

## COMMUNITY NOTE

### **Knowledge for Development: findings of a stakeholder consultation facilitated by the German Development Institute**

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This *Community Note* presents the findings of a conference on knowledge for development (K4D) which was facilitated by the German Development Institute (DIE) and which took place July 2014. Although it provides a brief introduction to the conference, its main focus is to communicate the findings and invite further discussion. The article ends with a short discussion of implications and ways forward.

Keywords: conferences; knowledge management; development; 2014

### **Theoretical background**

For decades, the concept of knowledge for development (K4D) has been considered a way forward in the international development cooperation sector. Its relevance as an explicit development factor was first established in the World Bank 'World Development Report' of 1998. The background mainly being the World Bank's realisation that in the future, due to a changing development landscape, more states would become financially independent from the World Bank. With financial independence, their development needs will shift from finances to knowledge. The World Bank thus re-branded itself as the 'Knowledge Bank', to maintain relevance to those clients (cf. World Bank 2011, Akude 2014). To facilitate this new focus, changes were made in the Bank's structure.

The effects were limited due to the complex systemic factors needing to be addressed in *practice*, given such changes in *rhetoric*. The complexity of change processes in the development sector is partly due to the fact that more than one knowledge exists. Although this may depend on one's definition of knowledge and philosophical standpoint, any objective consideration of the knowledge issue will reveal a simultaneous existence of multiple knowledges. This has been called 'epistemic diversity' (Ferguson et al 2008, Akude 2014). However, this has not yet been accorded the respect and recognition it deserves. This is intrinsically linked with the Western

mind-set and approach to donating development to non-Western nations. Because it solely draws on Western experience, this mind-set is parochial.

The Western development paradigm is an outgrowth of a series of ideas ingrained into contemporary Western society and culture. Ake (1978) says these ideas have led to a methodological and ideological bias of Western scholarship that is reflected in 'Eurocentric teleologism' in development thinking: the approximation of the standard of Western societies as the ideal that all human societies should be aspiring to achieve; and this consequently gives the West the 'rights and duty' to develop the rest. This teleologism, he asserts, results from the strong influence of teleological thinking in Western social science because some of the most influential scholars of today's Western social science – Spencer, Tonnies, Maine, Comte, Durkheim, Weber, Marx - were all teleological thinkers. More recently, Eyben (2010) calls this mind-set 'substantialism' and Watts (2011) describes the modes of the current development paradigm as 'standardised, linear, reductionist' but also observes a shift towards 'diverse, complex, systems.'

However, the experiences of international development in its first 50 years have led to a discrediting of teleological thinking and paved the way for the ascendancy of complex adaptive systems thinking. Nonetheless, the organic relationship between knowledge and development has still not been accentuated. Learning is still seen as an ex-post activity rather than continuous. The conception of development cooperation is still linear and top-down. This mind-set has implications for the relationship between knowledge and action: they are perceived as separate. The theory of change this leads to is that knowledge precedes action. This is, at best, questionable.

So how do societies learn? How can knowledge for development make a difference? This paper's theoretical point of departure is that knowledge emerges through human action. To illustrate, the existence (survival) of human beings on earth demands food and shelter (among other things). Consequently, human societies employ their immediate (and not so immediate) biological and physical environments to solve the problems posed by demands for food, shelter, health, etc. In this process, society members cooperate, thus gaining cognitive insights - learning. Development knowledge evolves from efforts to improve one's situation in an emerging context. Thus, every piece of human knowledge has temporal and spatial dimensions: what you know depends on where you are and when. Consequently, learning differs depending on context, society and the individual even within the same society since experiences and actions vary.

Since the Cold War ended, Western scholars have become very vocal in criticizing global development policy and Western development agencies and organisations are increasingly

accepting these criticisms. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness that stressed the principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, results and mutual accountability not only exemplifies this acceptance of criticisms but equally represents an attempt to free global development from the strangleholds of donor states. This also applies to the subsequent Accra Agenda for Action (2008) which went further to include delivering results, inclusive partnerships and capacity development; and to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (2011), which aims among other things to update and monitor the Accra Action Plan (2008). Ironically, these efforts to put recipient states in the driver's seat of global development aid have had the opposite effect: through the instrumentalities of capacity development programmes and aid evaluation institutes (for example), donor states consolidate their occupation of the driver's seat. Consequently, despite the continuing search for and interest in a better global development policy, it's business as usual.

However, whilst Western governments, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) struggle to find a less dominant position in development cooperation, change is occurring. One area where priorities change is K4D. This can be traced to numerous factors, but chiefly the application of knowledge to the successful development of Asian, especially Southeast Asian, and other emerging economies; the organic relationship between knowledge and development (although the World Bank realised this fact relatively late); and the World Bank's desire to retain customers in transition from developing to emerging economies. Initially however, the significance of K4D purposes concerned researchers working on Asian development. However, with the World Bank declaration that it had officially become a 'knowledge bank' in 1996, the situation changed substantially: discourse on and practice of knowledge management for development have since increased.

Encouraged by the World Bank, some donor states have launched similar programmes geared towards promoting the production, exchange or implementation of knowledge for development purposes - the Department for International Development (DFID), UK, the Dutch Development Organisation, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation – to mention a few. Some of these states have explicit policy guidelines for activities in the 'knowledge for development' sphere (Canada, UK, Switzerland) and others do not (Germany). However, almost all donor states are active in this area and for those without an explicit K4D policy, most activities have been in capacity development. Since emerging as an issue for development studies, the reach of knowledge for development has been expanding and this has been expressed in subsequent publications.

The influence of knowledge on development has led Hidalgo and Hausmann (2009) to propose the economic complexity index (ECI) as the new measure of development, being superior to

simple measures such as per capita GDP. The ECI is based on the diversity of countries' cultures and the ubiquity of their products. It calculates complexity by measuring accumulated knowledge as well as formed networks in an economy expressed in the economy's industrial composition. Complexity refers to the number of capabilities required to produce a particular product while ubiquity refers to the presence of that product in other countries. The higher the complexity, the lower the ubiquity and therefore the more a country earns.

Following the recognition of knowledge as a development factor, its management has become a substantial part of many development organisations, some ministries, agencies and other implementing organisations. Many of these have declared the ambition to convert to learning organisations and restructured accordingly by setting up knowledge management departments, sometimes combined with monitoring and evaluation; and of course, recruiting knowledge managers.

One major issue in knowledge management refers to setting up channels through which field workers transmit the newest lessons from field to base with the aim that headquarters will consider these and integrate them in policy planning. Knowledge management has become the arena in which ivory tower policy planning (Eurocentric teleologism) confronts the messy realities of policy implementation (differences in time and space) often proving the inappropriateness of policy planning. By the way, the impossibility of predictability in policy planning, for example, is one of the main insights derived from the much bandied-about complexity theory.

The novelty associated with the functions of organisational knowledge managers apparently led to initial confusion and uncertainty about the contents of their function in a developmental context. This led knowledge managers to constantly consult one another in searching for solutions to daily assignments. Over time, this led to the emergence of communities of practice (CoPs). Due to their original purpose, CoPs have remained mainly inward-looking: searching for the best ways to do individual members' jobs. They also function as silos, with little cooperation between them. This introspectiveness has led to organised knowledge actors in development cooperation neglecting sector-wide issues. The fact that the pedestal and logic upon which the institutions, structures and modus operandi of global development policy rest were wrong has largely been left unaddressed.

## **Background to the conference and workshop**

It is in this context that the German Development Institute (DIE) decided to facilitate a process that addresses various questions emerging from the above; with a view to using all the insights that emerged since K4D to improve development cooperation. The overall title of the DIE event 'Knowledge for Development (K4D): Galvanizing Opportunities of a Promising Theme for Improved Development Cooperation' was guided by the following questions:

- Are the institutional structures and modus operandi of development cooperation relevant for today's world? If not, what changes are needed in both donor and recipient states?
- Following the lessons of knowledge for development, are there any justifications for the exclusion of research institutions as part of Western development institutions?
- Knowledge managers in development organisations are mainly lone rangers. They complain that policy planners don't know how to integrate KM4Dev in policy planning. What could be done to change this, thus mainstreaming KM?
- The mainstreaming of relatively new issues in global development such as Human Rights or Gender has largely been the result of effective advocacy. Is advocacy relevant to mainstreaming KM4dev? If so, who should be doing it?

## **Methodology**

At the core of the process was a conference and workshop on 8-9 July 2014, at the GDI in Bonn, Germany.<sup>1</sup> Various approaches were taken to include different knowledges in the process of responding to the above questions. These include but are not limited to:<sup>2</sup>

- Leading up to the event, a wiki-survey was employed to gather ideas on different actions to put knowledge and learning at the core of development work and policy<sup>3</sup>
- A discussion paper was distributed in the KM4Dev community of practice that dwelt on these questions.<sup>4</sup>
- An external researcher with K4D research background and member of relevant communities was contracted for a certain timeframe to support the DIE in implementing the process.<sup>5</sup>
- Doing epistemic diversity justice, a group of interested experts was identified through an online survey distributed in relevant thematic networks.
- Two facilitators (members of the KM4Dev community and leadership [core] group) were engaged in framing and implementing the event.<sup>6</sup>
- A cooperation with the Knowledge, Technology and Innovation Group at Wageningen University was struck, whose members gave input on thematic issues for the event.<sup>7</sup>

## Findings

In presenting the findings, particular emphasis will be placed on the face-to-face event. The results of the Wiki survey are online, a video with statements on the main question and event notes are freely accessible on the conference website. The findings are clustered in three groups and presented in this order:

1. findings that emerged on the morning of the first day and were clustered in thematic fields;
2. findings that emerged on the second day, clustered by professional roles; and
3. findings that emerged in concluding discussions.

On day one, whilst listening to lectures, participants were asked to capture thoughts, ideas and questions on cards. These cards were randomly gathered on pin boards. Before moving towards workshop type sessions, the cards were clustered in an ad-hoc fashion, though guided with a search for the answers to the research questions. Five clusters emerged, suggesting participants' recommendations for a better application of knowledge to improve development cooperation: knowledge co-creation, macro-systemic/K4D, demand-led, narratives and transformation. The cards from each cluster are presented. Next, the findings of group discussions are outlined.

### Cluster 1: Co-creation

1. Knowledge sharing on equal footing
2. How to make knowledge co-creation reality? Which institutions (+institutional changes) are necessary to turn this buzzword into practice?
3. What do rigid rules for accountability set by donors mean for joint knowledge development & sharing?
4. KM 'not equal' to learning... but used interchangeably?
5. How to break down organisational boundaries?
6. How to operationalise knowledge co-creation?
7. How do development cooperation/organisations plan to create meaningful incentives for fostering a culture of open knowledge-sharing?
8. Importance of individual information processing and interpersonal relations
9. Is it really about knowledge creation or letting systems work better?
10. Joint knowledge creation required for sustainable development
11. Open up organisational boundaries
12. Intra-organisational and inter-organisational learning and changes
13. Local participatory knowledge creation as part of research projects
14. Knowledge sharing/instead of knowledge transfer only
15. Complementary knowledge and feedback loops

### *Group discussion findings*

The group discussion on the cards in this section highlighted a number of approaches that can improve the status quo, but further questions and criticisms of systemic factors also emerged. Engaging all stakeholders early enough appeared a simple yet challenging intention. Actors should try to open new collaboration spaces by broadening partnerships from creation to action; going beyond discussions by acting jointly. In such processes defining outcomes rather than outputs can help co-creation happen because it introduces flexibility currently missing in many projects and programmes. This, naturally, raised the question of how to achieve and incorporate authentic evaluation of outcomes; it was suggested that ‘collaborative projects’ could be a good example to facilitate co-creation.<sup>8</sup>

It was perceived that relinquishing power is necessary when trying to enable co-creation. Usually actors enter processes with unequal positions of power which hinders collaborative work. This includes challenging the donor-recipient relationship as it institutionalises and re-enforces dependencies. In such relationships, genuine co-creation is impossible. Thus, it was perceived that we need a shift away from project-based development since it hinders the establishment of ongoing relationships and the emergence of trust.

It was further agreed that Western development mind-sets need to change to enable knowledge co-creation and in that process, the duty of development cooperation should be specified. Development agencies have to be concerned with the feasibility of local ownership as well as their own future in order to find a role for themselves in a changing development landscape. Underlying the discussions here is the idea that for co-creation to happen, transfer modes and feedback loops are important. Actors need to respect the know-how of others, cultural influences need greater consideration and all actors need to move into the middle ground between political elite and bottom-up social entrepreneurship for co-creation to occur.

### **Cluster 2: macro systemic/K4D**

1. Increase funding for participatory action research
2. Management ‘buy in’ is not the same as strategic intent. Is KM really core to our businesses and core to our industry (our industry should be about knowledge flows and not aid flows)
3. Problem: KM still discussed as ‘technical solution’. How to avoid KM becoming ‘new technical silver bullet’?
4. @BMZ: can you ‘produce’ knowledge?<sup>9</sup>



5. When knowledge systems represent political/economic structures/interests in opposition: WORLD BANK vs local alternatives or divergent contexts
6. What is knowledge?
7. How to fund emergent networks?
8. Suggestion: more resources for K4D but with which concrete actions? ‘galvanizing’
9. How to design the middle way between qualitative and quantitative approaches?
10. Technical/ academic knowledge as a de-politicisation tool in local contexts
11. What is the role of science in K4D?
12. What is the contribution of policy coherence, is it desirable?
13. What could be the institutional set-up for global knowledge management/sharing?

#### *Group discussion findings*

Effectively, this group dealt with the main research question: what needs to change in order to improve development cooperation delivery if we are to take the insights of knowledge for development seriously? It was immediately remarked that global knowledge institutions are perpetuating North/South power inequalities, highlighting the importance of the locus of knowledge production. The group accepted that since development policy is poor at learning, it may not have the solutions. But why this poverty at learning? The proffered answers ranged from being scared to share, to being afraid of failure and of competition.

In order to improve development delivery, participants agreed development should be defined to reflect the intrinsic relationship between development and knowledge. Another verdict was that development should give access to justice. Further proffered opinions maintain that knowledge management should be for a purpose, that we should make knowledge systems work better and that we have not started yet. It was also agreed that since knowledge resides in human beings, development policy should drive joint projects with equal partners and also listen. Then the cultural dimension was introduced with a suggestion that knowledge narratives are cultural. Revisiting the issue of knowledge production, it was suggested that people produce knowledge in the process of cooperation to solve problems of human existence and that therefore, knowledge is social and context bound.

Further findings relate to understanding knowledge management as management as if knowledge mattered, that donor states should stop sending experts to developing countries. Experts should first work with locals in order to learn. Furthermore, global collaborative action is needed in knowledge creation; in KM platforms and networks as well as in innovation brokering and bundling, in local and global dimensions.



The suggestions dovetailed into knowledge typologies and diversities (tacit vs explicit, expertise vs indigenous) with remarks that power is used to frame knowledge. In that process, information barriers, language, culture, etc. play roles. Finally, the suggestion the EU may need a Chief Knowledge Minister or Commissioner.

### **Cluster 3: Demand-led**

1. Proactive responsive development rather than proactive (western institutions)
2. Open up for demand-led development processes
3. Legitimacy
4. How to improve knowledge access for minorities/unfavoured groups?
5. Reduce upward accountability
6. 'Knowledge is power', can knowledge be shared on an equal basis?
7. How to reduce obstacles to horizontal cooperation?
8. How to implement knowledge management in local projects?
9. Huge transaction costs (aid effectiveness)
10. How can North-financed development be owned by the South?

#### *Group discussion findings*

Initial clarification of 'demand-led' was needed. This means knowledge projects being initiated by local ideas.<sup>10</sup> We established that ideas differ between local needs and (international) development institutions' solutions and therefore there is observable tension between local demand and development funders' 'cool ideas'. At the Swiss Development Cooperation, this continues to be a struggle.

One way of tackling these tensions is by addressing institutional barriers (e.g. access for women to fill spaces so that gender and harmful traditional practices become part of the agenda). Laws, conventions and institutions need to change to make this happen. Surprise was expressed at the difficulty of adapting to participatory development despite unanimous agreement on its positive effects. How can we improve participatory methodologies, making sure budgets are really used for inclusive development? Clearly dialogues between donor and recipient are necessary and more efforts required to define common priorities. Terms of monitoring and evaluation need greater flexibility and also to capture serendipitous results. Accountability is important and is less about results than who is accountable to whom.

Demand-led considerations also play a role with regard to social policy. Approaches to policy development focussing on differences (old) and commonalities (new) impact on the relationships between social and institutional levels. Both approaches underline the necessity of contextually

embedding knowledge to increase acceptability and appropriateness across borders (cultural, religious, etc.). Views vary regarding appropriateness depending on the process purpose: are we after adaptable or adoptable knowledge and is the focus on the content (of knowledge) or the process (of knowledge [creation]). If the focus is predominantly on content, development risks being about political denomination - legitimization of expended funds - and thus resembles colonial patriarchy.

Therefore, processes and participation are both crucially important. Representations of women and/or lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities in processes highlight the importance of legitimacy and ever changing norms. The establishment of gender as a demand-led development theme could be instructive to knowledge (and its management) for development.

#### **Cluster 4: Narratives**

1. Destructive effects of telling a people's story for them
2. 'Development' narrative
  - a. post 2015
  - b. universal development
3. How does communication have to change for cooperation to improve?
4. How to access knowledge in marginalised (local) settings? How to overcome marginalisation in general to infuse knowledge?
5. Path dependency - and relevance of trade-offs for memory and amnesia
6. Prof Stichweh: the 'Western knowledge system' is strongly integrated in Western society. What does that imply for sharing knowledge in/with non-western countries?
7. Micro-narratives

#### *Group discussion findings*

Discussions here were rich, yet note taking basic. Discussions revolved around how to work at different scales of communications. The granularity of narratives is constantly changing in the direction of the individual's story. Individual narratives can accumulate into group insights and be analysed in light of diversity of other groups.

However, this group outlines the importance of power by noting the restriction of narrative spaces through high level claims. Underlying ideas, values and the prevalent development mind-set hinder the opening up of discursive spaces for inclusion and empowerment. Negotiating spaces in which common narratives across stories (of how to move forward) can emerge, need to be facilitated. Success here requires fundamental changes in how we approach development work.

## **Cluster 5: Transformation**

1. Drivers of transformation
2. Vision
3. Technology
4. Knowledge
5. Crisis - Risk of being too late. Tipping point
6. How does emergence fit with transformation?
7. Sustainability transition: KM for developed economies, not just developing.  
re: sustainable consumption, low-carbon economies
8. What is our (K4D) theory of change?
9. Knowledge may not be a differentiator but access to knowledge is. How to improve  
knowledge systems?
10. World Bank: no theory of change, new theory to emerge!
11. K4 global cooperation -> development
12. Issue of leadership/who drives change?
13. How can risk-taking be encouraged in predominantly static organisational structures?

### *Group discussion findings*

The central contribution here is that change starts with the individual: individual value system plays a crucial role in transforming humans who then try to transform the system they are part of by affecting different levels of that system. This assertion raised propositions on the need for 'Guerrilla KM'. Different levels understand knowledge differently. For example, at the social level knowledge (presumably) can be pooled. Whilst different knowledges of processes - financial tools/methods and approaches to planning - are important, it is not knowledge that changes an organisation (but people). Drivers of transformation are more diverse and others, e.g. crisis, are at the core of transformative change. Organisations are path dependent but crisis can open up avenues previously closed off or unimaginable.

This can then lead to systemic transformation. However, transformation should not be confused with growth nor and neither with process. It is very fundamental and (social) transformation takes very long. One long term transformation currently needing to be driven is silo bureaucracies. Seeing bureaucracy as a network type can help us imagine alternative, more productive and appropriate types of organisation.

## **Deliberations and Findings, Day 2**

The day featured a mixture of lectures, presentations and interactive sessions aimed at considering the practical implications of discussions thus far. However, the idea was to have discussions with people occupying similar positions in the development system and see how this could improve the status quo.

The five roles defined, based on a participant list were: (1.) Professionals and Consultants, (2.) Researchers and Students, (3.) Policy Makers and Funders, (4.) Planners and Managers, and (5.) Others (or 'Networkers'). The question posed was: 'What can I do in my role to implement the things we talked about?' Some key terms were provided as seed ideas; e.g. storytelling, stakeholder participation, co-creation, communities and networks, etc.

### **1. Professionals & Consultants**

This group sought to offer health checks for communities of practice and/or community management in organisations. Their advice includes considerations about reaching for 'low hanging fruits' (approaches to incremental improvements) and how to document successes, using those stories for furthering change processes. These participants pledged to accompany actors through a few well-designed steps towards their (actors') own goals. These 'goals' need definition by management and decision makers in development institutions; nudging these in a direction leading to the design of a 'knowledge strategy' (rather than KM strategy) is something professionals and consultants can do. Priority themes in terms of knowledge sharing foci should be a part of that strategy.

However, whilst professionals and consultants can accompany such processes, much remains to be explored regarding how to adapt context-bound knowledge to new contexts (e.g. across different value systems) and how to develop and improve upon 'last mile'-models. Creating spaces for such issues will also depend on educating donors. This group felt they can play a role in this. The engagement is long-term and any small changes (in the right direction) should be considered successes.

### **2. Researchers & Students**

Some suggestions revolved around participation, involvement and engagement. Group members encouraged one another to be courageous and continue to nourish the ideals of a development researcher even at the expense of one's own job. Examples include challenging the typical relationship imperatives in researcher - subject/object of research by letting 'subjects' think of

recommendations or approaches themselves. Similarly, engaging in more participatory action research, or more applied collaborative research (binational), or increasing engagement between practitioners and researchers by working with communities. Additional suggestions were intensifying efforts via ‘engaged scholarship’ (regarding design, data collection and feedback) and doing case study research using a problem-solving approach to link research solutions to organisational challenges. This necessitates becoming more receptive to addressing institutional pressures, considering more the ‘feedback loops’ to research participants and making sure that before engaging in participatory processes, some initial understanding of the local socio economic, political and cultural contexts exists.

Institutional support is needed - a conducive environment for researchers that facilitates communication in academia and offers training in participatory methods and consultancy skills (on real projects). Community knowledge sharing shall be part of funding budgets and proposal assessment criteria and consulting/policy advice should become more of a valued criteria vis-a-vis publishing. Besides demanding such changes, researchers and students pledged to combat the current incentive system, possibly circumventing the system to do more participatory and trans-disciplinary work while linking research, consultancy and policy advising.

### **3. Policy-makers and Funders**

This group addressed broad, sometimes abstract aspects of the K4D domain. Besides trying to integrate better KM/KS practices into their work (more reflection on the ‘how to ...’), emphasising the relevance of knowledge (sharing) in the post-2015 context and allocating more room for experiments, this group questioned the type of relationships currently underpinning international development. This includes continuing to challenge the donor-recipient relationship and advocating genuine partnerships. It also includes considering networks and other KM aspects as ‘replacing’ or substituting state-citizen relationships in fragile contexts.

They stressed that the relevance of K4D lessons goes beyond development contexts because of systemic linkages, for example the impact of migration to EU-countries (‘brain drain’). Furthermore, lesson learning in development cooperation needs concerns everyone. Too much ignorance exists in policy making with damaging effects on development policy. This is also relevant for non-policy makers since appropriate information can be used to empower migrants. Impact could be made through democratisation and advocacy.

Participatory methods have to be offered and further developed by funders and policy makers. Storytelling appeared an important approach to this group and better use should be made of storytelling in reporting; e.g. to blend qualitative and quantitative methods. Generally, the

storytelling approach should be employed more frequently when defining and discussing new ‘global partnerships’. This approach could ground abstract discussions in everyday reality. Soft-skill training for link-creation at all levels (inter-governmental, top-down, horizontal, etc.) is needed to enable such processes to succeed. Beyond storytelling, additional methods require development (e.g. for analysis of social and political imbalances allowing funders and/or policy makers to position themselves). The KM4Dev community could be used here as a sounding board for conceptual reflections.

#### **4. Planners & Managers**

These saw the core of their activities as the enabling of a knowledge-sharing environment that fosters trust building between individuals inherently willing to share knowledge. Skills like listening and visioning are crucial but processes are equally important. The creation of integrated knowledge-sharing procedures, visualisation and contextualisation and employing actor mapping processes are things planners and managers can do to improve the status quo. Valorising local knowledge and enabling demand driven core-creation can help focus more on outcomes. Taking time to learn from others and from evaluations can help planning for benchmarking.

#### **5. Networkers**

Networkers understood their tasks as the review and mapping of existing networks, partly to determine fitness for purpose (thus justifying investments in them) but also to assess whether new networks are needed. However, reviewing network redundancies in particular can help with defining what needs reinforcing. Overall, networkers aim to design interdependence in network architecture to increase resilience of systems. In these processes, the co-definition of value propositions and outcomes is equally as important as communicating at the appropriate levels of abstraction, allowing for network flexibility.

#### **K4D last suggestions**

The last session was dedicated to capturing final ideas. Participants considered that K4D needs the following:

- funding for space dedicated to storytelling and/or self-signifying [/role redefinition in view of changing circumstances]
- spaces for feedback
  - research to community
  - M&E process to include people

- to change the international set-up
  - donor fund partnership (sector budget support)
  - money should talk less
  - space for empowering partners
- to swap aid effectiveness (Paris/ACCRA/BUSAN) -> with K4D - to bring development closer to its *raison d'être*
- to review redundancy of network(s) and develop guidance for participation choices
- to balance quantitative data with qualitative aspects - under K4D
- smaller (context specific) budgets - big budgets lead to over-simplification of complex issues
- also to see a paradigm change from 'recipients'
  - 'Southern' leaders need to take ownership
  - prerequisite to take a road to development
- to create spaces for 'problem-owner' driven development through emancipation (knowledge = wealth)
- to open up everything and beyond because knowledge equals power. In open markets, for example, development organisations have major role because internet knowledge sharing is often not in the interest of free market players and hindered by policies
- to recognise that global cooperation is bigger than development and position ourselves in the system
- to link development policy with the masses

## Conclusions

Before summarising process findings and charting a way forward, it is necessary to state *ex ante* that the discussions somewhat side-lined the research questions but we deliberately decided not to intervene because observing how participants handle the issues was part of the research. Nevertheless, it was still possible to siphon answers from the discussions. Here we would like to recapitulate the research questions and briefly reflect on the findings.

1. Are the institutional structures and *modus operandi* of development cooperation still relevant for today's world?

Though there were practically no reflections on the appropriateness of current institutional arrangements, the *modus operandi* was criticised for being elitist and intergovernmental. Ordinary people are left out of the focus. Sending experts with foreign-bred solutions that often turn out to be inappropriate also attracted considerable criticism. Those experts were advised



instead to listen to the locals to ascertain what the problems are. Participants also advised the mainstreaming of knowledge co-creation in concert with North and South researchers.

2. If not, what changes are needed in both donor and recipient states?

Generally, there should be a change of mind-set to reflect our rapidly changing world: donor - recipient demarcation is becoming obsolescent. Furthermore, because ownership cannot be donated, the conference advises global development cooperation to leave leeway for developing states to claim ownership. Development cooperation should become more democratic and participatory. Making research institutes one of the institutions of development cooperation could be a necessary step here.

3. Following the lessons of knowledge for development, are there any justifications for the exclusion of research institutions as part of Western development institutions?

Despite the prominence given to this question, there were hardly any direct answers to it.

4. Knowledge managers in development organisations are mainly lone rangers. They further complain that policy planners don't know how to integrate KM 4Dev in policy planning. What could be done to change this, thus mainstreaming KM?

It could be deduced from the discussions that for knowledge to be mainstreamed in organisations, their culture and self-conception have to be transformed. Knowledge should not be seen as a technical solution but centralised in the organisation's strategy. The industry should then be about knowledge (cyclical) flows rather than aid flows.

5. The mainstreaming of relatively new issues in global development such as Human Rights or Gender has in part been the result of effective advocacy. Is advocacy relevant to mainstreaming KM4dev? If so, who should be doing it?

This issue was controversially debated as opponents and proponents felt very passionate about their positions. Proponents believe the mainstreaming of K4D demands advocacy in order to effect the necessary mind-set change. Opponents think that every stakeholder is in some way involved in the promotion of K4D through their daily assignments.

### **Implications and way forward**

Accentuation of K4D in development cooperation is still a long way off. Added to the problems surrounding mind-set changes, this may be because stakeholders fail to see the bigger picture. To

see the whole picture, growing up in a developing society, or at least, having studied development (in situ) is extremely helpful. For most stakeholders, especially policy makers, this is not the case. Thus, accentuating knowledge for development could imply restructuring development studies in Western universities to include study in developing societies. It also implies fundamentally changing organisational culture; by any means a very difficult feat. How to accomplish this will be the subject-matter of future research.

The DIE/GDI will continue its unflinching interest in improving development cooperation through K4D. Although the institute's immediate research interests relate to institutional and infrastructural changes in the North and South, the institute is ready to broaden its spectrum in collaboration with other institutes in the global North and South.

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<sup>1</sup> For event description and agenda see: <http://www.die-gdi.de/en/events/knowledge-for-development/>

<sup>2</sup> An as yet unpublished article by Pels, Bury, Akude, Grunewald (2015) explicitly discusses the evolution and facilitation of the stakeholder engagement process.

<sup>3</sup> For survey results see: <http://allourideas.org/k4d/results>

<sup>4</sup> For position paper see: [http://wiki.km4dev.org/File:Akude-towards\\_advocacy.pdf](http://wiki.km4dev.org/File:Akude-towards_advocacy.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Connect here: <http://uk.linkedin.com/pub/philipp-grunewald/6a/4ba/82/>

<sup>6</sup> Facilitators: <http://www.km4dev.org/profile/PeterJBury> & <http://www.km4dev.org/profile/JaapPels>

<sup>7</sup> For institution information see: <http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Expertise-Services/Chair-groups/Social-Sciences/KnowledgeTechnology-and-Innovation-Group.htm>

<sup>8</sup> This refers to a summary of Integrated Project (IP) and Specifically Targeted Research Projects (STREP) of the sixth European Union Framework for Research Programmes (2002-2007). The purpose is the creation of a consortium in which partners from donor and recipient states cooperate to develop new technology, new knowledge, new processes, new products and new services. Since 2004, this has been combined with the Horizon 2020 programme.

<sup>9</sup> BMZ - Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development).

<sup>10</sup> The opposite being supply-led, meaning that donors initiate knowledge projects.