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76 DEVELOPMENT BULLETIN

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DEVELOPMENT FUTURES: ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO END POVERTY



FEATURES & CASE STUDIES

- Emerging development priorities
- New approaches to identifying poverty, inequality and development
- New partnerships and cross-sectoral collaboration
- Harnessing technology for development
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The Development Bulletin

Development Bulletin has, for 26 years, been the journal of the Development Studies Network based at the Australian National University. It is an occasional publication providing at least one issue a year. The DB includes commissioned and submitted papers and is available in hard copy and for free download online. Each issue focuses on a specific, topical development theme providing a multi-disciplinary perspective on a diverse range of opinions and perspectives. The papers in DB are short and concise, with a word limit of 3,500. Authors include academics, non academics, development professionals, those working in non government and government organisations, consultants, teachers and students of development. There is a particular focus on the experience and opinions of those engaged in development practice.

The 76 issues of Development Bulletin are available on line. Together they provide a valuable history of social and economic development, development theory, development policy and practice and of development studies.

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Cover photos

Front: Immunisation day, MCH clinic, Port Resolution, Tanna, Vanuatu
Talk back radio, community radio station, Lenakel, Tanna, Vanuatu
Photos: Pamela Thomas

Back: Nikli community, Bangladesh, discussing ways to improve sanitation
in their area where large scale inundation occurs 6-8 months of the year.
Photo: Juliet Willetts



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Development Bulletin

Issue 76 August 2014

Development futures: Alternative pathways to end poverty

Papers and case studies include some of those presented at the international conference "Development Futures: Alternative pathways to end poverty" held under the auspices of the ACFID University Network and hosted by the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney, November 21-22, 2013

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Preface

With persistent and growing challenges facing the global community with regards to addressing poverty alleviation and inequality, there is a significant need to re-evaluate current approaches to development. Using a ‘futures thinking’ lens, such a reimagining may help to respond to the changing context in which the sector operates and may help manage and respond to future challenges.

Held over two days at the University of Technology, Sydney, the ACFID University Network Conference 2013 involved just over 400 participants. ‘Development Futures’ aimed to encourage delegates to think differently about alternative pathways for achieving an end to poverty, and asked participants to reimagine a future for the development sector.

Keynote speakers, including Uma Kothari, Sohail Inayatullah, Dave Griggs, Jim Woodhill, Sarah Cook and Enrique Mendizabal, challenged current paradigms around which the sector functions. Delegates included practitioners and policy-makers from government agencies, practitioners from non-government organisations, researchers, academics and students.

This conference was the fourth in a sequence of conferences addressing pertinent issues facing the sector and designed to engage practitioners and academics in reflection and debate. With a challenging remit of rethinking development futures, the conference covered wide ground. From current and future notions of poverty and how it is measured, to development and resilience within a finite planet. From citizens and their rights, to new strategies to tackle growing inequality and exclusion. From reconsidering the roles of NGOs and academia, to developing new partnerships with business and the private sector. From harnessing the latest technologies, to evolutions in teaching to prepare the next generation of professionals keen to address global social justice.

The ACFID University Network

The ACFID University Network is an Australian-based network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development. The network’s objectives are to:

- Catalyse collaborative partnerships between academia and NGOs;
- improve ethical development research practice and training; and
- address key issues in international development and global social justice.

The Network actively promotes improvements in development research, policy and action through providing a platform for collaboration between NGOs and university researchers, bringing the experiences and insights of each to benefit development practice. The ACFID University Network organises a biennial conference, occasional symposia and seminars.

This issue of Development Bulletin provides a taste of the breadth of presentations and discussions held, drawing from contributions across the ACFID University Network. We hope you find it useful to continue to prompt new thinking and new action in the sector.

The ACFID University Network Conferences have become anticipated events in the Australian development sector offering valuable opportunities for new partnerships to be forged and ideas for policy and practice to be brought forward. The next ACFID University Network Conference will be held 4–5 June 2015 with Monash University.

Juliet Willetts, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney
Meghan Cooper, ACFID
Conference co-convenor

Development futures: Alternative perspectives

Imagining development futures

Uma Kothari, Brooks World Poverty Institute, University of Manchester

International development policy and aid are founded upon an understanding that some societies are less developed than others. These differences and ideas surrounding 'less developed' are based on a number of criteria including levels of poverty, political democracy, conflict, equality, human rights and economic growth. So at the outset, development depends upon identifying who is poor and marginalised, who is underdeveloped, and who should be the recipients of aid and interventions. These are seen as distinct from those who are developed and can legitimately bestow ideas about progress, morality and civility (Parpart 1995).

So we create distinctions between developed/ underdeveloped; First and Third Worlds, rich and poor, beneficiaries and donors. These distinctions demarcate what development means, which societies are developed or underdeveloped, where development should take place. And this, provides the rationale and justification for the practice of some people intervening on behalf of others. But these differences are not just spatial differences, people 'over here' shaping the lives of people 'over there', but also temporal. Thus, some places are not only seen as being developed/ underdeveloped but also that some places are seen to represent the past and others the future. And these spatial and temporal differences reproduce global inequalities and hierarchies.

In this context, I address three concerns:

1. The idea that certain societies are seen to have been left behind and are less developed is based on particular ways of thinking about the past, present and future.
2. How, given that development offers a framework to guide change, the future has become predetermined and foreclosed such that some places are represented as being of the traditional past while other, developed societies, are seen to represent their modern future.
3. Policy-driven discourses and the imperative for development policies to continuously change, be revised and react, detracts from a poverty that endures.

It is only when all people are empowered with the capacity to aspire and their different visions for the future are acknowledged that we can begin to imagine multiple development futures and alternative pathways to poverty alleviation.

Understanding time, temporality and progress in development

Development is all about sequences and dichotomies, be they cultural (traditional to modern), moral (from bad to good), spatial (Third to First Worlds), political (autocratic to democratic), but also temporal (past to future).

Development is concerned with transformation and transition, so it is really about change over time. But how the past and the future are understood and imagined in development policy is largely ignored. Development policies and practices devised to bring about this apparent progress are severely time bound as evident, for example, in the very short period allocated to a development project cycle, five year development plans and the speed at which change is expected to occur with the setting of endless projections and targets best exemplified by the Millennium Development Goals devised in 2000 with an end date of 2015. This creates some ambivalence and confusion as while we can see them as unrealistic and constraining we also feel an imperative to action. But future targets also distract us from what endures.

I suggest that those places we identify as 'developing' are also seen as representing the past while developed societies represent their future. This happens in a variety of ways:

- The language of, for example, 'local', 'indigenous' and 'grassroots' that embeds recipients of development interventions in certain places and excludes and abstracts them from the global.
- Identified as traditional, backward and underdeveloped, the Third World becomes confined and consigned to the past. So the past is not simply an historical moment but also a place.
- A distinction is produced between the 'here and now' of the west that is positioned in relation to, and against the 'there and then' of the Third World.

In anthropology, for example the 'Systematic study of 'primitive' tribes began first in the hope of utilising them as a kind of time-machine, as a peep into our own historic past ...' (Gellner 1964: 18, quoted in Fabian p.39). We see this most obviously in travel writing. 'Travel is wonderful for the way it gives access to the past: markets in Africa show us how we once lived and traded' and 'An obvious example was Dicken's London, an impoverished city, populated by hangers-on, hustlers and newly arrived bumpkins – like Nairobi today' (Theroux 2003)

So we have produced a distinction between people and places that is partly based on seeing certain places as in the past and other places as representing their future. And the idea of development interventions is to bring those who are in the past into at least the present if not the future.

But what does that future look like?

The starting point is not to ask what development futures or futures of development would look like but who has the power and authority to shape that future, who determines what the future will look like, who is allowed the capacity to aspire and who is excluding from defining the future. Development is a term used to both describe processes of change and to offer a normative framework to guide change. So projections of where we are, where we should be going, and how we move from one set of circumstances to another are predetermined in ways that foreclose the future.

The practice of development depends on notions of progress that assume certain trajectories of development. The future then, is predictable, ordered and regulated; pre-empted and foreclosed through formal planning procedures e.g. through the targets and future scenarios of major development agencies that can be achieved through the adoption of a particular set of policy prescriptions and planning instruments that impose a predicted future within a short timeframe and with known outcomes.

The inference of how development plans are formulated suggests that developing countries can only aspire to a singular future – one that is symbolised by the west. And, through development interventions they can move into this future, but not necessarily a future of their own imagining. This linear process denies some people and places independence in determining their own future.

Such perspectives, and the policies that stem from them, ignore the steps and strategies that people use to imagine and realise their own futures or as Appadurai puts it, their capacity to aspire (2004). As Massey says, for

society to change, it must be able to freely absorb novelty or new information, to be 'fully open futures' (Massey 1999: 266) and free to become. Thus, Bourdieu's (1979) idea that the future is a field of possibles to be explored is not possible in development.

Enduring poverty and rapid change

Discourse of crises and change, immediacy and urgency, be they environmental or economic require that we rapidly amend or even reverse previous policy directions and prescriptions. We respond to crises immediately with a plethora of conferences, articles and academic and policy discussions on what to do. We respond almost mechanically every time there is a ripple on the surface. Development is full of fads and fashions of academic research and policies.

It is hard to keep up with the language of participation, civil society, good governance, log frames, gender analytical frameworks. We also contrast the slow pace of life in rural India to the hustle and bustle of the city, the slowness of tradition as compared to the speed of modernity.

There is something seductive about movement and change that stand as a promising sign of newness and future making. This future orientation implicitly renders the past static. We confer a sense of disfunctionality to things, people and places that are thought as immobile and too slow: being slow is lagging behind, becoming old, not modern enough. (Med Mobilities, Lancaster University)

What development does is create a sense of urgency, a fast tempo, with the imperative to save the world from poverty as soon as possible. A laudable goal but one that is often contrary to our actions. We have become distracted because of the need to continuously change, revise and reformulate policies and practices. There is a tendency then to keep moving, change policies regularly and quickly, speeding up so that we can address this or that current crisis. But what this does, I argue, is make invisible enduring, persistent, long standing poverty and deprivation.

Deep-seated, fundamental ideas of inequalities and poverty often get submerged in policy driven discourses. And, a major problem is that development is a highly unreflexive discipline and practice. History doesn't matter as the future is all important. What we need is more time for reflection to see the continuities in a context where all is presented as continuously and rapidly changing.

So to the future: imagining development futures?

So there is a problem of how we see different societies as representing the global past and future, how this perpetuates global inequalities and justifies development interventions and the imperative to continuously revise language and policies. All this keeps us from imagining different and multiple development futures and addressing poverty. We need to critique the short historical lens of development but also the short-termism of its policy initiatives and interventions.

We need to start seeing everybody as contemporaries. That we don't think about people as being in the

past, or traditional, modern, and that we don't demarcate and distinguish in that way. We need to understand that these are global issues and problems that cannot be addressed while we continue to demarcate and divide people in this way. There also needs to be acknowledgment of multiple and plural temporalities; other ways of working and living.

I don't want to suggest that poor people are simply victims of our policies and representations. They have agency too and can and do subvert how they are represented and also how their future is prescribed. The future is always in the making but it is only when all people are empowered with the capacity to aspire and their different visions for the future are acknowledged that we can begin to imagine multiple development futures and alternative pathways to poverty alleviation.

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Rethinking social development for the 21st century: From selectivity to inclusion

Sarah Cook, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Some alternatives for development futures

We are currently seeing a range of innovations in social policies across a number of countries, particularly larger 'emerging' economies (including the so-called BRICS), some middle-income economies and even a few developing or lower income economies. These countries are pursuing a range of social policies that potentially offer alternative futures, or alternative visions of social futures, to lower-income countries. By that I mean, they are pursuing a range of policies, which appear to be leading to more equitable development outcomes (for example, Brazil) and that have the potential to reduce poverty (as China has done).

Such initiatives should be seen in the context of a more general 'social turn' in development thinking that brought social concerns back centrally within the development agenda following their neglect during the era dominated by 'Washington Consensus' policies. The post-Washington Consensus social policies can be described as selective – focussed principally on safety nets and assistance targeted towards the poor, and in the important but still narrowly defined set of targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

What is increasingly remarkable about the set of policies seen in a wider range of countries is that they are not necessarily targeted only at the poor. They generally include important elements of poverty targeting through

social assistance or transfer programs (including conditional cash transfers and employment guarantee programs). These are currently the dominant forms of social protection on the development agenda, and are of course important poverty alleviation mechanisms.

But we are also seeing a wider set of policies and programs including social assistance but alongside more universal forms of social policy that are universal or categorically targeted rather than means tested or targeted by income. Such programs include universal pensions and child benefits, the expansion of health care access through a range of universal or social insurance mechanisms, policies linked to labour market inclusion and greater investment in a range of social services, health and education.

Inclusive approaches to social policy

In the Nordic countries or in Korea and other developmental East Asian states, we can see that at a critical moment of their development, when they were extremely low income, in some cases post-conflict societies, governments did not target poverty or the poor as a way to reduce poverty. Instead, they focussed on an *inclusive* economic development agenda, and in doing so they used social policies and redistributive mechanisms to support economic growth and broad-based development as well as for nation building. What the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development has argued from its research is that social policies are often a critical missing dimension in development agendas: not just in their function of protecting the poor, but rather through the multiple functions social policies can play. Such policies are effective when they are redistributive (contributing to equity and inclusion), are linked to economic development and enhance productivity, support social reproduction and ultimately bring the whole of society together in a cohesive way. This broader approach to addressing social issues in development does not necessarily focus principally on poverty reduction, but can lead to poverty reduction as an outcome that is more sustainable. In this process historically social policies have always played a critical role.

Innovative pathways for reducing inequalities

The interesting point is that the developing countries noted at the start are pursuing different pathways, from each other but also from the dominant prescriptions of the international development community. At the moment, we hear a lot about Brazil, because inequality is coming down (though we have to remember from very high levels). Brazil has a range of relevant policies from social protection, cash transfers, rural pensions, through to minimum wages and other labour market interventions. And we have also seen political mobilisation (in Brazil and elsewhere), as the 'middle classes' demand different kinds of policies, particularly more investments in public services and attention to the quality of services (health, education, public transport) – investments which should also benefit the poor. India has a different model: the most well-known programme is the massive rural employment guarantee

scheme; there is also a strong rights-based, bottom-up approach with demands on the state by citizens. Thailand led the way earlier towards a universal model of access to health care, while China is now massively expanding its social insurance system, particularly for health and pensions.

So we are seeing a large number of different programmes and pathways towards a more inclusive social model. At this point, we need to undertake research to understand not just the programs and their direct impacts, where a lot of the research and analysis to date has been focussed, we need to understand the political economy – what is driving these changes, what are the political processes involved, and what are the complementary economic and other policies and what does this mean for society? We need to ask are these programmes and policies creating what could be new social contracts within these states on which more sustainable and equitable futures may be based?

Environmental sustainability in development

Dave Griggs, Monash Sustainability Institute

Major issues for future development

I think the main point is that we need to find a new way of doing development which integrates environmental considerations. The reason is, we are entering what we are calling a new geological epoch, the anthropocene – an era where human beings are changing the natural environment on a scale similar to, or greater than natural processes. So, as human beings, we move more rocks and minerals than all the rivers in the world; we apply more nitrogen than natural processes. So we are affecting natural systems at a scale as big as, or bigger than natural processes. That is causing huge environmental problems including climate change, dramatic rates of biodiversity loss and real damage to the nitrogen cycle.

Environmental and development intersections

With development, the way that many countries have raised themselves out of poverty to date, has been through economic development that has been built, and re-built, on exploitation of the world's natural resources. So in our terms, it's exchanging natural capital for human and social capital. This means we have to find a new way of doing development, because the world's natural resources are finite and are now under stress and causing environmental problems. So we have to do development that doesn't depend on exploitation of natural resources, because if we continue in this way many development gains will be undermined by the consequences of the environmental damage including the short and long term impacts of climate change, causing extreme events such as flooding, drought, cyclones, heat waves, and so on. And we know that when these things happen development is set back by many years. So you gain development on the one hand, and then you lose it on the other.

Necessary changes in development policy

The Millennium Development Goals are focussed only on development. Goal 7 focussed on ensuring environmental sustainability, but it was largely ignored. So we are arguing that you can't separate out goals. You need to actually build them into all relevant goals and into the targets so they are done together. In other words, you can't achieve your food goal without the environment, you can't achieve your water goal without the environment, and you can't develop an environmental goal without considering the environmental services, the ecosystem services that the natural environment provides. We argue that by integrating them you can actually get a better outcome for both development and for the natural environment. But there is always that tension between what is best for people in the short term, and what is best for the majority of people in the longer term. It is a very difficult balancing act. Nobody is going to say that we are going to put all our money into long term food production and let many people starve in the short term. But equally, you can't say we are going to put all our money in short term provision of food and raising people out of poverty because we know in the long term that it is all going to disappear. So we need to balance it, and I believe you can balance it.

Futures thinking and strategy transformation

Sohail Inayatullah, Tamkang University and Macquarie University

Many development futures

My focus is on moving the debate from one future to many futures, to embedding the notion of possibility and alternatives in the development discourse. Often we are straight jacketed by the power of the nation state to define identity and strategy, but my goal is to explore options and to find narratives, metaphors, that can embody these possible futures.

The one future discussion is reinforced, whether in traditional or modern society, by notions of expertise - that there is just one answer and that it is often the "big man" the landlord or the expert who defines this truth. Our role, my role, in futures thinking is to open up the future and recover agency, to not see the current future as inevitable but as human created. Doing so empowers the person you are working with, empowers them to be reflective as to whether they are living their dream or someone else's dream. Foresight work is actually taking power about the future back and enhancing the possibility to create.

Alternative development futures

The specific features of alternative development futures depend on the context. If it is education: we were doing one workshop, for example in Queensland, and if we want young kids to be creative and innovative we suggest they re-design the room. So you just don't have the whole notion of rows, with the teacher at the front of the rows. Room redesign challenges the used future of the factory

with clear lines of discipline, of standardisation. Along with room redesign is a move to recreate power in the classroom from an ethos of the teacher or the principal knows best to one where we are all learners, all on a journey. So if I want an authoritarian world, I have strict rows and a chair where the teacher controls. If I want a more democratic, participatory world it's not just saying the words, visioning the future, it's re-designing the space so that the re-visioned future can become real. As well, in the move to a world where we are all learners, it is supporting traditional experts to become comfortable with becoming knowledge navigators.

Shaping a different development future

The first thing is to ask: does the way we think about the future make sense to our vision of development? So if you are a university in a developing country, you may want to model yourself after Oxford or Harvard and their traditions but often this is acontextual, not relevant, except as a used future merely playing catch up instead of a leapfrog over to a new model of education. So at a number of Asian universities, they began to challenge the previous pedagogical model, as it was only reinforcing traditional inequitable patterns of knowledge and power. They said: 'If we keep trying to catch up we will never catch up, let's imagine and create alternatives'. So they started thinking, 'Ok, let's now develop a greener university. Let's ensure our research funding goes for the bottom billion. Let's redesign space so it is more democratic'. So the goal of the university changed by thinking through the alternatives. Now what that does, is they are no longer trying to catch up, but innovating and creating new spaces. And let us as well re-measure the future and instead of the world university rankings where the current leaders will always be ahead, you develop a green, helping the poor, pro-poor foresight universities rankings, where you are doing well.

So it's not playing their game, but innovating and creating new spaces to play the game you want – your preferred future.

Helping those in marginalised communities

By looking at the alternatives, you ask different questions and come up with different solutions. And it reconfigures your place, your organisation, your institution in a different space. And that can be done at every level, from the very top or the very bottom. At the bottom it is more difficult, especially if it is a war area. There was one workshop in a war torn area, for example, and there if you started to talk about the bright future ahead there was natural resistance, as they had just gone through trauma. So then development work is actually naming the trauma, whether it is poverty, climate change, or war and then working on the worst case scenario. If this continues, what happens in one or two generations – for example, does it create inter-generational trauma? What do we do today to create a different future, what assets do we need, what resources do we need? It's starting out with the worst case, and then moving towards the best case, but the worst case has to be named and alternatives considered and outliers to the current trajectory explored.

Pro-poor foresight is about working with marginalised communities to see the future as an asset that they have a right over. Instead of being crushed by the present, by using the future, alternatives can be imagined and eventually created.

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Introduction: Development futures – alternative pathways to end poverty

Pamela Thomas, The Australian National University

Imagining the future

This issue of *Development Bulletin* challenges readers to imagine the future and to consider new ways in which development policies, research, planning and activities might achieve a sustainable end to poverty and inequality. The papers suggest we need new understandings of both development and poverty and to reconsider what underlies development terminology – developed, under-developed, developing, first and third worlds, rich and poor, traditional or modern, the future and the past and the way language influences the way we ‘do’ development. Through language we create distinctions between those who are poor and marginalised – the undeveloped – and those who are developed and feel they can legitimately bestow ideas about progress, morality and civility. Kothari points out that development is concerned with transformation and transition over time but how the past and the future are understood and imagined in development policy is largely ignored and deep seated, fundamental ideas of inequality and poverty often get submerged in policy driven discourses. ‘Development’ she says ‘is a highly unreflexive discipline and practice. History is seldom considered as it is the future that is all important. We need more time for reflection.’

Sohail Inayatullah feels we should consider many futures. Pro-poor foresight is about working with marginalised communities to see the future as an asset that they have a right over. Instead of being crushed by the present, by using the future, alternatives can be imagined and eventually created. ‘So we can consider many possibilities and alternatives ... too often we are straight jacketed by the power of the nation-state to define and strategise.’

Sarah Cook, on the other hand, sees some countries with a range of social policies that potentially offer alternative futures which have the potential to lead to more equitable development outcomes. Programmes that are not necessarily targeted only at the poor ... they focus on an inclusive economic development agenda using social policies and redistributive mechanisms. Currently we are seeing a large number of different pathways towards a more inclusive social model.

Several papers question both the benefits of economic growth without equality and growth built on utilising non-renewable resources. Griggs points out that an increasing number of middle-income countries have raised themselves out of poverty through economic development built and re-built on unsustainable exploitation of the world’s natural resources – exchanging natural capital for human and social capital.

Development futures in time and space

With increasingly rapid technological, political and economic change it is increasingly likely that expected trends will be interrupted by the unexpected and existing plans and policies will become inappropriate. What are the development priorities of the future and how much consideration should be given to the possibility of deepening poverty, manmade and natural disasters, climate change, rapid and unanticipated levels of urbanisation and the unparalleled scale of internal and international migration? How can an end to poverty be planned and implemented when already there are unanticipated billions of people fleeing drought, starvation, oppression and war and when a situational analysis can be rendered meaningless almost as soon as it is written?

Given the unknowable future, the following papers suggest innovative approaches to policies, processes and activities based on recent research and the experience of engaging in different ways of doing development. They exhibit a keen sense of the need for flexibility, reflexivity, alternative thinking, and the introduction of development assistance rapid change.

Together the papers point to the need for greater participation and partnerships with and between those in recipient and donor countries; those working in different areas of development, in different sectors and in different administrative structures. Many of the papers provide examples of research partnerships between the organisations of academia, government and civil society; others illustrate community participation in planning and delivering development programmes and of research collaboration between academic and poor rural and urban communities. Most put into practice the rationale for the ACFID University Network by developing academic/NGO partnerships in order to strengthen their research and their collective impact against poverty and injustice.

New ways to measure poverty and inequality

A basic question raised is how should poverty best be measured when current measures do not adequately capture the nature of poverty experienced daily by many millions of people? It is generally measured at household level, assuming everyone in the household, men, women and children are equally poor. As Crawford et al. suggest 'it is deeply problematic that in 2013, we cannot say who is poor, in what ways and to what extent'. Their paper introduces the individual deprivation measure which has the potential to transform poverty measurement and make visible who is poor and in what ways and enabling more targeted, relevant and effective anti-poverty programmes. A similar approach to measuring inequality within education focusses on partnerships and policy and the Australian Council for Education Research's experience of monitoring education outcomes in Zimbabwe.

New partnerships and cross sectoral collaboration

Several papers provide examples of effective cross sectoral integration. As Griggs points out, too often development is indicative of silo mentalities and approaches – the Millennium Development Goals is a good example of a framework that discourages integration. Toole et al., and Chivers and Macintyre illustrate the effectiveness of integration in their examples of collaboration between education, water, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition and agriculture in improving health and nutrition. To address very high levels of malnutrition and under nutrition in South Asia Toole et al. recommend a 'multi-sectoral approach that include integrating nutrition into related sectors – agriculture, social protection, health, education, water and sanitation as well as considering the cross cutting issue such as gender and governance'.

Adding to a growing discussion on the role of collaboration with the private sector Gero, Murta and Willetts pose the question whether partnerships between civil society organisations and the private sector provide a new pathway for addressing poverty. Using the water, sanitation and hygiene sector as an example they worked with four CSOs to engage with private and social enterprise to deliver sustainable and equitable water in

Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. They found that private and social enterprise was a potential pathway for addressing poverty. Partnerships can also provide greater benefits, leverage and influence than a single organisation as the partnership between Plan, Wateraid, ACFID and DFAT illustrates.

Partnerships between churches and the Australian Government in both Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu provide examples of the benefits of the partnerships in delivering better and more extensive health, education and social services and reaching what were previously unreachable, poor communities. Webster and Watson outline the positive impact on women of the PNG Churches Partnership Program.

Partnerships to address Indigenous disadvantage

Indigenous disadvantage is usually considered a marginal issue in international development although there are an estimated 350 million Indigenous people globally and 'being Indigenous is associated with being disadvantaged, and this tends not to improve over time'. Moran points out that in Australia, Indigenous disadvantage has led to intense public debate about underlying causes and possible solutions. Hunt's experience and research into development partnerships with Aboriginal communities in Australia is relevant to other situations. She found that successful partnerships were those where negotiations took place on an equal footing, there were a small number of partners, sustained long-term relationships, clarity of purpose, shared goals, clear roles and responsibilities and simple, flexible, long-term funding and importantly, consideration for the differences between local cultures. Moran also points out that while Indigenous cultures are an inherent strength, they are strongly differentiated and also differentiated from the mainstream cultures of the countries where they are located. ACFID's Indigenous Working Group came to similar conclusions as Hunt and Moran. Their principles of development practice when partnering with Indigenous communities included heightened attention to rights advocacy, governance and partnering.

New research approaches

While participatory action research is now an accepted research methodology, Vaughan et al. point out there has been little documentation of what is actually involved in conducting it and although 'its rhetoric is inspiring and compelling ... its practice has been exposed to considerable critique'. Undertaking action research among women with disability in the Philippines they found that while there were benefits, there were considerable costs and challenges ... 'inclusive research where members of affected communities are involved in project design, data collection and analysis should not be regarded as an inexpensive option'. They add that there are also considerable costs to the researchers' egos! Shackel, McCowan and Fiske's research on justice for women in

Kenya, Uganda and the Congo, agree that partnerships are effective but time consuming and often challenging. They argue that forming and developing research partnerships should be viewed as a key aspect of designing, planning and implementing research projects but time must be allowed for setting them up.

Using new technologies

With rapid changes in the accessibility and quality of media technology, Harris and Bau outline how communication for development now offers new possibilities and approaches for development and that more effective forms of participation, consultation and collaboration with local communities are beginning to take shape. Video and cheap digital cameras offer people the opportunity to capture images of their own life in a structured, meaningful environment. Live theatre provides a different way of using communication for participatory development. Kauli discusses developing a reflective and interactive process of enquiry using theatre to provide AIDS awareness in rural Papua New Guinea. In Vanuatu improved radio reception and the widespread availability of mobile phones has led to talkback radio becoming an important source of development-related information.

Approaches to equity and inclusion

Tahira Jabeen outlines attempts by Pakistan to meet the MDG of 100 per cent school enrolment, but widespread child labour and child poverty and very high dropout rates make this goal unattainable. She points out that there are no mechanisms in place to ask children or parents why children are not in schools or why they drop out. Child labour and low school enrolment are considered as market or education issues while a human rights-based approach would consider it a matter of inaccessibility or denial of fundamental rights. Although ACFID and DFAT have formally acknowledged the role of a human rights-based approach to overcoming the challenges of poverty, Arnold suggests that its implementation is proving challenging. She maintains that research into training in this approach was found to be insufficiently comprehensive to ensure its implementation in international aid and development programmes.

Rethinking roles and rights

In response to the significant challenges which currently face international NGOs, Roche and Hewett discuss the future role of INGOs in the rapidly changing development environment. While the lack of pro-aid political support and declining public aid campaigning suggest the need for changes in the ways NGOs do business, the bigger challenge is in the nature of ODA support for NGO's work. The focus on value for money and results based management have led to perverse incentives and outcomes. The trend for ODA to prioritise funding large development programmes on efficiency grounds has reduced support for small but often more innovative

projects. Among their recommendations Roche and Hewett suggest that to remain strategically relevant NGOs need to act as vehicles for social change and social justice and not present themselves as aid organisations. They must transform their organisational structures and ways of working to emphasise nimbleness and flexibility.

With an annual increase in the risk of disasters related to climate change, population growth and urbanisation Rebecca Barber discusses the changing roles and responses of international humanitarian organisations. She shows that despite the massive scale of destruction from cyclones, tropical storms and flooding in Southeast Asia mid-2011 neither the Thai nor Cambodian Governments requested international assistance although it had been offered. The government said they would welcome assistance but did not formulate this as a formal appeal. This led to uncertainty which diminished the efficiency of the response. With the risk of disasters increasing each year Asian governments are now developing capacities to prepare for, mitigate and respond to disasters but have not yet put in place robust systems to facilitate and coordinate international assistance.

Nicola Piper considers the situation of migrant workers, the majority of whom end up in small, precarious workplaces, where labour is largely unregulated. She outlines how in response to persisting obstacles to a rights-based approach to migration policy at global level, regional migrant rights organisations and labour unions have begun to form transnational and trans-organisational networks to channel advocacy to multi-state fora and international organisations.

Development futures

While this issue of *Development Bulletin* incorporates a variety of views on ending poverty there is some agreement that in a situation of rapid and unforeseen change future development policies and practice will need to be multi- focussed and able to deal with multiple futures that include visions of the poor for their own future. In Kothari's words 'we need more time for reflection to see the continuities in a context where all is presented as continuously and rapidly changing'. The development practices discussed here that appear to have been effective in improving people's lives are those of inclusion and equality, empowerment and recognition and understanding of cultural difference. In terms of policies and processes what has been effective have been flexibility, integration of effort, and long-term partnerships. Greater recognition needs to be given to smaller development initiatives that incorporate the visions of the poor. But given the current development climate and lack of clarity about the future this will be difficult. As the research undertaken before and after the Development Futures conference shows, the delegates were prepared to reimagine futures and alternative pathways to end poverty but their visions were seldom matched by 'futures' strategies or actions. The question we need to ask ourselves is how well equipped are we to change our development practice?

Development futures: Using futures thinking to re-evaluate the direction of the development sector

Laura Wynne, Jenni Downes and Juliet Willetts, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney and Meghan Cooper, Australian Council for International Development

Introduction

This paper reports the results of two surveys of delegates conducted prior to and following the Development Futures Conference. The surveys sought to understand delegates' perceptions on a range of issues, including willingness to reimagine futures and acknowledge uncertainties and unknowns. The paper outlines key findings, contradictions and inconsistencies that emerged from the survey – including what futures thinkers might call a lack of alignment between stated values and actual practice, between acknowledgement of future uncertainties yet confidence in the ability to plan social change, and between everyday actions and visions for a desired future.

The context

Globally, income poverty has decreased when measured by national averages (mostly due to rapid development in India, China and parts of Asia). However some 1.3 billion people still live in extreme poverty earning less than US \$1.25 a day (World Bank, 2014), and there are large disparities in access to education, food, health, water and sanitation, particularly in middle-income countries.

An overwhelming concentration (around three-quarters) of the world's poorest people live in middle-income countries (Sumner, 2012) and some of these countries, including Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (known as the BRICS), are now both recipients and donors.

Whilst the chronic poor still live in rural areas, major rural-urban transition is underway with growing numbers of the poor living in cities. Concurrently, we are facing various new or growing challenges, including rising food prices, excessive use of natural resources and the emerging impacts of climate change. As shifts occur amongst global powers and the circumstances in donor countries are altered, a new context for aid and development is being set.

The post-2015 Millennium Development Goal (MDG) process and related development of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides a current backdrop for the sector, supporting renewed reflection and questioning of the issues at hand and how we should respond, both in terms of the next global framework and also in terms of organisational responses to this wider context.

Futures thinking

Futures thinking and what is termed 'applied foresight' is an emerging discourse and field in its own right. HG Wells was the father of futures thinking, foreshadowing likely developments in the 20th century. Key concepts in futures thinking are firstly, that the future is not fixed and many

futures are possible. Secondly, that there is value in considering probable futures, possible or alternate futures, preferred futures and prospective futures. Such thinking can guide social change, support critical reflection and open up space for creativity and empowerment.

Inayatullah (2008) notes that even as the futures 'disrupts' – as we become aware that the future looks very different to business-as-usual – we remain tied to old patterns of behaviour. Inayatullah notes that 'we know we need to change but we seem unable to'. This notion resonates with current thinking about conceptual limitations in the field of aid and development. As Michael Edwards, a leading thinker in this space suggests, our solutions are '*getting thinner just as problems are getting thicker, seemingly oblivious to the scale and complexity of the challenges that lie ahead*'.

A key concept of Inayatullah's 'six pillars' of futures thinking is alignment. Alignment relates to our need to align our strategy with the big picture, the big picture with our vision, and our vision with our day-to-day actions (Inayatullah, 2008). The key concept recognises that despite our ability to develop a vision for the future, we often fail to align our day-to-day actions and behaviour with a strategy which will help achieve that vision.

Another important pillar of futures thinking relevant to this paper is 'alternative futures'. This concept acknowledges that alternative futures are possible. Such thinking considers the need to prepare for uncertainty and – to some extent – to embrace this uncertainty.

Survey methods

Two surveys were distributed to conference delegates, asking them to respond to a number of statements and questions regarding approaches for development.

Ninety-four delegates responded to the pre-conference survey, and 139 delegates responded to the post-conference survey. In general a similar profile of delegates was represented in the pre- and post-conference surveys, however a smaller proportion of students responded to the first survey.

The results of the survey were analysed including both quantitative and qualitative responses. Where meaningful, comparisons were made between the pre- and post-conference survey results.

Survey findings

Pathways to ending poverty

The conference was grounded in two themes, the first of which relates to current and future notions of poverty,

inequality and development, including identifying current and emerging development priorities and challenges.

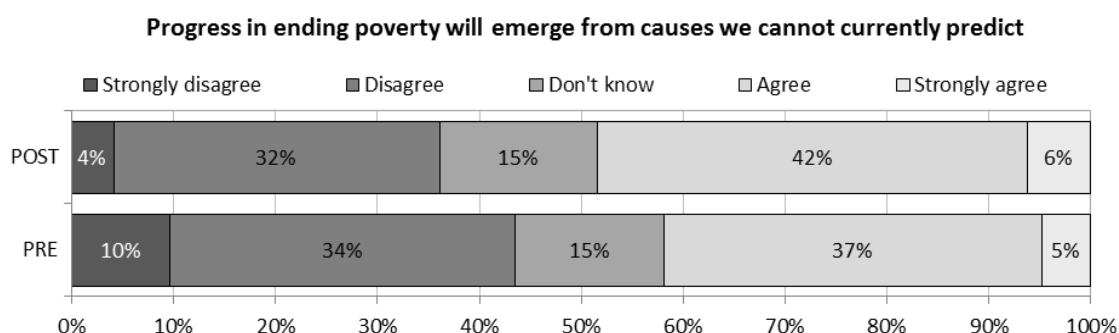
Several questions asked respondents to consider whether the development sector is currently on the right track to end poverty. Respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed with a number of statements about development.

We asked participants to tell us whether they thought that progress in ending poverty would emerge from causes that we can't currently predict. This question relates strongly to the 'alternative futures' concept of Inayatullah

(2008), in that it is asking respondents to consider uncertain factors in achieving a vision for the future – in this case, the vision for the future is a world without poverty.

Around half of respondents said that they agreed or strongly agreed with the notion that solutions may emerge from causes they cannot currently predict (see Figure 1), demonstrating a reasonable level of agreement with Inayatullah's concept that we must prepare for uncertainties in our futures, even if we cannot understand what form these uncertainties might take.

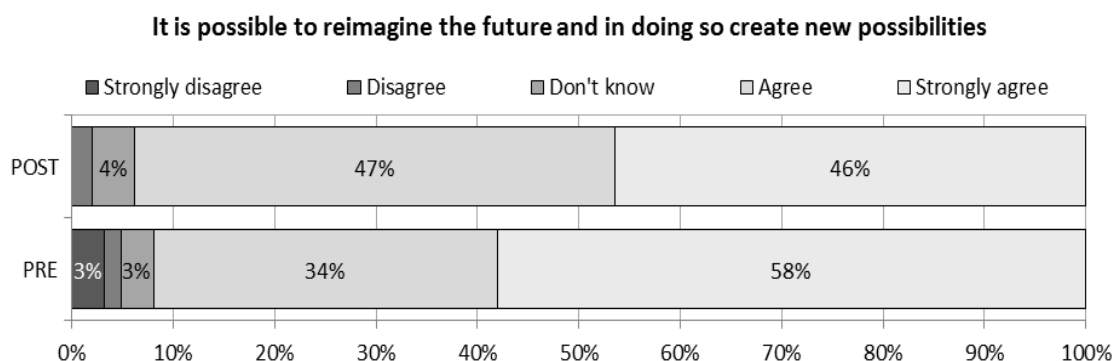
Figure 1: Responses to statement 'Progress in ending poverty will emerge from causes we cannot currently predict' comparing pre- and post-conference responses.



The survey also asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: '*it is possible to reimagine the future and in doing so create new possibilities*'. The level of agreement with this statement was high – 93 percent of respondents said that they agreed

or strongly agreed that it is possible to reimagine futures (see Figure 2). This indicates that the concept of alternative futures resonated strongly with delegates, and is an acknowledgement that the future is not a fixed point that we are travelling towards.

Figure 2: Responses to statement 'It is possible to reimagine the future and in doing so create new possibilities', comparing pre- and post-conference responses.

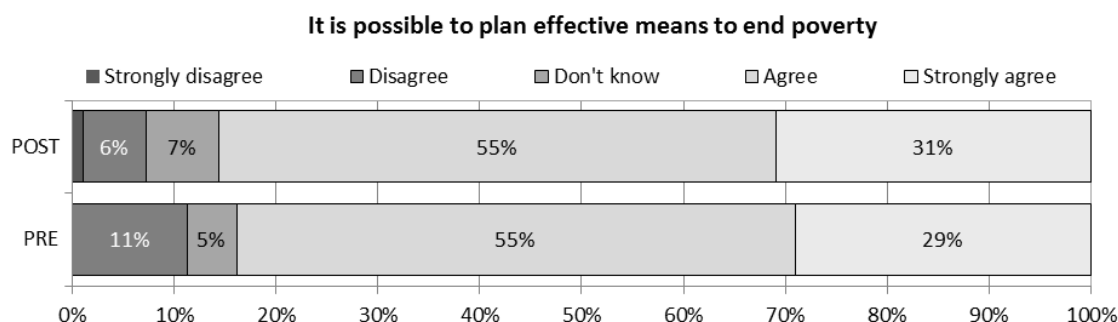


Conversely, however, the majority of respondents believe it is possible to plan effective means to end poverty, with 86 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with the notion that it is possible to plan (see Figure 3).

These responses raise interesting questions for the sector – how is it possible to confidently 'plan' for the elimination of poverty (given most believe this to be

possible) if we agree that we are not yet certain what the solutions are? In planning for the future, is the sector imagining a range of different futures and planning for a range of possibilities within these, or is it trapped within a paradigm which views progress towards a 'western future' as the only type of future available to developing nations?

Figure 3: Responses to statement 'It is possible to reimagine the future and in doing so create new possibilities', comparing pre- and post-conference responses.



Following this line of thinking, participants were also asked to respond to the statement '*developed countries are ahead and developing countries are behind*' – a statement reflecting the notion that western countries are more 'advanced' along a linear continuum of development than developing countries. This question relates to the concept of the 'used future' – the idea that many visions of the future are borrowed from somewhere else, and therefore may not be ideal or appropriate for the context. Inayatullah (2008) illustrates the concept of the 'used future' with the example of the development of Asian cities. He argues that despite the now-recognised shortcomings of the western pattern of urban development, which has led to resource depletion, unplanned growth and a lack of liveable communities, Asian cities have unconsciously persisted in following the growth patterns of western cities, instead of developing their own vision for city futures.

In her keynote address, Uma Kothari asked delegates to think of everybody and every nation – whether poor or wealthy, developed or developing – as contemporaries, rather than as traditional or modern, backward or advanced. Kothari emphasised the need to discontinue current thinking that sees developed as 'modern' and developing as 'backward', as this implies that developing countries are – and should be – heading towards the same future that developed countries are currently living. She noted that this approach does not allow for alternative –

and perhaps better – futures to be imagined for developing countries, but rather locks them into and predetermines a particular pattern of development.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents disagreed with the concept that developed countries are 'ahead' of developing countries. This demonstrates a high level of agreement with Kothari's sentiments regarding possibilities of imagining alternative futures for developing countries.

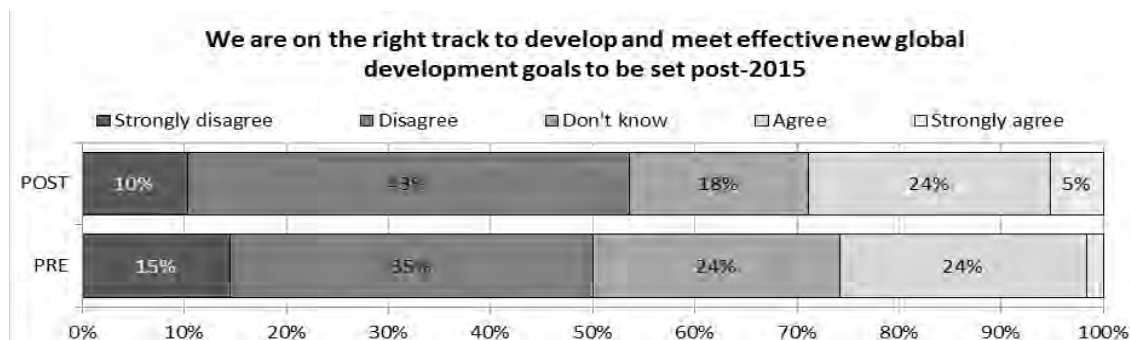
Goals and policies to support development progress

As we come closer to the 2015 target date for the MDGs, there is increasing reflection on progress achieved to date in reaching the goals laid out for the development assistance sector, as well as increasing debate about how to set and achieve new goals.

Ordonez and Bergh (2014) note that there is criticism not only of the MDGs themselves, but of the process of setting MDGs. They note that this process is seen to have lacked participation, been strongly donor-led, and skewed by a heavy top-down approach.

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they think that we are on the right track to develop and meet effective new global development goals to be set post-2015. More than half of respondents (53 percent) indicated that they do not believe we are on the right track to set and meet a post-2015 agenda (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Responses to 'We are on the right track to develop and meet effective new global development goals to be set post-2015'.



This may either reflect a concerns that the post-2015 approach, despite the significant efforts that have been made to allow for wider participation, will not avoid the mistakes made in the development of the MDGs, or, that we are not on the right track to meet such goals once they are in place.

Given the changing contexts regarding Australia's approach to ODA, several questions were included that relate to aid and foreign policy.

Over half of the respondents agreed that it is effective to align foreign policy objectives with those of aid and poverty alleviation, with 38 percent disagreeing. This point is highly topical given the recent merger of the Australian aid program into the wider Department of Foreign Affairs including a changing policy shift to strongly align the aid program with wider efforts concerning economic diplomacy.¹

On an international level, there is similar discontent with regards to the suitability of aid architecture. 'Aid architecture' refers to the processes and institutions associated with the provision and distribution of aid on a global scale. This includes traditional donors (especially OECD national aid agencies) and their relationship with recipients and the OECD Development Assistance Committee as well as the emerging new donors. 67 percent of respondents indicated

that they disagree or strongly disagree that the current international aid architecture is fit for purpose.

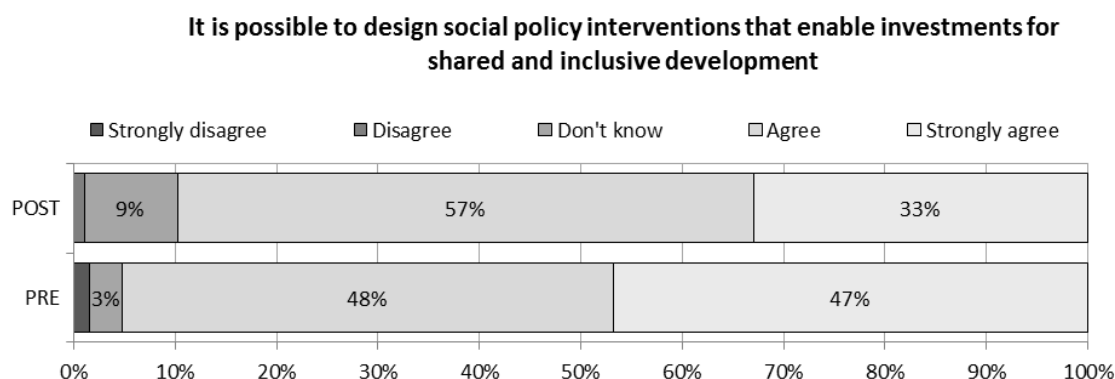
Effective ways to end poverty

The second theme of the conference was concerned with re-configuring actions and approaches for development – innovating in *how to achieve development*. Sessions and presentations focussed on rethinking roles of various players in the sector, identifying new partnerships and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, understanding a role for business in development, and harnessing technology for development, as well as understanding the importance of links between practitioners and researchers for effective development practice.

Over 70 percent of respondents said that they believe scaling up inclusive business models is an effective way to end poverty. This is particularly relevant to the Australian context due to increased emphasis on using economic and business development strategies to facilitate development in developing countries.

A vast majority (93 percent) of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that it is possible to design social policy interventions that enable investments for shared and inclusive development (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Responses to 'It is possible to design social policy interventions that enable investments for shared and inclusive development.'



This response is particularly interesting given an apparent mismatch between stated values and current practices. Sarah Cook, in her conference address, called social policy interventions 'the missing dimension' of current aid practices. Cook emphasised the need for a more coherent approach to improving and working with social policy in the development sector, and for social policies that are redistributive and linked to economic development – something that the development sector has typically not focussed on delivering.

The responses described above raise questions that relate to Inayatullah's concept of alignment, or the need to ensure that our current practices are aligning to longer-term visions and strategies for improved futures. As discussed – there is currently a lack of alignment between the sector's perception of the importance of social policy interventions and the degree to which they are implementing such interventions. Further, relatively few practitioners

are utilising inclusive business models to alleviate poverty – despite them noting that they believe it will be an effective means for ending poverty, and according to Cook, few practitioners are focussing on social policy interventions as a means to facilitate shared and inclusive development, despite them indicating that this is a possibility. Is there a need for development practitioners to reassess the alignment of their vision, strategy and their day-to-day and craft better alignment, in order to ensure that we are progressing towards a future that relates to their vision?

Development and environmental sustainability

Melamed and Ladd (2013) note in their paper on integrating human development and environmental sustainability that creating a post-2015 development agenda is about 'combining the needs and aspirations of people with the imperative to protect the natural resources on which human life depends'. They argue that as every aspect of

human life (and in turn development efforts) becomes affected by the changing environment, the urgency of achieving both environmental and social sustainability become increasingly apparent.

The need to include environmental considerations in development debates was put to delegates on several occasions throughout the conference. In his keynote address at the conference, Professor Dave Griggs emphasised the need to find a new way of ‘doing’ development – one that integrates environmental considerations.

Seventy-one percent of respondents disagreed that progress in addressing poverty will inevitably come at the expense of the natural environment, acknowledging the possibility of alternative futures – futures in which human development and economic prosperity are not intrinsically linked with destruction of the natural environment.

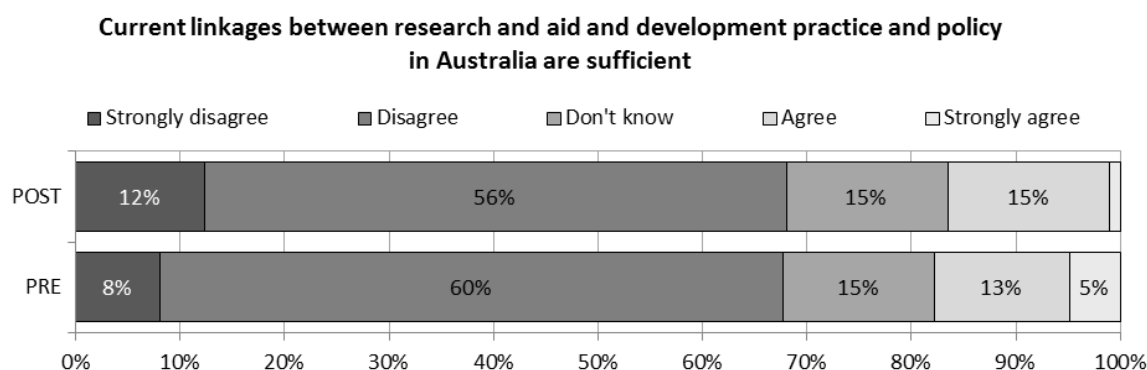
Linkages between practice and research

A longstanding debate exists about how to best link research, policy and practice in development (though arguably applicable to fields beyond development). Recently, this debate has resulted in specific discussions about cross-sector collaboration for such links to be made, namely through greater partnership between academia and the NGO community. The experiences of Aniekwe et al. (2012) through the ‘Cracking Collaboration Initiative’ of

the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) suggest that increasingly there are ‘many overlapping areas and exchange of people between the two worlds’ (p.3). To add, Horton (2012) argues that academia could have a greater impact on global poverty than they currently do. He argues that academics have an opportunity to conduct the right kind of research and to share what they have learned in order to support decision makers to make better decisions. However, Horton also points out that academics are not doing enough to support decision making, and are perhaps not thinking about the decisions in question from the point of view of the relevant decision makers.

Respondents to the survey were asked to indicate whether they think that current linkages between research and development practice and policy in Australia are sufficient (see Figure 6). Fifty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they do not believe the linkages are sufficient, with only 16 percent agreeing that they are sufficient. This raises important questions about how such linkages might be encouraged and whether research currently being conducted is the *right* research to assist with responding to emerging development challenges, and or, whether the findings of this research is being communicated to and understood by practitioners and decision makers in a way that would support practice; and whether decision makers choose to use the research results provided to them.

Figure 6: Responses to ‘Current linkages between research and development practice and policy in Australia are sufficient’



Leading innovations for ending poverty

The pre- and post-conference surveys were designed to draw out any differences in opinions and perspectives that may have emerged as a result of exposure to new and different ideas at the conference.

Respondents were asked to describe what they thought would be the leading innovation for ending poverty. Strong themes emerging in the pre-conference survey related to specific approaches that might be used to alleviate poverty – themes such as education, gender-based and technology approaches, as well as cooperation and collaboration between countries, sectors, organisations and stakeholders. Specific responses include:

- Education and livelihood for everyone in all societies will end poverty.

- Enabling women and their collectives, to enhance their sense of agency and link them with mainstream institutions.
- Look at poverty with a gender lens.
- Information technologies for citizen engagement.
- New science and technology development making development solutions cheaper and more accessible.

Responses in the post-conference survey tended to focus more on the *how* of development – a major focus of the conference through its second theme. The most common responses in the post-conference survey related to improving cooperation and collaboration between countries, agencies and sectors; community empowerment and participatory development; and improvements in north–south relations, including an acknowledgement of the need to



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Development futures: Alternative pathways to end poverty

Papers and case studies include some of those presented at the international conference "Development Futures: Alternative pathways to end poverty" held under the auspices of the ACFID-Universities Linkages Network and hosted by the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney, November 21-22, 2013

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tackle the manner in which global inequities are handled, and bringing an end to the ‘donor-recipient dichotomy’ an area highlighted by another conference keynote Enrique Mendizabal.

Specific responses include:

- Innovation through collaboration!
- Partnerships – thinking about transformation as a way to bring about real change and thinking creatively about HOW we do things and why.
- Rethink empowerment approaches and support more grass-roots structural challenges that will have a lasting impact.

This resonates with the focus of responses to questions about how individuals and institutions would like to contribute to the ACFID University Network and suggestions for future events. The most common responses across these questions related to hosting seminars, forums and discussions that purposefully encouraged and supported collaboration across disciplines or on specific areas. Many responses indicated an interest in collaborative research and sharing of research ideas so to encourage better links between research and practice.

The survey also asked respondents to identify what they perceive to be the key obstacles to ending poverty. Common responses included donor conditionality, lack of community participation, ‘old paradigm’ thinking, developing country government issues, and bureaucratic and ineffective aid processes.

Specific responses describing obstacles included:

- ‘Business as usual’ government and bureaucracy thinking.
- Donor-driven agendas and not listening to people.
- Governments (donors and recipients) continue to patronise the poor by pretending that they know what poor people want or what is good for the poor.
- Funding cycles and project-based funding.
- Lack of transparency and true evaluation of all development funding.

Conclusions

The Development Futures conference sought to challenge entrenched perceptions about the future of development and pathways to ending poverty. Similarly, the conference sought to identify and offer a space for cross-sector collaborations to be identified as this is a key aim for the ACFID University Network. Keynote speakers were chosen so as to present a range of challenging views about the pathways, uncertainties and alternatives that exist in efforts to alleviate poverty.

This paper has outlined responses to a number of questions posed by a pre- and post-conference survey of delegates. Responses revealed a number of key inconsistencies underpinning perceptions and practice in development:

1. While many acknowledge significant uncertainties and unknowns in the future of poverty alleviation, many still believe that they can effectively plan a means to end poverty;
2. While many acknowledge the use of social policy and inclusive business models as key strategies for achieving development outcomes, few are actively engaged in delivering such strategies;
3. While the sector focusses on specific strategies and approaches such as education, gender-based approaches and the use of technology, there is an acknowledgment that collaborative, community-led empowerment approaches are likely to be the most effective means of ending poverty.

Responses indicate that the sector is prepared to reimagine futures and consider alternative pathways for achieving goals and visions. However, this paper has found that there is a strong need to review the level of alignment between vision, strategy and action, in order to ensure that today’s actions are leading towards a desired future.

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Notes

- ¹ In September 2013, the recently elected Coalition Government announced that they would be integrating the Government agency responsible for managing the overseas aid program – Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) – with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT).

The future of poverty measurement: Introducing the *Individual Deprivation Measure*

Joanne Crawford, *International Women's Development Agency*, Sharon Bessell
and Janet Hunt, *The Australian National University* and
Sarah Smith, *Swinburne University of Technology*

Why a new approach to poverty measurement?

Current measures of poverty do not adequately capture the nature of poverty as experienced daily by millions of people. Poverty is generally measured at the household level, in effect assuming that everyone in a household is equally poor (or not), with similar access to household resources and assets. Current approaches do not assess the situation of individuals, so cannot provide accurate sex-disaggregated data, making it impossible to reveal whether and if so, to what degree and in what sense global poverty is feminised. Measurement approaches often emphasise aspects of life that men and women have in common, rather than dimensions that are particularly important to women, or to men, obscuring the gendered experience of poverty. They generally determine people to be poor, or not poor, so cannot reveal the depth of poverty and create incentives to focus on those just below the relevant cut off, rather than on the 'poorest of the poor'. Approaches based on the International Poverty Line (IPL) also give highly inconsistent results (Reddy and Pogge 2010:42–85).

Sex-disaggregated data, in relation to dimensions and indicators that can reveal gender disparity among poor people, is a prerequisite for quantifying the relationship between gender and poverty, designing effective, well-targeted policies and programmes, and assessing their impact. It is deeply problematic that in 2013, we cannot say who is poor, in what ways and to what extent.

Over the last four years an international research collaboration has developed a new approach that overcomes these limitations, and establishes a new direction for poverty measurement.

About the research: What we did

Research was undertaken in Angola, Fiji, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique and the Philippines, over three phases. Our methodology was informed by recognition that existing measures are both insensitive to gender differences and reflect the values and priorities of experts rather than those of women and men experienced poverty (Bessell 2010). It was also underpinned by feminist principles in that we aimed to illuminate the ways in which the gendered division of labour, gendered power hierarchies and social values interact to shape women's and men's experiences of poverty. Our starting point was that any just and justifiable measure of poverty must be able to reveal the ways in which poverty impacts differently on women and men.¹ Project staff worked with local research teams in each country in the first two phases, prioritising contextual knowledge and experience.

Phase one involved qualitative research in three sites in each country, covering urban, rural and highly marginalised contexts.² The research design aimed for around 100 participants per site, 300 per country and 1,800 in total. Six participatory research methods were used with separate groups of women and men, further divided into three age groups, to help maximise the space for participants to comfortably contribute. Key informant interviews provided special insight into the nature of poverty within a particular research site.

Group discussions explored what constitutes poverty, how poverty is experienced by different individuals within a household, whether this varies by age and/or sex, and whether participants recognise different levels of poverty. The rich, detailed reports are an important resource in themselves, in addition to shaping subsequent phases of the research.

From this first phase, 25 candidate dimensions of poverty were identified following a workshop with academics, project staff and researchers from all six countries to review results and identify commonalities and differences.

Phase two saw research teams return to all sites to clarify participants' priorities among these 25 aspects of life and identify a manageable number of dimensions that could be appropriately justified. Participants ranked their top 15 priorities and identified any important dimensions they thought were missing from the list of twenty-five. Again, research groups were divided by sex and age.

Researchers also reviewed potential dimensions in light of insights from gender and development literature. Some dimensions were included because of their capacity to reveal gender disparity; some were inter-related and could be captured in a single dimension; others were assessed as less relevant or less supported in the data collected. Weight was given to whether indicators could be populated from existing data collection efforts, but the team determined not to be limited by lack of data, so that current limitations are not perpetuated. The research team also reviewed recent poverty measurement innovations and assessed what a new measure needed to do to improve on existing approaches.

Fifteen areas of life were identified for inclusion in a new gender-sensitive multi-dimensional measure of poverty, to be called the *Individual Deprivation Measure* (IDM). The IDM tracks an individual's status in dimensions of material and social importance, measuring sufficiency in both quantity and quality (Table 1).

Table 1: Individual Deprivation Measure

Dimension	Indicators	Source for questions
1. Food/Nutrition	Hunger in last four weeks	FANTA
2. Water	Water source, water quantity	WHO, UNICEF, new
3. Shelter	Durable housing, homelessness	DHS, new
4. Health Care/Health	Health status, health care access; for women pregnant now or within the last three years, substitute pre-natal care, birth attendance and actual/ intended place of birth	CWIQ, WHS
5. Education	Years of schooling completed, literacy and numeracy	IHSN, DHS, new
6. Energy/Cooking Fuel	Source of cooking fuel, any health impacts, access to electricity	DHS, new
7. Sanitation	Primary toilet, secondary toilet	UNICEF, WHO
8. Family Relationships	Control of decision making in household, supportive relationships	OPHI/WEAI, new
9. Clothing/Personal Care	Protection from elements, ability to present oneself in a way that is socially acceptable	New
10. Violence	Violence (including sexual and physical assault) experienced in the last 12 months, perceived risk of violence in the next 12 months	OPHI missing dimensions
11. Family Planning	Access to reliable, safe contraception, control over its use	DHS, new
12. Environment	Exposure to various environmental harms that can affect health, wellbeing, income and livelihood prospects	New
13. Voice	Ability to participate in public decision making in the community, ability to influence change at community level	WEAI/OPHI
14. Time-use	24 hour clock (labour burden, leisure time)	Various time-use surveys, WEAI
15. Work	Status of/respect in/for paid and unpaid work; safety/risk in relation to paid and unpaid work	OPHI

Trialling the Individual Deprivation Measure

Phase three involved a nationally representative trial of the measure in the Philippines. In each of 750 randomly-selected households, enumerators were asked to interview all household members 18 years and over, to enable analysis of intra-household differences. While inclusion of all adult household members was not possible in all cases, multiple household members were interviewed; 1,806 respondents completed the questionnaire (983 females and 823 males). Data was collected using a multi-topic survey that included household and individual modules, recognising that some information (for example, shelter), is better collected at household level.

An IDM was calculated for each participant based on their scores in each of the 15 dimensions. Answers to

survey questions were initially scored on a one-five scale (the lower the score the greater the deprivation, with five representing no deprivation and any score lower than five representing some deprivation). Within each dimension, weighting was used to give greater significance to more severe deprivations. Greater weight was also given to the dimensions ranked more highly by participants in phase two, as shown below. The maximum potential sum of the weighted scores was 150, which, when converted to a percentage, is the IDM score. In the case of four dimensions (freedom from violence, family planning, voice and respect in relation to paid and unpaid work), for a variety of reasons not all respondents received a score. For these respondents, their actual score was divided by their total possible score.

Figure 1: Weighting system

Within each dimension	Between dimensions
Improvements from more severe deprivations are morally more important than equal sized improvements from less severe deprivations Interval 1: 0 points Interval 2: 4 points (4) Interval 3: 3 points (7) Interval 4: 2 points (9) Interval 5: 1 point (10)	Deprivations in some dimensions are more important than deprivations in other dimensions Top 5 dimensions: Weighted x 1.5 Next 5 dimensions: Weighted x 1 Bottom 5 dimensions: Weighted x 0.5

Individual Deprivation Measure thresholds

We have established the following IDM thresholds, to reflect our commitment to develop a measure that can reveal the extent and depth of deprivation. This is important ethically, so resources can be targeted to those who are most deprived, and for development effectiveness, because what is required for someone to be no longer deprived depends on whether they are somewhat or deeply deprived, in relation to a few or many areas of life.

From 90–100, we categorise individuals as not deprived.

While these individuals do in some areas fall below a threshold deemed sufficient for a minimally decent life, these shortfalls are of moderate depth and few in number. It is very likely that a middle class person in a wealthy country would score in this range.

From 80–89.9 we categorise individuals as somewhat deprived. An individual in this category may suffer from several important deprivations, but reach the minimal thresholds in most other dimensions.

From 70–79.9, we categorise individuals as deprived.

These individuals fall below the minimum threshold in a range of deprivations and some of their shortfalls are significant. They might occasionally be hungry, have a house that is made of some rudimentary materials, share a toilet, lack some control over decision making in their household, or experience some other combination of significant shortfalls.

From 60–69.9, we categorise individuals as very deprived. These individuals are deprived in a larger number of dimensions or are severely deprived in the dimensions where they fall short. A person who is sometimes hungry, has low quality shelter, lacks running water, and is subject to violence may be typical of this range.

Below 60, we categorise individuals as extremely deprived. These women and men will be deprived in a large number of dimensions, and very deprived in a subset of those dimensions. A person who is regularly hungry, who lacks any sturdy materials for housing, uses no improved sanitation, cooks with dirty fuel, has little influence over the community, is subject to violence, and perhaps suffers several other deprivations may be typical of this category.

These thresholds need to be validated against the perceptions of individuals in poor communities and the scores that are calculated in a range of different contexts. It is our hope that this can occur in conjunction with future research using the IDM.

Two axes of achievement

The IDM tracks an individual's status in 15 dimensions of material and social importance. However, these do not capture financial status. Lack of money is undeniably part of poverty and was heavily emphasised by participants in

phase one. Money was excluded from the phase two if they had money, they could address many other deprivations, masking preferences among other substantive dimensions. However, given the importance of money for addressing deprivation, in itself and as expressed by participants, we recommend taking account of both financial deprivation and deprivation in specific dimensions of life.

We follow the recently debuted Mexican multi-dimensional poverty measure in tracking *financial deprivation* on one axis and *multidimensional deprivation* on another. This allows anti-poverty policy makers to track when multidimensional deprivation is related to financial deprivation, and when it is not. It also recognises that financial deprivation is an important component of poverty, independent of its relationship to multidimensional deprivation. We propose collecting information about financial circumstances using a simple assets index, given the time involved in collecting more detailed financial information.



In the graph above, person A is severely deprived in many dimensions and has a very bad financial situation. Person B is on the borderline between very poor financially and very deprived multidimensionally. Person C is on the borderline between very poor and poor financially, but in the multidimensionally poor category. Person D is not poor either financially or in the multiple dimensions of deprivation captured in the IDM.

Poverty and gender equity indices

Data collected for the IDM can also be used to calculate a composite gender equity measure that is relevant to the circumstances of poor women and men. The gap between men's and women's achievements in each of the 15 dimensions can be measured across a population, or investigated by subgroups, or within individual households.

Results and reflections

Phases one and two

The research generated in-depth qualitative data from a range of geographic, social, political, cultural and economic situations, and quantitative data confirming the relative priorities of women and men of different ages and backgrounds regarding potential dimensions of poverty. It confirmed that poor women and men consider poverty to be defined by a *wider range of deprivations* than captured in existing approaches, including aspects that go to social connections, vulnerability, voice, agency and governance, and the ways in which people *feel* deprived.

While there was no simplistic connection between gender, age and how participants thought poverty should be defined and measured, the research showed clearly that gender roles and responsibilities affect the *burdens* that women and men face when deprived. There were also significant differences between urban-rural contexts and age groups in how participants conceptualised poverty and in what they considered most important for moving out of poverty. For example, a lack of employment or income was often seen as a problem experienced more by men, whereas a lack of food was seen to affect women more, as

they were responsible for providing food and other household requirements. In Malawi, participants noted how gendered roles and responsibilities shaped the ability to *act* to address poverty: ‘men can walk long distances to do piece work and get food while women cannot do this as they must take care of children at home.’ In Mozambique, participants noted that girls and women without a partner and with limited mobility and employment opportunities often have to resort to prostitution to earn money to pay for help with heavy tasks such as building houses, or to trade sex for goods including food and drinks.

Although many participants in phase one considered the household an appropriate unit of analysis for assessing poverty (‘if one is poor, the whole family is poor’), they also readily identified differences in the situation of people within the household.

Phase three

The pilot of the IDM in the Philippines established the feasibility of assessing poverty at the individual level using a questionnaire that can be administered in around an hour, addressing a longstanding challenge with survey collection. Our survey found the following distribution of deprivation:

Table 2: Distribution of deprivation in the Philippines

IDM score	Males (no.)	Males (%)	Females (no.)	Females (%)	Full sample (no.)	Full sample (%)
>= 90 Not deprived	61	7.4	129	13.1	190	10.5
>= 80 < 90 Somewhat deprived	322	39.1	426	43.3	748	41.4
>= 70 < 80 Deprived	259	31.5	276	28.1	535	29.6
>= 60 < 70 Very deprived	130	15.8	120	12.2	250	13.8
>= 50 < 60 Extremely deprived	44	5.3	30	3.1	74	4.1
>= 40 < 50	7	0.9	1	0.1	8	0.4
< 40	0	0	1	0.1	1	0.1
Total	823	100	983	100	1806	100

The table below presents population-level results using the IDM compare with other estimates of poverty in the Philippines.

Table 3: Poverty and deprivation in the Philippines

IDM not deprived	10.5%	World Bank \$1.25 PPP	18.4%
IDM somewhat deprived	41.4%	World Bank \$2.00 PPP	41.5%
IDM deprived	29.6%	MPI	13.4%
IDM very deprived	13.8%	Philippine National (food) Poverty Line ³	7.2%
IDM extreme deprivation	4.6%	Philippine National (Food plus basic needs) poverty line	20.9%
IDM (total in three categories of deprivation)	48%		

Given the IDM was developed to address fundamental concerns with existing methods of measurement it is not surprising that we found some differences. Overall, the results of the IDM appear initially consistent with a plausible interpretation of the deprivation experienced in the Philippines. The proposed IDM thresholds also appear to provide a useful guide for anti-poverty work, identifying a small group who are the ‘poorest of the poor’ and a larger group who are extremely poor.

The IDM makes it possible to break down the overall score and review gender differences within the 15 dimensions, revealing how the *composition* of poverty varies

by gender, age or location, even if the overall *extent* of deprivation – the IDM score \hat{u} is the same. Table 4 presents dimension scores and the IDM scores disaggregated by sex and urban/rural. Consistent with the weighting system outlined earlier, each dimension is scored out of 10. Dimensions one to five are then weighted 1:1.5 (maximum possible score 15), dimensions six–10 are weighted 1:1 (maximum possible score of 10), and dimensions 11–15 are weighted 1:0.5 (maximum possible score of five). This indicates statistically significant differences by gender in deprivation scores in eight dimensions, providing valuable information that household measures obscure.

Table 4: Dimension scores and IDM score, disaggregated by urban/rural and by sex

Dimension	Sex	Urban average	Rural average	Average full sample
1. Food/Nutrition	M	14.25 (515)	14.26 (308)	14.25 (823)
	F	14.26 (654)	14.38 (329)	14.30 (983)
2. Water	M	12.64	12.93	12.75
	F	12.73	12.83	12.76
3. Shelter*	M	11.02	8.13	9.94
	F	11.52	8.60	10.54
4. Health care/health*	M	11.43	10.36	11.03
	F	12.50	11.36	12.12
5. Education	M	12.54	11.00	11.97
	F	12.86	11.68	12.46
6. Energy/cooking fuel	M	6.85	4.74	6.07
	F	7.01	4.85	6.28
7. Sanitation*	M	9.20	8.42	8.91
	F	9.28	8.85	9.13
8. Family relationships*	M	8.22	8.00	8.14
	F	8.41	8.07	8.30
9. Clothing/personal care*	M	8.52	8.08	8.36
	F	8.70	8.09	8.49
10. Freedom from violence*	M	7.08 (475)	7.34 (272)	7.18 (747)
	F	7.63 (610)	7.95 (286)	7.74 (896)
11. Family planning	M	1.58 (324)	1.53 (200)	1.56 (524)
	F	1.97 (329)	2.06 (178)	2.00 (507)
12. Environment	M	2.76	3.57	3.06
	F	2.95	3.66	3.18
13. Voice	M	3.09 (515)	3.22 (303)	3.14 (818)
	F	3.04 (648)	3.18 (323)	3.09 (971)
14. Time-use*	M	4.33	4.40	4.35
	F	3.94	3.95	3.95
15. Respect at/ for paid* and unpaid work	M	4.57 (492)	4.53 (292)	4.56 (462)
	F	4.63 (628)	4.60 (316)	
IDM*		79.38	74.17	77.43
		81.67	76.6	79.97

Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of respondents when less than the full sample. The numbers for the full sample are given in the hunger dimension.

* = Dimensions where the differences by sex in the full sample are statistically significant.

In order to compare the performance of the IDM and the MPI, we measured, as close as possible, the MPI for each household in our sample. We found that the IDM revealed a good deal of deprivation masked by the MPI. In particular, it revealed very significant intra-household differences when we compared each respondent in a household to all other respondents in that household. In 40 percent of scores the difference in IDM between household members was greater than five percentage points; in 10 percent it was greater than 10 percentage points, confirming the importance of assessing poverty at an individual level, rather than treating the household as an aggregate unit.

Perhaps the most striking and unexpected finding was that women appear slightly better off than men in our sample. The average female IDM score (79.97) was slightly *higher* than the average male IDM score (77.43), and this difference was statistically significant. Female scores were higher in shelter, health, education, toilet, decision making and personal support, clothing and personal care, freedom from violence, family planning, respect in paid and unpaid work. Male scores were higher in leisure time. There are several possible explanations. The Philippines scores highly on other gender equity measures, so the findings may be accurate. On the other hand, the results may point to the need for revisions to sampling method, indicators or weighting.⁴ Or both explanations may be true. The IDM also treats deprivations equally between men and women, but a particular deprivation may be experientially worse for a woman than a man (or vice versa). Additionally, many important gender inequities (for example, regarding representation in national parliament) occur above the minimum deprivation threshold that is tracked by the IDM. Finally, the fact that men are worse off in some dimensions is a separate question from whether this constitutes gender injustice.

Conclusion and future directions

The *Individual Deprivation Measure's* strength is that it improves markedly on current approaches to poverty measurement, in a number of ways. For the first time, we have a measure that is grounded in how poor women and men define poverty. It includes dimensions that are gender sensitive and measures at the individual level so can reveal differences between women and men (including within households), and among other groups, where these exist. And it tells us about the nature and extent of deprivation. Data is captured through a low-cost, easy to administer survey that can be completed in roughly one hour in very diverse circumstances by enumerators who do not require any special training or expertise. It can be used at a range of scales from national to local, by national statistics offices or by development organisations, for a variety of policy and programme purposes.

Further use of the IDM in contexts where gender disparity is pronounced will help to clarify the performance of the measure and survey tool in revealing gender differences in deprivation where they exist. The

measure will also benefit from further dialogue with others involved in poverty measurement.⁵ There is potential for refining the indicators in a number of dimensions. However, given the improvement on approaches already in use, we believe the benefits of the IDM can be best realised by a developmental approach that combines use, as one of the suite of tools to assess human development, with close reflection, analysis and refinement as necessary. A study of gender and poverty using the IDM is planned for Fiji in 2014–15 and will provide valuable comparative data and the opportunity to test some alternative indicators in a number of dimensions.

The IDM has the potential to transform poverty measurement and efforts to address deprivation and gender disparity, making visible who is poor and in what ways, and enabling more targeted, relevant and effective anti-poverty programmes. As the world considers ways to assess human development progress post-2015, the IDM has much to offer.

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Notes

- ¹ See Alison Jaggar and Scott Wisor 2013, 'Feminist Methodology in Practice: Lessons From a Research Program', in A Jaggar (ed.) *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, Paradigm.
- ² We recognise that many communities will not easily fit into one of these three categories. All communities have many distinguishing features and some will fall on a continuum between urban and rural. All marginalised communities will also be shaped by their urban-rural status, and identifying a marginalised community can be difficult in countries where most communities face systematic deprivation.
- ³ www.nscb.gov.ph/poverty/defaultnew.asp.
- ⁴ The final research report provides further detail.
- ⁵ The project website www.genderpovertymeasure.org includes information about researchers, partner organisations, the research process, reports, data and links to publications.

Doing action research: Perspectives on rationale, rhetoric, reality and results

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Increasingly academics and practitioners working in development contexts use ‘participatory’ research methods and action research designs to ensure that the results of their research are relevant to the contexts and communities with whom they work. Participatory approaches are also seen as fostering inclusion – enabling the perspectives of, for example, women and persons with disability – to inform research processes and findings. However, critical reflection about what it takes to *do* participatory action research in complex development environments is limited. This paper draws upon the early experience of establishing a three year action research project aiming to improve access to sexual and reproductive health for women with disability in the Philippines, and to reflect on the following questions:

- How is it possible to bring academics from different countries, civil society actors, government representatives, funding agencies and community members together to implement a participatory action research project;
- at what cost in terms of time, money and lost opportunities to use these resources in other ways; and
- with what benefit when compared to traditional research approaches?

Introduction

Action research and participatory approaches are not new to researchers and practitioners working in development contexts. There is a growing literature suggesting that action research – that is, a dynamic approach to collaborative knowledge production based on cycles of reflection, planning, action and analysis – is an appropriate methodology which aims to inform practitioners working in complex, quickly changing environments associated with aid and development work (Burns et al. 2012).

Traditional approaches to research where research participants are not involved in the design of the research process have been critiqued for producing findings that are theoretically interesting, but unusable for taking action or making change in the ‘real world’ of participants. Research findings that are disconnected from the practical concerns of participants, policy makers and practitioners have often been dismissed as irrelevant, inappropriate and impractical. Ensuring that research activities are grounded in the priorities and day-to-day challenges of those best placed to use the knowledge generated, is seen as a key reason for using a participatory approach. Researchers also commit to participatory approaches for data collection and analysis in order to build local research capacity and increase ‘buy in’ by local communities.

Given the steady growth in the number of published studies using these approaches, there has been surprisingly little documentation of what is actually involved in establishing and conducting a participatory action research project in the development sector. In this paper we aim to share our perspectives on costs and benefits associated with working in this way.

What is action research and why would you do it?

Action research is generally described as having its origins in the work of social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, in the 1940s. Lewin, a Jewish scholar who had fled Nazi Germany, was deeply committed to resolution of social conflicts and the position of minorities or disadvantaged groups. He developed an approach to research in organisational psychology based on the position that ‘one cannot understand an organisation without trying to change it’ (Schein 1996:64).

Lewin described his action-oriented approach to research as being based on ‘a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact finding about the result of the action’ (Lewin 1946–1948:206). While Lewin has been criticised for neglecting complexity and the non-linear nature of social change, the notion of a spiral of reflection, action, and reflection about the outcomes of the action, has been a central pillar of participatory action research endeavours in development for more than 50 years. Contemporary action researchers argue that Lewin’s ‘spiral’ is a useful metaphor, but one that should not of itself be conflated with the practice of action research (McTaggart 1996). Rather, the practice of action research fundamentally involves collective reflection and action to change the organisation of power, relations and practice (ibid). It is underpinned by the principal of working with, rather than on or for, people, in efforts to transform complex situations (Chevalier and Buckles 2013). Many participatory action researchers working in development contexts are informed by Paulo Freire’s view of research as a form of collective action that incorporates a broader societal analysis, and has considerable emancipatory potential (Herr and Anderson 2005).

The rationale for choosing an action research design – that such an approach can generate new understanding by bringing together actors with diverse knowledge about a situation; can increase local research capacity; increase relevance to participants and policy makers; increase the likelihood that research findings are grounded in the local context; and is able to generate information useful for

supporting social change (Reason and Bradbury 2006) – resonates strongly with the goals of those working in development.

Rhetoric associated with action research can be rather lofty and is described as a ‘participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human processes ... in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities’ (Reason and Bradbury 2006:1). Such aspirations are aligned with the values of many development practitioners.

The rationale for an action research approach is appealing for practitioners and researchers committed to supporting concrete improvements in people’s lives through their work. The rhetoric associated with participatory action research is inspiring and compelling, though participatory *practice* has been subject to considerable critique. It has been suggested that the idealistic language of ‘participation’ has been co-opted by privileged groups, including development agencies, to maintain existing power relations (Cooke and Kothari 2001). This implies there is a need to better examine how action research is experienced in practice by researchers and partner organisations.

Reality – the W-DARE project as a case study

To examine what action research actually involves in practice, we draw on our emergent and ongoing experience with the W-DARE project that we are currently implementing together in the Philippines. W-DARE (Women with Disability taking Action on Reproductive and sexual health) is a three year action research project funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Australian Development Research Award Scheme, with co-funding from the UNFPA Philippines Country Office. The aim of the project is to increase access to sexual and reproductive health services (including protection from violence) for women with disability.

Women with disability experience poor health outcomes across the life cycle, with greater unmet health needs and reduced access to health information, screening, prevention and care services (MacLachlan and Swartz 2009). In particular, women with disability have minimal access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) programs (WHO 2009). They have often been excluded from development activities promoting access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services, because having a disability is falsely associated with being asexual and because there is limited data on the prevalence and experience of women with disability to inform disability inclusive SRH activities.

International conventions acknowledge the right of women with disability to have sexual relationships, get married, have a family, and to access comprehensive SRH information and services (United Nations 2006). However a range of factors undermine the SRH of women with

disability. Limited education and economic participation of women with disability can reduce their ability to access basic health care, including SRH services (Mall and Swartz 2012). SRH services are often not accessible, welcoming or appropriate for women with disability (WHO 2009). Global studies also show that women with disability are two to three times more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than women without disability (World Bank 2004), directly contributing to poor SRH outcomes and further undermining access to services. Women with disability face challenges to their right to SRH information, stigma and discrimination from service providers, and barriers associated with local attitudes towards disability, women and SRH (Shakespeare et al.1996).

While there is evidence that women with disability do not have equal access to SRH services and information, it is far less clear what to *do* about this (and how). For the researchers and practitioners involved in the design of W-DARE, it was important that the project contributed to increased understanding of local, contextual barriers to SRH for women with disability in the Philippines. We also believed it was critical to address the ‘what to do’ question, if the project was going to make a difference to the health of women with disability. An action research approach seemed a very good fit.

W-DARE has been designed to have three phases. In the first, qualitative and quantitative data describing barriers and access to, and experiences of, SRH services for women with disability – as identified by women with disability, their partners and families, and by service providers – will be collected. Findings from this phase will be used to inform the second phase of the project, where local interventions will be developed to address identified barriers to SRH services. During this second phase, practitioners and researchers will put local interventions into action, reflecting upon this experience as they go. In the third phase, interventions will be evaluated to assess what has and hasn’t made a difference to women’s access to SRH services and information, and this experience will inform the development of guidelines on gender-sensitive disability inclusion in SRH in the Philippines.

An action research approach emphasises learning by doing, the importance of drawing on local knowledge, and ensuring participation and contribution of those actors most likely to instigate social change in response to the problem under study (in this case women with disability themselves, SRH service providers and local government). Therefore women with disability and service providers have and will be actively involved at all stages of the project.

W-DARE is being conducted by researchers from the University of Melbourne (Australia) and from De La Salle University (Philippines), in collaboration with feminist scholars from the Center for Women’s Studies (University of the Philippines), service providers and health advocates from Likhaan Center for Women’s Health (an NGO providing SRH services to poor women in locations across

the Philippines), disability activists from two leading Philippines Disabled Persons' Organisations (WOWLEAP and PARE), and the gender team at the UNFPA Philippines Country Office.

Working together in partnership is in keeping with the principles of participatory action research. However the reality of bringing together people with varying expectations, expertise, priorities and communication styles, to achieve collective action, is far from straightforward. In addition, women with disability in the Philippines come to the project with experiences of research that could be described as extractive and, in some cases, possibly exploitative. An understandable degree of wariness characterised initial conversations and negotiations. Given the limited exploration of the practice of action research in the development literature (in contrast with the community-based participatory research literature from the US in particular – see, for example, Israel et al. 2010, Minkler 2005), it seems worthwhile to document our experiences.

How partners have found the 'reality' of action research

As we come towards the end of the data collection associated with the first phase (and year) of the project, we have the opportunity to reflect on the action research experience thus far. Not surprisingly, there is a diversity of views among team members, who come to the project with different experiences, expectations, social power, and priorities.

Perceived benefits and opportunities

Interviews with, and conversations among, the research team and other stakeholders, suggest a range of benefits associated with having adopted an action research approach. Team members representing local Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) and service providers, highlight the importance of the project's commitment to 'action' to improve the SRH of women with disability, and to learning about whether and why that action had a tangible effect on women's lives. Team members note that research using a traditional approach, 'just' collecting and analysing data, might have little impact on the day to day work of practitioners trying to contribute to concrete changes in the health of women with disability. They described frustrating experiences with research projects that had focussed on traditional academic outputs (such as publications and conference presentations) at the expense of trying to contribute to change in the problems under study:

In the past we have gone through many research [projects], and after the research we are hanging (DPO member).

Team members were clear it was important not to 'use' research informants in order to meet researcher objectives, such as producing academic outputs, unless there was also an equal commitment to achieving participants' objectives:

It's not also fair that you just do a research and then just put it there and not doing any action ... [But with this project] we'll have time to develop interventions coming from the point of view of the women with disability' (Service provider).

The ethical imperative to reconcile this potential clash of objectives and desired outcomes has also been identified by community-based participatory researchers working with marginalised groups in high income countries (Green and Mercer 2001, Minkler 2005).

Team members perceived that using an action research design would enable W-DARE to meet a range of different objectives at varying stages throughout the project. This was described as one of the key opportunities associated with using an action research approach.

We have tried to ensure a participatory and inclusive approach in establishing W-DARE. Women with disability and local service providers have been involved in partnership with academic researchers in establishing the project design, clarifying research questions, and in collecting both qualitative (interview and focus group) and quantitative (household survey) data. Women with disability and local service providers will also be involved in data analysis and dissemination, and in the design, implementation and evaluation of interventions and guidelines in future years of the project. The inclusion of women with disability, in particular, is seen as building research capacity. However academic partners note their capacity has also developed through the project, with highly experienced researchers describing how much they have learned from women with disability. They describe how their prejudices were revealed and their perspectives changed because of participation in the project:

I have been involved in the women's movement as a researcher for many years, and I am ashamed to say that I never really thought about women with disability (Academic partner).

It has been a steep learning curve for me, I never worked alongside women with disability before. I mean I was really surprised, they can really do it (Academic partner).

Inclusion of women with disability as researchers is also seen as meeting their right to participate in research that directly affects them, and as providing benefits in terms of the quality and credibility of the data collected.

For me, I think it is very important to include women with disability as researchers. Because they themselves have experienced the difficulties and the challenges (DPO member).

Team members see the research design as enabling dialogue between academics, women with disability, service providers and other stakeholders. Rather than the project answering questions relevant only to the academic researchers (informed by the narrow understanding of development contexts and issues described in 'the literature'), the co-construction of *new* knowledge is facilitated by dialogue:

It is a two way exchange, meaning that the so called experts or those who have some technical expertise are able to, sort of, what we call ground truth their knowledge with the actual realities on the ground. So in that process there is not just exchange of knowledge but an understanding (Project manager).

Development of shared understanding through dialogue is particularly important for this research project in the context of the Philippines. Research in relation to disability can often be sensitive, given the history of discrimination, exploitation and tokenism in the sector. In the Philippines, research in relation to SRH is also extremely sensitive, with reproductive health a polarising and highly charged issue in the wake of divisive public debates associated with the recent passing of the 'RH Bill' (the *Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act* of 2012, which guarantees universal access to modern methods of contraception and family planning, sex education, post-abortion care, and maternal care). Partners involved in implementation of W-DARE have, at times, strongly opposed reproductive rights, which could have been paralysing for the project. However, the dialogue enabled by the participatory and inclusive approach has resulted in emergent understanding and mutually respectful relationships:

You know what I enjoy is, like in the recent workshop that we just had, people became friends. In that forum we don't talk about differences, we talk about how we can work together. To me that is an accomplishment already (Project manager).

Costs and challenges

While team members perceive a range of benefits associated with W-DARE's action research design, we should be clear that there are also costs and challenges associated with working this way. Some of the challenges we have experienced were related to problematic experiences a number of partners had with past research projects. Previous problems, including lack of acknowledgement, inadequate and slow payment for services rendered, and difficulties ensuring that local priorities were 'on the table', resulted in cautious initial negotiations and discussions between academic researchers and partner organisations. We were fortunate to be able to recruit a project manager with a long history in the disability sector, and experience in SRH. As establishing trust is a major challenge for action researchers, our project manager's existing networks and the trusting relationships he has established with partner agencies over a long period of time have been invaluable to the project.

The academic researchers involved in W-DARE wanted to work in formal partnership with DPOs and service provider agencies to ensure there was recognition of, and remuneration for, their role throughout the project. Large, inflexible bureaucracies (such as universities) contracting small, local organisations with varying capacities and degrees of financial reserve pose a range of difficulties. This is also true when some team members are

employed as salaried staff by partner organisations, while others are voluntary members of DPOs.

Action research designs pose particular difficulties for team members responsible for budgeting and work planning. Initial plans for years two and three are necessarily indicative, as specific activities with corresponding personnel inputs need to be designed based on the analyses of data collected during year one. This can create anxiety for management, finance and administrative staff, as budget forecasting cannot be done with accuracy very far in advance. Trying to ensure availability of key personnel, for example experienced trainers, for inputs at some indeterminate time' can be difficult, and requires considerable diplomatic skills!

Inclusive research, where members of affected communities are involved in project design, data collection and analysis, should not be regarded as an inexpensive option. There have been real, material costs in facilitating participation of women with disability in all W-DARE activities – training venues and participant transport and accommodation, for example, must be accessible. This precludes many less expensive facilities without ramps, lifts, accessible toilets, adequate signage and so on. Sign language interpreters (who usually work in pairs, to minimise fatigue) are also costly but essential. Expenses associated with personal care attendants accompanying participants must also be considered. Costs associated with facilitating participation of marginalised groups, who have limited time, energy and resources, are described by those working in low-income settings (Diaz and Simmons 1999).

A particular challenge that academic researchers face when working with participatory action research approaches is managing the inevitable 'dents' to one's ego and sense of self as an 'expert'. Academics and health professionals have access to enormous symbolic power and their knowledge is recognised as 'expertise' (Foucault 1973, Frank 2005). Academics' professional status depends on them being seen as having the most knowledge on topics in which they are 'expert' (Frank 2005). Therefore, it can be confronting to realise that lay persons, including persons with disability, know far more about their own lives, needs and experiences, and have different, often better, ideas about how to proceed with various research activities:

When you open up the process and the engagement of the stakeholders, then you also open yourself up for either criticism or for feedback that you wouldn't normally expect. You know there are risks to really opening up! But the good thing is when you keep an open mind then you realise that maybe you need to do things differently, you need to revisit your own assumptions (Project manager).

Working collaboratively to institute an action research project with research partners from different disciplinary, cultural and social backgrounds, who also have varying levels of research experience, takes considerably longer than establishing a standard research project. Action research approaches involve negotiations with partners to

come to consensus on work plans; building a shared language and understanding in relation to key concepts; training team members in relation to aspects of particular research or data collection methods; and organising meetings for partners located in different locations and working to different schedules. These processes add to costs of the project in terms of time, energy and money.

Conclusion

In this paper we have presented our early reflections on the process and experience of establishing a three year participatory action research project in a development context. Challenges have included: the need to build trust with a broad range of agencies in a context of polarised debate around reproductive health; the difficulties of building genuine partnerships between unequally sized and resourced organisations; and the time and material costs associated with supporting a process that is genuinely disability-inclusive. Benefits at this early stage include: the opportunity to identify and reconcile competing objectives and desired outcomes for practitioners and academics; development of new capacities for research partners (including practitioners, women with disability, and academic researchers); and the co-construction of new knowledge about the SRH of women with disability that draws on partners' diverse experience and perspectives, and that can inform concrete action towards improving women's access to services and information. In sharing our reflections we hope to contribute to debates about the emancipatory potential of participatory action research, and to efforts towards advancing research methodologies relevant to development futures.

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Notes

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The end of the 'golden age' of international NGOs?

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Introduction

International non-government organisations (INGOs) are facing significant challenges which go to the very heart of their identities as effective agents for social change and justice. But, these challenges also offer opportunities.

The challenges and opportunities arise from unprecedented changes in the development environment as well as changes in INGOs' key relationships – with partner organisations such as NGOs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), communities and governments in developing countries; with funding agencies, especially official development agencies; and with supporters in their home countries.

Some have argued that INGOs have had a 'golden age' (Agg 2006) that may be coming to an end. By a 'golden age' we mean that INGOs were seen to be making a distinctive contribution to the eradication of poverty and injustice. They were trusted and considered credible actors by their supporters in rich countries, effective intermediaries by official development agencies, and many had privileged access to international forums (Clark 1991). INGOs were also seen as effective partners by many, if not all, civil society groups in the developing world. They operated in a climate where their broad concerns enjoyed high level political support (Salamon and Anheir 1996). This trust and credibility with supporters and official agencies resulted in the income of many INGOs growing to unprecedented levels (Hudson Institute 2012, Huggett 2012).

Many of these 'strengths' have also been seen by some as key weaknesses of INGOs, that is:

- The trust they built was based on simplistic or distorted communication of their contribution and the development process;
- their access to international forums and high level political support crowded out other voices and was self-serving; and
- their 'partnership' with civil society elsewhere was a sham (Rauh 2010, Wallace and Chapman 2009).

Indeed, a longstanding critique of INGOs views them as:

- Too close to their governments (Quarmby 2005, Edwards and Hulme 1997);
- anti-politics machines (Fisher 1997, Ferguson 1990);
- complicit in being part of an aid 'industry' that has performed poorly and is unwilling to change; and
- the vanguards of neo-liberal models of development (Duffield 2007, Middleton 2006).

Changing development environment

There are five changes in the development environment which we view as critical for INGOs.

1. *Massive reductions in income poverty in countries like China, India and Vietnam, but also the persistence of chronic absolute poverty, albeit at reduced levels*

These gains should be celebrated and understood. Central to this understanding is that development assistance, be it official or NGO, has had little direct role to play in this achievement. However, evidence of the role of aid in contributing to improvements in some areas of education and health provision is thought to be more convincing (Kenny and Dykstra 2013), and is likely to have made a contribution to creating the environment instrumental in achieving reductions in income poverty.

2. *The growth of multi-dimensional inequalities which have become the underbelly of global prosperity*

The vast majority of the world's poor – some 74 percent of the 'bottom 1.4 billion' living on less than \$US1.25 a day now live in middle income countries like India, China, Indonesia and Nigeria (Sumner 2012). More than 400 million poor live in India and more than 60 million in Indonesia. About half of the world's poor live in India and China.

- Income inequality has risen in many more countries than it has fallen. In the Asia Pacific region, most countries have higher income inequality now than they did a few decades ago. Inequality is particularly acute in middle income countries, where most of the world's poor live. For example, inequality in earnings has doubled in India over the past two decades, making it the worst performer on this count of all emerging economies. In 2010, the top 10 percent of wage earners in India made 12 times more than the bottom 10 percent, up from a ratio of six in the 1990s (OECD 2011).
- Gender inequality is the most persistent type of inequality. The face of poverty is still that of a woman or a girl. The statistics may be familiar but are worth restating – women and girls make up 70 percent of people living in poverty, women comprise two thirds of the world's one billion illiterate adults, women do 60 percent of the world's work, produce half the world's food but earn only ten percent of the world's income, and own one percent of the world's property. Women hold only 19 percent of parliamentary seats worldwide and only 16 percent of ministerial posts (United Nations 2010).

3. *The increasing number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies with a global humanitarian system that is under-resourced and under real strain*

The impacts of climate change, with increasing volatility of weather patterns plus the failures of global and regional governance, are resulting in more humanitarian emergencies. Climate change is causing more droughts and hurricanes while the crisis in global and regional governance is best illustrated by the current humanitarian crisis in Syria.

- Post-September 11, the 'new' security agenda has complicated the humanitarian picture, posing new challenges for INGOs (Fowler 2008).
- The global humanitarian system is under resourced, poorly led and coordinated with an increasing number of new players, many of whom are outside formal coordination mechanisms (Kent et al. 2013).

4. *The multifaceted impacts of climate change*

Climate change doesn't just increase chances of humanitarian emergencies, it also has serious consequences for livelihoods, disease patterns, peace and security (Harvey 2013).

5. *Official Development Assistance (ODA) is increasingly in a state of flux*

Most INGOs receive funding from their government through their ODAs. Australian based INGOs over the last three years have seen a funding increase from \$69.2 million to an estimated \$106.4 million through the AusAID-NGO Cooperation Program (DFAT 2013). There are, however, a number of trends which will affect both the institutional health of INGOs as well as their development practice. Globally, ODA is declining. In 2012, members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD provided \$US125.6 billion in net ODA, representing 0.29 percent of their combined gross national income, a four percent drop in real terms compared to 2011 (OECD 2013).

Since 2010, ODA has fallen by six percent in real terms. Given budgetary pressures in many countries, the lack of pro-aid political leadership and declining public aid campaigning, it is likely that these cuts in spending will continue into the foreseeable future. The lack of pro-aid political leadership is also illustrated by decisions to merge stand-alone government aid agencies in New Zealand (Spratt 2012) and Canada (Mackrael 2013) into their foreign affairs and trade departments, a direction followed recently by the new Australian government.

The bigger challenge is not so much declining ODA but rather changes in the nature of ODA support for INGOs' work. It has long been argued that INGOs have become 'too close (to government) for comfort' (Edwards and Hulme 1997). In recent years this 'discomfort' has increased with a number of disturbing trends, particularly:

- The focus on 'value for money' and 'results based management' (Eyben 2013) which is arguably narrowing the nature of development programming and disincentivising attempts to promote transformative development, often leading to perverse incentives and outcomes.
- Decisions by a number of official aid agencies to focus their programs on fewer countries, either on geographical criteria, on development characteristics (for example, to shift most programming to fragile states) or on geo-political strategic criteria.
- A trend by ODA agencies to prioritise funding of larger development projects, often on 'efficiency' grounds and in the process reducing support for smaller, often more innovative, projects.

Intermediary role under challenge

More generally the traditional intermediary role of INGOs is increasingly being challenged. The essence of the traditional working model of an INGO has usually involved garnering financial support in rich countries (be it from public fundraising or ODA grants) that is used to provide funds to partner organisations (usually local NGOs or Community Based Organisations, but sometimes local governments) in developing countries. In some cases, an INGO may directly implement development projects, rather than working with, or through, a local organisation. INGOs' intermediary roles have traditionally included project and program design, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, specialist and technical assistance. An INGO might also facilitate links or networks amongst various partner organisations as part of a development program. Many INGOs integrate community education, advocacy and campaigning into their domestic environment, giving more 'added value' or 'leverage' to their interventions.

This go-between role is under challenge from supporters in rich countries who are looking for more direct engagement, from civil society in the south, which in many cases has developed greater strength and capacity than northern INGOs, and from official aid donors who are 'leapfrogging' INGOs and directly relating to southern civil society.

Indicative of the changing demands of rich country supporters is the growth and development of Kiva (2013) and Give Directly (2013). Founded in late 2005, Kiva facilitates direct linkages between donors and developing country communities through the provision of microcredit loans. In less than eight years Kiva has distributed over \$US450million in loans from nearly one million lenders to over one million borrowers. Give Directly similarly explains their modus operandi:

- You donate through our webpage;
- we locate poor households in Kenya and Uganda;
- we transfer your donation electronically to a recipient's cell phone; and
- the recipient uses the transfer to pursue his or her own goals (Give Direct Inc. 2013).

At least one evaluation suggests that there is some merit in this approach (Kestenbaum 2013).

Illustrating the changing approach taken by official donors is that the NGOs receiving the greatest funds from (the former) AusAID was BRAC in Bangladesh – without any involvement by an INGO.

Summarising, we believe that there are a number of changes in the environments within which INGOs work, and in their relationships with their stakeholders that produce disruptions to the current status quo. Our conclusions are similar to broader work that has been done on the aid sector (Kharas and Rogerson 2012), but we are less convinced that INGOs are likely to be 'winners' in this shake up.

Remaining strategically relevant

What are some possible ways forward which will increase the likelihood that INGOs remain strategically relevant, and which respond to some of the challenges we have laid out? Critically, we believe that the status quo is not an option, yet we stress the proposals listed below are advanced knowing that many are not new ideas. We do not claim to have the answers but offer these proposals for consideration in a spirit of debate, discovery and discussion for INGO activists and supporters interested in transformational development (Shutt et al. 2012).

INGOs should clarify their identities and present themselves – and indeed act – as vehicles for social change and social justice, and should no longer present themselves as aid organisations. Given the growth and development of southern civil society– we believe it is time for INGOs to finally transcend the language of ‘aid’ (with all its patronising baggage).

INGOs should focus their development programming on challenging unequal power relations and the political, economic and social processes that drive these. This leads to an unequivocal commitment to gender justice and to supporting active citizenship. One of the most significant changes in the development environment is growing inequality, and the most persistent inequality is gender injustice. Numerous evaluations have concluded that the most effective and long lasting development interventions are those with a focus on tackling gender inequality (DFID 2010) and the promotion of active citizenship and collective action (Weldon and Htun 2013).

More INGOs should ask themselves if they should cease direct service delivery programming, especially in middle income countries. We highlighted the massive reductions in income poverty and the lack of a direct role of development assistance in many of these gains as well as the changing geography of poverty. We believe that given these developments, the role of many INGOs needs to change, which should lead to INGOs focussing more on supporting communities and their organisations to hold governments accountable for the fulfilment of their basic human rights. An example of this is JOSH in Delhi, India with their work mobilising communities to realise the constitutional (and human) right to basic education (JOSH4India 2013).

INGOs should also focus on building connections between their supporters in their home countries and communities and their organisations in developing countries. Historically INGOs have tended to foster a transactional approach (Darnton and Kirk 2011) – ‘give us your money and we’ll do good on your behalf’ amongst their support communities in countries like the UK and Australia. As we argued earlier, this increasingly no longer meets the needs of current or potential supporters. There is a need to move to a more transformational approach.

INGOs should aim to ‘bring it all home’ – recognising the porous boundaries of global social justice concerns. This should lead to a particular emphasis on the challenges of inequality and inequity and to being more prepared to enter domestic political debates. The world’s economy is increasingly intertwined, many of the most pressing issues facing humanity, such as climate change and population

movement, are intrinsically global in their nature. Rich countries like Australia have a particular responsibility to contribute to the productive response to these crises. INGOs that identify as social change organisations need to be willing to challenge the powerful in their own space. Ironically, recent political changes in Australia might create new opportunities for this. The death of the Climate Commission (Metcalf 2013) and its rebirth as the independent Climate Council (2013), suggests there may be a potentially cashed up and now disenfranchised group willing to support progressive causes.

INGOs should have clear guidelines for their relationship with ODA agencies, including being clear about their response to the conditions that come with funding.

Approaches narrowly defined by results or value for money can have perverse incentives and perverse outcomes. Yet, they are increasingly the basis for ODA funding of INGOs and other civil society organisations. INGOs need to devote resources to clarify their approach towards these developments and be clear about whether there are lines they are not willing to cross.

INGOs need to transform their organisational structures and ways of working to emphasise nimbleness and flexibility. Volatility and uncertainty (Ramalingham 2013) are inevitable as the development environment constantly changes. Effective responses to this volatility demand appropriate organisational structures and ways of working, which have implications for organisational planning, and how organisations monitor the changing environment. This need for nimbleness and enhanced flexibility has critical implications for how performance is measured.

Begin a more coherent and focussed discussion on whether institutional growth is necessary for INGOs to be effective vehicles for social justice. Most INGOs give prominence in their organisational performance assessment as to how well they have grown their income. But how important is this? Does a larger organisation necessarily mean a more effective and strategically relevant organisation? Are there limits to growth? And does a focus on growth lead to a prioritisation of institutional over developmental imperatives? Given the likely pressures on INGOs’ income that we have discussed, is it best for INGOs to shape their future as smaller, more nimble and responsive organisations?

There is little doubt that international NGOs will continue to exist. That for us is not the question. Rather, it is whether they can remain strategically relevant, rising to the challenges we have outlined and making the changes necessary to evolve.

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Notes

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Harnessing participatory media technology for community development: Choices and implications for practitioners

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Introduction

Communication plays an important role in social change processes in a society. Since communication is the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people, effective communication in development must include both top down and bottom up approaches in message exchange. That is, it should not only communicate what powerful elites want to say, but also facilitate a better understanding of what the people want in order to improve their own lives. While mass media is still widely used in disseminating messages about development, what is less understood is how effective participatory communication practices can be integrated in community development projects to give people a greater voice. How can participatory practices be initiated and sustained and what are some of the tools that can aid effective participation? This article discusses viable ways in which participatory media may be included to enable communities to gain ownership of projects by voicing their own ideas and concerns. It also considers implications for development practitioners who choose to employ participatory communication technologies to improve, facilitate, and optimise local community engagement.

Communication for development

Development communication models have evolved over past decades informed by both scholarly research and community-based practice. Early development communication efforts were based mostly on the one-way model which used mass media to transmit information about state-led development interventions. Messages were created by government experts to inform audiences and persuade them to change, and failed to reflect the views of the people. Current scholarship favours the inclusion of two-way model which focusses on discussion, dialogue and capacity building of stakeholders, and incorporates their everyday lived experiences. This phenomenological approach to communication gives significant attention to issues of interaction, social relations and networks (Galindo Cáceres 2006). Communication scholars seek to understand how an individual's or group's engagement in the communication process increases their ability to critically understand oneself, the community and the wider society by drawing on Paulo Freire's (1970) key ideas of dialogue and conscientisation which are important elements in achieving transformation. The process of communication becomes a place for self-representation, self-expression and self-empowerment and considers the influence of social norms, values, culture and context (Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte 2006). This places greater focus on people's needs as well as the communication process as encapsulated in the following definition of communication for development (C4D) by Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998:63).

Communication for development is the use of communication processes, techniques and media to help people toward a full awareness of their situation and their options for change, to resolve conflicts, to work towards consensus, to help people plan actions for change and sustainable development, to help people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to improve their condition and that of society, and to improve the effectiveness of institutions.

In 2006 the World Congress on Communication for Development's *Rome Consensus* proclaimed C4D as 'a major pillar for development and change'. It identified 'listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change' as key characteristics of C4D (WCCD 2006).

C4D practitioners are able to use diverse forms of communication to facilitate participation. These may include interpersonal modes such as community dialogue; various forms of media such as community radio, participatory video, digital storytelling; entertainment education including television and radio dramas, animation, theatre, and music; information and communication technology (ICT) including mobile phones and the Internet (Lennie and Tacchi 2013).

Participatory media projects provide people in the community with necessary training and support so that they can produce their own messages. The idea for the project cannot be imposed from the outside, but must come from within. Community members exchange views on topics such as literacy, health, safety, agricultural productivity, land ownership, gender and religion depending on the project. The process of production encourages people to think creatively about a problem, reach consensus and take collective action through a democratic process which may challenge the hierarchical structure at local and national levels. The final content embeds local knowledge, encourages cultural expression and facilitates community discussion and debate. In the following section we discuss two forms of participatory media, video and digital photography, which have been employed in community development work.

Video

Participatory video was first used as an empowerment tool for community development in the Fogo Island project in Newfoundland in the 1960s. The Fogo process, as it became known, gave birth to the participatory approach by emphasising the importance of a community's input during the process of production. Participatory video has since been integrated in projects in many parts of the world to

uncover corruption, to give voice to non-literate communities, to facilitate dialogue between groups in conflict situations and to bring alternative perspectives on a range of community concerns.

There is a high degree of collaboration between facilitators and participants during the production process. For this reason facilitators must have gained participatory media training themselves so that they are able to constructively assist communities during group workshops and production activities. They also require good communication skills in order to maintain an ongoing dialogue with various groups in the community to interpret diverse needs and concerns about the issues, and to ensure equity and resolve conflicts.

There are five phases in the production process – camera training, story development session, location shoots, viewing sessions and editing. As a participatory project, communities have control of content development and the use of technology during pre-production, production and post-production phases. Participants are encouraged to experience every facet of the production process with progressive transfer of knowledge and control from the facilitator to the group. The essence of the narrative and the end product must reflect the decision-making process of the people themselves.

Although there is no one way of doing participatory media training here we discuss one way in which participatory video training may be planned. The first day of training is designed as a media literacy session to increase the participants' knowledge of media especially as a tool for development. This is followed by a basic lesson in visual techniques, such as shot sizes and composition. Participants are invited to offer their ideas for stories. Each response is written down on a whiteboard or butcher's paper. The group discusses which of these ideas they deem most important and who will be responsible for producing the different segments. Participatory video does not adhere to a formal script, instead a storyboard or shot lists may be developed as part of the story development session.

Participants gain access to cameras on the first day of training. Participants work in teams to shoot a story. A viewing session is planned so that the participants can enjoy each other's efforts and gain greater self-confidence by watching themselves on screen and receiving feedback on their work from other participants. The central focus of all activity is to enable participants to become confident in the use of video and audio equipment and editing software so that they are able to train other community members once the participatory video facilitator has left.

Photography

Participatory photography utilises photography as a form of consultation. From the images they have taken, members of local communities can show their perspectives, develop narratives, and engage in collaborative discussions identifying issues affecting them.

After learning basic photography skills, participants are encouraged to take pictures around a theme or to simply capture images of places, objects, people and

situations that have a particular meaning in their lives. These can be related to the present but can also be symbolic of something that happened in the past. Here, the camera becomes a tool to capture the world the way participants see it.

The most important part of these activities, however, lies in the caption writing. This involves a group story-telling process when all participants look back at their photos and explain the significance attached to them. This allows people to share experiences and also to generate knowledge and understanding about the problems they are facing while participating in a debate about finding possible solutions.

Implications for practitioners

Development practitioners must be aware of a number of considerations when choosing to employ communications technologies for community engagement. These relate to the current status of C4D in the international aid landscape, as well as the specifics of these types of projects. In the following section we offer some reflections on issues which practitioners face while undertaking participatory media productions.

What is (and what is not) 'participatory'

Goodsmith and Acosta (2011) provide some clear indications on how to recognise participatory and non-participatory interventions. In projects where the degree of participation is particularly high, the most important decisions related to needs, goals and outcomes are made by the community involved in that activity. There is an ongoing dialogue between practitioners and local actors, and the process enables different groups to be represented and to exchange views. In contrast, projects that adopt a low degree of participation fall in what is called 'the diffusion model', where communication is a one-way flow and it is primarily aimed at behaviour change. Here, community engagement and dialogue do not seem to feature on the list of goals (ibid.).

In participatory photography it is important to remember that the stories behind the photos are more important than the quality of the photos themselves. Yet, those who conduct these projects have at times the tendency to select what will appeal to a wider audience on the basis of the power of an image, despite the fact that the particular image may not represent a priority issue for the participants (Wang and Redwood-Jones 2001).

With participatory video, a number of assumptions made by those planning the project affect its element of participation. The belief that participants are powerless and that the video workshops will enable them to have a voice is one that heavily shapes the design. Practitioners approach communities with preconceived notions that they are disempowered or lack education which may impact on people accepting or refusing to take part. Outsiders are often surprised to find how well people are able to articulate issues and concerns in their community, and how insightful and creative they are in finding sustainable solutions. People do not need lessons on what

to say. Instead they need support on how best to make themselves heard.

Ethics

It is important for practitioners to take into account the ethical considerations when engaging with participatory media activities using video and photography.

It is crucial to acknowledge how the participation in projects of these types may present potential dangers for subjects. The use of images may lead to the identification of victims of persecution or discrimination by another group or even by the government. Thus, prior to initiating these activities, an accurate risk assessment must be carried out, where the dangers arising both from the workshops and from the use of the images themselves are identified (Daw 2011). Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001) also emphasise how, in participatory photography projects, the safety of participants should come first and foremost to the value of images. This is why the facilitation should begin with a group discussion on the power of the camera's power and user's responsibilities, rather than with the photography training.

Another issue is that of consent when taking photos of strangers in public spaces. This is linked to the important concepts of ownership, state control, and personal freedom – in relation to both the photographer, who chooses what to capture in his/her image, and to those who choose whether or not to be photographed. Members of the public may be asked to provide consent on the spot without knowing who the photographer is and in what context the image will be used. A written consent form should be used in each project with everyone who appears before the camera. The form should provide information about the project and contact details of the facilitator, and give people the option to withdraw at any stage of their participation (Kaplan et al. 2011).

Again, while the same considerations apply to participatory video, an extra element that comes into play in these projects is related to the ethics of editing. Lunch and Lunch (2006) remind us of how the final editing process done by facilitators or donors can easily wipe away the power of a strong participatory video process, with the final message becoming something that is completely unintended by the video maker. An ongoing cycle that involves screening back and group discussion on what should be included in and excluded from the final product is an important part of the participatory decision-making process. Drawing a paper storyboard is another useful method to get more people involved and to reach a consensus on the type of editing required, even without the availability of a computer. Finally, it is crucial to receive approval for the final version of the video from the community that worked on it and for the means of distribution outside of the community.

The widespread use and impact of social media is another issue that must be carefully considered when engaging with participatory media projects today. If donors (or facilitators) have an interest in making videos or photographs from the projects available online, participants must be consulted and made aware of all the potential

repercussions this may involve, based on the context in which the participatory media activities took place.

Funding

Practitioners may find their attempts to obtain funds for the implementation of participatory media activities challenging for the reasons discussed below.

Since one of the main goals of C4D interventions is that of contributing to individual and community empowerment, the indicators required to evaluate this type of process – usually referred to as 'process indicators' – are mostly qualitative and of a more flexible nature. Additionally, there appears to be a lack of a clear agreement among practitioners over what participation and empowerment really are, and whether there is something that connects them (Cooper et al. 2006). Due to these factors, participatory communication stands in contrast to mechanisms that focus on fast and tangible results, which are frequently among the pillars of donor requirements.

Another factor that overshadows the potential of C4D is that its planning is still being conducted within corporate communication or external relations units, which treat communication mainly as a means to an end rather than an essential component of the development process. As a result, the role of communication is confined to one of message delivery and information dissemination, rather than a channel for people to participate (Lennie and Tacchi 2013). This has clear implications for the allocation of fundings on C4D activities, as communication goals are not regarded as a priority in the international aid system. Communication is adopted mostly as a tool to support health, education, environment or economic programs, and technical staff with expertise in these areas are those who make decisions over its use (Waisbord 2008).

Finally, the costs incurred in relation to resources and time may often be disproportionate in comparison with the benefits achieved through these projects, since the effects of participatory communication methods are often characterised by a limited reach. As a result, meeting technical objectives is prioritised over the implementation of participatory communication interventions that facilitate dialogue and promote equality (Waisbord 2008).

On balance, the importance of incorporating communication activities into the planning and budgeting of development projects design is yet to be fully recognised. Consequently, addressing communication concerns that arise during project implementation is often challenging due to inadequate funding.

Access to technology

With the reduced cost of technology and its improved user-friendliness, the application of video as a means of communication is within reach of a wider population. Projects designed around video involve creativity and flexible activities that can adapt to the different social and cultural environments (Gamucio-Dagron 2001). Completed videos are easily distributed to international audiences or to networks within minutes of completion through easy file sharing options via the Internet and without the need of

negotiating with a gatekeeper. In choosing the equipment smaller and lighter cameras are recommended due to ease of use and storage. Consumer model cameras provide exceptional picture quality and include hybrid storage (internal flash memory and SD card), simple editing capacity and easy playback with some cameras incorporating a built-in projector to allow communities who don't have a television set to review the footage. Good quality sound is achieved with an external microphone or by changing settings in the in-built microphone. It is important that a sturdy weather-proof case is provided to store all equipment and accessories. An equipment checklist is also essential to record what was taken by whom and what was returned.

The community as a whole should decide where the equipment would be stored and who would have access to it. A list of projects can be developed and allocated to different groups so that the equipment is accessed by all groups, e.g. women and youth. Involving the community in a discussion of their roles and responsibilities instills in them a sense of ownership over the activities, which will contribute in keeping the equipment safe and in good working conditions (Gamucio-Dagron 2001).

Similar considerations can be applied to the use of photography. It offers people the opportunity to capture images of their own life in a structured, meaning-making environment. More recently, the arrival of inexpensive digital compact cameras has taken participatory photography practice a step forward enabling participants to instantly look at the photos they have taken and more easily engage in a dialogue.

Concluding remarks

Communication for Development opens up new possibilities and creates new approaches for the future of international development, where more effective forms of consultation and collaboration with local communities are beginning to take shape. Combining technology with processes of participatory communication will assist communities to express their views and concerns with the help of the visual element, while simultaneously providing practitioners with insights into people's lives that only these types of media productions are able to bring to the surface.

In this short paper we have presented the main concepts around the introduction of participatory media and where these types of productions are located within the sphere of development. We have also shed light on the implications that must be considered when working with participatory communication technologies such as video and photography, and the issues that one might encounter.

As Gamucio-Dagron (2001) points out, when we are talking about communication technologies in development we are not referring to development practitioners having to equip themselves with laptops and connectivity devices to improve their performance. We are instead considering the challenges of bringing communities as equal partners in the development process through the use of participatory communication technologies.

When participatory media projects are successful they bring profound benefits to a community. These include better decision-making processes, self-expression of marginalised groups and improved interaction between members which engenders greater cohesion and trust within communities. As a capacity-building exercise the media production workshop increases participants' skills in media literacy and the use of technology along with public speaking, critical thinking and creativity. It also builds capacity for self-reliance and self-organisation. These elements are the essential building blocks of that elusive concept known as empowerment.

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Theatre in Conversations: An iterative and reflective approach to development in rural Papua New Guinea

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Introduction

Theatre in Conversations is a community development approach that draws on two established development practices: contemporary Theatre for Development applications and the Community Conversations methodology. Dominant development discourse prefers tangible deliverable outputs and ensures that practitioners collect and collate relevant data that shows this. The demand for programme outcomes privilege quantifiable goals confining the improvement of programmes and overlooking issues that emerges from implementation. Some leading proponents in development practice like Clarke and Oswald (2010) have argued against this. While tangible, measurable outcomes indicate the delivery of projects, attaining transformation and social change within some programmes is often constrained as deliverables fail to capture the complexity of the place and social influences that mediate the peoples' lives. This is particularly the case in Papua New Guinea (PNG) given the interlocking social relationships that shape the lives of individuals.

Theatre in Conversations has addressed these constraints by forming collaborative partnerships with the community and government organisations, particularly the rural district administration. In between developing reflective and iterative processes of enquiry, practitioners gain deeper understanding of their community. The process works with whole communities couched in value-based principles, fostering and nurturing relationships that create social transformation through collective learning. Conversations are stimulated by episodes and most often move away from the main theme of discussion. Artist-facilitators allow this to happen as an approach to engage with relevant community concerns.

Theatre in Conversations engaged socially committed and experienced artist-facilitators from the Rai Coast district to develop the method, which they later performed in three different villages using the issue of violence towards women to test its applicability.

Theatre in Conversations: The origins

Volunteer Service Overseas Awareness Community Theatre project: In 2005, I was hired by Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO) Tokaut AIDS project as the theatre trainer for its Awareness Community Theatre initiative (ACT) based in the Rai Coast district, Madang Province. My job was to engage and train 12 young men and women to use drama as a way to educate the population of Rai Coast about HIV. Tokaut AIDS attempted to look beyond the conventional models of HIV prevention and to take a site-specific contextual approach to addressing behavioural change. It drew from the rich oral traditions, indigenous performances and traditional communication modes in the

Rai Coast to develop performances based on key issues within the community. Through drama, participants were able to understand the wider meaning and implications of social issues. The iterative and reflective processes framing their workshops deepened their understanding and facilitated processes to document and evaluate how villages saw the epidemic. Additionally, the ACT's consistently layered approach to building and improving comprehension heightened communities understanding about social issues relating to and perpetuating HIV, earning them reputable status.

The ACT theatre troupe was regarded as knowledgeable about the epidemic and as a collective repository of travelling knowledge. They demystified the darkness and confusion that surrounded the epidemic.

At the core of this development programme were three intersecting relationships that worked collaboratively, learning and re-learning their methods of community work:

1. The 10 young men and women and two community health worker who apart from their contribution and cultural advice in the development of theatre performances, also became cultural brokers, community liaisons and conduits to gauge social constraints in the Rai Coast.
2. VSO International who provided the financial support, astute capacity-building programmes and support to the troupes' development.
3. VSO theatre team who contributed theatre training that merged Western forms of theatre and drama practice with the indigenous Rai Coast performance paradigm.

This fusion of complementarity was shown to work well providing HIV education to local communities (Levy 2008; King and Lupiwa 2009). An external evaluation showed that the ACT had 'proven to be a strong, efficient introduction, providing two rural communities with information relating to HIV, so now it should contemplate community engagement tools such as Community Conversations for deeper community changes and consensus' (Levy 2008:16). The ACT had made visible links between certain behaviours and the increased likelihood of contracting HIV, but had no comprehensive strategy to assist the communities to create the change themselves. Levy reports one interviewee echoing the same sentiment: '*do not tell us how to do, help us find out for ourselves how we will function better as a community*' (loc.cit:16).

The VSO Tokaut AIDS awareness campaigns had succeeded in informing communities but they needed strategies to mitigate the impact of HIV. The Community Conversations programme was aimed at not just educate people about HIV but taking them through a journey of understanding, identifying the power in relationships that perpetuate injustice and finding solutions for social issues

that increased the likelihood of contracting HIV. Its approach was never didactic, but dialogical, opting to embrace and work with the messiness of people's lives. In making sense of the messiness, a collective understanding and approach to support communities in their journey to change emerged. The strength of communities lay within itself, but to uncover it and harness its potential, communities needed to understand themselves better. Tokaut AIDS educated people, and maintained a consistent presence with repeated visits to the community, but Community Conversations sat down with communities and worked with the local communities to identify their strengths and develop local strategies. Community Conversations premised its work by focussing on collective action. In 2008, as part of the team that began implementing the Community Conversations programme my primary role was to coordinate and implement the initiative in the Western Province of PNG and subsequently other provinces.

Community Conversations in PNG: Although Community Conversations has only recently been introduced into PNG, it has been used in over 40 different countries in the world, most of it coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme, in partnership with local NGOs. Community Conversations was developed in Papua New Guinea in 2006 by the PNG Sustainable Development programme (PNGSDP) led by Elizabeth Reid, as a different way of responding to the HIV epidemic. Reid envisioned that the programme would:

... assist in the development of complementary and newly emerging ways of responding to the epidemic, ways based on a recognition of beneficial community values and practices, approaches which assist families and communities to survive its depredations, ways of drawing new players into the response, and approaches that ensure that those infected and affected are cared for and supported by their families, communities, employers, pastors and the larger society (Reid 2006:9).

PNGSDP's Community Conversations worked through area coordinators from the different provinces to implement the initiative. The sparsely separated nature of the provinces and the increasing number of communities that wanted to conduct Community Conversations work needed a responsive management that could comprehensively mentor and monitor the Community Conversations teams. To manage this, a core team was established consisting of officers of the PNGSD HIV and Development programme guided and mentored by Reid, who worked consistently with the area coordinators to implement the initiative.

By the end of 2008, PNGSDP was supporting Community Conversations work in six provinces with six area coordinators managing the teams. In some cases area coordinators were overseeing more than two teams. The area coordinators were members of the communities who had achieved levels of competencies to lead and monitor the group (Figure 1).

Like VSO's Awareness Community Theatre programme, understanding the processes of social change was

an important consideration for the participants. It enabled and guided the iterative processes of capacity building.

Figure 1: Community Conversations teams in PNG

Province	Teams	Communities	Schools	Implementing partners
Simbu	3	7	Yes	United Nauro Gor.
Jiwaka/W HP	1	2	Yes	Shalom Centre, Banz
NCD	2	4	No	Moresby South Electorate, Sirus Naraq Foundation
Central	3	4	No	Sirus Naraq Foundation
Western	3	4	No	Catholic Diocese Sirus Naraq Foundation
Gulf	4	6	Yes	Catholic HIV Coordinator

This enabled reflexivity and flexibility needed to capture emerging changes in the implementation of the programmes. A combination of documenting, monitoring and evaluation processes and ongoing mentoring in the field and during the workshops contributed to the progress of Community Conversations in PNG.

Theatre in Conversations: An emerging methodology

Theatre in Conversations methodology uses issues that stem from community concerns and develops them into episodes (dramatic narratives). These episodes are performed to local communities. The content of the narratives are used to facilitate discussions with local communities. Violence towards women was not only a recurring issue in the Rai Coast but also an intensely scrutinised and debated topic throughout the country. It became the issue used to test the Theatre in Conversations. The project developed six discrete episodes that addressed violence towards women and children and its impact. Unlike conventional dramatic narratives, the episodes were not performed as a linear story. Each episode had a specific intention and addressed areas often overlooked by the instrumental approaches to violence against women and children. It intended to bring out Lepani's (2005) concerns regarding the appropriation of gender as a blanket term to represent women and a failure to highlight the diverse and the extensive violation and violence in their lives. Theatre in Conversations voiced the voiceless, making visible the effect and affect of violence on the women and as experienced by their children. One of the episodes also triggered conversations that challenged the dominant view that violence against women was acceptable and culture legitimised its use.

Theatre in Conversations: Distinguishing characteristics

There are three things that distinguish the Theatre in Conversations' methodology. Firstly, it engages socially committed and experienced artist-facilitators from within the community. Secondly, it uses particular issues of concern in the community. A sequence of specific theatre episodes based on these issues is designed. Thirdly, each theatre episode stimulates a conversation in which community members talk about the issues.

It was clear from the onset that, for Theatre in Conversations to work, it needed socially committed and experienced artist-facilitators from within the community. It was vitally important to work with a group of experienced theatre practitioners familiar with community theatre principles and also with Community Conversations methodology. Also, importantly, they had to be locals, from the Rai Coast district. I knew that VSO's Tokaut AIDs theatre troupe were available and the husband and wife community health worker team who worked with them. I trained the members of the community theatre group, young community members, and the two health workers in the Community Conversations methodology. This training assisted participants to understand the problems as emerging from multiple and complex relationships that required heightened capabilities in reflexive and collective critical analysis. From this training, 10 participants who demonstrated potential were selected to collaborate with me to test the Theatre in Conversations methodology.

During workshop sessions a sense of the issues affecting the community in the Rai Coast District emerged spontaneously. Violence towards women, and unabated alcohol and gambling featured prominently as growing concerns. We then designed three Theatre in Conversations episodes based on these themes and in November 2012, worked with the 10 selected participants to further develop the theatre episodes based on these issues. In the process of developing the episode, artist-facilitators corroborated findings, changing the content where they found it irrelevant. The artist-facilitators became a repository of indigenous and contextual knowledge, verifying and validating information. In addition to introducing artist-facilitators to the conventions and forms of drama, theatre for development and Community Conversations conventions, the episodes were also designed to improve and expand their knowledge of social issues.

Theatre in Conversations in action

Each theatre episode stimulates a conversation in which community members talk about the issues. Knowledge gained and made visible through the function of Theatre in Conversation elicits an affective response that evokes self-reflections and triggers reflective moments in both men and women. The episodes show the antagonist's complicit behavior that culminates in a defining moment. At this point the antagonist contemplates moments of loss if the behavior is left unaddressed. These moments of loss are a

microcosm of events in the community, and resonate with the community. Exploring moments of loss in the episodes creates instances of reflection, which is then executed as a convention to begin the conversations.

In all three villages where we performed Theatre in Conversations, many discussions were triggered by the episodes. The episode addressing the impact of violence on children generated a variety of conversations ranging from young primary school children absconding from school to have sex with their peers in the bushes, to the drop in attendance in the schools and then to issues of parental responsibility and the benefits of educating a child. During the episode that addressed the impact of violence towards women, one of the trajectories of the conversations allowed men to openly condemn the extra-marital affairs other men were engaged in. They stated they were repulsed by the brazen way some men severed ties with their wives, disregarding the consequences. Outraged, some men asked an emphatic 'why'? Women too wanted to understand why they were being discarded and unvalued and why they incurred so much violence even when they performed to marital and cultural expectations. But other men in the community claimed the right to beat their wives because they had already paid bride price for her.

Theatre in Conversations: Spectacle or transformation?

Lepani (2005) draws our attention to a village community setting in PNG, where similar sentiments are echoed and abuse or violence is seen as a spectacle; accepted and normalised. McPherson (2008) concurs but goes further questioning the utility of drama on account of a drama she witnessed in West New Britain which reinforced cultural biases pertaining to women rather than challenging them. In the performance ... '[m]en claim sexual prerogative on the one hand, while on the other, blaming their sexual transgressions on the woman's seduction or love magic' (loc.cit:229) inadvertently implicating women in the spread of HIV. Applied theatre practitioners have also noted similar arguments. Chinyowa (2009) questions the efficacy of community theatre conventions that pursue the process of transformation and have been 'confronted by ambiguities in terms of agency, power and representation of its participants' (op.cit:11). This hinders transformation rather than supporting it. The realities of place and space in a community challenge the endeavor for change. The spectacle that concerns Lepani and the efficacy of community theatre interventions shared by McPherson and Chinyowa have constrained community theatre application. Questions such as is Theatre in Conversations reinforcing spectacle, or is it reinforcing cultural biases, weigh heavily on the design of the approach as it strives to create an alternative practice that will avert such precedent. There is also the question of how Theatre in Conversations contributes to social transformation.

Theatre in Conversations: Building capacities

Theatre in Conversations adopts a capacity building approach to recognise conflicting views through training, mentoring, iterative processes and reflective practice. These four components guide and improve the capacity and practice of artist-facilitators within the workshop space and when performing in the local communities. Iterative and reflective practice in both working spaces captures emergent themes that further inform the practice and the practitioners. This process assists artist-facilitators to identify and recognise the conversations that use cultural arguments to legitimise violence, for example. Artist-facilitators contest these beliefs in a way that is less confrontational and more useful in changing the ideas of men, particularly about violence to women. For this argument, Selepe a recently married young 25-year-old male artist-facilitator, used his own story to elucidate the repercussions of perpetuating this argument:

Beating your wife deprives you and your family creating unintended discord, leaving you marooned without assistance to support the children and other tasks. This has implications for you and for your family.

Conclusion

If social transformation is viewed as changes that contribute to progressive development then Theatre in Conversations has achieved two tangible markers. First, Selepe was able to challenge another older male community member who was quite forceful in asserting that he had every right to hit his wife because he had paid bride price for her already. For a young male to challenge and speak against his elders is considered disrespectful. Nonetheless Selepe did it. For him to challenge the man in an open forum, in front of women and other men is also regarded as a seminal transformative moment. Selepe was aware of the Melanesian concept of public shame, however he proceeded to challenge the man openly because he knew the consequences of the man's erroneous belief.

Another moment of transformation occurred when I realised that during the conversations, community members – men in particular – were openly speaking up against other men who engaged in illicit affairs while their wives stayed at home and looked after their children. The safety and neutrality of the open and safe space declared prior to the community visit was part of the reason that allowed the fluidity of conversations to flow. For a moment men shared their collective frustrations against other men folk, but I also sensed that they had been waiting for an opportune time to divulge their frustrations openly. They were reminiscent of a time when things were less complicated and the whole community put divergent behaviors such as infidelity and wife beating to shame. They lamented about a time when men engaged in such illicit behavior were discrete about it for fear of retaliation from

the communities and spirits. They weren't as audacious about it as some did now. These men weren't condoning the affairs, rather reflecting of a time when men in particular, had a moral conscious. However, like domestic violence, infidelity also become normalised over the years.

Through the dedicated approach of capacity building built from an in-depth understanding of processes of social change, artist-facilitators developed a deeper understanding of the social issues, engaged with a whole community and like the episode regarding the impact of violence on children, went where the conversations took them. Where the complexities of the issues needed more attention they were noted for later Theatre in Conversations. Additionally, and most importantly, creating the power of the safe space to bring forth stories, particularly about men from men.

Theatre in Conversations is another way to address issues of great importance. Its strength lies in genuinely working with people who are socially and culturally experienced community theatre and development practitioners, apt to carry out change. Theatre in Conversations demonstrates the possibilities of change if collective partnership and collective will to change is understood within the larger context of social well-being. It contributes to change by drawing from community assets – local people, local knowledge, local ways of communicating, indigenous knowing – to create a collective consciousness and a want to have an improved way of life.

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Incompatible philosophies or complementary roles? Civil society and business engagement in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector

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Introduction

Partnership with the private sector is emerging as a new pathway to address poverty. This is the result of recognition that external support through aid is small relative to other sources of finance and the scale of development challenge at hand. This concept is well recognised and was raised in the Australian Government's Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness, noting the need to harness the power of business and innovation (see Callan 2012). Other organisations have recently emerged which hold this as their core focus, for example Business for Millennium Development. In addition, evolving notions of social enterprise and entrepreneurship are blurring the boundaries between private sector and civil society, and opening up new possibilities for cooperation and partnership as exemplified by the water, sanitation and hygiene sector (WASH).

Over the past decade, poor functionality of water and sanitation services has called into question the effectiveness and sustainability of past and current approaches. In response, civil society organisations (CSOs) are exploring new approaches in water, sanitation and hygiene including engaging with small scale private and social enterprise (hereafter referred to collectively as 'enterprise') organisations to strengthen supply chains and build capacity for professionalised service provision. Engaging with and assisting in establishment of businesses reflects a shift in approach for CSOs, many of whom have historically been cautious of business interests in the development sphere, viewing for-profit models as potentially at odds with core civil society priorities of meeting basic needs and realising human rights for all.

Researchers at the Institute for Sustainable Futures are investigating this shift, working in partnership with four CSOs (Plan, WaterAid, SNV Development Organisation and East Meets West Foundation) actively seeking to engage with private and social enterprise to deliver sustainable and equitable water and sanitation services in Indonesia, Vietnam and Timor-Leste. Drawing on a systematic literature review and primary research in Indonesia, this paper explores these emerging partnership models, reflecting on if and how social and business objectives can align to achieve equitable service delivery, and the implications for development approaches for the future that involve business engagement.

Methods

Two methods were used to inform this paper.

First, we undertook a systematic review of literature, following the methodology of others in the international development sector (Hagen-Zanker et al. 2012; Hagen-Zanker and Mallett 2013; Gasteen 2010; DFID 2013). These methodologies acknowledge the difference to traditional systematic reviews, including a more flexible, sensitive and adaptable approach, the use of the 'snowball approach', inclusion of grey literature; while also maintaining a transparent approach with the use of a research protocol, inclusion and exclusion criteria and robust assessment of the evidence. The systematic review focused on papers published in the period 2008-2013 examining small scale enterprise involvement in water and sanitation services in developing country contexts. Of 4211 papers identified from first-round searching, 164 relevant documents were mapped against WASH categories and degrees of research rigour. From this, 82 documents were deemed highly relevant to the topic and were analysed in more detail.

This review examined five areas: types of enterprises providing WASH services; the strength of the evidence (relating to enterprise engagement); the success factors affecting enterprises; outcomes for the poor; and the engagement of CSOs to support such enterprises. This paper reports primarily on the first and the last of these areas – others are reported elsewhere (see Gero et al. 2013).

Second, we undertook field research in Java, Indonesia over two weeks in September 2013, which aimed to understand the role businesses were playing in the sector, the incentives that support or undermine their role, and how and why CSOs choose to engage to support enterprises. This included semi-structured interviews with 29 stakeholders representing private and social enterprises, national and international CSOs, donor organisations, and different levels of government from various relevant sectors to private sector development in the WASH sector. A political economy framework was used to frame the interview questions and analyse the data collected.

Types of private and social enterprises: What roles do enterprises play?

WASH services are supported by many different types of enterprises ranging from informal private sector providers to 'one-stop-shops' selling sanitation products, to user associations providing supporting roles to entrepreneurs (see Table 1). The breadth and diversity of types of organisations and their roles highlights the significant opportunities available to support and expand such roles.

Table 1: Private and social enterprise business models for WASH

<p>Formal private operators working under licence: Includes water treatment plant operators and truck companies delivering water and collecting waste. Formal operators have also been described as providers of water and sanitation services.</p> <p>(Sima et al. 2013; Lockwood and Smits 2011)</p>
<p>Franchises and network models: These models aim to encourage existing or new entrepreneurs to sell sanitation products from existing shops.</p> <p>(Cole 2013)</p>
<p>Informal private sector providers: In the water sector: water kiosk operators, water cart vendors, street vendors selling bottled water, small water bag vendors; direct water vendors selling water from taps, wells or rivers, 'middle-man' water distributors selling water to homes; pushcart water deliverers and small piped network providers. In the sanitation sector: vacuum truck owners, pump operators and masons, ranging from skilled masons, to simple masons to labourers.</p> <p>(Sima et al. 2013; Mahe and Wild 2010; Bereziat 2009)</p>
<p>Importers, Retailers, and Wholesalers: Building and construction materials stores sold sanitation related items such as cement, ceramic pans, PVC tubing and tiles. Wholesalers sold on to retailers and the public with examples from Cambodia where latrine components were a minor part of the range of products.</p> <p>(Salter 2008)</p>
<p>'One stop shop': Also called 'Rural Sanitation Marts', this type of sanitation business is discussed by several authors as a means to overcome fragmented supply chains. 'Sani-centres' are a similar concept whereby sanitation related marketing and products are made available through a local entrepreneur at a retail shop.</p>
<p>Prefabricated concrete producers: Prefabricated concrete producers sell concrete rings for well, water tanks, latrines and slabs. An example in the literature highlights that 40 per cent of rural sales and 65 per cent in urban areas were latrine related.</p> <p>(Salter 2008)</p>
<p>Micro-entrepreneurs: This group reportedly respond to demand and local opportunity. Services include some already listed under informal private sector providers. Some micro-entrepreneurs are family managed and financed, with business growth drawing on family for employees.</p> <p>(Mahe and Wild 2010; Kleemeier 2010)</p>
<p>NGOs and CBOs: There is some evidence of NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs) undertaking roles of service provision and being actors in supply chains in the water sector (see Section below on CSO engagement with enterprise). CBOs are also becoming more formalised in their provision of water supply services, with the need to be 'bankable' (ie, gain access for formal credit through banks). Literature also provides a comparison of CBO and private operator models, noting the weaknesses and risks of each.</p> <p>(Tiberghien 2013)</p>
<p>User associations: User associations sometimes participate in private sector-type operations, for example in Senegal, user associations hold operating leases and engage entrepreneurs to operate services, much like a management contract. Water user associations in Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Paraguay are participants in the private operator model.</p> <p>(Kleemeier 2010)</p>
<p>Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), with private sector operators to maintain and manage larger systems under contract: Most examples of PPPs come from Africa and consist of rural communities, small scale operators and other private firms being awarded contracts to work with utilities and government departments in the delivery of water supply services.</p> <p>(Annis and Razafinjato 2011)</p>
<p>Large companies and international / multi-national corporations: Examples from Burkina Faso Gabon, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Paraguay and India highlight that large companies are active in WASH service provision in developing countries.</p>

Note: full reference details can be found in Gero et al. (2013).

CSO engagement with enterprise: What does the literature say?

Evidence about engagement between enterprise and CSOs in academic and grey literature was limited, likely because it is a new phenomenon. However a breadth of roles and examples were available and are described here. Most engagement was found to consist of CSOs offering capacity building support to businesses or to informal operators. For example, capacity building came in the form of training for businesses, through financial and technical assistance (Kleemeier 2010; Mahe and Wild 2010) and through provision of materials and tools (Singh 2012).

Top down, supply side assistance was offered in the water sector through technical support in designing contracting arrangements (Mahe and Wild 2010), while the Water and Sanitation Management Organisation (WASMO) programme in India provides an example of a

CSO engaging with government to ensure sustainability of services.

Many CSOs are turning to sanitation marketing as an approach to engage with enterprises. However, many CSOs were found to have limited skills and experience in engaging with business. Approaches to CSO engagement in sanitation marketing can occur through technical support as governments lead implementation, or CSOs lead implementation themselves, with close support from government and community (Pedi and Jenkins n.d).

A final example of a role CSOs play in regard to enterprises is that of active engagement in the supply chain. Examples from Africa include NGOs providing maintenance and spare parts and producing and distributing chlorine products (Hystra 2011). An example from India highlights the blurring of private enterprise with CSOs through a 'social sector organisation' in water treatment (Kleemeier 2010).

Outcomes for the poor

If CSOs are to partner with enterprise, one of their expected key concerns could be how enterprise can act as a vehicle to reach the poor rather than those who are better off. Findings from Indonesia describe current evidence on if and how enterprises are reaching the poor in their contributions to the WASH sector. Overall there was not strong evidence that the poor are being reached, which calls into question the alignment between CSO pursuits compared with the role of enterprise.

In both water and sanitation literature, serving the poor was not raised as a specific priority for businesses. To ensure business viability through maintaining profits, sanitation businesses preferred to service non-poor customers (Bereziat 2009; Desalegn et al. 2012; Tiberghien 2013) and expand to new areas once ‘early adopters’ have been serviced (Pedi et al. 2012; Baker et al. 2011). Sanitation marketing literature acknowledges that serving the ‘bottom of the pyramid’ is not the primary aim of the approach, rather it aims to capture least poor customers first to drive aspirational motivation amongst the poor (Narracott and Norman 2011). There was mention of the role of social business models, with some authors arguing this approach will lead to lower costs and correspondingly allow poor to participate in the sanitation market (ibid).

Some evidence of water sector businesses offering flexibility in pricing structures was found in the literature, allowing poor households and communities to access the market. For example, entrepreneurs in the informal private sector have demonstrated flexibility in pricing to allow for poor households and communities to access services. One study noted that:

Price seems to be the highest in areas where consumers can afford to pay larger fees...This finding contradicts conventional opinion that private providers take advantage of poor urban resident (Sima et al. 2013:141–142).

Another study provided evidence of flexible pricing depending on economic need (Annis and Razafinjato 2011), while another highlights the need to align design and delivery of products with the needs of the poor (see Ramani et al. 2012 for a checklist for successful diffusion of pro-poor innovation).

Given this lack of evidence that the poor are reached by enterprises, it is useful to examine the actual experience of CSOs and enterprise to better understand the alignment, or not, of their goals. Examples from Java, Indonesia are provided below.

Elements shaping engagement with small private sector: Findings from Indonesia

Research in Indonesia revealed a growing trend for both CSOs and other development partners to engage with small scale enterprise within the last five years. Prior to this time, only large scale private sector or construction contractors were reported to have been involved, but more recently a breadth of opportunities were emerging and

being filled by individuals and new organisations. These included sanitation entrepreneurs selling and installing household toilet facilities, small scale businesses offering desludging services and distributors of water purification products, as well as collective organisations operating as a form of social enterprise. Examples of the latter were ‘professionalised’ water committees who had formed cooperatives to allow them to access loans and expand services, as well as associations of sanitation entrepreneurs, who were playing roles to support private entrepreneurs.

Where CSOs were engaging to support enterprise, the key motives behind their engagement appeared to be a focus on sustainability: *‘NGOs are funded on a project basis. But if [it] can transfer a project into a business opportunity then it can continue.’* CSOs were also being prompted to act as intermediaries to allow support to be provided to enterprise from donors or from government, as there was a perception that donors and government could not directly support for-profit organisations. As one stakeholder said: *‘Donors can’t directly provide private sector because of regulations’*. Equally, a government representative noted there was a need for more local NGOs (whom government can fund directly) who could act as intermediaries to support development of sanitation enterprises.

In terms of differences in philosophies and aims, diverse perspectives were heard. On the one hand there were CSOs who didn’t see a big difference in their objectives versus those of enterprise: *‘There are differences but not serious ... it’s in line’*. This was particularly the case where the enterprise involved in fact had strong social motives anyway, which aligned to those of the CSO. For instance one sanitation entrepreneur described his lenient approach to seeking repayments due to a social mission:

Repayments – I didn’t make any terms – one week, one month, one year-1.5 years – we’re not only about business, it is a social purpos^o.

On the other hand, there was an example of a CSO whose approach was rooted in concepts of community self-sufficiency and sharing, and viewed market based solutions as running contrary to this and as a result resisted working to engage with enterprise:

The least you’re dependent on the market, the more you’re independent...when they have knowledge they have to share it, not keeping it for yourself...[it’s the] spirit of sharing.

CSOs were also being tested in terms of defining the limits to the kind of support they were best placed to give as civil society actors. For instance, questions arose about whether financial support to enterprise was appropriate, with one CSO noting that they avoided this as: *‘Real entrepreneurs should sacrifice their own money to start a business.’* Equally, concerning tensions arose from CSO’s perceived need to avoid promoting specific enterprises or companies. For instance one CSO involved in supporting distribution of water purification products spoke of how

they wanted to promote access to supply, but not a specific brand, and therefore developed information communication materials that were non-brand specific. Similarly, concerning sanitation suppliers, one CSO described their role as follows:

When people have been triggered [to want a toilet], and supply is needed, our role is to pass on information [about potential suppliers].’

CSOs also met with other challenges in engaging with enterprises. Where they were based in locations with very little business activity, finding individuals with the outlook and capacity to act as entrepreneurs was challenging. Equally, donor reporting requirements were suggested to focus on short-term targets (e.g., number of people with access to improved sanitation) rather than development of sustainable markets that might grow beyond the time-frame of a funded ‘project’. Finally, CSOs working closely with government experienced a lack of knowledge and interest by government in building enterprise capacity, since this area is very new, and will take time for the public sector to find its place and role.

Conclusion – what next?

This paper provides examples from literature and the field of the various roles and relationships between enterprise and CSOs in the WASH sector to explore whether CSOs and businesses have ‘incompatible philosophies’ or ‘complementary roles’. The link to ‘Development Futures’ is seen in the rise of private and social enterprise as an emerging trend and potential pathway to address poverty. We have provided an account of how social entrepreneurs and socially-minded businesses blur the boundary between private sector and civil society, and represent an important area of focus in poverty reduction strategies.

Evidence highlights examples of both incompatible philosophies and complementary roles, which comes from the diversity of types of engagement across a variety of contexts. Evidence also shows that the skill set required by both small scale WASH operators and CSOs needs further development, and hence drawing on the skills and expertise of other sectors, businesses and academic expertise is likely to be important going forward. In addition, developing an enabling environment for businesses to grow may require more proactive support than has been provided to date, particularly with respect to ensuring socially inclusive approaches from which the poor might feasibly benefit. A key point raised in this paper is that the possibility of businesses that are driven by social objectives as well as CSOs that have their eye on sustainability, are important drivers for existing and future CSO enterprise engagement.

Lastly, this paper demonstrates both the opportunity and complexity of this newly emerging pathway of engaging with small scale enterprise to support services for the poor, and may offer useful lessons to other sectors for how enterprise engagement is taken forward.

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The sum is more than the parts: Impacts of the Australian Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Reference Group

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Introduction

Partnerships offer benefits, leverage and influence that single organisations are unable to achieve alone. Established in 2007, the Australian WASH Reference Group (WRG) is an informal network of diverse organisations working on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in developing countries. This paper offers the WRG as a case study of how diverse actors can work in partnership to strengthen civil society practice and outcomes. It outlines the history of the WRG and its operations, successes and challenges faced, and concludes with reflections on lessons learned that can be applied to other civil society groupings hoping to strengthen practice and influence policy within their sector. The information is largely drawn from the authors' experiences as long term members of the group, and from reviews of the WRG, including a Ways of Working Review (WaterAid 2012) and a Reflections Report (Plan 2012).

The WASH Reference Group

The group emerged from a small collection of people scattered across a variety of Australian NGOs and academic institutions, all committed to WASH and sharing a common frustration with Australia's limited contribution to this sector. The broad collective aim is to improve Australia's response to the global water, sanitation and hygiene crisis, and the group seeks to do this by pursuing five objectives:

- making WASH a priority for Government and development agencies;
- mainstreaming WASH within Australian aid policies and programmes;
- improving the quality and volume of Australia's foreign aid for WASH;
- establishing and strengthening a Community of Practice; and
- building public awareness and support for WASH.

The WRG has an open membership comprising Australian-based organisations involved in WASH, including NGOs, academic institutions and independent contractors. The Australian Water Association is also a member and represents the domestic water industry. Membership is by agency, with individuals regarded as formal representatives of their agency. The group now has a membership of 30 organisations, represented by 60 individuals, encompassing most of the organisations in Australia working on WASH in developing country contexts. The cost of time and contributions to WRG work is covered by member agencies.

The group maintains a link with ACFID (the NGO peak body in Australia), primarily through joint contributions to ACFID papers and processes; however, the group operates outside of the ACFID structure, principally to maintain its open membership base which includes non-ACFID members.

WRG ways of working

The WRG is led by a self-nominated Executive Committee (ExCom), including a chairperson. The ExCom's role is to agree on broad strategy, prepare a workplan for the coming year and to facilitate preparation for upcoming activities and meetings. ExCom members are expected to play a leadership role, represent the group as needed in external meetings and participate in all internal meetings. Feedback from internal reviews (Plan 2012; WaterAid 2012) prompted changes to membership processes of the ExCom, now re-opened annually for any member to self-nominate to the committee.

Meetings of the group can be broadly classified into three types: Community of Practice sessions, meetings with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT, previously the Australian Agency for International Development, AusAID); and planning meetings. Community of Practice activities include conferences, publications and sharing days. Joint meetings with DFAT are held approximately twice annually, with the agenda jointly agreed upon by DFAT and the WRG, and sessions co-chaired. These meetings present an opportunity to deliver key messages to DFAT and share information. Where possible a planning meeting is held ahead of this joint meeting. Additional meetings are organised on an as needs basis. For example in 2008–09, when the first Australian government water and sanitation initiative was announced, there were frequent meetings to prepare for and discuss with AusAID (now DFAT) the principles and priorities for the initiative.

Achievements of the WRG partnership

Over the last seven years substantial progress has been made towards the objectives of the group. These contributions could not have been achieved by one agency alone and are the result of members working in partnership. Notable achievements of the group are:

- Successful advocacy to Government for increases in priority given to, and allocations for, WASH within Australia's aid programme. To date, annual government funding to WASH has increased from \$45 million in 2007–08 to \$279 million in 2013–14.

- Regular dialogue with DFAT on the effective spending of these resources and on Australia's role in ending the global sanitation and water crisis. This dialogue with DFAT has contributed to a change of direction and a new thematic WASH strategy which emphasises a pro-poor focus, behaviour change and sustainability.
- Enhanced knowledge, capacities and development practice of members through Community of Practice activities, such as increasing the evidence base documenting good practice in WASH. Examples include the inclusive WASH publication and website (WaterAid 2013), and the sharing experiences publication series on hygiene practices (WaterAid et al. 2011), hygiene promotion (WaterAid et al. 2010) and sanitation (IWC et al. 2008). These resources are now widely used globally within the WASH sector.
- Achievement of a strong focus on learning and knowledge, something that has been recognised by DFAT and has since become institutionalised in DFAT's funding window for NGO WASH programming, the Civil Society WASH Fund. A learning component was included in the initial funding round of this programme and has been strengthened in subsequent funding rounds. Significant resources have been allocated to knowledge building and all CSOs are required to resource knowledge and learning within their programmes and the fund itself includes a knowledge and learning manager to facilitate cross-institutional and cross-regional learning.

Whether these achievements have directly contributed to improved outcomes for beneficiaries is yet to be determined. Kelly and Roche's (2014) recent study of Australian NGO partnership models identified that evidence directly attributing partnership models with effective development outcomes is scarce. By improving its monitoring and evaluation the group will be able to better make this connection and contribute to this knowledge gap.

Why is the model effective?

A number of key enablers have contributed to the effectiveness of the WRG partnership model. A core group of dedicated people working together with clarity of purpose has been a key reason for many of the achievements to date. For many people this has involved an additional voluntary commitment above and beyond their regular work. Whilst motivations for involvement differ, collective civil society interest, shared values and intent to work together towards desired changes are often noted as primary drivers for participation in this partnership.

WaterAid's resourcing of the group's secretariat has been critical, as it has always provided a coordinating function to the group, even when chairpersons and other members of the ExCom have left. The fact that WaterAid has resourced this role to date and the WRG has not had to seek financial contributions from members or donors has greatly simplified the group's workings. For WaterAid, performing this function has complemented its own strategy of increasing Australian Government support to WASH which has been a win-win situation for both the WRG and WaterAid. However there is a sustainability

question over how long WaterAid will continue to perform this function and the WRG has not yet explored how it would manage this issue.

Membership diversity has been another key strength. NGOs have been important in envisioning advocacy opportunities and providing practical programme experiences; academic institutions have introduced analytical rigor and technical expertise; and at times the water industry has helped the group differentiate itself from other NGO groups. These different skill sets have given credibility to the group with DFAT and parliamentarians and allowed the group to remain active, relevant and capable of responding to changing discourses (such as the post-2015 agenda), while affording members opportunities to undertake different roles and responsibilities as according to their capacities, interests and competencies.

Within the DFAT WASH team there has been an openness and willingness to engage in open dialogue. The WRG has been able to build a level of trust with DFAT that did not initially exist. At times, agendas of the WRG and DFAT align and the relationship is easy to manage, while at other times agendas differ and the relationship can become tense. Clear communication of intentions and plans, and a high level of trust between the WRG and DFAT have enabled points of tension to be overcome.

Challenges and responses

Two recent reviews (Plan 2012; WaterAid 2012) revealed some challenges to which the group has sought to respond. The reviews highlight the need for ongoing review of partnership, communication mechanisms, ways of working and ensuring that there are feedback loops to communicate and problems or tensions. Power dynamics exist in every relationship, yet are often an unspoken part of partnerships (Clark 2003), and power relations are an ongoing and underlying challenge faced by the WRG.

At times the group has struggled to reach consensus and to be clear about attribution of activities. Given the large membership and different individual and agency viewpoints it can be difficult to achieve consensus on particular decisions, such as joint submissions. When looking to brand submissions as being on behalf of the whole group this process can be cumbersome, particularly in instances when not all agencies formally agree to or endorse a piece of work. Similarly, when WaterAid in its Secretariat role has played an active role in producing or communicating WRG agendas, there has been confusion as to whether these are WRG or WaterAid activities. One practical solution has been to develop a tagline to be included on any materials produced on behalf of the group which states 'Submission prepared by the WASH Reference Group with special input from...[agency names that agreed and contributed]'

Fowler (2012) emphasises that the quality of interactions between individuals in relationships contributes to the effectiveness of the partnership. Individuals as representatives of their agencies are the interface of partnerships, and hence individual competencies are

important. Within a working group setting, the following competencies are valued in individuals: diplomacy, technical competency, collaborative ways of working, an ability to negotiate, good interpersonal skills, and confidence in verbal communication. In recognition that within any group these competencies vary (for example, some individuals are more vocal than others), the WRG has consciously varied meeting formats to allow for different engagement techniques (particularly smaller group work) and tried to rotate chairs for different parts of the agenda. When this is not done, and meeting structures revert to a plenary format, more vocal participants limit the diversity of contributions.

The imperative of individual agencies to obtain funding means member organisations often have to balance collaboration with competition, which also means there are potential tensions in the group functions, most obviously when the group is lobbying for greater resources for WASH and securing some of these funds for member agencies. Meetings with DFAT around funding opportunities have seen greater participation of members. Other subtle potential tensions exist in terms of knowledge development and advocacy on setting agendas.

Conclusion

Partnerships offer benefits, leverage and influence that single organisations cannot achieve alone. The WRG offers an example of how partnership can enhance efforts to strengthen civil society practice and influence government. The complementary and contributing roles of NGOs, academics and industry representatives are key to the success of the WRG. In addition, having a well resourced coordinating body has provided momentum and focus to the group. Individual relationships and competencies have played an integral part in the WRG's operations with trust and dialogue critical, particularly between civil society and government. The characteristics of the partnership which aided its success are: flexibility

and adaptability; an emphasis on learning through a Community of Practice; and learning to improve the functioning of the partnership itself.

A 'big picture' view of Australia's role in ending WASH poverty and inequality and identifying a range of strategic influence points means avenues to pursue this agenda continue, and different members of the group can continue to contribute. Lessons learned from this partnership model operating in the Australian WASH sector offer ideas for other sectors wanting to take collective action to alleviate poverty.

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Pathways to development through local faith communities

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Introduction

Despite the success associated with several Millennium Development Goals, humanity is faced with unacceptable levels of material poverty, increasing socio-economic inequality, growing scarcity of natural resources and ongoing or newly emerging conflict between various ethnic and religious groups. Within this context, concern has emerged over the potential for religious fundamentalism to impede progress. Notably, at times of uncertainty, fundamentalism, religious or otherwise, tends to thrive as people seek certainty in an uncertain world. Conceding that religious and other forms of fundamentalism can be very destructive, and recognising that the role of religion within development theory and practice remains marginalised, this paper considers the positive changes that are possible at the nexus between 'religion' and what can loosely be described as 'development'. Running parallel to concerns over the rise of religious fundamentalism is a growing movement to engage local faith communities and religious resources more effectively in the processes of human development. In this paper original CPP research on gender programming in the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Church Partnership Program (CPP) is presented as a brief case study that illustrates the potential when development processes engage with, rather than avoid, religion. We argue that in the case of PNG, attempts to separate 'religion' and 'development' result in an uncomfortable dichotomy. Rather than religion being viewed as irrelevant, or in direct opposition to development goals, there is significant common ground to be found between the two. It is the willingness of all stakeholders in the development enterprise to work together within this common ground that suggests its potential as a future pathway to poverty reduction and human development.

The role of religion

Religion is a significant component of the lives of the vast majority of the world population and is likely to remain so into the future. By one recent estimate over 88 percent of the global population consider themselves to be members of a religious group. Less than 10 percent indicate a non-religious affiliation and only two percent describe themselves as atheists (CIA 2013). Within Australia, widely considered to be a largely secular nation, census results suggest that 64 percent of Australians identify themselves as Christian. Although McCrindle (2012) indicates that this affiliation is purely nominal for the majority of Australians, and this may also be the case in developing countries, the connection remains strong enough to drive important aspects of behaviour and identity or to legitimate important social services providers. In many of the developing nations of the Pacific the proportion of citizens claiming religious affiliation and practice is much

higher. Estimates across all Pacific nations, excluding Australia and New Zealand, indicate that over 95 percent of the population identify as Christian (Pew Research Centre 2011). The religious communities in these countries are vibrant, active and already engaged in the improvement of their societies. Many of the medical, educational and social support services available to the population in these countries are provided by religious communities. For example, in PNG Hauck et al. (2005:14) points out that church representatives see 'social work' as their primary strength in working with communities. Christian groups collectively provide 50 percent of all health services, co-manage 40 percent of primary and high schools and run two of the nation's six universities. Additionally, organised churches in PNG are heavily involved in reconciliation and peace building, development of public policy and direct service provision.

Key to discussing the role of religion in relation to development processes is the need to identify components of religious experience and practice. Ter Haar (2011) categorises religious 'resources' into religious ideas, religious practices, religious organisation, and religious experience. Of these four categories the third is favoured when identifying potential for religion to enhance or hinder human development and nation building. This relates to the potential and capacity for religious communities to engage their members and deliver services that contribute to the broader development agenda. In the case of PNG, in 2010 the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which served approximately 10 percent of the population, operated one of the nation's six universities and 100 schools, assisting a total of 21,000 students (Watson 2012). For the most part, this sort of service provision, provided it is done well, is broadly deemed to be both necessary and beneficial while PNG develops export industries and a taxation base sufficient to bolster the public education system.

Ideas and beliefs are perhaps the aspect of religion most often questioned by secular development practitioners. Beliefs held by religious groups which act, intentionally or otherwise, to oppose or counter aspects of the development or human rights agenda, attract widespread concern, a prime example of which is the perpetuation or imposition of patriarchal norms on women which may have a devastating impact on their wellbeing. The rise of religious fundamentalism since the 1970s is a source of grave concern among secular critics and religious moderates. Notably however, a range of inconsistent and emotive definitions and uses of the term fundamentalism exist. For the purposes of this paper a contextual approach is taken drawing primarily from Emerson and Hartman (2006), who characterise religious fundamentalism as a reaction of communities against the marginalisation of religion by modernity and its accompanying processes of

development. By such accounts fundamentalism is a defensive aspect of religion that emerges naturally when secular development processes or other stressors are forced on religious communities. While this is one of various theories, of particular concern is the capacity for religious belief to be seized by extreme elements in society and used to incite conflict, violence and the abuse of human rights in ways contrary to the underlying value system of the religion itself. We argue that religious fundamentalism is more likely to arise and have a negative impact when development processes do not adequately engage or take into account the religious beliefs, practices, experiences and organisations of a community or society as a whole.

Religion and development

The past five years have seen an increasing interest in the synergies apparent at the intersection of religion and development that have perhaps been forgotten over time. While Christian missionaries have been best and worst known for evangelistic endeavour, their commitment to the social gospel has been less recognised. For example, a 1928 Church of England Study book (cited in Hilliard 1978:259) asserted 'the Christianising of the world involves the creation of sanitary conditions, of an educational system, of social, economic, and political welfare, in which life and life abounding may come to its full personal and corporate development'. Watson (2012:92) argues that to some extent the discourse of development mirrors that of traditional evangelical mission with obvious similarities between the dichotomies heathen/poor, primitive/illiterate, missionary/development worker, missionary organisation/NGO, gospel message/human rights message, evangelism/modernisation and civilised/empowered. Interest has come from a broader range of actors than those in academia and includes obvious candidates such as the development organisations of Christian denominations such as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Caritas or those faith-based development organisations not tied to a specific denomination such as Islamic Relief and World Vision. Other less obvious actors include government aid donors from Australia and the United States of America, and multilateral agencies like the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the World Bank. To some extent all have promoted the need to mesh broader development objectives with religious resources.

It is the view of ADRA Australia staff that increased engagement with faith-based groups is a positive trend in that it brings the potential for improved human development outcomes and increases the leverage of a broader range of religious community resources for development programmes. However, most commentators note that there are a number of gaps regarding both knowledge and engagement that need to be addressed for synergies to be maximised. In particular, 'the existing literature ... is conspicuous in its failure to take religious ideas seriously in the sense that many scholarly works on religion and development regard religious thought as representing something else, generally some social quality or economic trend' (Ter Haar 2011:3). These gaps are important to

address for several reasons. First, they mitigate against effective engagement of religious communities in addressing development challenges around challenging issues such as gender inequality. Second, the lack of good information about the role that religious communities play, in all their complexity, in effective human development makes it challenging for policy and decision makers to take appropriate actions and resource allocations.

To address these gaps a number of formal and informal groups have emerged, each with a focus on strengthening both learning and practice in the engagement of religious communities with development programmes. Some, such as the Religions and Development Research Programme are coalitions of academic institutions. Others, such as the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University, represent a single academic institution with close ties to a range of key development actors. A third type, of which the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities is a prominent example, are coalitions of a broad range of actors from academia, religious groups, development actors and the private sector. The combined effect of all this effort is an increasingly detailed picture of the existing and potential engagement of religion in development and improved understanding of good practice. What is missing, however, are specific case studies that demonstrate both the difficulties and successes possible when development practitioners work more closely with faith based groups and organisations.

Religion and gender

This paper does not set out to delve deeply into the relationship between religion and gender. However, it is necessary to touch on some of the issues that others have addressed in considerable detail, particularly as they relate to the argument being presented here and the case study from the Church Partnership Program in PNG. Gender, and specifically gender inequality, is a challenging issue for many development practitioners who belong to religious communities. Apparently homogenous religious communities contain a diversity of beliefs regarding gender roles, especially where religious communities incorporate numerous cultural groups. Development practitioners may find that corporate beliefs are in tension with their own beliefs and the gender equality ideals and human rights they are striving to achieve. Tadros (2010) effectively summarises these tensions by describing four conundrums commonly found in the engagement of faith-based organisations with gender inequality. The first conundrum relates to inconsistency in the standpoints that the organisation takes in relation to various gender issues. The second is characterised by complexity in the mix of both power and limitations imposed by religious tradition on women in a range of activities. The third lies in the degree to which religious organisations working at the community level may, or may not actually represent indigenous voices. The fourth describes dilemmas faced by women if services provided by faith-based organisations are directly or indirectly conditional on conformity with traditional gender norms. These tensions, which derive

largely from the patriarchal nature and discriminatory treatment of women inherent in the practices and traditions of many of the world's major religions, create challenges to establishing common ground and collaboration between secular development actors and religious organisations. The depth and width of the gap that these challenges create should not be underestimated when seeking new pathways to future development goals.

The Church Partnership Program

The Australian Government funded CPP in PNG is a 'long-term, multi-stakeholder partnership between seven denominational Australian Non Government Organisations (ANGOs), the churches in PNG that they represent, and the governments of PNG and Australia' (Kelly and Roche 2014:30). It was first funded in 2004 based on recognition of the key roles played by churches in the areas of health, education and social services provision within the PNG context. The underlying premise is that the quality and scale of this service may be enhanced if the capacity of, and collaboration between, the various churches is strengthened.

Based on a review of the first phase of the CPP, the partners agreed to an increased emphasis on mainstreaming gender and achieving outcomes related to gender equality in the second phase of the programme which began in 2010.

Figure 1



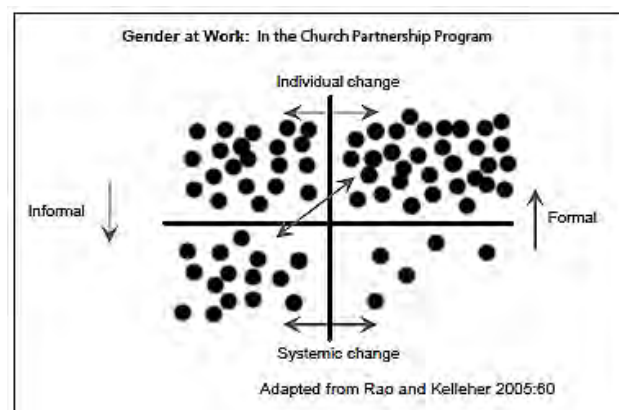
CPP activities, as reported by church leaders and programme staff, and documented in formal project reports, were particularly focussed on achieving individual change at the formal level but also at the informal level. For example, it was common to find churches operating gender awareness trainings for church leaders and establishing gender action groups at congregation level. Activities of this type were reported as prevalent in all seven of the church partners. One church partner was in the process of identifying gender champions from bishop down to lay member levels and forming action groups throughout their church structures to increase awareness of gender equality issues. Likewise, a richly diverse range of activities such as skills or leadership training for both men and women, and provision of gender sensitive health and education services were common across all seven churches.

Church programmes often engaged both men and women demonstrating an understanding of the dynamics

This aligned with AusAID's gender strategy for PNG which highlighted the importance of coordination of gender equality initiatives, and of improving the collection, analysis and use of gender equality data through joint monitoring and evaluation (AusAID 2010).

In 2012 a gender review was conducted by the lead author to establish a framework for further action against these commonly held objectives. The review took place over three weeks during February and March of 2012 and utilised semi-structured, qualitative methodologies based around AusAID's gender equality approach and the Rao-Kelleher gender change model shown in Figure 1 (Moser 2007:10). Fifty-one key informants identified by the churches participated in either individual or group interviews. The informants consisted of just over 50 percent women with group interviews usually involving a mix of men and women. The overall approach described above was deliberately adopted in order to allow a transparent and non-threatening engagement with all stakeholders on a potentially sensitive issue. The review found that all church partners engage with gender issues in their programme activities and that all seek to contribute to the achievement of gender change in relation to gender equality and women's rights. This is illustrated in Figure 2 which plots identified church activities against the Rao-Kelleher model, and described in more detail below.

Figure 2



of gender issues within their religious communities. For example, churches that provided HIV/AIDS voluntary counselling and testing were not only aware of low access rates by men and seeking to address barriers to men's participation, but also aware of the consequences in terms of violence and social stigmatisation for women when they accessed such services without their husband being tested too. That the churches were actively seeking to provide gender sensitive services reduced the likelihood of conflict violence in the family (Webster 2012). It was evident to the researchers that long-term engagement of partners with the CPP was building gender awareness in service delivery by churches. CPP staff who self-identified as gender awareness champions within their churches indicated an optimism that change could take place. In several interviews, participants cited the shift over time in attitudes towards HIV/AIDS programmes within churches as evidence that positive was achievable.

Programming to address systemic change at either informal or formal levels was less common and 'is an area that could be strengthened, particularly in relation to understanding and effectively using gender change agents and the development of gender policy within religious communities' (Webster 2012:2). For example, only one church had formally adopted a gender policy, while three others were addressing some aspects of gender in existing formal structures. Informal systemic change was more common, though still with less activity across the churches than seen with activities aimed at individual change. Perhaps the most common example provided in interviews was the presence of the CPP itself within the church. In several cases the presence of senior staff, often women, from the CPP interacting regularly and raising gender issues amongst the church leadership was seen as a positive disruption to established gender norms within the church.

As a long-running collaboration between both secular and faith-based actors that deliberately seeks to find common ground around gender issues in development, the CPP represents an encouraging case study of an 'integral development' model. Interviews during the review process explored many of the conundrums outlined by Tadros within the context of religious communities in PNG. Of particular note was the significant number of responses that indicated the kinds of internal tensions associated with ongoing changes in gender norms within the churches. For example one respondent stated that,

the church could be seen as hypocritical in arguing for gender equality in the community – when there are some church roles that are restricted to men – people can challenge that (Webster 2012:12–13).

Evidence from the review suggests that all seven CPP churches are in a process of transformation around gender.

The CPP also provided a platform for male and female church leaders who were already seeking to create gender change. Many of the review participants identified themselves as key change agents with a commitment to promoting gender equality in their religious communities extending well beyond the scope and limitations of the CPP. As one respondent described it,

... peer influence is quite strong – so when men see other men showing respect for the roles and contributions of women then they are likely to change too (Webster 2012:14).

In reality, peer influence is a necessary though slow vehicle for change in relation to gender norms that are perpetuated in church structures and policies, often undergirded by deep cultural values and practices that predate the arrival of Christianity in PNG. Nevertheless, the rich interactions between CPP partner staff, the Australian NGOs and donors do lead to a questioning of dominant thinking and organisational culture.

Diversity and complexity of belief and practice on gender equality within churches and the community appeared to be taken into account by review participants in

their narratives and actions. Four out of seven churches demonstrated evidence of developing gender approaches that 'balance or incorporate the positive elements of traditional PNG, church and 'Western' gender concepts ... One participant suggested that

... we should look for the good in traditional cultures (including church culture) and try to strengthen that aspect of things' (Webster 2012:13).

Many church leaders were clear in their view that attempts at rapid change were unlikely to have positive outcomes and might in fact undermine long-term efforts to achieve gender equality. '*I believe it is happening, slowly – but we are getting there*' (Webster 2012:13) sums up a common response from church leadership, whereas the response from CPP staff was more likely to feel that change needed to be faster. What was also equally clear was that the collaboration between local and external stakeholders on the CPP enabled an expansion of common ground that noticeably increased the pace of gender rights reform in the churches.

Conclusion

It is a well established principle in community development practice that success in the achievement of any development objective is more likely to be achieved when all stakeholders in the community have ownership of the decisions about their future and participate in the changes taking place in their lives. Given that in the majority of countries facing the most extreme development challenges, large sections of the population are part of religious communities, it does not make sense for development actors to exclude or ignore those religious communities, especially when seeking to deal with challenging and seemingly intractable issues such as gender inequality and gender-based violence. Challenges notwithstanding, increasingly there is a recognition that what Ter Haar (2011) describes as 'integral development' (deriving from an understanding that religion and development have more in common than is normally apparent) is an alternative to separation between the worlds of religion and development. In the case of PNG we find that religious communities are neither simple nor homogenous in their relationship to gender inequality or other development challenges. They are capable of being both part of the problem and part of the solution. Further, the separation of religion and development constructs an uncomfortable dichotomy for many Melanesians who see churches as intrinsically involved in peace building, service provision, policy development and the construction of social capital. An unnecessarily confrontational approach to gender inequality closes down pathways to future development and may result in a hardening of fundamentalist tendencies. Without compromising on human rights, a nuanced engagement of religious communities through a participatory approach such as the CPP, that values the religious resources in a faith community and seeks to harness its inherent diversity and complexity, opens new pathways to a future free from gender inequality and violence.

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Complexity, chaos, compassion: Partnerships making justice work for women

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Introduction and background

Women survivors of violence face psychological trauma, social ostracism, economic disadvantage and lasting reproductive and other health problems, including HIV/AIDS. Violence against women in conflict is of increasing concern globally and within the international community. Evidence suggests existing formal justice measures are not adequately engaging with women to address their needs. A partnership between ActionAid Australia and cross-faculty academics from Sydney University's Law School and Cosmopolitan Civil Societies at University of Technology, Sydney, is exploring the efficacy of transitional justice processes in delivering justice to women in northern Uganda, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The project is investigating women's justice needs within the context of their lived experiences and will identify how transitional justice can work better for women given the realities of their lives. This partnership combines the scholarly knowledge, research skills and training of academics with ActionAid's on the ground presence in conflict-affected communities, their work on access to justice for women at a community level and knowledge of women's rights issues to deliver outputs that are rigorous, credible and finely attuned to the realities of women's lives and specific in-country contexts.

Making Justice Work for Women

Rights, Resilience and Responses to Violence Against Women in Northern Uganda, Kenya and Democratic Republic of Congo is a multi-partner interdisciplinary research project funded through an Australian Development Research Awards Scheme grant. It commenced in April 2013 and will be completed in the second half of 2015. The project aims to generate a deeper understanding of women's justice needs and priorities and the gendered effects of transitional justice processes and generate implementable strategies for better justice outcomes for women. This paper examines some of the complexities and challenges of conducting a multi partner project of this kind with this geographical and substantive focus. It also presents the strengths and opportunities that such a diverse partnership offers and argue that this research partnership and the methodology it allows positions women at the heart of the research and enables their voice to be heard in policy dialogue and law reform aimed at improving justice for women. The partnership represents a powerful vehicle for achieving outcomes including greater agency for women survivors that would not otherwise be attainable by each partner if working alone.

Key opportunities and challenges in collaborative research partnerships

A review of relevant literature points to mixed results in outcomes of academic-NGO partnerships (see Aniekwe et al. 2012). Academic-NGO partnerships may be susceptible to misunderstanding and weakened because of paradigmatic differences and at times divergent objectives. Roper (2002) raises 'the key issue of cultural and intellectual clash between academics and NGO practitioners, highlighting differences in ideology, philosophical logic (epistemological and ontological differences), as well as distinct institutional and cultures and discourses.' These differences play out at multiple levels including differences in ways of 'knowing', valuing of different goals and different outputs. At the risk of over-simplifying, academics are more likely to recognise abstract, theoretically-framed knowledge in comparison to practitioners' more ready recognition of experientially-based, applied knowledge. Similarly, NGOs need practical, implementable and programme- or policy-specific goals and outputs to justify the commitment of time, money and other resources to a major research project, while academics seek outputs that reflect robust methods of inquiry that will stand up to rigorous academic scrutiny and which can yield institutional demands for 'scholarly' outputs (publications in peer-reviewed journals, books and book chapters). All partners including the primary donor in this project have committed substantial funds, expertise and other institutional and agency resources to this large-scale research project. All partners have a vested interest in ensuring the project achieves successful outcomes and quality deliverables.

The aim of these discussions is not to 'choose' one set of institutional realities over the other, but to seek to move beyond binary thinking and build opportunities for development of knowledge and practice and shared outputs. Research in an academic-NGO partnership is likely to be grounded in in-depth, experiential knowledge and systematically analysed and theorised to maximise the potential impact of the findings – in policy, practice and academic communities.

This project seeks to address the current lack of evidence on the needs of women and their status and position in transitional justice processes. We want our research processes themselves to be strongly ethical, to reflect the values inherent in our research goals and partnership, to be empowering, build solidarity, and generate a strong body of data to enable campaigning and better inform programming. INGOs ideally wish to share and validate research with the communities involved in the

study. For example, in this project each of the country-specific communication and engagement plans are being shaped to ensure research findings can be shared in ways that are accessible by women participants and their communities. This approach also reflects ethical and responsible academic research.

We are committed to seeing our research translate to practical impact; towards improving justice and equality for women through generating robust evidence to inform policy and law reform that directly benefits women and their communities and through strengthening NGO programming and practice. The partnership between the universities and ActionAid strengthens the potential for such change. Ultimately, there is overlap between the knowledge that academics generate and the knowledge that NGOs use in their work. While we need to be careful not to overstate what this kind of research can realistically achieve and the extent to which it can directly influence positive change, it does provide the opportunity to amplify voices and reflect priorities of poor and excluded communities. The partnership, through its values and the feminist, grounded research methodology is creating an avenue for the perspectives of women affected by violence to be heard in evaluating existing transitional justice mechanisms and developing alternatives to better meet their justice needs. The power of the partnership to effect agency for women is strengthened by women's leadership in the partnership and the involvement of women researchers at every stage of the project.

Our experience navigating an academic-NGO partnership

It took some time for this research group to recognise the differences between our respective organisations and our different drivers. This is an ongoing process as we navigate each new turn in our project. We invested a lot of time initially in understanding our respective perspectives, institutionally and as individuals. A meeting on partnership principles and associated behaviours at the initial stages of the research aimed to put these issues on the table and create relationships built on mutual understandings, trust, open and regular sharing of information and active collaboration between partners. This resulted in development of a Partnership Agreement; though not legally binding, it made explicit partners' commitments to a set of principles and ways of operating to guide behaviours and interactions within the limits of individual organisational accountabilities and legal requirements. This was useful in anticipating and recognising potential challenges and putting in place related strategies and behaviours. It also made explicit the shared values and interest in contributing to improvements for women affected by conflict which underpin the project.

Given the multifaceted and demanding nature of this research project, involving multiple partners, short-time frames with significant outputs, it was very important to set up and agree on clear project timelines, roles and responsibilities and communication protocols – between partners, with the donor, in-country partners and external stakeholders.

We invested significant time interrogating the overarching research questions and ensuring we were on the same page regarding the core project aims. We were clear that we wanted this to be a true partnership, and that the role of ActionAid country programme staff should go beyond simply collecting data from the field for the university researchers to analyse given their local knowledge and expertise.

We convened a week-long participatory methodology workshop in Nairobi, involving ActionAid country directors, women's rights coordinators and other key staff from the countries involved in the research. We probed the research questions, to ensure they reflected the context across the three countries, adjusting the overarching questions and the research instruments that would shape interviews with women affected by violence and key informants. We fleshed out our communications, engagement and dissemination plan, looking at how to maximise strategic attention to and uptake of key findings in each country programme, helping to ensure buy in and engagement from in-country teams.

Following this workshop an ActionAid Australia staff member, a university researcher and the local ActionAid staff responsible for the bulk of the collection of data pre-tested the research tools and processes in one research site, adjusting these as necessary through a process of collaborative reflection. This was invaluable for all involved, creating strong pathways for skill development and capacity building among ActionAid field staff. It also provided a rich opportunity for academic researchers to experience and understand first-hand the project context, an experience that has impacted how the academic researchers conceive of certain issues.

This level of relationship building and collaboration within the partnership is resource intensive and requires careful planning. Significant budget for travel and staff time both within NGO head offices and at the field level has to be factored in as does appropriate teaching buy out for academic staff. There needs to be flexibility, margins for error and space for genuine and responsive processes. For example, during the pre-test phase in Democratic Republic of Congo, the Provincial Minister of Justice in Goma asked the project team to return and hold a stakeholder inception workshop to strengthen the opportunity for developing local buy-in and understanding of the project, its aims and expected outcomes. Local stakeholder support for the research is essential for the project's success, both in terms of accessing prospective research participants and in enhancing the chance of the research findings being openly received by organisations and individuals in positions to effect change. The research methodology is designed to facilitate local engagement and participation and 'buy-in' to the process. How this manifests in each research site differs and the methodology needs sufficient flexibility to accommodate localised differences and conditions, while maintaining methodological rigour. The delicate and early stages of peace in the DRC along with the absence of a national ethics accreditation process there, meant that approvals needed to be sought and obtained at a regional level. A

local inception workshop was necessary to ensure key goals and objectives of the research could be met. Moreover, local actors were seeking clarity and a better understanding of how our research might be relevant to, and enable, their own efforts and work in delivering post-conflict justice to the community. The team was able to respond to these local needs and quickly adjust work plans and budgets to enable this to eventuate in a timely way. In Kenya and Uganda local conditions have not required us to conduct a similar inception workshop, however, we have carefully considered local political contexts in planning our research and shaping our interview schedules and ensuring that we engage with key local stakeholders throughout the project. By way of a further example, in Kenya, our pre-testing was taking place at the time of the Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi and because of the fragile political context and heightened security risk at the time we decided to make changes to our planned interviews with women affected by violence.

Finally it is important to recognise that a solid partnership also often rests on intangibles such as the good will of individual researchers, their commitment and passion for the cause. The literature suggests that 'individual chemistry' is an important factor in research collaboration. 'Whilst institutional buy-in is crucial for academic-practitioner research collaboration, project team skills and knowledge, collaboration experience and personal motivation are key determinants for successful collaboration' (Aniekwe et al. 2012:10). Our experience in this research confirms this and significant energy has been put into building and maintaining good relationships, open and respectful communication and care for each other between team members in Australia and across the three research countries.

The implications of the political context in Africa for the project

There are four primary issues of in-country politics that the partnership has had to navigate.

1. The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a key institution in the field of transitional justice and indictments and prosecutions by the ICC are issues with which this research must engage. The legitimacy of the ICC is a highly sensitive topic in Africa generally and in Uganda, DRC and Kenya in particular, as all three countries currently have cases before the Court. Early in the life of the research (October 2013), the African Union (AU) strongly criticised the ICC as unfairly focussing on Africa. The AU issued a resolution that serving AU Heads of State should be immune from international prosecution while holding office, and called for deferral of the current trials of Kenya's President and Vice President (Chingaibe 2003). There have been multiple, credible reports of witnesses involved in these cases being intimidated, threatened and even disappearing (ICC 2013). The collaboration of academic and NGO partners has been invaluable in assessing the implications of these developments for the research and adjusting accordingly. Expert knowledge from both fields is essential and complimentary.

2. In DRC there is still ongoing conflict which has implications for security and safety for research participants and researchers. Since our research commenced the situation in DRC has noticeably changed as armed groups have been weakened and peace and community confidence is being widely restored. This raises practical, political and conceptual challenges for engaging on issues in transitional justice in a conflict setting where peace is nascent. ActionAid's up-to-date knowledge of changed local conditions combined with the capacity of academic researchers to rapidly analyse and evaluate new conceptual frameworks and engage with large bodies of information such as draft policies, strategic plans and proposals for legislative and other reforms increases the power of our partnership and potential to deliver strong, relevant and context-specific research outputs.
3. In each research country political, economic and cultural leadership reflects the patriarchal systems and structures which underpin the violence experienced by women before, during and after situations of conflict and women's inability to access and receive justice. Uganda, Kenya and DRC are dominated by male leaders and struggle with recognising and implementing women's rights. For example, in Kenya the recently passed Marriage Act 2014 legalises polygamy. This means that the rights that some women may have over family property or financial decision making may be further limited and effectively deny women access to family wealth. The new law in an initial draft bill allowed the first wife to veto the husband's choices of additional wives but male members of parliament successfully lobbied to have that clause dropped. Female MPs tried to block the bill but did not have sufficient numbers. Currently only about 25 per cent of MPs in Kenya are women. This new law in Kenya will compound the difficulties faced by women who were forced to leave their families during the 2008 post-election violence. They will be unable to claim their land and property rights because in most families, property and land titles are in the husband's name (Ngirachu 2013). Women's experiences of violence and justice do not occur in a vacuum and analyses of women's experiences of both violence and justice, need a comprehensive understanding of the social, legal and political contexts of each country.
4. The ongoing peace building and transitional justice work being undertaken by the Great Lakes Conference (ICGLR) presents a strategic opportunity for the project to influence and impact the agenda. ActionAid's participation in some ICGLR forums on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (usually closed spaces with minimal NGO involvement) provides an opportunity to influence the forum which is providing regional leadership on peace and reconstruction post conflict. All the research countries have signed up to the ICGLR's Kampala Declaration on the fight against sexual and gender based violence in the Great Lakes Region aimed at preventing, ending impunity and providing support for victims of sexual and gender based violence. The findings from this research project will provide timely evidence to support advocacy with member states to implement policies and projects which will advance their commitments under the Kampala Declaration.

Methodological and ethical challenges

The research seeks to understand women's experiences of transitional justice from the perspectives of women in conflict-affected locations which are subject to transitional justice mechanisms. The research proactively seeks out the opinions of women who, although directly affected by justice and reconciliation efforts, are often excluded from decision-making processes about transitional justice. A rigorous and recognised methodology is necessary to ensure that women's voices can be recognised as credible and relevant beyond the anecdotal in a highly politicised and patriarchal field.

The research pre-tests in country revealed some differences between ActionAid's approach to conducting research and academic expectations regarding research design and implementation including requirements of institutional human ethics research committees. In terms of methodology, differences emerged regarding sampling and recruitment of research participants. Because ActionAid often outsources research to consultants, its field staff were relatively unfamiliar with sampling and recruitment of research participants. In Northern Uganda, for example, the women who had been recruited for the pre-test had been sourced through three different NGOs. Each of these women, to some degree, reflected the views or focus of the NGO through which they'd been recruited. The approach to recruitment also resulted in a disproportionately higher number of women who were former combatants compared to the recorded incidence of women combatants in northern Uganda. The ActionAid Kenya-based team also recruited all women through their own programmes. These modes of recruitment raised questions about representative sampling and potential bias. Conducting the pre-test phase with ActionAid in-country staff and an Australian-based academic and NGO partner allowed us to identify methodological and practical issues which would affect the fieldwork and further develop a shared understanding of methodology in action. Accordingly we were able to review the field work guidelines for the field researchers and ensure that women participants would be recruited from diverse sources, to more closely reflect the population's experiences, and that the process of recruitment would be documented.

Some practical aspects of conducting research were also reconsidered, for example the need for interviewers and translators to be women; and the need for interviews to be documented in ways that would ensure integrity.

Conclusion

We have argued that forming and developing research partnerships should be viewed as a key aspect of designing, planning and implementing a research project. Research partnerships between academics and NGOs have much to offer in terms of different perspectives, knowledge, skills and values. However, if potential is to be realised, time needs to be spent at the outset of a project to get to know one another, understand the drivers for each partner, establish shared understandings about the research, particularly regarding aims, methodology, values and expected outcomes. We have argued that a strong and effective partnership is born of trust, respect, open and transparent communication, collaboration and care for one another. These values create a culture of shared responsibility where partners may freely ask questions, make suggestions and discuss differences of opinion. Work is undertaken progressively and reflexively, to enable integration of learning as we go and allow 'mistakes' to become opportunities to learn more about each other and enhance the project.

As reflected in this paper, while our partnership has a shared vision, we sometimes speak with separate voices. This partnership, its values and the opportunities it creates for shared learning have been structured to strengthen the voices of women and amplify the opportunities for improved justice for women.

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Citizen, rights and accountability: A case for children in Pakistan

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Introduction

A new development agenda will depend on effective governance capacities at all levels (global, regional, national and sub-national) and commitment to the rule of law, including political commitment, leadership and the *empowerment of people, especially those most excluded and vulnerable, to participate in global, national and local decision making*. (Global Consultation on Governance and the Post-2015 Framework 2012, emphasis added)

That children are excluded and vulnerable is taken for granted almost universally. The idea that children could be empowered enough to participate in decision making is often hard for most adults to accept. If we see citizenship as 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community where all members who possess status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed' (Marshall 1950:14), we can see that citizenship is often clearly linked with concerns around peoples' civil, political and social rights. However, feminists and anti-racism scholars have contested this traditional image of citizenship which inhibits the participation in public life of marginal and vulnerable populations (Lister 1997, 2006; Williams 1991). While women have been able to win some 'inclusion' in a century-long struggle, children are still excluded from public life in the name of their own welfare.

Children's citizenship has gained attention since the new millennium as scholars and others have rethought children's position as members of a community or a nation as rights holders. While the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989), with its emphasis on children's participatory rights, provides the foundation for this (Ivernizzi and Williams 2008), current development agendas, such as those found in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), offer the building blocks of such rethinking. These agendas emphasise citizens' participation in development processes as well as accountability to citizens. As many of these agenda items relate directly or indirectly to children (eg, literacy and education, poverty reduction), it is inevitable that we need to rethink children's position in decision making because, as the literature suggests, a truly responsive and accountable development process could only be possible by ensuring children's active participation in decisions affecting them.

This paper, based on data from Pakistan, examines children's citizenship from the perspective of development policy and practice involving issues such as child protection, child labour and school enrolment in Pakistan.

Contemporary childhood debates typically view children as either welfare dependents or as right-bearing

citizens. In the 'welfarist' view, children are considered dependent, incompetent and vulnerable, needing care, protection and guidance, with their childhood determined by adults (Neale 2004). In the 'children as citizen' view, children are seen as people who have strengths and competencies, who need respect and recognition, and whose decisions influence their childhood (Neale 2004). Amongst the two views, the welfarist view is the dominant view in public policy. In paternalist public policies, children are represented politically by adults (such as their parents), leaving them more vulnerable and excluded (Cohen 2009). As a result, children's interests often fail to be understood because the adults who represent them conflate, or substitute, their own views for those of the children they seek to represent. Children's voices remain unheard in policy arenas as they do not have the right to vote, meaning that they are not citizens in a constitutional sense.

Child rights and citizenship

Citizenship can mean different things to different people¹ and children's citizenship in particular, is widely debated. For example, the UNCRC provides children with three sets of rights including protection, participation and provision rights. Sgritta (1997) notes that protection describes civil rights, participation evokes political rights and social rights come under provision rights. However, according to Qvortrup, 'children do not enjoy economic and political rights as autonomous citizens' (2005:11). For some, this implies the necessity to strive for full rights for children. For others, this is not desirable since it would ignore specific needs of children that are founded in human development (Roche 1999). There are thus discussions about children having 'partial citizenship' (Ivernizzi and Milne 2005:3), 'citizenship to the size of children' (Jans 2002:11), and 'social citizenship for children' (Stalford 2000:121). It is worth noting that the crosscutting theme in all these expressions is the recognition of children's role in society and community.

For adults, citizenship might be only a political term, but for children it is an entitlement to respect as human beings, recognition of their contribution to community and society and acknowledgement of their participation as social agents (Neale 2004). Scholars and practitioners in the field of child rights have been trying to translate children's citizenship from a scholarly discourse to a concept with practical utility. For example, Roger Hart (1992) documents a variety of projects involving meaningful child participation. In some cases, children negotiated with authorities and reached agreements which translate the rights demands into reality. An example is the movement of the working children of Bolivia concluding

an agreement with the mayor of La Paz that guaranteed the children free use of public spaces for their work (Tisdall and Liebel 2008). Similarly, Willow (2002) surveyed over 100 public sector initiatives that involved children of primary school age, and reflected on their effectiveness. All these attempts highlight children's active participation in decisions and processes impacting their lives, thus providing what Lister (2006) terms as a more inclusive view of citizenship.

Children's rights and development

In the field of development, unlike child rights, children's participation has received only scant attention. Andrea Cornwall (2002:25) noted a UNICEF report from the late 1980s arguing for community participation as an essential ingredient of structural adjustment 'with a human face'. However Cornwall (ibid) also noted that 'community participatory development interventions in the late 1980s served to deepen the exclusion of some groups such as women'. This echoes Robert Chambers (1974) who, since the beginning of participatory development practice in the 1970s, pointed out that participatory development might benefit the already powerful and further marginalise those with little agency or voice, such as children. However, the struggle of women and the poor for participation in development interventions has lessons to offer in terms of children's participation. Cornwall (2002:57) succinctly summarises these lessons:

being involved in a process is not equivalent to having a voice, voices need to be nurtured...translating voices into influence requires more than ways of capturing what people want to say; it involves efforts 'from above' and 'from below' (cf. Gaventa and Robinson 1998 in Cornwall and Gaventa 2001).

However, with regard to children's participation in development, these efforts are yet to be realised in most parts of the world, including Pakistan, as the data and analysis in this article shows.

Methods and data

Data for this paper were gathered through in-depth interviews with 30 policymakers and an analysis of Pakistan's child-related legislative and policy framework, as a part of a larger research study on child protection policy in Pakistan.² The study was conducted using a constructivist-interpretative research approach, which intends to understand the world of human experience suggesting that reality is socially constructed. Data were analysed thematically, by identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The study participants included members of parliament, senior bureaucrats and technical experts, all of whom have been directly involved in children-related policy since the country's ratification of the UNCRC in 1989. To maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, they have been cited using the date on which the interview was conducted. The legislative and policy framework included examining contextual factors relating to the national

constitution, national and provincial laws, policies and action plans related to children. Themes relating to the definition of child, children's rights, status of children in Pakistani society and in the national policy and legislative frameworks, generated the data analysed in this article.

Analysis and discussion

Almost universally, children's issues evoke both social and legal concerns. In socio-cultural terms, Pakistan is a patriarchal society based on age and gender hierarchies, where children are considered dependent on and the responsibility of their parents. On the legal side, Pakistan has ratified the UNCRC, which emphasises children's participatory rights, thus providing a foundation for children's citizenship. The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees fundamental rights for 'every citizen, wherever he may be' – children are not mentioned. For example, Article 9 provides for the security of the person, Article 11 prohibits slavery and forced labour, Article 14 ensures the dignity of man, Article 22 covers the rights of minorities and Article 25 promises equality for citizens, although Section 25(3) further provides that this equal protection clause shall not prevent the state from making special provisions for the protection of women and children. However, most of these principles of policy are really only aspirations and intentions of the state. In addition, the use of gendered language in the Constitution deprives vulnerable populations, such as women and children, from having a voice and from demanding their constitutional rights.

Legislation and children

Pakistan has some 80 pieces of legislation relating to children. These include laws relating to the criminal justice system, cultural issues, economic matters, education, family protection, health affairs, immigration, general welfare, registration and social welfare (Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education 2005). The National Registration Act 1973 is a major law establishing children's citizenship which provides for issuance of a national identity card to all citizens above the voting age of 18 years. Criminal responsibility is established at seven and the minimum marriageable age for females is set at 16 and for males at 18. Although these laws establish rights and duties for children, a basic element in Marshall's theory of citizenship, none of them directly addresses children's citizenship.

Different age limits for different purposes are set almost arbitrarily (Jabeen 2012) and further confuse a child's status in society, a status that is already divided into strict age and gender hierarchies. For example, a good majority of Pakistani children are economically active on a full-time basis – another element in Marshall's vision of citizenship. Although the legal working age is set at 14, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2011), children aged 10–14 years make up 18.48 percent of the Pakistani population and 13.08 percent of labour force participation, making this group 2.42 percent of the entire civilian labour force. Another 16.21 percent of the population is the 15–19 year age group, with a 37.02 percent

labour force participation rate, making this group 6 percent of the overall civilian labour force. During 2000-2009, 16 percent of urban and 29 percent of rural Pakistani women aged between 20 and 24 years were married before they were 18 years old (UNICEF 2011). However, neither participation in the labour force nor assuming adult responsibilities in a marriage change children's status as dependent, incompetent and in need of adult care and protection.

The role of parents

Against this backdrop of confusion regarding the status of children, policymakers in Pakistan carry a typically traditional and welfarist view of children. The majority believe that a child is a parents' responsibility, that children should be treated with love and care, and provided all necessities of life and brought up as a good Muslim. Many pointed to existing practices in Pakistani society where children live with their parents until marriage and parents pay for their education up to university level. Translated into policy, such beliefs mean that the state has little to do with children except for providing them with basic social services such as health and education. As argued by one respondent, 'Children belong to their parents, to the private sphere of home and the state could not and should not interfere in the private sphere' (Interview 1 June 2010). This implies that children's issues, as far as possible, should not be decided in the public sphere and can result in a development dilemma.

If, as argued by Pakistani policymakers, it is for parents to decide whether to send their children to school, to work, or to marry them off, and, parents have few options for themselves to work and fewer schools for children, then the potential decision is obvious. The issue of Pakistani children being sent as camel jockeys to the Gulf states provides a clear explanation as one senior bureaucrat stated,

It was difficult to understand why so many people sent their children to the Gulf ... Videos of camel races resulting in injury and/or death of children were shown to parents to make them fully aware of the consequences. Even then, some parents still decided to sacrifice one of their too many children to save the whole family from death due to starvation. (Interview 24 February 2010)

Another policymaker argued,

More than half the population is below 25 years of age, a very young population. Where should this young population be? In schools! But, we don't have enough schools ... then, there is the issue of the affordability of schooling ... Parents too, think that if a child is not in school for whatever reasons, s/he should go to work. S/he will earn something, learn some skill and become independent in future. (Interview 29 January 2010)

Yet another went as far as to argue, 'What is the use of having a definition of the child as a person under 18 years, if you cannot enrol her/him in school if s/he is out of

school, say at 14 years of age?' (Interview 2 February 2010).

Children's participation – whose responsibility?

The realisation of the state's constraints in providing education for all children or the parents' lack of choice in terms of opportunities for themselves and for their children did not lead to policymakers recognising the result of active economic participation of children in their own and in broader development efforts.

In fact, children's participation is almost an alien concept for many policymakers in Pakistan. The National Plan of Action for Children 2005 (NPA) claims child participation in the process of plan preparation (Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education 2005). However, many of those involved in the process did not remember any consultation with children. The then Secretary of Social Welfare (the ministry responsible for the preparation of the NPA) recalled,

Yes, some parents and children were brought to Islamabad and put together in a hall to talk about children's rights etc. but, it was a very tokenistic participation (Interview 30 March 2010).

This participant was of the view that children's issues do not get priority on national development agendas because children are not voters. Another said laughingly,

the Social Welfare Department has always considered children a very minor part of their work, because children are small (smiling) so, it has to be a small portion' (Interview 3 April 2010).

Similarly, research participants from the Ministry of Labour shared that parents or children were never consulted in the formulation of the National Policy and Action Plan for Elimination of Child Labour 2000.

These and similar views of other participants in my research reveal that it is not just that children's active participation and contribution is not acknowledged, it is that children's views are not considered worthwhile and therefore their views should not even be expressed. As children are *not voters* policymakers do not seem to prioritise children's issues and do not feel accountable to them. Worth mentioning, is that children are not only *not voters*, but many do not even have formal state recognition in terms of birth registration. Although the Government of Pakistan is using innovative technologies such as 'geo-mapping' to pinpoint low-birth registration areas, there are still 16 million children under age five whose births are not registered (UNICEF 2007). As a result, they may be denied health care or education, simply because macro level government policy and practice is based on statistics that do not count these children. Against this backdrop, what does non recognition of children's participation and/or their non-citizen status mean in terms of development futures in Pakistan?

Development futures

Many have argued that citizen participation has not been duly acknowledged in the MDG framework. I argue that some members of society, such as children, whose citizenship status is not recognised, are further marginalised in their national (and global) development processes. While children's rights, including the right to participation, are formally acknowledged by almost all countries of the world (the United States and Somalia being the only exceptions), their participation is either not acknowledged or it is tokenistic in state policy/national development agendas. In the case of Pakistan, if children's rights are not made central to future development and their participation is not ensured in national development policies and plans, the country may not achieve its major development goals. For example, Pakistan is struggling to meet the second MDG of 100 percent school enrolment – their current net enrolment is 56 percent (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2011). School drop-out rates, (mostly because children have to work), are one of the highest in the region³, child labour remains a serious issue and child poverty rates are alarming. There is a national emergency to achieve 100 percent school enrolment by 2015. However, no mechanisms are in place to ask children and/or parents why they were not enrolled earlier or to consult with them about how to avoid future drop-outs. Similarly, Pakistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy touches upon the child labour issue, but only as a labour market issue and not from a children's rights perspective. As highlighted earlier, children's participation was not sought in the formulation of the National Policy and Plan of Action for Elimination of Child Labour. After 12 years of implementation child labour has increased, not decreased. Considering the interdependent relationship between school enrolment, drop-out, child labour and poverty, Pakistan needs to make serious efforts for its future development. This involves recognition of children's participation in national development and of their status as (differently) full citizens to whom the state feels accountable. For development policy and practice, this means, efforts 'from above' and 'from below' (Cornwall 2002). As Cornwall and Gaventa (2001) suggest, on the one hand it requires strengthening the process of participation – the ways in which children's voices are heard through child-friendly forms of inclusion, consultation and mobilisation designed to inform and to influence institutions and policies. On the other hand, the accountability and responsiveness of these institutions and policies needs to be strengthened (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001). For policymakers and development practitioners, it implies that they take an active interest in seeking responsiveness (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001), try to access the information that children possess (Tisdall and Davis 2004), and engage themselves in critical reflection on pervasive policy discourses and prevailing policy narratives (Cornwall 2002). NGOs such as Save the Children, equipped with child-centred research and programming methodologies, can play a crucial role in opening policy spaces where a long term dialogue could take place between children and policymakers, and in translating

children's views into messages that could be heard under the policymakers' rules of the game (Tisdall and Davis 2004) thus ensuring the recognition of children's role in making development agendas truly inclusive, responsive and sustainable.

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Notes

- ¹ Such a debate is out of the scope of this article, for details see for example, Lister (2006), Roche (1999).
- ² Author's PhD thesis submitted in December 2012 to the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
- ³ Some believe highest in the world as quoted at a consultation on 'Education for all: Role of Media' organised by the Pakistan Coalition for Education and initiative of Society for Access to Quality Education (SAQE) on 15 May 2012, in Islamabad.

The future of equity in education: Rethinking the conceptual boundaries

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Introduction

Prior to the *Human Development Report* of 1990 development was conceptualised as an economic process, measured through a nation's Gross Domestic Product. Following a paradigm shift it is now conceptualised as *human development* (UNDP 1990), at the heart of which is education. During the 1980s and 1990s an increasing focus, not only on inequality between countries, but also on inequality *within* countries, led to the introduction of the inequality-adjusted Human Development Index. Nonetheless, measuring inequality in education presents complex conceptual, methodological and spatial constraints.

This paper focusses on the conceptual challenges of measuring inequality within education with an emphasis on partnership and policy.¹ It draws on the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) experience of monitoring education outcomes in Zimbabwe through the Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessment (ZELA) Program which uses language and mathematics tests, background questionnaires and school case studies to monitor changes in learning outcomes for Grade 3 pupils and evaluates the extent to which observed changes are attributable to UNICEF's Education Transition Fund program.

Rethinking the Conceptual

Improving access to education globally has been a key success of the Education for All movement, with a further 50 million children enrolled in schooling since 2000 in sub-Saharan Africa alone (UNESCO 2012:123). However, until recently, discussions around equity in education, and targets and indicators associated with the MDGs, have been bound by an 'equity as access' paradigm.

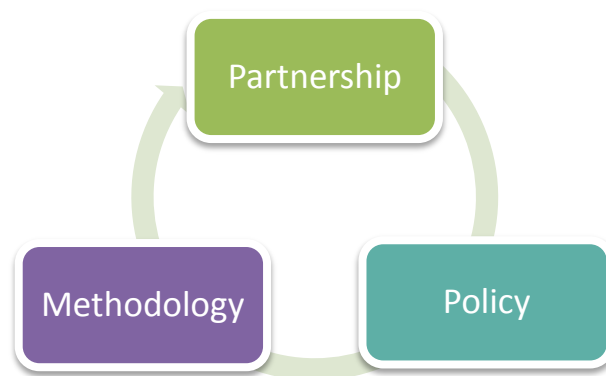
Gale (2010) argues that this approach is, crudely speaking, a 'bums on seats' approach, that obscures much from view. Equally important questions remain regarding which bums are on which seats and what takes place while certain bodies sit in certain seats? The shift from a focus on access, to an inclusion of the quality of education, was an important step towards improving equity in education in developing countries. Global partners working towards improving educational quality for all children issued an '*urgent call for action*' (UNESCO 2012:127) to improve the monitoring of literacy and numeracy acquisition.

Yet against the backdrop of the broader development political climate and in a moment in time defined by '... momentous shifts across the global and national landscapes' (Sassen 2000), improvements in measuring the quality of education will not be achieved through technical solutions alone. When considering development futures Michael Edwards rightly suggests that within development our solutions are 'getting thinner just as problems are

getting thicker ...' (Australian Council for International Development 2013).

Focussing on learning in the early years we argue that monitoring literacy and numeracy must address three interdependent areas:

1. Building stronger national and international partnerships;
2. development of a more robust methodology to measure quality; and
3. engagement in a more nuanced, and nationally orientated policy dialogue



Rethinking the spatial

There are significant challenges to measuring learning outcomes globally. At the national level, the expected learning outcomes to be achieved at the various levels of education are expressed in the curriculum, developed by national experts and often taking cue from national development goals and priorities. Large-scale international assessments provide reliable and comparable data on student learning; however learning domains, target populations and progress maps tend to be driven from outside of the national country context. International large-scale assessments are limited in their ability to inform national policy, to align with the national curriculum, to take account of the national educational context or to evaluate specific interventions and reforms aimed at improving education quality. National assessment systems can have different aims, objectives and target year levels from those of interest to development partners.

Rethinking methodology

Early-grade assessments in the developing country context have played an important role in advocating for improved resourcing to support literacy and numeracy in the early years and evaluating investments in the education sector but they have not been without criticism which has been expressed as both technical and epistemological concerns.

Technical concerns include a reliance on assumptions regarding the way that children learn across cultures and contexts and a misalignment with the national curriculum (Goodman et al. 2014:35). Epistemological concerns include the narrowing of literacy definitions and the use of assessments to disseminate foreign values (op.cit:15). It has been suggested that removing local educators from the assessment process removes the ability of assessments to capture the ‘dynamic interaction among the reader’s existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language and the context of the reading situation’ (Wixon 2010). Best et al. (2013) argue that assessments used to monitor and evaluate the quality of education can be ‘seen as an extension of the dominance and institutionalization of a scientific discourse, in which scientific instruments, such as assessments, have a global cultural authority’ (Best et al. 2013:15). Quoting Benavot and Kamens (2011), the writers go on to state ‘[t]he enactment of global norms is especially important for developing countries, as they are accountable to adhere to global values’ (loc.cit).

Yet the global value that quality in education can and should be measured through scientific instruments such as learning assessments; is contested. The writers only gesture towards the difficult philosophical landscape of epistemological discourse whereby feminist, post-colonial and critical race theories trounce the ideal of a ‘detached’ observer, free from social, ethnic, historical or political contexts. Rather, the writers rely on constructed narratives of the ‘global cultural authority’ of scientific discourse, ignoring the processes of knowledge selection that privilege certain kinds of knowledge over others, often through the language of scientific discourse itself. Connell (1993:31) states ‘Once produced, knowledge still has to be selected or compiled ... This is not done in heaven by a committee of epistemological angels ...’. Therefore, despite the respectability of international pushes towards evidence-based policy through national and international learning assessments, methodological and epistemological risks are ever-present.

Scholars dealing with ways of knowing and knowledge/ power dynamics tend to agree that disrupting established power structures can be undertaken by valuing ‘other’ knowledges and eliciting silenced knowledge – termed oppositional knowledge (Collins, 2000). For Freedman (2009), ‘background assumptions are often invisible and only with the contrasting values of another interest group do our particular value commitments come to light’.

In order to mitigate methodological and epistemological risks the ZELA program seeks to work with and through government at each stage of the assessment cycle. Although epistemological concerns can never be completely resolved, it is the case that by establishing practices and processes that value a broad range of knowledges and understandings, working in collaboration with national institutions and building on existing structures, the ZELA program is able to engage meaningfully in challenging assumptions based on context-bound values.

Working in partnership

In order to address these issues, the ZELA program is national in its orientation, yet is informed by international best practice. Thus, the program is designed for the Zimbabwean context, aligned to the national curriculum and the source of evidence to inform national policy, reforms and interventions. Every aspect of the ZELA program is undertaken with and through government. This increases the likelihood of capturing context-bound nuances regarding the way that children learn. Support by a team of international technical experts increases the likelihood of credible results.

The ZELA program is strengthened through built-in and bolt-on learning opportunities for government counterparts in the technical aspects of the assessment cycle. Learning opportunities take the form of learning-by-doing, workshops, international orientation delegations, technical assistance and technical support placements. The program is strengthened through opportunities to engage with, and rely on, national educators and experts in the development of tests and the interpretation of results. Program activity responsibilities take place within a hand-over strategy, whereby government colleagues take increasing leadership in the areas of test quality assurance processes, data analysis, reporting and the dissemination of results. The handover strategy is informed by evidence suggesting that the impact of national and international assessment programs on educational policy in developing countries is greater when assessments prioritise *local* policy concerns (Braun and Kanjee 2006) and when there is recognition of the priorities and needs of key stakeholders and partners at the national level. In this way, working in partnership, building a more robust methodology and engaging in policy dialogue are interdependent.

Conclusion

This case study explains a new and more useful way of measuring educational outcomes for the future and the importance of working in partnerships. Working in partnership further increases the contextual understanding required for making technical decisions related to the ability of pupils at the target grade, the most suitable categories for data collection of background characteristics and national policy needs.

The program aims to escape the binary options of ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ development projects, by partnering with national institutions and building on established frameworks in order to ensure that the outputs of the study are fit for the context in which they must function. The research literature indicates that such collaborative partnerships not only increase the likelihood of results take-up and adequate policy responses, but also mitigate epistemological concerns and build important sustainability outcomes into the project plan.

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Notes

- ¹ This paper is one of three published elsewhere which also focus on conceptual, methodological and spatial challenges to measuring quality in education.

Implementing the human rights based approach to meet the needs of future generations

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Introduction

Several decades ago, charities began the transition from welfare to sustainable development approaches (Theis 2004). Now many Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) working in international aid and development have moved from a needs based approach to that of human rights (Winter 2009). However, anecdotal evidence suggests many are finding the transition challenging, particularly in operationalising the new approach. While the change is organisational, the focus of this paper is on the quality and impact of training to provide NGOs with the capacity to work within the human rights based approach (HRBA). It identifies opportunities to strengthen the application of HRBA that should lead to better outcomes for those living in poverty.

Human rights and poverty

The human rights based approach to poverty eradication explains poverty as a result of the inaccessibility or denial of fundamental human rights (Seewald 2011). As explained by former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson (2005:38) the HRBA should be understood as:

... a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to protecting and promoting human rights. The rights based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of the human rights system into plans, policies and processes of development.

For the purpose of this paper the human rights based approach and the rights based approach (RBA) are one and the same.

The arguments for the rights based approach are compelling and according to Theis (op.cit):

... the combined forces of human rights, development and social activism are more likely to succeed at eradicating poverty and achieving justice and equity than each of these approaches on their own.

Implementing the HRBA

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the former AusAID have formally acknowledged the positive impact of the HRBA in overcoming the challenges of poverty (Winter 2009). ACFID has altered its Code of Conduct to urge international aid and development organisations to respect and foster internationally recognised human rights and Australian aid programming has directly linked its activities with human

rights. As a result many Australian NGOs working in the international aid and development sector are reinventing themselves as rights based organisations (loc.cit). However, many are finding implementation challenging (Arnold 2013; Winter 2009) as they are still in the initial phase of clarifying the principles, concepts and standards of HRBA programming (Winter 2010). Phase 2 relates to application of the principles, concepts and standards to existing tools, methods and approaches while phase 3 is associated with establishing simple and effective approaches, beyond existing boundaries.

For organisations, embracing human rights is complex, involving significant modifications to their strategy and culture, which in turn impacts on their internal systems, structures and processes (Pillay 2011; Waddell, Cummings and Worley, 2000:431). According to Waddell, Cummings and Worley, the new paradigm for organisational management and leadership involves qualitative differences in the way people perceive, think and behave in the organisation; active leadership; and considerable amounts of ongoing learning. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, learning needs to foster HRBA knowledge and skills and, ultimately, HRBA values, attitudes, and behaviours (Pillay, 2011). The knowledge and skills acquired should be applied by management and integrated into NGO policies, systems and processes (Pillay 2011; Theis 2004: 46). Theis (2004:46) points out that rights based management is about facilitating the advancement of human rights values and standards throughout the entire organisation including programs, human resource management, marketing and communication, finance, and fundraising.

The way forward

The international community is increasingly promoting human rights education and training through United Nations initiatives such as the World Programme for Human Rights Education and the United Nations Declaration for Human Rights Education and Training as a means to preventing human rights violations and violent conflicts, promoting equality and sustainable development, and enhancing people's participation in decision-making within democratic systems (Pillay 2011).

Research methodology

To determine whether HRBA training is achieving its objectives a recent study in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Human Rights was undertaken on the quality and impact of training on the ability of NGO personnel to work within the HRBA in the international aid and development sector. A sample of

people were interviewed from Australian based international aid and development organisations to determine how well they understood the approach and how well they were able to implement it in their work. The questionnaire included how personnel implement the HRBA in the organisation, challenges and issues with applying it, and the availability and scope of HRBA training. A case study pro forma was developed listing several development issues in order to elicit responses from participants on how they would approach the example through a HRBA lens. The case study provided particularly rich data.

The findings indicated that training is not sufficiently comprehensive or varied to ensure a commonly held understanding of the HRBA or to fully implement it in international aid and development programs. While participants did evaluate against human rights treaties and principles but not at all stages of the program. In addition, the large majority did not recognise interdependence or indivisibility as important to their HRBA attempt to address the underlying or root causes of a problem, or any unjust power relations – aspects that are important, unique and special to the HRBA.

Secondly, there appears to be a lack of training that is specific to making the change to a HRBA in the sector. Participants reported ‘a real void in direct HRBA training’ and a lack of awareness of where to go to receive specific HRBA training. In addition, participants reported HRBA training is often embedded in other courses and not differentiated from other approaches. Thirdly, training did not bridge the gap between theory and practice. Terms and concepts were often explained, however practical application of the HRBA was not, or vice versa. Fourthly, training lacked depth to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours required to fully implement the HRBA. Finally, training had limited practical resources, was not specific to the sector, and trainers were unlikely to be HRBA experts.

Recommendations

In light of the above, a suite of flexible HRBA training offerings were recommended to develop a deeper understanding of HRBA theory and practice, the legal and

broader frameworks, and the opportunity to understand how HRBA language and tools can be used effectively to make sustainable changes. Recommendations include:

- More targeted HRBA training for program and non program workers;
- flexible HRBA training sessions and programs that are specific to the sector;
- short term intensive targeted training sessions; and
- more in-depth training to develop the knowledge and skills required to fully implement the HRBA.

Providing training to support this complex change is important to build the capacity of those working in the sector now and in the future and to realise the full potential of the HRBA to facilitate gains in achieving rights, meet the millennium development goals, and overcome the multidimensional challenges of poverty.

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Reconnecting food security and nutrition security

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Introduction

The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets related to hunger and nutrition are unlikely to be met by 2015. These targets include halving the proportion of the population consuming below the minimum daily level of dietary energy. The baseline proportion in 1990–92 was 23.2 percent; thus, the target in 2015 is 11.6 percent. However, in 2010–12, 14.9 percent of the world's population (852 million people) were consuming less than the minimum energy intake (FAO 2013a). Disparities remain large in the rate of reduction in undernourishment among regions and countries. Progress has been relatively swift in South East Asia, East Asia, Central Asia and Latin America. However, the pace of change in the Caribbean, South Asia and, especially, Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, appears to be too slow to meet the MDG target (Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat 2013).

Another MDG target is to halve the proportion of children under five years of age who are underweight. Globally, this proportion fell from 25 percent in 1990 to 16 percent in 2011. Still, this rate of progress is insufficient to meet the MDG target by 2015. Underweight prevalence in 2011 was highest in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (ibid). The joint effects of foetal growth restriction, child undernutrition, and vitamin A and zinc deficiencies are estimated to cause more than three million deaths annually, or 45 percent of deaths of children younger than five years (Black et al 2013). Thus, an inadequate reduction in the rate of nutritional deficiencies also constrains progress towards achieving MDG 4: to reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

The Asian enigma

'In the public imagination, the home of the malnourished child is Sub-Saharan Africa. But the worst-affected region is South Asia' (Ramalingaswami, Jonnson and Rohde 1996:1). Around half the world's undernourished children reside in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal (ibid). However, comparisons between South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are not straightforward. While the highest rates of low energy intake, or hunger, are in Sub-Saharan Africa with lower rates in South Asia, wasting and underweight rates are higher in South Asia than Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrating that there are factors other than inadequate access to food that influence child undernutrition. The prevalence of underweight children under five years in South Asia in 2010 was 32.5 percent compared with 19.6 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNSCN 2011). However, progress in South Asia since 1990 has been steady while very little improvement has occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa (Black et al 2013).

One hypothesis seeking to explain the unexpectedly high prevalence of child undernutrition in South Asia is based on the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition (Ramalingaswami, Jonnson and Rohde 1996). Small adult women are more likely to have low birth weight babies because maternal size has an important influence on birth weight. Newborns with a low birth rate are more likely to have growth failure during childhood. In turn, girls born with a low birth rate are more likely to become adult women with small stature. The incidence of low birth rate in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2006 was 14–15 percent compared with 28 percent in India and 21 percent in Bangladesh and Nepal (UNSCN 2011). Poor maternal nutritional in South Asia is further indicated by an average weight gain during pregnancy of 5kg compared with 10kg in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ramalingaswami, Jonnson and Rohde 1996). Moreover, anaemia prevalence in women in South Asia is 60 percent (up to 83 percent in pregnant Indian women) compared with 40 percent in Africa (UNSCN 2011). Anaemia in a pregnant woman is a risk factor for having a low birth rate baby (Qadir and Bhutta 2009).

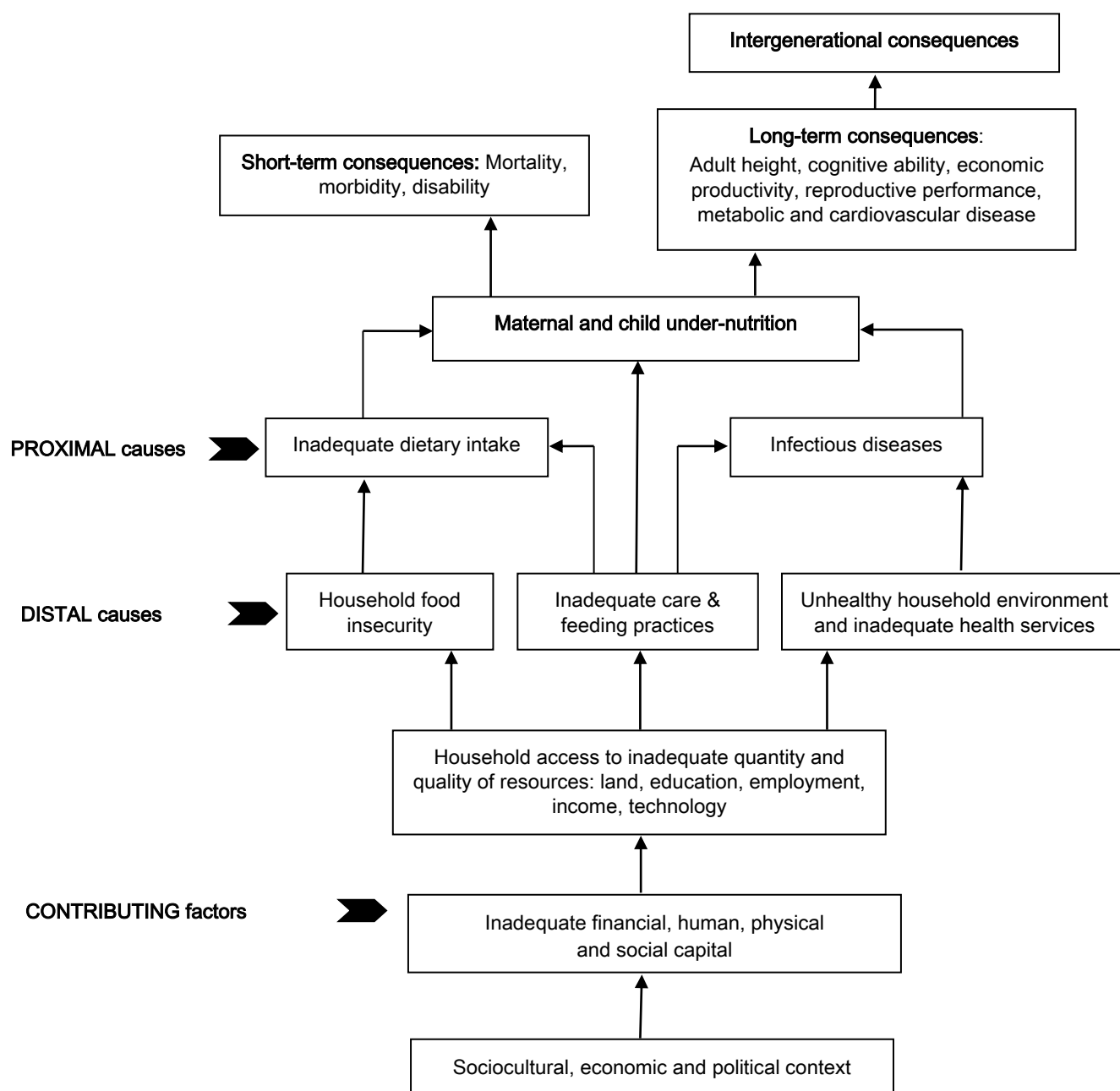
Thus, gender inequality leading to maternal undernutrition has been posed as one of the causes of the Asian enigma. Another factor cited as important is the poorer access to clean water and sanitation in South Asia, compared with Sub-Saharan Africa.

Causes of undernutrition

The evidence base for a causal framework for child undernutrition has been summarised by UNICEF and is shown in Figure 1 (UNICEF 2013). This updated framework is based on a series of articles on maternal and child nutrition in *The Lancet* in June 2013 (Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group 2013). The proximal risk factors for undernutrition have been classified as (i) inadequate access to nutrient-rich foods; (ii) poor feeding and care-giving practices (such as not exclusively breastfeeding until six months of age), often influenced by cultural beliefs and taboos; and (iii) high burden of infectious diseases. Distal causes include (i) inadequate food security, including availability, economic access, and food utilisation; (ii) inadequate knowledge and resources for feeding and care giving at the maternal, household, and community level; and (iii) poor access to and/or use of health services and an unhygienic environment.

Contributing factors to undernutrition include gender inequality, poor water and sanitation, high fertility due to lack of family planning services, low education of parents, especially mothers, inadequate agricultural services, and the lack of social safety nets.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the determinants of child under-nutrition (UNICEF, 2013)



A framework of interventions to address undernutrition

There is currently a consensus on the classification of nutrition interventions, as described in the 2013 *Lancet* series and promoted by the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement (Secretariat of the SUN Movement 2011). *Nutrition-specific* interventions or programmes address the proximal risk factors for foetal and child nutrition and development by ensuring adequate food and nutrient intake; sound feeding, care-giving and parenting practices; and low burden of infectious diseases (Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group 2013). *Nutrition-sensitive* interventions or programmes address the distal and contributing risk factors for foetal and child nutrition and development by promoting food security; adequate care-giving resources at the maternal, household and com-

munity levels; and access to health services and a safe and hygienic environment – and incorporate specific nutrition goals and actions (ibid). *Nutrition security* is achieved when secure access to an appropriately nutritious diet is coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health services and care, to ensure a healthy and active life for all household members (Secretariat of the SUN Movement 2012).

Achieving food security and nutrition security

It is now timely to bring together the two concepts of food security and nutrition security in order to see how they can be better integrated in development practice. *Food security* exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets

their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO 1996). Household food security is the application of this concept at the family level, with individuals within households as the focus of concern.

Food security

From this definition, four main dimensions of food security are defined:

- Physical availability of food addresses the 'supply side' of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade.
- *Access* includes the affordability and allocation of food. An adequate supply of food at the national or international level does not in itself guarantee household level food security. Concerns about insufficient food access have resulted in a greater policy focus on incomes, expenditure, markets and prices in achieving food security objectives.
- Food *utilisation* is commonly understood as the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food. Sufficient energy and nutrient intake by individuals is the result of good care and feeding practices, food preparation, diversity of the diet, and appropriate intra-household distribution of food. Combined with good biological utilisation of food consumed, this determines the nutritional status of individuals.
- *Stability* of the other three dimensions over time: Even if food intake is adequate today, a person is still considered to be food insecure if s/he has inadequate access to food on a periodic basis, risking a deterioration of nutritional status. Adverse weather conditions, deterioration of soil fertility, political instability, or economic factors (unemployment, rising food prices) may have an impact on food security status. For food security objectives to be realised, all four dimensions must be fulfilled simultaneously.

The status of women within their culture or community is central to strategies to address food security. For as long as they are unequal or of lower status they will have limited access to resources or finance and will be unable to plan for periods of food shortage.

Nutrition security

Clearly, the food utilisation component of food security is essentially about maximising the nutritional benefits of food. Nutrition security is achieved by adopting a public health approach, incorporating secure access to sufficient, appropriately nutritious food, a sanitary environment, and adequate health services and care (DFID 2009). However, in practice, so-called food security development programmes mainly focus on the availability and/or access components. For example, the official definition of food security within the Australian aid programme refers only to availability (through investments in agricultural productivity, distribution systems and policy reform) and access (through higher cash incomes and efficient local markets) (AusAID 2012).

Negin et al observed that the Asian Green Revolution did not always lead to improved nutrition outcomes because it focussed on the 'food availability' component

of food security over the food access and food utilisation components, resulting in the neglect of essential nutrition elements (Negin et al 2009). They note that although India benefited from significantly higher crop yields as a result of the Green Revolution, the burden of child under-nutrition remains one of the highest in the world. The Asian Green Revolution led to an increase in cultivation of cereal grains like wheat and a narrowing of the food base, which may have led to a decrease in dietary diversity, especially for the poor. In addition, the Asian Green Revolution emphasised high yielding seeds, chemical fertilisers and mechanisation, which may have displaced many women from their traditional roles in agriculture. This was compounded by entrenched inequality of access to nutritious food within households. The authors call for a more thorough integration of all components of food security into the proposed African Green Revolution, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that women share equally the benefits of new technologies.

Integrating food security and nutrition security

Traditionally, the different components of food security have often been addressed by different and unconnected development actors. Agriculturalists have tended to focus on food production, storage, processing, and transport of food crops. Nutritionists have focussed on food preparation, nutrition knowledge, cultural traditions, and the measurement of nutritional outcomes. Health workers have focussed on health care, child-care practices, and illness management. Some attention has been given by microfinance practitioners to income generation and household access to food. Government systems do not lend themselves to inter-sectoral cooperation to improve food and nutrition security even at the district level where agricultural extension officers rarely work closely with public health workers. Agricultural development programmes rarely measure nutrition outcome indicators.

The SUN Movement

Since it was formed in 2010, 45 low and middle-income countries have joined the SUN Movement, which is supported by a large number of donor governments, international NGOs, universities, and private sector entities. The SUN framework recognises the need to integrate actions by all nutrition-relevant sectors. One of the key elements of the framework is to:

take a multi-sectoral approach that includes integrating nutrition in related sectors and using indicators of undernutrition as one of the key measures of overall progress in these sectors. The closest actionable links are to food security (including agriculture), social protection (including emergency relief) and health (including maternal and child health care, immunisation, adolescent health, and family planning). There are also important links to education, water supply and sanitation as well as to cross-cutting issues like gender equality, governance (including accountability and corruption), and state fragility (Secretariat of the SUN Movement 2011:1–2).

The framework promotes country ownership, inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders, and strong, country-led nutrition governance, including coordination across sectors and across stakeholder groups.

Nutrition-sensitive initiatives

Nutrition-sensitive interventions should aim to have an impact on nutritional status, for example by: (i) including specific nutrition goals, objectives and actions; (ii) including a nutrition objective in the theory of change; and (iii) having at least one outcome or impact indicator related to improved nutrition. Moreover, nutrition-sensitive interventions should ensure they ‘do no harm’ to nutrition outcomes, for example by: (i) seeking, identifying and mitigating any harmful nutrition impacts from actions in other sectors (such as agriculture and rural development); (ii) protecting the nutritional status of women and girls; and (iii) supporting caregivers’ ability to engage in optimal infant and young child feeding practices (such as exclusive breastfeeding) (Le Cuziat and Mattinen 2011).

One simple measure is to ensure that communities whose income increases due to interventions such as growing high-value vegetables focus on women as key household providers and receive sound education on using that income to improve household dietary diversity and equality.

It has long been known that water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes reduce the incidence of

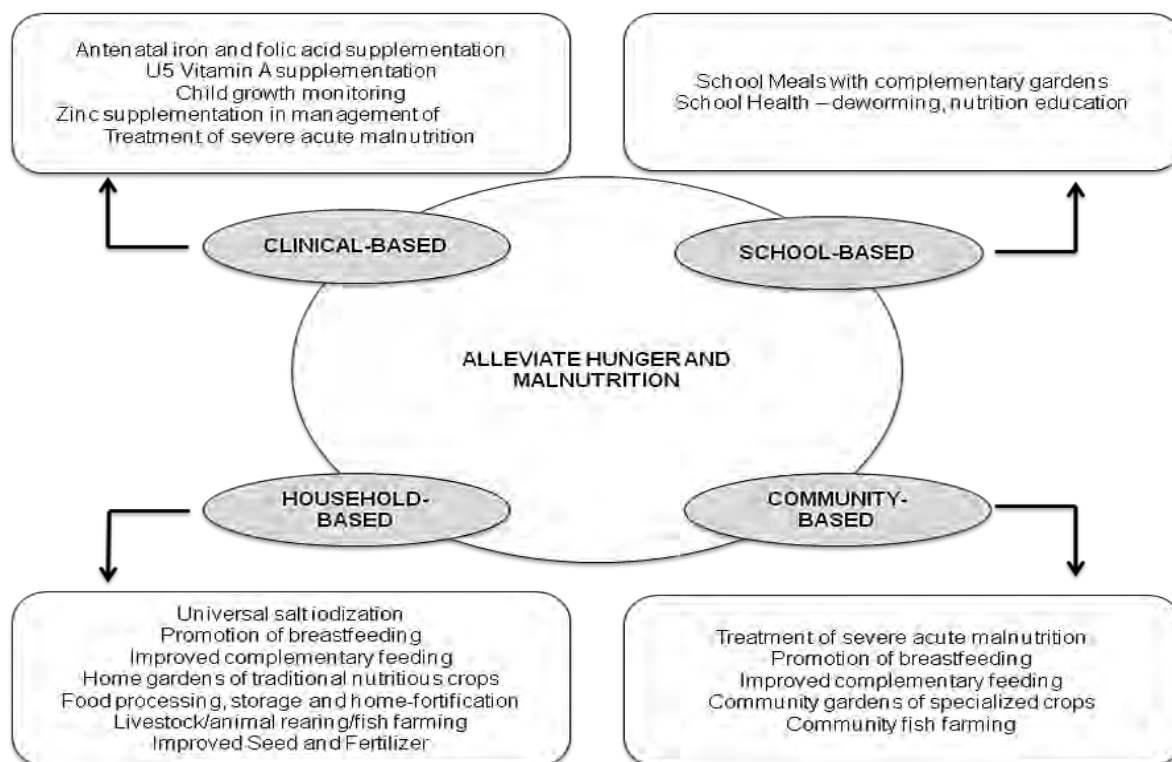
diarrhoeal diseases. Furthermore, there is a clear causal association between diarrhoeal disease and child undernutrition. Recent studies suggest that access to sanitation can explain much of the variation in rates of stunting (Spears 2013). Therefore, WASH programmes should integrate hygiene and nutrition education and include maternal and child nutrition indicators in their evaluation protocols.

Millennium Villages Project

The Millennium Villages Project is an example of an integrated, community-based approach to food and nutrition security in 15 villages across Sub-Saharan Africa. The project supports a combination of nutrition specific interventions, such as micronutrient supplements and the treatment of severe acute malnutrition, delivered at the clinic, community, and household levels, and nutrition sensitive interventions such as improved access to seeds and fertiliser, homestead gardens, crop diversification, and school meals, deworming and nutrition education (Figure 2) (Fanzo et al 2011).

A mid-term evaluation across all the Millennium villages found significant increases in crop yields (almost six-fold in Malawi); declines in the proportion of households reporting not enough food to eat during the previous 12 months; significant declines in the prevalence of stunting in all but two villages (a mean decline of 14 percent); increased crop and dietary diversity; and an increase in the contraceptive prevalence rate (ibid).

Figure 2: Nutrition strategy of the Sauri Millennium Village, Kenya



Nutrition-focussed agriculture

Agriculture interacts with nutrition on many levels (e.g., dietary diversity, protein availability, income generation, aflatoxin control, and micronutrient availability). One of the most valuable contributions by agriculture to human nutrition is the development of crops that have high intrinsic nutritional value. Biofortification is the breeding of crops to increase their nutritional value either through conventional selective breeding or through genetic engineering. In 2008, the Copenhagen Consensus on solutions to major global challenges found that biofortification ranked fifth among the top 30 cost-effective interventions (Copenhagen Consensus Center 2008).

One example of biofortification is orange-fleshed sweet potato, which is rich in β -carotene, the precursor of retinol (vitamin A). In an extremely resource poor area in Mozambique, the effectiveness of introducing orange-fleshed sweet potato was assessed in an integrated agriculture and nutrition intervention. Children in households growing and consuming orange-fleshed sweet potato had significantly higher levels of serum retinol at the end of the study compared with children in control households (Low et al 2007). An estimated 250 million pre-school children are vitamin A deficient; therefore, the potential nutritional benefits from consuming orange-fleshed sweet potato are enormous. Maize and rice have also been fortified with vitamin A precursors. So-called 'golden rice', which is rich in β -carotene, is being widely grown in the Philippines, despite protests by groups opposed to genetic engineering technology.

Two billion people – over 30 percent of the world's population – are anaemic. In developing countries, 50 percent of pregnant woman and 40 percent of preschool children are estimated to be anaemic. In Burundi, the Institut des Sciences Agronomiques du Burundi and the Centre International d'Agriculture Tropicale have developed high-iron beans through conventional selective breeding. High iron traits have been bred into a range of beans, with high yields and the additional qualities of pest, disease, and drought resistance. In addition to beans, both conventionally bred and genetically modified iron-rich rice are in the pipeline.

Addressing gender inequality

Gender inequality is rarely addressed in a systematic manner. Despite it being central to women's role in food production; intra-household distribution of food; and food utilisation. Throughout the food and nutrition cycle, women and girls are severely disadvantaged. In low and middle-income countries, women produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food (FAO 2013b). However, most women involved in subsistence agriculture live in patriarchal communities where men are heads of households, imposing many constraints on their capacity to address food security and poverty issues within the household. As Negin et al noted, women tended to miss out on the gains made during the Asian Green Revolution and may also miss out in Africa unless gender inequalities are addressed. Women and girls are often discriminated

against within households where the distribution of the quality and quantity of foods favours men and boys. Undernourished girls tend to grow into undernourished adolescents. If they become pregnant as adolescents, due to cultural practices such as child brides, they are more likely to give birth to low birth rate babies, thus perpetuating the inter-generational cycle of undernutrition.

The number of female-headed households is increasing significantly in rural areas in most developing countries as many rural men migrate for employment. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 31 percent of rural households are headed by women, many because their husbands have died of AIDS, and in Latin America and Asia women head 17 percent and 14 percent of households, respectively (FAO 2013b). The Food and Agriculture Organization has identified the potential consequences of the absence of male labour as declining yields and outputs or shifts in production toward less nutritious crops requiring less labour; increased reliance on child labour; and diminished access to labour-saving technologies.

Negin et al (ibid) stress the need to ensure that women farmers gain access to inputs, training, and opportunities and are not displaced from their leading agricultural role. Women need to be guaranteed access to control over their land and should be encouraged to participate in agricultural income management programmes and microfinance opportunities. Phillips (2009) argues that the individual empowerment paradigm is not sufficient to reduce inequality. For transformative change to occur grass roots feminist action, which supports the emancipation of women, is most likely to succeed in developing sustainable solutions.

Conclusions

As we approach 2015, it is timely to re-think the approach to reducing maternal and child undernutrition – one of the greatest global development challenges. There is evidence of recent high-level political commitment to reducing hunger and malnutrition as witnessed by the launch of the SUN Movement in 2010 by then US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton. Australia joined the SUN Movement in 2013. The twin track approach outlined in the SUN Framework for Action should be adopted globally together with implementation research to document the effectiveness of such an approach. Sectors that impact on nutrition, such as agriculture, education, and WASH need to be mobilised to maximise the effects of their development work on nutrition. However, unless gender inequality throughout the food and nutrition cycle is seriously addressed, sustainable progress will be impossible.

Food security *and* nutrition security need to be inseparable.

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A comprehensive approach to addressing under-nutrition: Integrating water, sanitation and hygiene interventions into nutrition programming

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The last two decades have seen increasing investment in global health and progress towards improving maternal and child health (Bhutta et al. 2013). However, many low and middle income countries will fail to reach their Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets that address the health of women and children (Singh 2012). Though the MDGs provided a clear framework for action and quantifiable goals and targets, their interpretation in practice has often led to siloed, narrowly focussed programming that tends to ignore the key social and environmental factors which underpin human health (McMichael and Butler 2006). Single health condition-driven programmes inadequately acknowledge the inter-relatedness of education, gender, access to water, sanitation and other concerns in individuals' and communities' health and wellbeing. Failing to address social and environmental determinants of health will hinder progress towards achieving the MDGs and drive inequity, resulting in the poorest and most vulnerable being excluded from key services and care (Baum et al. 2009).

Recently, there has been increasing recognition that in order to effectively and equitably address health conditions such as under-nutrition, enhanced cross-sectoral collaboration is essential (Action for Global Health 2013). This paper assesses the importance of addressing environmental determinants of health as they relate to under-nutrition. It explores the evidence and frameworks for integrated approaches to under-nutrition through focussing on the role of water, sanitation and hygiene in comprehensive nutrition programming. Though there is limited evaluated evidence of the outcome of large-scale integrated nutrition programmes, key lessons from newly implemented programmes offer insight into the challenges and possible benefits of such programmes.

Under-nutrition: A global public health crisis

Under-nutrition is a major public health problem. Globally, almost one in four children under five has stunted growth and an additional 52 million children suffer wasting (low weight for height) (Black et al. 2013). Chronic under-nutrition, measured through low height for age or stunting, leaves children susceptible to disease, restricts their cognitive development and can result in reduced productivity and poorer economic outcomes in later life. Furthermore, under-nutrition is estimated to cause nearly half of the seven million deaths of children aged under five years annually (ibid). Though East Asian and Pacific Island countries have substantially reduced the number of stunted children in their regions over the last two decades, several countries still have stunting rates higher than 40 percent (ChildInfo 2013).

The causes and underlying factors that contribute to an individual's nutritional status are numerous and complex. Key direct causes of under-nutrition include direct food intake and diseases such as diarrhoea. Underlying causes of under-nutrition can include: food security and food utilisation; care practices such as exclusive breastfeeding; environmental factors such as water and sanitation and, access to quality health care services (Black et al. 2008). Additionally, there are several basic, structural factors that influence nutritional status, such as social structures, governance, security and natural and financial resources. It is clear that health, particularly nutrition, cannot be disaggregated from social, political and environmental contexts, and this complexity of factors that influence nutrition exemplifies the need for comprehensive approaches to address the burden of under-nutrition.

Why WASH and nutrition?

Environmental determinants, such as access to safe water, safe sanitation and good hygiene practices, are fundamental underlying causes of under-nutrition, and are often overlooked in nutrition programming. The relationship between under-nutrition and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) in children is not adequately prioritised in either health or WASH practice, and thus, provides a clear context to discuss the importance and benefits of integrated, cross-sectoral comprehensive nutrition programming. Several direct and indirect links have been shown between WASH and under-nutrition (Velleman and Pugh 2013). The World Health Organization estimates that 50 percent of under-nutrition is associated intestinal worm infections or repeated diarrhoeal episodes due to insufficient access to adequate WASH (Velleman and Pugh 2013). Access to improved water quality, safe sanitation practices and hand washing with soap can reduce the incidence of diarrhoea by 17 percent, 36 percent and 48 percent respectively (Cairncross et al. 2010). However, there is emerging evidence to show that the lack of access to adequate WASH has greater impacts on nutritional status than the impact caused by diarrhoea alone. Faecally transmitted infections (FTIs), including soil transmitted parasitic intestinal worms, typhoid, hepatitis A and trachoma, are a vicious cycle in health: infection increases the chance of under-nutrition, which, in turn, leaves one more susceptible to infection (Chambers and von Medeazza 2013). In addition to FTIs, environmental enteropathy is hypothesised to reduce an individual's ability to absorb nutrients effectively, and to increase susceptibility to infection. Environmental enteropathy is a subclinical condition that does not manifest with obvious clinical symptoms such as

diarrhoea making it difficult to diagnose and measure prevalence. Caused by frequent ingestion of faecal pathogens, it results in intestinal inflammation and structural changes in the small intestine which are thought to be irreversible if it occurs during the first two years of life. The structural and physiological changes in the intestine result in reduced absorption of nutrients and an increase in permeability of pathogens into the gut (Humphrey 2009). Therefore, the impact of WASH on under-nutrition is likely to be underestimated if the focus is exclusively on the impact of diarrhoea and intestinal worm infections. The roles of access to safe water, safe sanitation and good hygiene practices are fundamental to improving a population's nutrition, and their integration into nutrition programmes is essential.

Frameworks for integrated nutrition interventions

Cooperation and integration between WASH- and health-focussed sectors and programmes will be crucial in addressing under-nutrition. However, integrating WASH interventions into nutrition programmes extends beyond linking exclusively with the health sector. It is necessary to address nutrition through a comprehensive, collaborative and integrated approach which requires co-operation across several sectors, including education, market chains, agriculture, local government structures and access to finance. Acknowledging the complexity of factors contributing to an individual's nutritional status, and fully understanding the key determinants driving under-nutrition in each national and local context, is essential to design, implement, coordinate and evaluate comprehensive nutrition interventions.

The need for comprehensive nutrition approaches has been reflected in international frameworks and guidelines. The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Framework (Scaling Up Nutrition 2013) is a movement that unites governments, civil society, the UN, external donors, businesses and researchers on the principle that all people have the right to food and good nutrition. Within the SUN Movement, national leaders are prioritising efforts to address malnutrition. Countries are putting context-appropriate policies in place, collaborating with partners to implement programmes with shared nutrition goals, and mobilising resources to effectively scale up nutrition across several sectors. The SUN Framework draws on the distinction between *nutrition-specific interventions*, i.e. those focussed on immediate causes of nutrition such as micronutrient supplementation, treatment of severe acute malnutrition and exclusive breastfeeding, and *nutrition-sensitive interventions*, or those that promote nutrition through integration within social protection interventions that are responsive to the nutritional needs of individuals, households and societies, such as reproductive health services (World Bank 2013). Access to WASH is recognised as an essential nutrition-sensitive intervention. It is crucial that nutrition programmes incorporate both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, as only 20 percent of stunting will be averted if there is 90 percent coverage of nutrition-specific interventions;

nutrition-sensitive interventions are essential to address the remaining 80 percent of stunting (Shrestha et al. 2012). Policy documents by major donors and global health actors also emphasise the importance of including both nutrition-specific and -sensitive interventions (DFID 2013; Sanchez-Montero et al. 2011; USAID 2013a; World Bank 2013).

Integration in practice

While there is academic evidence to support the integration of nutrition and WASH (as well as other nutrition sensitive interventions), large-scale interventions are currently in the early stages of implementation, and rigorous outcome and impact evaluations are not yet available. USAID and DFID are leading two large-scale integrated programmes in Nepal and India respectively (DFID 2013; USAID 2013a). To illustrate integration in practice, USAID's Integrated Nutrition Program *Suaahara* (Good Nutrition) in Nepal provides a clear example. Nepal has some of the highest under-nutrition rates in the world: 41 percent of children under-five suffer from stunting, 13 percent from wasting, and 39 percent are underweight (USAID 2013c). While the Government has made major strides in recent years in combating child mortality, rates of maternal and child under-nutrition have remained stagnant (USAID 2013b).

In support of the first National Health Sector Plan (NHSP), USAID began an integrated nutrition programme, *Suaahara*¹ – *Building Strong and Smart Families*, in 2011, which integrates nutrition, hygiene, agriculture, family planning, reproductive health and child health activities at the household and community level in 20 rural districts with poor nutrition indicators (USAID 2013c). The programme brings together multiple stakeholders including: the Government of Nepal; international non-governmental organisations (Save the Children, Helen Keller International, Jhpeigo); local organisations (Nepali Technical Assistance Group (NTAG), and Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH)); and academic institutions (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs) (USAID 2013b). The programme centres exclusively on behaviour change, and focusses on the nutrition of pregnant mothers and children during the first two years of life. The programme has completed its first year of implementation and is undergoing an evaluation. Challenges recognised during the initial stages of implementation included: lead time to establishing functional cross-sectoral working groups at each level of Government; training a broad workforce from several sectors to deliver all key interventions; adjusting a broad, blanket approach programme to reach the most marginalised and establishing strong support and participation from sectors outside health to prioritise nutrition (Suaahara Project Team 2013 pers. comm 18 September). While these are not insignificant challenges, the programme recognised that these elements were essential to establish before implementation at the community level commenced. Evaluation data for the project is proposed to be available in 2015.

Political and institutional factors that influence integration

As integrated approaches to development issues such as nutrition are being adopted and implemented more widely, evidence has emerged that addresses the key political and institutional determinants of effectively implementing multisectoral approaches. As several stakeholders are involved in addressing under-nutrition, their engagement and coordination is critical for long-term sustainable progress towards reducing under-nutrition. Listed below is a selection of determinants that are relevant to integrating WASH into broader nutrition interventions (Acosta 2012):

- Ensuring national policies and commitments are aligned from the top level of Government through to key ministries, policies and local level of government, which typically delivers health services;
- Ensuring each sector involved in nutrition has a clear policy, direction and commitment to nutrition by governments and donors;
- Promoting ownership of nutrition programmes at the local level (particularly by civil society organisations and local government);
- Establishing coordination bodies to manage, monitor, facilitate decision making and allocate funds in a coordinated manner;
- Tailoring funding mechanisms and incentives to promote coordinated and cooperative interventions; and
- Ensuring transparent and frequent nutrition related data is reported and disseminated.

Conclusion

There are several large-scale studies underway that will inform integrated approaches and design in the future (Dangour et al. 2013). It is critical for future development opportunities for children that all actors in these programmes document, monitor and rigorously evaluate large-scale programmes so that the evidence base can develop to support effective integrated programming design. To effectively tackle under-nutrition, governments and key stakeholders will need to work together co-operatively across sectors, share information and coordinate standards, and derive novel ways of working to achieve sustainable and equitable outcomes.

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Note

- ¹ Suddha Santulit Aahar, Hamro Jeevan Rakchhya ko Baliyo Aadhaar.

Indigenous futures on country in rural New South Wales

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This paper draws on two studies I have undertaken in recent years. The first is a study of the socio-economic benefits of Aboriginal engagement in natural resource management activities in New South Wales undertaken for the Office of Environment and Heritage of the New South Wales Government (Hunt 2010; 2013a). Due to the absence of state-wide data, this was approached by undertaking three case studies. The other is a recent literature review on what makes for effective engagement with Indigenous communities undertaken for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (Hunt 2013b; 2013c).

This paper briefly explains the salient partnership arrangements in place for two of the three case study communities in New South Wales – the Banbai Business Enterprises which managed two Indigenous Protected Areas as part of the National Reserve system, near Guyra on the Northern Tablelands and the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council's Land and Sea Country Plan on the far south coast. The third case study, with the Nyambaga Green Team (now known as Ngurrula Green Team), an environmental contracting service in the Northern Rivers region near Nambucca Heads, is referred to briefly. I then draw on the research on engagement which I undertook and examine these case studies in terms of the partnership arrangements which surrounded them, to draw some conclusions about how effective these were in supporting Indigenous futures.

The case studies

Banbai Business Enterprises was established in Guyra, a small rural town on the Northern Tablelands in 1998. Guyra has a population of 1,990, including 120 Aboriginal people 60 per cent of whom are under 25 years old. One third of the adults are unemployed. In 1995, the Guyra abattoir, a major employer, closed and pastoral work declined. In a situation where only two or three Banbai people had jobs and the town appeared to be in considerable economic decline, the Banbai people obtained funding through a 'New Work Opportunities' programme to run a training course on cultural heritage management, which 20 participants completed. At this time the Banbai people were looking to purchase land. Contacts made during this course eventually led them to buy the property 'Wattleridge', financed by the Indigenous Land Corporation. They now manage this as an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) along with another property, 'Tarriwa Kurrukun', successfully claimed under the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1983) by the Guyra Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). They have a Memorandum of Understanding with Guyra LALC to manage that property. The resulting economic and social turnaround has been significant. A total of 47 Banbai people have been employed over the 10 years up to 2010,

with around 14–25 staff employed at any one time. The initiative has brought the community together, provided a stepping stone for some people to other jobs and study beyond the IPAs. In addition, the Banbai Business Enterprises has become the second largest private sector employer in Guyra.

In terms of its partnerships, Banbai Business Enterprises has two major sources of funding, both long term and relatively secure (three–five years) – the Indigenous Protected Area Programme and the Working on Country Programme of the Australian Government's Department of the Environment. They supplement this with funding from other sources. These two major partnerships with different parts of the Environment Department, provide a sound base for the organisation and enable the Banbai people, through their organisation, to work to plans developed by themselves for management of the IPAs. This enables them to exercise a high degree of control over the activities, with a limited level of non-Indigenous support in governance and financial management as well as flexible, on-country training support from New South Wales TAFE. These partnerships have built strong, respectful personal relationships. There is good leadership and a huge internally-driven effort to strengthen the capacity of the Banbai organisation.

The second case study is located around Eden, a small town on the far south-east coast with a population of 3,000, of whom 206 identified as Indigenous in the 2006 Census. Eden sits within the Bega Valley Shire which records an Aboriginal unemployment rate of 25 percent compared to a nine percent unemployment rate for non-Aboriginal people. Overall, levels of education are low and an Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) member survey in 2007 found that of 42 adults who responded, 28 were in the labour force, but only nine had full-time work. Most part-time or casual work was in agriculture, health or community services. Aboriginal household incomes were low. While Aboriginal people had historically been involved in a succession of natural resource management industries in the region, over time they had been excluded from them, and were keen to regain involvement (Hunt 2013).

The Land and Sea Country Plan (L&SCP) was developed over six months in 2010 and launched publicly in 2011. It built on a host of agreements with natural resource management or environmental agencies that the LALC or other Aboriginal organisations had negotiated over the years but which had not been fully implemented. It envisaged developing a sustainable Land and Sea Ranger programme based at the LALC and utilising opportunities to work on the small range of successfully claimed and now LALC-owned lands through conservation activities, including developing enterprises with

economic and cultural outcomes, such as development of an aquaculture enterprise, cultural tourism and the maintenance and transmission of cultural knowledge as well as economic and cultural use of state forests.

To develop and implement the plan, which covered the considerable publicly owned lands in the region (state forests and national parks), the Eden LALC had to partner with the major land management and environmental bodies in the region. These were the Catchment Management Authority (Southern Rivers CMA); four Local Government Shires (Bega Valley, Bombala, Snowy River and Tumbarumba); the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage (Southern Ranges and Far South Coast Regions); Forests New South Wales (Southern Region); the Department of Industry and Investment (Fisheries) (Southern Zone); and the Rural Fire Service. This brought considerable complexity to the plan, although not all of these agencies were actively involved. To date, the most promising part of the plan is the development of a cultural tourism development – the Bundian Way – an ancient Aboriginal walking track from Kosciusko to the coast.

In terms of partnerships, the Eden LALC has had to negotiate multiple partnerships with no ongoing funding for implementing the plan. Most of the funding is short-term project funding of one to three months. The longest recent funding provided is for one to two years. The leading partner, Southern Rivers CMA, had limited funds and Aboriginal projects were only part of the diverse agencies agendas and plans, so there was limited Aboriginal control over which activities could be undertaken. While the L&SCP contributed to the development of good personal relationships, the LALC itself had limited capacity to undertake such a significant initiative on top of its statutory functions and there were limited resources available from key partners for organisational capacity development – the best was two years' funding for a part-time L&SCP officer. Training was hard to access. There was however, some important non-Indigenous support for the Bundian Way sub-project which recently obtained two years' funding.

As a commercial business the Ngurralla Green Team's partnerships differed somewhat from the Banbai and the Eden LALC experiences. It had some underlying support from a local CMA and a well-connected non-Indigenous manager who was able to secure contracts for the team. But unlike the other two it had 'clients' rather than 'partners' although the Eden LALC contract work was similar in this regard.

Evidence about engaging with Aboriginal communities

The more recent research I have undertaken on engagement of Aboriginal communities highlights a number of aspects which can contribute to success. These can be categorised as relationships, processes, and governance and leadership. Also very important is flexible and secure funding. Evidence drawn from numerous studies indicates that factors associated with these features of partnerships

and Aboriginal community engagement are key. By 'engagement' I mean a sustained relationship between groups of people towards shared goals. In these cases the relationships were largely with various government agencies and Aboriginal organisations with an interest in environmental management.

In terms of relationships, successful engagement requires clarity about the purpose and relevant scale of engagement. The engagements needs to be related to Indigenous aspirations and well-being; to be long term relationships of trust; and having government staff with knowledge of the Indigenous context and valuing Indigenous skills and knowledge. In terms of processes, what is needed are strategies, often through agreements, which contribute to evening-up power inequalities, enabling work within a framework of Indigenous control and decision making in which there is a high degree of clarity about desired outcomes and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Adequate governance for the engagement is needed both in the Indigenous organisation and the government, and there needs to be resourcing for the engagement process. The process also needs strong Indigenous leadership and investment in Indigenous governance and capacity development, realism about government resources and other limitations so that achievable goals are set, and importantly governments with the capacity to respond to Indigenous priorities with pooled and flexible funding arrangements.

Partnership management and achievements

So how did each of these case studies rate against the criteria listed above?

Banbai BE had fewer, more long-term relationships, working towards an Indigenous-driven Plan of Management for each IPA, with specific objectives which were agreed by the IPA section of the Environment Department; power was in that sense shared through the specific agreements on the Plans of Management. There was good Aboriginal leadership and significant internal efforts being made by Banbai to strengthen their own governance and management and to build succession planning into what they did. They were fortunate to access reasonably long term, relatively secure and flexible funding from one major source, the Commonwealth Department of the Environment (through two major programmes); this and other partners, such as the Catchment Management Authority, TAFE New South Wales and a local jobs provider agency, were generally supporting a Banbai agenda which coincided with their own mandate.

Eden LALC on the other hand was trying to engage with a relatively more complex set of relationships to implement its Land and Sea Country Plan. Some of these were quite long term, but for others the process of the plan helped develop those relationships so that government agencies had a better understanding of the LALC's aspirations. The L&SCP had broad objectives, rather than specific objectives tied to clarity about responsibilities. The plan attempted to get agencies to commit to certain actions but was generally rather unsuccessful in this regard. Power sharing was more difficult than for the Banbai.

Environmental and natural resource management agencies were working to their own plans and agendas and trying to make them 'fit' with Aboriginal ones. The LALC had some leadership but limited staff time. Staff were overloaded although funding for a part-time Land and Sea Country Plan Coordinator was a big help during 2012–13. In this case, government leadership was rather dispersed through the various agencies of the steering committee, especially after the Plan was launched when there was a lack of clarity about which government agency would chair the committee and in the end the LALC took the leadership role. Finally, there was limited funding to support the plan and it was mostly short-term project-specific money.

Support for Bundian Way was the exception, where there was support from an unpaid non-Indigenous consultant who was passionate about helping to develop the pathway and the economic and cultural opportunities it represented, and who was able to leverage some two years of funding in 2013 to develop the concept further. The Bundian Way had its own steering committee and objectives which it was progressively achieving (e.g. it was getting Heritage Listing for the pathway and getting declarations of Aboriginal Places along the way, developing camp sites, etc). It made progress in small, achievable steps, whereas the remainder of the plan struggled to gain sufficient support to effect implementation as the Aboriginal community had envisaged.

The Ngurrula Green Team was auspiced by a capable Indigenous organisation, Ngurrula Aboriginal Corporation, and had the initial benefit of a very experienced non-Indigenous Coordinator who brokered work contracts for the team. It is now entirely Indigenous managed. The local Catchment Management Authority and early on the Ngurrula Corporation's CDEP programme (until CDEP was abolished in most of New South Wales in 2009) provided some flexible funding; the rest of the funding was short-term project contracts with various environmental and local government agencies, and some training funding for a trainee team. It too was supported by TAFE New South Wales with some flexible on-the-job training, but its challenge was sustaining a sufficient number of environmental management contracts to keep the team and trainees continuously employed full-time. It broadened its role to include a number of construction projects such as a boardwalk along the Nambucca River and a cycle path in order to provide enough work and to broaden the skills for its team members. The Ngurrula Green Team was in effect a non-profit environmental management organisation operating on a commercial basis. Its relationship to most of its stakeholders was one of service provider-client rather than a programme partnership. It struggled to sustain itself for a few years as its initial coordinator changed, training funds became harder to access, and possible cutbacks in state government environmental agencies led to fewer contracts being available. However, it has now reduced in size to around four members and is under Aboriginal leadership. With a growing funding base from Councils, the Commonwealth Government and other diverse sources, and continuing support from Ngurrula Aboriginal Corporation, it has established a sustainable model.

Conclusions

The three case studies of Aboriginal development in rural New South Wales suggest that a number of factors need to be considered if partnerships are to be effective in enabling Aboriginal development to be sustained. These include:

1. That it is better for Indigenous organisations to engage through a smaller number of long term partnerships than to have to juggle many partners.
2. It is more effective when the partnerships are working to a clear Aboriginal-driven plan which includes agreed objectives and indicators and is clear who has responsibility for particular roles and tasks.
3. It is important that governance and leadership is good on both sides of the partnership and that it is nurtured throughout.
4. Most importantly, funding needs to be simple, flexible and secure for long timeframes as this provides an organisation with the ability to plan, to develop its people and organisation over the longer term, and it reduces time spent sourcing funding through complex tender processes.

Thus, if there are to be strong Indigenous futures on country in rural New South Wales Aboriginal people need to be able to access suitable partnerships and funding arrangements that meet these criteria.

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Adapting development practice to Indigenous contexts

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Introduction

Indigenous disadvantage is widely considered as a marginal issue in international development, but the UN has estimated the worldwide Indigenous population at 350 million, representing more than 5000 distinct groups, across 70 different countries and 4000 languages (UNPFII 2009:1,84). Indigenous groups are typically the poorest in their countries. Hall and Patrinos (2012) estimate that five percent of the world's population identify as being Indigenous, yet they disproportionately constitute 10 percent of the world's poor. Being Indigenous is associated with being disadvantaged, and this disadvantage tends to not improve over time.

The available literature is disproportionately focussed on the Indigenous peoples of high-income countries – especially Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada – but an estimated 95 percent of the world's Indigenous population live in low- and middle-income countries (Hall and Patrinos 2012). While many developing countries are now decolonised, Indigenous people typically face continued competition from more dominant actors, including mining companies, infrastructure developers, logging companies, and water resource users. They can also face competition from migrants and other ethnic groups. Similar contests over land, cultural heritage, resource exploitation and modernisation generally ensue. In extreme cases, they face complete dispossession from their lands.

Few international aid agencies differentiate their work with Indigenous groups. There is some fledgling recognition within the UN system and multilateral aid agencies (ADB 1998; Danida 2004; IADB 2006; IFAD 2009; World Bank 2011), including rights-based approaches (UNPFII 2008) and culturally-centred ethno-development (van Nieuwkoop and Uquillas 2000:18; UNDG 2008:27). These share common themes of protecting cultural heritage, advancing Indigenous rights, and advocating for improved government policies, but with little guidance into what programmes or approaches may be applied in implementation.

Since its first session in 2002, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has raised attention to the plight and rights of Indigenous peoples, resulting in the 'Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People' being passed into international law in 2007, and the flagship report, 'State of the World's Indigenous Peoples' (UNPFII 2009). The Permanent Forum has resisted a universal definition of Indigeneity, arguing that this would inevitably be either over- or under- inclusive (UNPFII 2009:6). The following four characteristics are nonetheless widely cited in United Nations reports (UNDG 2008:9):

1. Priority in time, with respect to the occupation and use of a specific territory.
2. The voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness, which may include aspects of language, social organisation, religion and spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions.
3. Self-identification, as well as recognition by other groups, or by state authorities, as a distinct collectivity.
4. An experience of subjugation, marginalisation, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist.

Levi and Maybury-Lewis' (2012: 6, 10, 16–17) search for commonalities across the global Indigenous movement found considerable heterogeneity, from reindeer herders (Saami, Scandinavia), to shifting cultivators (Karen and other hill tribes along the Thai-Burmese border), to hunter gatherers and forest dwellers (central Africa), and to casino wealthy tribes of North America. They also found 'diaspora as well as homeland' to be equally descriptive of their rural and urban distensions. They recorded how increasing numbers of peoples were identifying as Indigenous, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. They concluded that 'more than anything, Indigeneity is a political identity', a 'discourse of empowerment and social justice for the most disadvantaged members of society' with 'a particular position or subjectivity vis-à-vis fields of power'.

Indigenous groups tend to be locked into a *political context* with a more dominant or colonising other, giving rise to a complex intercultural and political field for development. The strength of Indigenous people's cultural attachment to ancestral territory can effectively deepen the degree of cultural differentiation and political contest. As noted by Eversole (2005:20), 'understanding the relationships between Indigenous peoples and their nation-states is key to understanding Indigenous poverty, and to uncovering the potential for change'.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia

According to the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI), Australia is one of the richest countries in the world, second only to Norway. Universal welfare entitlements ensure a comparative lack of poverty, by international standards, but pervasive inequalities persist in certain sections of the Australian population, most notably Indigenous Australians (Vinson et al. 2009). Household income for Indigenous people was a little over half of the equivalent for non-Indigenous people. The unemployment rate was three times higher, and Indigenous students were half as likely as their non-Indigenous counterparts to complete year 12. Indigenous

men and women experience double the rate of physical violence during their lifetime (ABS and AIHW 2008). In 2010–12, the life expectancy for Indigenous Australians was 69 years for males and 74 years for females, a difference of around 10 years in comparison to the non-Indigenous population (ABS 2013).

Indigenous disadvantage in Australia has proven to be higher and more intractable than experienced by their counterparts in other high-income countries. Cooke et al (2007) measured a substantially lower Human Development Index rating for the Indigenous population of Australia (0.674), compared to Canada (0.815), USA (0.811) and New Zealand (0.728). Between 1990 and 2000, where the gap in human development between Native Americans and Maori and their general populations decreased, the gap for Indigenous Australians actually widened.

The combined federal and state governments of Australia are united in a policy of ‘closing the gap’ in health, education and employment disparity, through the ‘building blocks’ of governance, leadership, early childhood education, schooling, health, safety and housing. Nationally, more than \$5 billion in government funding is allocated to Indigenous specific programmes. If the total level of servicing is included, by adding mainstream services like health, education, policing and corrections, the total figure is \$25.4 billion; more than double that per head of other Australians (Productivity Commission 2012). A Department of Finance and Deregulation’s (2010) ‘Strategic Review of Indigenous Expenditure’ concluded that this investment has ‘yielded dismally poor returns.’ The Review attributes this to the familiar litany of under-performing programmes, poor coordination across governments, and the lack of engagement with Indigenous peoples in design and delivery. An unknown proportion of this expenditure is absorbed internally by the government administration (Altman 2012).

The intractability of Indigenous disadvantage in Australia has led to questions and intense public debate about the underlying causes and possible solutions. While there is clear consensus on achieving outcomes, there is considerable disarray and contestation about what constitutes Indigenous development and pathways to get there. Despite this, a large number of government agencies, Indigenous organisations, NGOs and commercial companies are actively working with Indigenous groups to ameliorate their disadvantage, largely in the absence of any practice frameworks. There is little evaluation, documentation and knowledge exchange of the effectiveness of different approaches.

Academics and advocates have argued for the adaptation of an international development approach to Indigenous disadvantage (Hunt 2010; Phillips et al. 2011; CGRIS 2011). The international NGOs in Australia with an active domestic programme, come together via the Indigenous Working Group of their peak body, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID 2011). The group concluded that Indigenous contexts in Australia are unique, in four ways:

1. The number of government departments, Indigenous organisations and private service providers involved in servicing Indigenous communities leaves the institutional landscape very crowded.
2. Many institutions take a welfare, as opposed to a development approach, considering community members as beneficiaries or consumers, rather than partners in development.
3. The entire colonial experience of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, whereby ‘outsiders’ working in communities have been involved as both regulators/enforcers and as facilitators/development workers.
4. The sheer gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, and the resulting marginalisation of Indigenous peoples into a ‘fourth world’ context.

In bringing development thinking to this context, the ACFID working group proposed a set of principles of development practice, with heightened attention to rights advocacy, governance, and partnering. World Vision Australia signed an MOU with the Australian Government to improve the effectiveness of Indigenous development assistance (Australian Government and World Vision Australia 2012). The Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory subsequently issued a set of its own principles to guide the practice of NGOs,¹ with an even stronger emphasis on partnering with Indigenous organisations, ensuring their control (not consultation), respecting their existing development practice, and building (not displacing) their capability with clear exit strategies (APONT 2013). Sixteen major domestic and international NGOs signed up to the APONT principles and others are expected to follow.

Indigenous groups in low- and middle-income countries

As in Australia, Indigenous groups in low- and middle-income countries are marked by their distinct culture and languages. They typically live in well-defined geographical areas where they maintain attachment to ancestral lands and a responsibility for preserving their lands for future generations. Those that have been able to maintain the strongest connection to their traditional culture and land are often found in remote and highland areas, beyond the competing land use pressures of industry, agriculture and urbanisation. For their livelihoods Indigenous communities tend to rely on their natural resources, including subsistence (hunting, fishing, gathering), farming (agriculture, animal husbandry) and natural/cultural resource management. Strong social capital also exists based on collective custody of lands, resources and cultural heritage, with cultural values, activities and identity embedded at the community and group levels, rather than the individual.

Application of the ‘sustainable livelihoods framework’ will typically reveal high levels of sociocultural and natural capital, compared to lower levels of human, physical and financial capital. Accordingly, successful examples of sustainable livelihoods include art and craft, cultural tourism, ranger programmes, and carbon and biodiversity market initiatives (Moran et al. 2007). This reliance on

social and natural assets, and comparative lack of human, financial and physical assets, introduces a heightened vulnerability. Sensibly, Indigenous leaders and aid agencies often seek to improve the resilience of Indigenous communities by diversifying their asset base (IFAD 2009:11), through development initiatives that include, for example, early childhood education, schooling, youth leadership, employment, mentoring and micro-enterprise programmes.

Caution is needed in generalising attributes of Indigenous culture between different contexts. Indigenous groups are often viewed in terms of traditional remote 'villages', but large numbers have been forcibly relocated or voluntarily migrated to urban centres, or are highly mobile in between. In Peru, Earle's (2009) examination of the social protest against proposed mining by an Amazonian Indigenous organisation, revealed how international NGOs romanticised a notion of Indigeneity, imposing a stereotype of a cohesive ethnic group working collectively in protection of their territory and traditional livelihoods. The NGO then assigned blame to the group when the Indigenous organisation failed to sustain protest. Such misconceptions underscore the need for reaching a deep understanding of context in different places.

Not only are Indigenous cultures an inherent strength, they are also strongly differentiated from the mainstream in the countries where they are located. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews results in marked cultural differentiation, confusion, misunderstandings and often marginalisation of Indigenous peoples. In designing Indigenous development programmes, it is necessary to understand the confusion and politics around ideologies of Indigenous culture, and to not be skewed or immobilised. Indigenous development is often understood mono-culturally, where culture is idealised as static and isolated from outside influences, when in reality people are engaged in a dynamic and complex intercultural process of change with the more dominant society. This is not to understate the pervasiveness of persistent traditions within this dynamic. While development programmes may seek to make this dynamic positive, including a measure of community control, the cultural and social substrate can powerfully influence development efforts. Intercultural development implies that both mainstream and Indigenous cultural knowledge systems should be practised with equal human, technological and financial resources, with spaces for exchange of knowledge, methodologies and practices that ensure the ongoing development of both systems (UNPFII 2009:177; Moran 2010).

Governing structures, whether existing or aspirational, formal or informal, are critically important in Indigenous contexts, and are often strong forms of social capital on which to build development initiatives. Programmes should seek to strengthen, and at no times displace, these existing organisations, which may be vulnerable to external influences. Due to the centrality of land, Indigenous groups may place a high priority on land reform and titling to ensure security. This may involve land and resource management, including co-management and benefit sharing (IADB 2006:7). Indigenous

governance systems often reflect traditional social norms of reciprocity and consensus, evidenced in the sharing of food and other resources, and in practices for resolving conflicts and managing commonly held resources. Such traditional governance institutions may need strengthening, particularly in relation to external negotiation and stakeholder management (IFAD 2009:12; World Bank 2011:41). Critical to building capability is an enabling structure of 'networked governance', through communication links and support between different levels and nodes of governance (Hunt et al. 2008; Moran and Elvin 2009).

Negotiated, not assumed, development

At the Fourth ACFID University Network 'Development Futures' Conference in Sydney in November 2013, the authors convened a workshop among international development practitioners on adapting development practice to Indigenous contexts. The participants confirmed that Indigenous contexts in the countries where they have worked are unique, more complex, and critically, that development assistance must occur 'flexibly for experiential learning'. They also highlighted the mismatch between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, and that notions of Indigenous development must be 'negotiated, not assumed'.²

Marked differences typically exist in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators (especially health, education and income) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous society, where *relative* poverty is more important than *absolute*.³ Development assistance and government service delivery sensibly tends to be orientated towards closing this disparity, but it cannot be assumed that Indigenous people aspire to the same benchmarks as the mainstream. Competing worldviews may lead to alternative development pathways, including Indigenous people's choice to maintain separate traditional lifestyle (Myers 1986; Tonkinson and Tonkinson 2010). In his work among outstation groups in the Northern Territory, Altman (2007) has described people's preference for a hybrid existence involving a mixture of non-market customary activities with more formal employment and business enterprise. For middle- and high-income nations, social welfare and other benefits may open up choices for Indigenous people otherwise not available, leading to a life of passive welfare dependency (Pearson 1999). Governance and political representation may be considered to be more important than engagement in the economy and other mainstream institutions. They may express a form of sovereignty through these organisations. When these alternative pathways do not lead to the same benchmarks against which inequality is measured by the nation, then competing expectations and confusion can emerge between stakeholders and participants.

Dealing with this development disarray places demands on the professional capabilities of the development worker, especially in their negotiation and brokering skills (Danida 2004:25). It usually requires them to remain involved for several years to build the necessary mutual trust and understanding and to stabilise

relationships. Indigenous contexts generally have a past and ongoing colonial history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, whereby non-Indigenous people working in Indigenous communities have been involved as both regulators/enforcers and facilitators/helpers. Development workers who are nationals may be seen by Indigenous groups as colonial agents of the nation state. It may not matter to Indigenous leaders whether the outsiders are internationals, if they are seen to be representing global interests. Many development workers lament how they are not immediately welcomed by the Indigenous groups they seek to assist.

In this contested political field, Indigenous leaders may place heightened demands on development agencies and their workers. Indigenous leaders may seek to enlist them in their political struggles with the state. Or when preferring a separate existence, they may actively seek a dependent paternalistic relationship with the development workers, as a broker to supply welfare, resources and knowledge of the outside world.

Many capable Indigenous professionals have the skills, experience and standing to fulfil the development worker role, to navigate and broker the intense factionalism and conditionality of the intercultural spaces between community and the mainstream 'system'. Organisations need to be proactive in how they value and respect that Indigenous staff members have inherent cultural, religious and community responsibilities. In order to increase the number of Indigenous development workers, support networks, coping strategies, mentoring and career paths are needed.

Prior development experience does not necessarily prepare workers for the unique context and complex negotiations of Indigenous development. To be effective, development workers need skills in political analysis and stakeholder management. Political risks must be carefully managed to avoid internal and external conflict. Deep analysis is required to understand the cultural and historical substrate, and informal and formal governing structures. Current university courses in development studies should include electives in Indigenous development programming. Knowledge management systems are also required to capture and share knowledge.

Conclusion

While international aid agencies typically do not explicitly focus on Indigenous people as a separate target group, they are almost always among the most marginalised and poorest in society. While a focus on poverty and the most vulnerable will tend to self-select Indigenous people, it does not follow that standard programming approaches will be effective. The question is not one of defining disadvantage, but rather how to programme effectively in a unique context.

The above discussion on designing and implementing development assistance programmes in Indigenous contexts is exploratory, and needs testing across a range of Indigenous contexts. Further research and scrutiny is required which might lead to an evidence base and

guidelines towards improved development practice in Indigenous contexts.

Of all the possible unique attributes, the most challenging is the political relativities and complexities that arise through the interactions between Indigenous groups and a more dominant mainstream. Rights frameworks are essential to address the inequalities that Indigenous groups face, but a range of capabilities in governments and Indigenous organisations is necessary to realise them. In addition to rights-holders holding duty-bearers politically to account, ways must also be found to repair and rebuild relationships between Indigenous groups and outside governments and corporations, so they are more productively engaged in jointly advancing Indigenous development. Development workers have an interstitial role to play, to build systemic capability, to free up obstacles and join up the system, to bring rigour and effectiveness to programming approaches, and to facilitate stakeholder involvement towards a negotiated, not assumed, development.

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Notes

- 1 APONT is a coalition of peak Indigenous organisations across the Northern Territory: <http://apont.org.au/>.
- 2 This latter comment is attributed to Janet Hunt, a leading Australian scholar for community development and governance and the translation of international development practice to Indigenous contexts.
- 3 www.un.org/millenniumgoals/.

More than remittances: Resisting the dominant discourse and policy prescriptions of the current migration-development nexus debate

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Introduction

In recent years, we have witnessed the ascendancy of the international movement of workers on the global policy agenda where this issue has been deliberated primarily in its relation to development, i.e. the linkage between, and mutual effects of, international migration and development in countries of origin and destination of migration. By debating migration in its relation to development, the United Nations opened up space for an overdue dialogue at the global level on a topic that has notoriously been overshadowed by concerns for national security and sovereignty.

Opportunities and aspirations for improved well-being have been the key drivers of migration throughout human history. ‘(B)eing able to decide where to live is a key element of human freedom’ (UNDP 2009:1), and freedom is, as argued by Amartya Sen in his seminal work (1999), essential for development. The distribution of opportunities throughout the world, however, is ‘highly unequal’ (UNDP 2009:18) and becoming increasingly so. For foreign migrant workers such inequality is due to two main reasons: (i) a restrictive and highly selective migration policy framework practiced globally, and (ii) limited access to various kinds of resources which would enable migrant workers’ physical movement and therefore enhance their mobility. Barriers are especially high for people with low skills, or who are classified as such, as policies tend to favour the admission of the better educated and highly qualified. Where active recruitment of the low skilled is practiced – which these days occurs mainly in the context of temporary contract or seasonal migration schemes – the bundle of rights and entitlements they are provided with are usually far fewer than those granted to the highly skilled. When the low skilled resort to methods or channels of migration deemed ‘illegal’ in order to circumvent the physical and legal barriers to their mobility, the rights they have as ‘unauthorised’ or ‘irregular’ migrants are next to none. As a result they are at high risk of abusive and exploitative practices (ICTU-APRO 2003). In other words, admission and treatment are two crucial elements affecting the positive outcomes of migration for individuals, sending and receiving communities. Given the complex axes of differentiation between groups of migrants based on skill and educational level, country of origin and gender (Kofman 2008), ‘vast inequalities characterize not only the freedom to move but also the distribution of gains from movement’ (UNDP 2009:10). This affects migrants’ ability to contribute to development in destination and source countries.

The imbalance between gains and losses from movement across political borders which marks the experience of the majority of low skilled, temporary or irregular migrants leaves them in conditions of great injustice.

Labour migration and justice beyond borders

There is no doubt that international economic migration has become an integral feature of economic globalisation. Increased labour mobility is inherently a transnational phenomenon reflecting the changing composition of labour markets and labour systems due to international migration. As most if not all countries are affected by migration today, it has become a truly global issue and, perceived as requiring multilateral rules and regulations. This is reflected in the heightened interest in migration by international organisations and a drive to greater co-operation between states over the last few years (Grugel and Piper 2011). At the global level, it is in particular the revived and intensified debate about the relationship between migration and development that has gained most interest, dealing with the issue of how to render migration a ‘triple win’ phenomenon that is to benefit origin and destination countries as well as individual migrants (GCIM 2005;).

The current debate on the ‘migration-development nexus’ has revisited the issue of how migration can contribute to development. Previous phases of this debate tended to highlight the negative implications of migration, especially in the context of the highly skilled epitomised by the notion of ‘brain drain’ (Faist 2008). Individual migrants were often seen as ‘traitors’ (Nett 1971) by their origin countries or as unwelcome ‘guests’ by many destination countries, especially as they began to ‘overstay’. Current thinking by policymakers and donor agencies in developed countries as well as among academics is marked by a shift towards a more positive assessment. The more positive attitude taken by origin countries today has primarily to do with the proactive search for overseas employment opportunities for the many low-skilled workers. Migrants now are treated as potential and actual agents of development by not only sending remittances but also returning with newly acquired skills and valuable knowledge to their countries of origin where their ‘human’ development is to contribute to broader development. Importantly, they are seen to do so best if migrating as temporary contract workers or as circular migrants. Overall, there is a disconnect between analyses of the migration-development nexus which focus predominantly on *economic* indicators for development in the countries of origin and analyses of the social costs or the link between migration and broader *social* development as it relates to issues of education, health, social welfare, political participation and equality between different groups of people (men/women, migrant/non-migrant) (Piper 2009).

This shift in discourse has turned the old view of migrants as ‘traitors’ (Nett 1971) into treating migrants as ‘the unsung heroes’ (Ramamurthy 2003). As good as it is

to highlight migrants' role as agents and to inject agency into the one-sided depiction of migrants as victims this shift in discourse comes at a time when neoliberal thinking dominates policy making and policy outcomes (Rankin 2001). What tends to be glossed over are the costs of migrating under highly restrictive policy frameworks that are promoted globally and deployed by an increasing number of countries. Such costs are economic (indebtedness to unscrupulous recruitment agencies) as well as social (transnationally split families).¹ Incidences of injustice that invariably arise from this restrictive policy environment have been subject to high profile reports by INGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International as well as critical assessment by academics (Basok and Piper 2013; Geiger and Pécoud 2010). As demonstrated in the literature, grievances or hardships experienced by migrant workers, male and female, are being voiced more and more in a collective manner (Ally 2005; Anderson 2001; McNevin 2007; Piper 2009). The experience of hardship is thereby interpreted as outcomes of global (in)justice on two broad levels: (i) structurally (as linked to the political economy of unequal development); and (ii) institutionally in terms of the dominant position of certain actors within global governance institutions and their particular interests.² Social justice organisations constitute the crucial type of actor in this institutional web whom aim to empower migrants and to represent their interests where or when migrants cannot do so themselves. It has been amply shown that social justice organisations and social movements engaged in the struggle for redistribution and recognition are increasingly looking beyond the territorial state by forming transnational networks and engaging in transnational advocacy (Grugel and Piper 2011; Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Migration can lead to gains, probably the most important of which is the securing of livelihoods for the individual migrants and their families by finding work (Briones 2009), especially in situations where social safety nets are insufficient or absent (Sabates-Wheeler and Feldman 2011). This ability has to be qualified, however, by taking into consideration one of the most prevailing forms of migration schemes practiced in many parts of the world and promoted by global governing institutions: temporary, employer-tied migration. This type of 'legal' migration leaves the migrants few choices in terms of changing employer in the case of abuse and mistreatment, or in terms of changing country of destination because of the involvement of recruitment agencies, which often charge often excessive fees, thus, rendering the act of migration a costly affair (Piper 2011). In this sense, the further one migrates in terms of distance or frequency, the more expensive the migration journey becomes, thus reducing the monetary gains for individual migrants substantially, if not entirely. Moreover, the social and emotional costs of being separated from one's family for prolonged periods of time give cause for concern (Khadria et al. 2010).

It is the severe costs of labouring in the global economy for the majority of international migrants

classified as low skilled who work in unregulated sectors, often in the informal economy, under temporary or circular migration schemes and the increasing institutionalisation of migration as a tool for development, that need to be conceptualised as violations of human rights (Delgado Wise et al. 2010; Piper 2010). These issues have in fact given rise to increased political activism from below directed in particular at the global level of migration governance.

Resistance through activism

Migrant workers, especially those in low-wage and/or informal sectors such as domestic work, who comprise the majority of migrants in Asia, are generally portrayed as having little or no agency in the world economy or world politics. By emphasising 'demand and supply' structures of the economy some scholars tend to conceive of migrant workers as victims of macroeconomic power structures whilst others view migrants as isolated actors exerting micro agency through acts of 'everyday resistance' which do, however, not lead to transformative change. Whilst there is substantial evidence of the extent to which migrants' human and labour rights are violated, it is wrong to portray these workers as passive bearers of the weight of global or regional structures.

'Resistance' is conceptualised here in the context of transformative mobilisation where by 'transformative' is used to refer specifically to changing institutional practices. Such perspective takes us beyond an understanding of rights as individualistic liberal artefacts to a perspective on rights as a "struggle concept" (Stammers 2009; Koskeniemi 2001). Such struggle requires collective activism.

To challenge the individual and collective costs as the outcome of economic and 'networked' globalisation, a specific form of political activism is required, such as forming organisational networks. From a social movement perspective, networks constitute collective sites of 'everyday action' at the meso level and operate spatially within and/or across national borders.

Networking across borders in these contexts is an indicator of enhanced globalisation processes and the shifting of global institutions as targets of activism. In this context, Hale (2004) has argued that despite the obstacles posed by economic globalisation, it is also 'providing new opportunities for international alliances. These alliances are said to gain momentum by the innovative organising and networking initiatives of women activists' and 'signals a new kind of labour internationalism and one that places the demand of women workers right at the centre' (2004:671). The recent networking activities among migrant and non-migrant domestic worker associations that built up in preparation of the ILO's congress in 2010 during which the drafting of a new domestic worker convention was discussed and finalised in 2011 (see www.domesticworkerrights.org) constitute examples of alliances and networks working toward greater gender, informal worker and migrant justice – which constitute subject areas and specific groups of

workers that were neglected by conventional labour unionism for a long time.

Labour unions have meanwhile woken up to the significance of migrant as well as informal labour, male and female, and the importance of actively engaging in migrant organising. Unions have in recent years published documents acknowledging the need for a social movement unionism approach and 'comprehensive campaigning' which should focus on workers' direct material interests but also include broader issues of human rights and social justice by forming coalitions with an array of community organisations and by addressing groups of workers traditionally left out of union organising, such as women working in feminised sectors, informal sector workers and migrants, particularly the undocumented. For example, the Dutch FNV has identified the organising of the low wage service economy with its high share of ethnic minority or migrant workers as an important element of their political activities (Kloosterboer 2007:22). The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (IUF) produced a handbook in 2008 aimed at labour unionists on organising and defending migrant workers in agriculture and allied sectors along three main points: (i) by informing migrants about rights, (ii) by organising migrants into unions, and (iii) by building coalitions with migrants' own groups. The latter shows how significant networking across organisations is also for practitioners. The Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) launched its Global Migration Programme in 2010 under its campaign 'BWI Connect' which refers to: connecting the migrant worker to the labour union; unions from countries of origin and countries of destination; unions with employers; unions with other civil society groups; and unions with governments (see <http://connect.bwint.org/>). These are all examples which demonstrate the increasing significance given to a specific type of 'collective action' which is done trans-institutionally (between unions and non-unions) and transnationally.

On the question of social, economic and labour rights, the obstacles and opportunities posed by the global economy and governing systems or regimes give rise to both optimistic and pessimistic assessments. What the optimists and pessimists have in common, according to Evans (2007), is their acknowledgement of changes in the spatial reach and intensity of networks of social relations as reflected in the increasing activity of social movements, NGOs and other interest groups.

Multi-scalar organisational networks

Networks are manifested at multiple geographical and organisational scales and can be understood as vehicles for multi-sited governance including 'bottom up' processes through social justice organisations and not only 'top down' (Grugel and Piper 2011; Powell and Smith-Doerr 1994). The network concept and methodology allows us to analyse not only our understanding of the global economy but also activist responses to global economic injustices.

This means the network concept and methodology can be used to reinstate a sense of power in non-elites, such as migrant and non-migrant workers labouring in marginalised sectors or jobs. Drawing on Latour's (1996) network conception and applying it to the context of the US labour movement, Herod (2007) has used the notion of 'defiance agency' to reject a view of labour as a passive victim of capitalist globalisation and to critique traditional or conventional accounts in which workers are thought to be confined to the national realm and, thus, thought to suffer from spatial impotence. Conceiving of geographical scales as containers of social life allows political actors to represent such scales as spatial enclosures, which is a central aspect of exercising political power. In this way, capitalists convince workers that they are doomed to be constrained within the national scale. This can be a powerful psychological weapon in matters of class struggle, as argued by Herod (2007). However, workers do play a role in shaping the global geography of capitalism which is actively and constantly struggled over as labour geographers and labour relationists have demonstrated (e.g. Herod 2007). They do this so more effectively than before via global unions and cross-border union campaigns (Bronfenbrenner 2007).

Labour unions are, however, not the only actors in worker activism. Although unions have been the historically most significant channel for collective worker agency in the struggle for improved working conditions and labour rights, the vast majority of workers are beyond the reach of the official union structure which rarely represents the needs of the poorest, those working in the informal economy (Hale 2004; Leather 2004) or migrant workers. 'Traditional forms of organising are fraught with difficulties relating not only to the oppression of labour unionism but also to changes in the nature of the production process' (Hale 2004:671).

Studies on organisational and labour networks have by and large bypassed the specific experience of migrant workers, the majority of whom end up in small workplaces, often in the informal sector, where organising poses specific problems when compared to large factories (Brown and Getz 2007). The three sectors identified by the ILO as particularly precarious – agriculture, construction, and domestic work – have many common features. They are the classic sectors where migrant labour is concentrated, often as the dominant workforce, and where labour relations are largely unregulated. They involve work in great isolation either in private households or workplaces in remote areas (rural or urban), removed from mainstream society and visibility. The temporary or undocumented nature of their residential and/or employment status make political activism on their behalf or by them a risky undertaking.

Nonetheless, migrant workers, women and men, could, and do, make significant contributions to the struggle for workers' rights as demonstrated by studies that have mapped the landscape of migrant worker organising either from a labour union perspective or non-union perspective (Ally 2005; McIlwaine and Bermudez 2011; Piper 2009). It is especially when seen through the

lens of transnational networks that the force behind the gradual build-up of a migrant rights movement becomes evident, as has been well demonstrated in the Asian case (Ford and Piper 2007; Piper and Ford 2006; Piper 2009) but also globally (Piper 2010).

Conclusion

Reflecting the transnational nature of (especially temporary and circular) migration and in response to the persisting obstacles to a rights-based approach to migration policy making at the global level, national and regional migrant rights organisations and labour unions have begun to form transnational and trans-organisational networks to channel advocacy to multi-state fora and international organisations. The two examples briefly mentioned here constitute two different modalities of organising: one that is driven by migrant rights associations (the PGA) and one that has labour unions at its centre (ILO Convention No. 189), with cross-networking taking place in both contexts. The plight of workers from the Global South labouring under temporary and highly precarious conditions in the global informal economy is being addressed in both contexts, leading to high levels of inequality and unfreedom of mobility. The situation of foreign domestic workers thereby epitomises the marginal migrant as women and as informal worker. Their concerns have been prevalent within regional and global networks of migrant organisations for quite some time, partly in response to the sheer enormity of domestic work carried out by foreigners, mostly women, in the 'global care economy' and partly in response to political opportunity structures that have opened up at the global level. Thus, organisational networks and specific chains of events have come together to open up space for counteracting inequality and fighting for greater freedom. Collective capabilities through collective action has thereby created, and responded to, political opportunities. In this sense, organisational networks are chained to events and chains of events lead to enhanced networking.

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Notes

- ¹ See D Ionesco and C Aghazarm (eds), *Gender and Labour Migration in Asia*, International Organization for Migration, Geneva.
- ² This can be seen from the various statements made at the Civil Society Days of the last Global Fora on Migration and Development (<https://www.gfmd.org>).

Learning from humanitarian response in Southeast Asia: The shifting roles of national and international actors

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Introduction

Around the world, economic and human exposure to disaster risk is increasing due to the combined effects of climate change, population growth, poorly planned development and urbanisation. The Asia Pacific region is the most disaster prone region in the world (UNESCAP/UNISDR 2012:xxi). Almost two million people across the region were killed in disasters between 1970 and 2011, representing 75 percent of global disaster fatalities (ibid). It is particularly vulnerable to hydro-meteorological events, to which more than a billion people throughout the region have been exposed so far this century. This number is expected to rise with the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (ibid).

Throughout the region, this increase in disaster risk has been accompanied by a rise in national disaster management capacities. Almost all countries in the region have national disaster management organisations as well as legal and regulatory frameworks for managing disaster risk. But increased capacity has not kept pace with increased risk, and as the frequency and severity of climate-related disasters continues to rise, there will continue to be cases where national capacities are overwhelmed. Thus, the importance of international humanitarian assistance has not diminished.

Together with the increase in national capacities to manage disaster risk, there has been a shift in attitudes towards international assistance. With few exceptions, governments in the region no longer issue generalised, public appeals for assistance, preferring instead to accept specific offers, targeted to meet identified gaps in national capacities, on their own terms (see Save the Children/AADMER Partnership Group 2012, Save the Children/AADMER Partnership Group 2013). While this is in part a reflection of increased national capacities – an assertion by national governments that for the most part they can manage disasters on their own – it also reflects deep-seated cultural mores around asking for help. Across Southeast Asia, not only in disaster management but across a broad spectrum of social and political contexts, a request for help is seen as a sign of weakness with the resulting ‘loss of face’. While none of this is new, international humanitarian actors, accustomed to a particular set of tools designed for contexts with minimal government capacity, have in some cases struggled to define a role for themselves in this new situation (ibid).

This article compares experiences from humanitarian responses in Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines in 2011 and 2012, with particular attention to the decisions taken by national governments to request or not to request international assistance and the implications this has for the international humanitarian community. Experience

shows that ambiguities arising when national governments do not formally request international assistance has in some cases resulted in slower, less efficient humanitarian responses, and highlights the need for tools and guidelines tailored to suit this ‘welcome but not requested’ scenario.

Offers and acceptance of international assistance

In the aftermath of disaster, the language used by national governments to request, welcome or accept international assistance has far reaching implications for the humanitarian response system. This is mainly due to the 1991 UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the Strengthening of the Coordination of the Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the UN, which still today serves as the foundation for the provision of international humanitarian assistance. The Resolution states that ‘humanitarian assistance should be provided ... in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected country’, and that the UN should ensure the ‘delivery of relief assistance in full respect of [this principle]’ (GA Res 46/182, 1991). The precise meaning of ‘in principle on the basis of an appeal’ is not defined, but it is generally understood to mean a generalised, public request for international assistance. Traditionally, for international actors, an appeal of this nature has served as the trigger for the launch of a humanitarian response.

The complete international humanitarian system includes: a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) headed by a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC); a coordinated rapid assessment using standardised tools; use of the ‘cluster’ system to facilitate coordination; a consolidated planning process; and coordinated fundraising in the form of an appeal (see UN OCHA 2013a). Such a system is or has been in place following natural disasters and conflicts around the world – Afghanistan, Pakistan, South Sudan, the Horn and Sahel regions, Indonesia, and the Philippines – to name but a few. In some contexts the system is established and subsequently dismantled following a spike in conflict or sudden onset emergency (some Pacific Island States, for example). In other countries, the system has assumed a degree of permanence, responding to situations of ongoing crisis (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia, for example). In most countries not typically fraught by conflict and disaster – much of Southeast Asia, for example – the humanitarian response system is not and never has been in place. If these countries *are* struck by disaster, the extent to which affected governments or the senior staff of development agencies can pick and choose from the various components of the system is not clearly defined.

Nor are the circumstances in which parts of the system can be put in place in the absence of a formal appeal – or the procedures for doing so – clearly articulated.

The following sections describe the way in which these issues played out, with implications for national and international actors, in the aftermath of the floods in Thailand and Cambodia in 2011, and Tropical Storm Washi and Typhoon Bopha in the Philippines in 2011 and 2012.

Humanitarian response in Thailand and Cambodia

Between July and October 2011, a succession of cyclones, tropical storms and monsoonal rains across Southeast Asia resulted in the worst flooding in the region in more than a decade. In Thailand, more than 14 million people in 65 provinces were affected (UN Country Team in Thailand 2011); in Cambodia, more than a million people in 18 provinces were affected (Action Aid et al. 2012).

Despite the scale of the disaster, and offers of assistance made in both countries by the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs), neither government formally requested international assistance. Both governments, however, made it clear they would *welcome* assistance, and various government ministries and departments made their own requests to international agencies. The Thai Ministry of Education, for example, provided the education cluster with a list detailing its support needs in affected schools, and the Cambodian Ministry of Health asked the World Health Organization to assess access to healthcare in affected areas. What was at issue was that these requests, and statements made by both governments that international assistance was welcome, did not amount to what has come to be understood as an ‘appeal’ for assistance as required by Resolution 46/182 (Save the Children/AADMER Partnership Group 2012:18). As remarked by one participant in a lessons learned workshop on the Thailand floods, ‘the Thai Government said that they welcome assistance but many agencies do not work that way’ (UN Country Team in Thailand 2011:35). The situation gave rise to considerable uncertainty among the international humanitarian community, and in some cases among national authorities, regarding the place for an international response. The UN RC for Thailand explained that it was ‘difficult to operate without any clear procedures related to requests for international assistance’ (ibid:3). One international NGO staff member in Thailand reflected that ‘at every [coordination] meeting, there was a sense that our hands were tied, that we could only do so much’ (Jungwiwattanporn, B 2012, pers. comm., 17 April).

The remainder of this section considers implications the absence of a formal appeal had for leadership, coordination and financing of the overall humanitarian effort, which ultimately diminished the efficiency of the response.

Leadership and coordination

In Thailand, a decision was made in early September 2011 by the UN RC and other senior humanitarian staff to

‘informally’ establish both the HCT and the cluster system (UN Country Team in Thailand 2012:4). The decision to informally establish these leadership and coordination mechanisms reflected a sense on the part of the international response community that even in the absence of a formal appeal they were necessary to ensure coherence and predictability to the international response. As explained by one UN representative:

there’s only one trigger for the activation of the HCT, and that’s a formal request for assistance. In the absence of that ... we all just eventually got together ... and decided to set it up (Hyo-Jeong Kim 2012, pers. comm., 19 April).

The 2012 Draft Contingency Plan for Thailand, revised based on the experience of the 2011 floods, explained that:

the activation of the HCT [following the floods] was not officially notified to the Emergency Relief Commissioner, but was ‘informally’ adopted by the HCT ... who recognised the need to coordinate efforts under ... the leadership of the RC/HC’ (ibid:4).

Because of this informality, there was a sense amongst members of the HCT that it was acting ‘off the record’, not only vis-à-vis stakeholders in New York and Geneva but also vis-à-vis the national government, who had not formally agreed to the establishment of the HCT. As explained by one UN representative, ‘on outreach and external relations, the HCT purposefully adopted a low-key approach’ (ibid:3). The clusters for their part were set up as a ‘space ... to exchange information and coordinate activities’ (IFRC 2012), and ‘acted like clusters without being called clusters’ (Juat, V 2012, pers. comm., 24 April). Both the HCT and the clusters were generally regarded as serving a useful purpose; but due to time spent deliberating the trigger for activation in the absence of a formal request for assistance, were slow to get going, with the HCT not meeting until two months after the onset of the floods (UN Country Team in Thailand 2011). In the weeks following the disaster, the delays in establishing both the HCT and the clusters gave rise to considerable frustration amongst international actors, and inevitably affected the efficiency of the international response.

In Cambodia, the option of formally activating the international humanitarian system was also discussed within the UN Disaster Management Team (DMT), but there was ‘consensus that given the scale and complexity of the emergency’, this was not required (de Margerie, JP 2012, pers. comm., 10 May). Instead, the UN, donors and NGOs looked to the Cambodian Government to take the lead. But the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) declined to assume a leadership and coordination role, at times citing a lack of resources, and in some cases citing a lack of authority to do so (see Save the Children/AADMER Partnership Group 2012:15).

Given budgetary constraints, the NCDM’s assertion that it could not afford the cost of coordination may well have been correct but the assertion regarding lack of authority sits awkwardly with the existence of a Sub-

Decree establishing the NCDM as the apex body for coordinating disaster management. What was presumably being referred to was a particular interpretation of the Prime Ministerial decision not to formally appeal for international assistance – an interpretation that took international actors by surprise. As described by one international NGO staff:

the government said they weren't going to call for international assistance. But I thought this meant *external* assistance, it never occurred to me that this would ... mean they couldn't work with those of us already here (McCausland, C 2012, pers. comm., 1 May).

The reluctance of NCDM to lead and coordinate the response left a vacuum, with no one else feeling able to step up. The DMT was meeting, but involved only UN agencies, and did not provide a forum for inter-agency coordination. NGOs were meeting amongst themselves, donors were meeting, and everyone was reaching out to the NCDM – in the absence of an overarching leadership framework. As one donor reflected, 'everyone was spinning in their own circles, NGOs, government, donors. ... It was a huge disappointment' (Heidel, B 2012, pers. comm., 20 April). By mid-October things had marginally improved, with the World Food Programme and NGOs convening inter-agency coordination meetings. However, the first formal government led inter-agency coordination meeting did not take place until almost five months after the emergency. As in Thailand, this undermined the ability of international actors to coordinate activities, minimise duplication and ensure that humanitarian needs were prioritised and met.

Financing the response

The absence of a formal appeal for assistance also had implications for financing the response. Reflecting Resolution 46/182, many donor policies require that humanitarian assistance be provided on the basis of a request (see AusAID, German Federal Foreign Office, UK Department for International Development, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs). This did not wholly preclude the provision of funds, as a number of donors were able to find ways to work around the absence of a formal appeal. Some did so simply by interpreting their policies flexibly – AusAID, for example, despite a policy requiring that assistance be provided on the basis of a request, provided assistance in both countries on the basis that willingness to accept Australian Government assistance had been made clear (Vizzard, M 2012, pers. Comm., 9 May) – while others provided limited assistance by supporting existing NGO partners with ongoing country programs. Save the Children, Oxfam, World Vision, Action Aid, Concern and Plan are just a few of the NGOs with permanent country programs in Thailand and/or Cambodia who were able to scale up their regular programs to support the flood response. Most Southeast Asian governments also provided assistance, in all cases based on bilateral agreements.

But the scale of the international response was limited, totalling just US\$24million to Thailand and

US\$20.5million to Cambodia (UN OCHA 2012a). In Thailand, this was to some extent just a reflection of the scale of need. An assessment conducted by USAID in mid-October found that 'national responders are providing ample food, water, medicines, and other supplies to affected families' (USAID 2011), while Médecins Sans Frontières reported that 'the government ... [has] the means and the capacity to ... [provide] continued healthcare to the affected population' (Springett 2012). The situation in Cambodia was more ambiguous, with the lack of consolidated assessment data making it difficult to get an overall picture of the extent to which needs were met. Cambodia's post-flood relief and recovery survey in March 2012 found that household access to water sources and latrines did not appear to have been disrupted (Action Aid 2012:32); but an inter-agency assessment conducted in four provinces in late 2011 found that 'food and clean water shortages were indicated in all interviews' (UNICEF 2011:11). Gaps that did exist cannot be attributable solely to a lack of funds, although some NGOs felt that with additional funds, more could have been done to ensure that needs were met. One international NGO staff reflected that 'we initially prepared bigger proposals than what the donors were actually able to give and we had to reduce the number of beneficiaries and activities. ... I think we could have done more had we received more funds, and most likely more funds would have been made available had the government issued a formal request' (Sakerwalla, S 2012, pers. comm., 15 May).

Humanitarian response in the Philippines

Practice adopted by the Government of the Philippines in recent years has ranged from formally requesting international assistance, to declining offers of assistance on the grounds that the Government has the resources it needs, to the in-between position of not *requesting* assistance but formally *accepting* an offer made by the UN RC/HC.

Following Tropical Storm Ketsana in 2009, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) made a formal request for international assistance (UN OCHA 2009). By way of contrast, in the aftermath of Typhoons Nesat and Nalgae in 2011, and in response to the monsoon floods in Luzon in 2012, the Government declined the offer of assistance made by the UN RC/HC (see Save the Children/AADMER Partnership Group 2013: 15). Again by way of contrast, following Tropical Storm Washi in 2011 and Typhoon Bopha in 2012, the Government did not request international assistance, but accepted, in writing, the offer made by the UN RC/HC. This written acceptance was then shared by OCHA with the HCT, and in contrast to the situation in Thailand and Cambodia served as the basis for the provision of humanitarian assistance by donors, the UN and international NGOs, the use of humanitarian coordination architecture, and the launch of a flash appeal (ibid). As a result, the response was described by most actors as one in which there was strong government leadership and

good coordination between national and international actors. OCHA's After-Action Review of the Washi response found that 'key clusters were quickly established in the affected areas or scaled up', and that 'Government cluster leads took strong leadership roles with the support of the HCT cluster co-leads' (UN OCHA 2012b:3). The Bopha After Action Review found similarly that 'the clusters were rolled out quickly at regional, provincial and municipal level' and that 'regular information exchanges allowed clusters to identify priorities and coordinate effective responses' (UN OCHA 2013b:5).

A number of factors underpin the contrast between the Philippines experience and that of Thailand and Cambodia. Firstly, the Philippines is a country in which the international humanitarian infrastructure is already in place. This obviates the need for discussion – which took up considerable energy in Thailand following the 2011 floods – regarding the trigger for activating these systems in the absence of a government request for assistance.

Secondly, there were marked differences in the way in which senior humanitarian staff interpreted both the national government response and international guidelines. In Thailand and Cambodia, much was made of Resolution 46/182 and its requirement that humanitarian assistance be provided on the basis of an appeal – with the absence of an appeal seen by many as a sticking point. In the aftermath of both Washi and Bopha in the Philippines, the fact that the government merely accepted rather than 'appealed for' international assistance was not raised as an issue. One UN agency staff explained: 'the moment the government accepts, it's as if they've made the request. Everyone understands the dynamics' (Nyangara, A 2013, pers. comm., 14 June). In other words, humanitarian and development staff understand the cultural issues surrounding requests for aid, and are prepared to 'read between the lines' as allowed by their own rules and procedures. The Philippines example demonstrates that this approach requires leadership from the most senior levels. Unless senior UN staff are prepared to exercise this sort of flexibility in interpretation, it is unlikely that others will do so.

The third factor distinguishing the Philippines scenario from those of Thailand and Cambodia was the extent of familiarity on the part of the Philippines Government with the international humanitarian architecture. Humanitarian coordination structures have for the most part been embraced by the government, with the cluster approach having been formally recognised in 2007 in an NDCC Circular titled 'Institutionalisation of the Cluster Approach in the Philippine Disaster Management System' (NDCC 2007). Because of the extent to which the humanitarian coordination infrastructure is described by the government as institutionalised within its own systems, the question of whether a disaster is sufficiently serious to warrant the imposition of international humanitarian systems is scarcely considered, because in the understanding of the government, the humanitarian response system is nationally led.

Conclusion

With the risk of disaster throughout the region increasing each year, Asian governments continue to develop capacities to prepare for, mitigate and respond to disasters. While capacities have increased, most governments are yet to put in place robust systems to facilitate and coordinate international assistance. At the same time, systems and structures that for international actors traditionally provided the framework for the provision of humanitarian assistance are losing relevance. The result, as highlighted in the humanitarian response to the Thailand and Cambodia floods, is that as time is spent negotiating whether or not, or how, assistance should be provided, those affected by disasters do not always get the support they need as quickly as should be possible. In a rapid onset emergency, this can cost lives.

In the region and around the world, some important steps have been taken to address these issues. At the international level, initiatives include OCHA's 'Guide for Governments and National Disaster Management Agencies on how to access the tools and services available from the International Humanitarian System', which sets out for governments how to access various components of the humanitarian system, and the International Federation of the Red Cross's *Model Act for the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance*, which provides governments with model clauses on the issue of requesting, accepting, facilitating and coordinating international assistance, which can be adapted and inserted into national legislation. Such initiatives reflect a growing and welcome awareness that the landscape for the provision of international humanitarian assistance – in particular the relationship between national and international actors – is changing, and these changes must be acknowledged, and our systems, rules and procedures adapted accordingly.

With the number of people affected by disasters increasing each year, national and international actors have a collective responsibility to ensure that our systems and structures are appropriate to the evolving Southeast Asian context, and be prepared to use these systems with initiative and flexibility so that those affected by disasters are provided with the support they need. New disasters present new challenges, but some things can be predicted:

- Increasing disaster risk;
- increasing national capacities to manage and respond to that risk;
- a disinclination on the part of national actors to publicly and explicitly seek assistance; and
- a desire on the part of the international community to assist.

The Philippines provides a case study of a government that has demonstrated the ability to facilitate and coordinate international assistance in a manner that maximises available capacities while retaining government leadership. Conversely, the response to the 2011 floods in Thailand and Cambodia highlights the fact

that international humanitarian systems and procedures are, in some contexts, in need of reform. As such there is an opportunity for national and international actors to consider whether the systems and structures they have in place in a range of contexts are fit for purpose, and whether these systems and structures are being interpreted and utilised with sufficient flexibility to ensure the best possible humanitarian response.

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The future of PNG's provincial government system: Another opportunity to take stock and adjust

Henry Okole with Legu Guba and Xavier Winia¹

Introduction

This paper considers the political, governance and development future of Papua New Guinea (PNG) with particular reference to the laws relating to provincial and local level government and the ways in which existing laws have been hijacked over time by those in leadership. On 28 May 2013, Papua New Guinea's National Executive Council (NEC) took the decision that many people have been waiting years for, to review the Organic Law on Provincial and Local-level Governments (OLPGLLGs). This would be the second review of the law that entails the sub-national levels of government. The Organic Law on Provincial Governments (OLPGs) was adopted in 1976 and was replaced in 1995 by the OLPGLLGs. Ever since this first review, there have been on-going debates relating to the relevance of this law. Some argue that it bears little relevance to the reality on the ground, especially in terms of the strength of the public service, and therefore negates its own implementation. Others say that the law is too prescriptive and accords too much room to Members of Parliament (MPs) to manoeuvre. What is undeniable is that service delivery to provinces has declined under this law (see Kalinoe 2009). The consideration today is whether the problems relate to the law or to the manner in which the PNG society is changing.

The importance of the law is obvious. It is the 'spine' that connects the three present levels of government; national, provincial and local including 22 provinces, 89 districts, some 305 local-level governments and over 4000 wards. The OLPGLLGs lays out the blueprint for ways in which services are to be delivered to the people. After almost four decades of statehood, PNG is still going through similar development pains as other young democracies. This is particularly so in terms of the optimal use of state institutions for the sake of national interests, lack of capacity in the public service, and the ever present political interests of leadership at all levels of the government machinery. Regardless of how this review process is approached it would do more harm if nothing less than a systemic approach is adopted. This is a process that requires smart thinking and strategic planning to ensure that much of this 'behemoth', in the form of the decentralised system of government, is addressed.

Provincial government system and the decentralisation policy

The provincial government system was initially introduced in the late 1970s after protracted discussions within government circles as to whether PNG, after gaining independence from Australia in 1975, should continue

with a centralised political structure, or consider a much more complex decentralised version. The Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC), the group that comprised elected MPs and technocrats who were commissioned to oversee the drafting of PNG's constitution, unanimously pushed for decentralisation as it was deemed a better 'fit' for PNG with the added novelty of being a design that was inclusive of ordinary people in contrast to a centralised system that projected exclusive control from an isolated central point. Accordingly, the decentralisation policy was introduced amidst widespread reservations.

The reservations were by no means baseless. Given the truncated colonial history of the country, a modern state was superimposed on the diverse population from the 1950s, and strengthened after the first national elections in PNG in 1964.² Eleven years later, independence was granted at a time when nation building and state building were profound dual challenges. Secession was expressed by Bougainville and the Papuan region as groups of people sought to protect their respective identities within the uncharted seas of political change. So when the decentralisation policy was first suggested, contrasting fears were expressed by sections of society. The policy could either work against nation building efforts – and worse still, perpetuate the disintegration of the country if groups of people were to relish this opportunity and push for a break away from PNG. Or, the decentralisation structure could accommodate the deeply diverse population by granting some degree of freedom to groups to run their own affairs while remaining under the umbrella of PNG. Either way, the challenge was always going to be colossal for a country that had just emerged from a stateless form.

On the other side of the spectrum, and away from political considerations, there were others who considered the decentralised structure unworkable. Local-level districts were slowly introduced from the 1950s and extended in the 1960s to represent the extent of the central colonial administration in peripheral areas. However, efforts were to encounter one particular challenge: the almost impenetrably rugged topography of the island of New Guinea that had challenged colonisers in the past. Furthermore, it was generally difficult to secure obedience from the local communities who were invariably recalcitrant and could not readily trust anybody from outside their immediate localities. Changing this mindset to suit a nationalised line of thinking was a hurdle in itself. It was for practical reasons therefore that the Australian colonial administration wanted to institute two levels of government: the national and local. The OLPGs brought in the second-ranked tier of government (provincial).

Public service and weak provincial leadership

For a country that in the 1970s had almost no educated elite to run the public service, the creation of provincial and local-level governments ensured that whatever manpower resources were available were spread very thinly. The situation was exacerbated by the last remnants of Australia's colonial public servants leaving the country. In hindsight, perhaps the biggest blunder was a decision taken by the national government soon after the adoption of the OLPGs to grant all provinces a government at the same time (see Dorney 2000:247). Provinces that had a better pool of manpower and longer histories of contact with the colonial administration and the outside world were better prepared to handle their own affairs. But for many provinces, the provincial governments heralded new experiences in political leadership and administration. They were not equipped for such responsibilities and by the 1980s the weaknesses of the provincial governments began appearing. Capacity within weak provincial bureaucracies became obvious as poor administration became a reoccurring issue in the majority of provincial governments. Poor leadership was common as provincial leaders became embroiled in maladministration and corruption.

The problems of provincial governments were compounded in the 1980s by a national government decision to reduce the powers of the Public Service Commission (PSC). While there were reasons for this decision, the end result was increased politicisation of the public service. This was felt principally at the national level – but with reverberating effects for provinces (see Turner and Kavanamur 2009). By the 1990s, only a handful of provincial governments were working well while the rest struggled to make an impact.

Politicising service delivery

The decentralisation policy ensured the creation of layers of red tape as well as demarcated grounds for a political tussle between the national and provincial leaders as both sides laid claims to leadership roles in the same constituencies. To some degree this was a case of 'dual legitimacy' since both sets of leaders were elected by the same people and therefore saw the need to play to their wishes in a bid to maintain their support for the sake of their respective political careers.

While the OLPGs appeared clear on areas of responsibility and shared functions between the first and second levels of government, prevailing political interests charted their own course. When this included leadership at both the national and provincial levels, the end result was a four-way tussle that also involved the local level governments and the voting public. It became clear from the 1980s that there were tense relationships between the national and provincial governments. Provincial governments, for their part, were only too willing to criticise local level governments for performance-related issues. Local level leaders, for their part, were more than willing to return fire against provincial leaders, to the delight of

national leaders. But in the final analogy, it was the *people* who held the 'strings' to all levels of leadership (see Okole 2012). When service delivery began declining it was easy and convenient to point to poor leadership as the primary cause. Less attention was paid to other factors, such as the manner in which the country was forced to rapidly accommodate foreign institutions and to work with them to yield acceptable results.

Meanwhile, opportunistic individuals were only too willing to place themselves at vantage positions to capitalise on the government and administrative systems. With a state system unable to command undivided support and loyalty from the people – and certainly not from most individuals situated within the state institutions – the state machinery at many points became resource outlets to serve more limited interests. Corruption, aided by weak institutions and poor enforcement of relevant laws, quickly worked its way into all levels of society.

MPs political interests and the OLPGs

Undoubtedly there were issues that justified a review of the provincial government system. Bad governance, maladministration and poor service delivery were blights to the development aspirations and progress of the young country. What ultimately drove the reform agenda however was the national level MPs intention to completely eradicate political leadership at provincial level.

In March 1995, the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local level Governments was passed accompanied by pieces of enabling legislations. Its proponents argued that the new law better captured the precepts of decentralisation than its predecessor. Furthermore, it was supposed to improve the delivery of services, facilitate increased participation by people in government affairs, relocate public servants from urban centres to rural outstations and reduce opportunities for the mismanagement of funds (Kalinoe 2009:2–3). In hindsight, nothing could have been further from these objectives. For a plethora of reasons, service delivery has deteriorated over the past 18 years. While people's participation has been enhanced through the elevated status of local level governments, this has become little more than a symbolic gesture given the direct involvement and influence of MPs in various governance aspects of the provinces. The much anticipated shift of public servants to peripheral areas from urban centres has not taken place. Poor infrastructure and the gradual disappearance of basic services in rural areas made it an unattractive proposition for public servants. Today, corruption is far more embedded than in the past.

While corruption and the poor performance of the public service generally negated the performance of the three-tier system of government, the most telling factor was the poor state of service delivery. Essential services to the people in PNG are directly linked to the strong reciprocal relationship between voters and MPs (Okole 2012). Given the existence of weak political parties in the country where MP's popularity is tied to the personality of the MP that heads them (see Okole 2005), voters

habitually turn to MPs to deliver services to them. This responsibility traditionally, and by law, falls to the state through the public service. The weakness of the public service since the 1980s in turn has ensured that the elected leaders have gradually usurped the ‘delivery role’ – and today this is being overtly demonstrated in many ways.

Much of the inherent weaknesses of the law – including some idealistic provisions that were at odds with existing political realities – emerged partly as a result of poor implementation. What became evident with time was that the poor state of the law left it susceptible to political manoeuvring and influence. What we see today is an organic law that is struggling to make an impact as originally intended. At the same time, it has been captured and used to serve the public (especially for reasons relating service delivery), but twisted to serve individual political interests. The clearest example of this is how some MPs have been allocated K10 million annually to delivery services directly to their constituencies under what is called the District Support Improvement Program, but without proper accountability and auditing mechanisms in place (see Ketan 2007).

Concluding remarks

The review of the OLPGLGs is a good opportunity to place good governance and proper administrative practices back in perspective. The tendency invariably is to tinker with the law or established processes and procedures, and then modify them to suit what are perceived to be appropriate demands on the ground. The case with the OLPGLGs and the three tier government system in PNG, as pointed out in this paper, indicates that there are deep-seated issues that go beyond a mere review of the law. The manner in which state and society have undergone change over the last four decades demonstrates that a holistic approach – at least as a way to gauge the wider factors at hand – is needed for this review exercise.

For a workable law to be written, it would require experts able to understand the political landscape and related issues, but more importantly, to be able to accurately foresee the type of political reaction that could take place once a law is instituted. This is difficult given that PNG’s political temperament is highly unpredictable, perplexing, and perpetually changing.

Those who frame the laws will have to meticulously read the dynamics of PNG politics, both past and present, but more notably, look into the future as the wording of the legislation will have to pre-empt the calculated

behaviour of the people. Failure to do so will quickly render the laws obsolete.

The potential danger with the review of the OLPGLGs is if it considers service delivery but turns a blind eye to those practices associated with it that endanger many areas of the larger polity. The review should include aspects of service delivery, but it is equally important to include building and sustaining democracy, enhancing respect for the rule of law, recognising the supremacy of the state and the centrality of the constitution. Failure to cover all these issues and failure to develop a law which provides a central pillar to the governance structure in the country, is likely to result in governance and administrative imbalances. In the long run, this could prove difficult to manage if individual interests were to capture institutions and laws – as has happened in PNG in the past.

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Notes

- 1 Henry Okole is a freelance consultant who has been engaged to take part in the review process of PNG’s Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments. Legu Guba and Xavier Winia are research assistants in the same project.
- 2 The country at present is home to well over 750 languages that are spoken by about seven million people; a clear indication of the deep fragmented population.

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