

Juxtaposing doers and helpers in development

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Abstract A classic part of the community development process is people facing an acute economic or social problem connecting with others specializing in conceptual solutions. For example, South Asian villagers confronting chronic poverty may work with non-governmental organizations offering micro-credit schemes. These are two sides of the development relationship, the *doers* and the *helpers*. While the doers face problems that are unique to themselves, the helpers offer solutions that tend to be generic, applicable to a variety of contexts. In this paper we seek to bring some conceptual clarity to the relationships between doers and helpers in development, with a focus on the social sector that operates between business and government. We present a typology of the organizational forms involved in development, and then look at the gaps between helpers and doers and the approaches used to bridge them.

Roots and roofs

In the historical sense, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) tended to be both grassroots doers and their *local* helpers, functioning in communities (Boli and Thomas, 1999). But when we use the term NGO in the contemporary sense, we tend to think of *cosmopolitan* helpers: foundations and developmental agencies that function at national and international levels, with activities directed into many localities. It is in this latter sense that NGOs have been 'discovered as a new institutional form of development resource' (Carroll, 1992, p. 1), so numerous as to represent a 'global associational revolution' (Salamon, 1994; see also Avina, 1993; Glasius and Kaldor, 2002; Lewis, 2001).

Developmental activities can therefore be roughly divided between organizations rooted locally that reach out, with the pull of need, and organizations floating more globally that look in, with the push of help.

Uvin (1995, p. 496) has described this divide as a spectrum, from the grassroots ('small localized' organizations) to the summit ('big international development aid organizations'). We prefer the metaphor of roots and roofs. If local doers, and even some local helpers, can be thought to *grow up* from the *grassroots*, then the cosmopolitan helpers might be thought of as *coming in*, as if as a set of *roofs*.

One side tends to appear naturally, indigenously, often unexpectedly, all over the place, emerging from the soil that has nurtured them. The other side sits over and above this, artificially constituted in a sense, as wide and rather independent covers that on the one hand can protect the local activities yet on the other hand can also obscure or block them.

How do the roots and the roofs collaborate? The roofs, compelled by this push of help, translate general solutions into a particular application. In that sense, they are *deductive*. The roots, in contrast, impelled by their pull of need, seek solutions to a particular problem. They tend to be more *inductive*. Where these meet – where induction combines with deduction – is likely to be where the best developmental practice takes place (see Table 1 for a summary of the parameters relating to these two sides of development; the last part of the table is discussed later in this paper).

Table 1. The two sides of development

Local insiders	Cosmopolitan outsiders
Roots	Roofs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous doers and helpers • Collaborative action • Experienced actors • Inside-up • Connected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exogenous helpers • Altruistic support • Educated professionals • Outside-in • Constructed
The pull of need	The push of help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have problems • Rooted in contexts • Resulting in inductive response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer solutions • Offering concepts • Offering deductive expertise
Member-owned organizations	Non-owned organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blended into communities • Need for engagement • Danger of incestuous involvement, co-optation by local business and political interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated through networks • Need for transparency • Danger of excessive detachment, co-optation by donor biases and abstract dogmas

Mapping development organizations

We believe that these two sides of development have not been sufficiently conceptualized within the burgeoning research on NGOs, partly due to the peculiar vagueness of the term 'NGO' itself (Martens, 2002; Mageli, 2005). Through the 1990s, theorists sought to identify unique developmental roles of NGOs: in charity, service, participation, and empowerment (Cousins, 1991); relief, technical innovations, service contracting, advocacy, grassroots development, and popular development (Clarke, 1995); service delivery and policy advocacy (Desai and Preston, 1999); and as implementers, partners, and catalysts (Lewis, 2001, 2003). Other studies identified NGOs that represented or aided grassroots efforts (Padron, 1987; Uphoff, 1995), or identified their distinctive features such as their non-profit distributing, self-governing, and voluntary qualities (Salamon and Anheier, 1999). More recent research has emphasized unique organizational forms involved in development, such as 'globally oriented NGOs' (Young *et al.*, 1999) and resource supporting organizations (Brown and Kalegaonkar, 2002, p. 239).

We build on these efforts with a typology of the organizational forms identified as NGOs on the two sides of development that we have identified. We focus on their structures and activities, a vital and currently neglected theme in the literature (Lewis, 2003, p. 335).

We developed the framework (Figure 1) mainly along a diagonal, from the pull of need at the bottom left to the push to help at the top right. Local root organizations are correspondingly mapped starting in the lower left, and cosmopolitan roof organizations starting in the upper right. Between them, we speculate, is a 'no organizations' land', a gap that has to be bridged.

The basis of this framework is the classical distinction in organizational theory between differentiation and integration (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Organizations differentiate, distributing specialized tasks, and they integrate, co-ordinating these tasks.

The vertical axis of Figure 1 describes differentiation in terms of the various activities these organizations perform. The most tangible concern the *operating tasks* of the doers, whereby goods and services are *sourced, produced*, and *distributed*. By sourced, we mean the acquisition of input materials, tools, energy, etc. (for example, supplies and machines for the making of textiles); by produced, we mean the transformation of materials and energy through the application of some technology (e.g. from cotton into textile); and by distributed, we mean the pooling of outputs, usually for logistic purposes or to get better prices (as in the collection of milk), and then their marketing, sales, and delivery to customers. Next up are

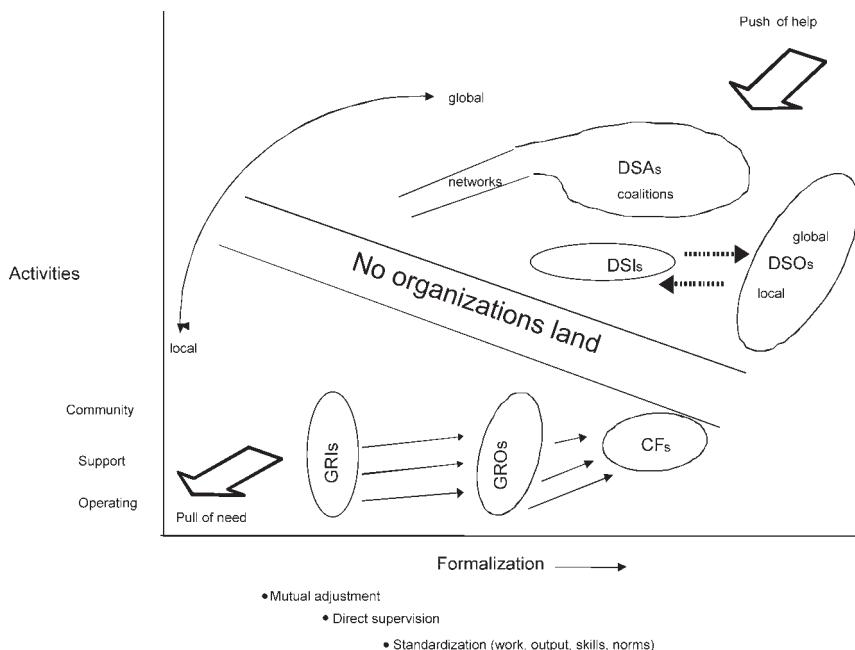


Figure 1 Map of doers and helpers in development

those activities that *support* these operations *directly*. They include *financing*, *training*, and *researching* (e.g. in the use of new technologies). And third are those activities that support the previous two *indirectly*, by developing the overall *community*. This often takes the form of the *provision of infrastructure*, whether *physical* (water, roads, electricity, etc.), *economic* (markets, banking, etc.), or *social* (health, education, etc.). Indirect support can also include *organizing* or *mobilizing* the community to action (e.g. to build a well), or else *advocating* to others on behalf of the community (e.g. to gain greater government support).

The horizontal axis shows integration, in terms of increasing formalized mechanisms of co-ordination (see Mintzberg, 1979, pp. 2–7), from *mutual adjustment*, in which the people of an organization coordinate informally among themselves; *direct supervision*, in which a manager in authority coordinates their work; and *standardization*, formalizing the coordination, through the *work* itself (e.g. rules and work orders), the *outputs* of the work (e.g. performance standards), the *skills* of the workers (through training), as well as the *norms* by which the workers are guided (e.g. in the established value and culture).

All organizations, of course, function through a mixture of most or all of these mechanisms of co-ordination. But most do favor some over others,

and that will be seen along our scale, from the least formal on the left to the most formal on the right

From the inside-up

Figure 1 identifies various types of developmental organizations. We begin from the inside-up. At the least formalized end are grassroots initiatives (GRIs), followed by grassroots co-operatives (GRCs), and finally co-operative federations (CFs). All are member-owned, in one way or another.

Grassroots initiatives

GRIs are loose groupings of people within an identifiable community or neighborhood who recognize the benefits of working together in response to some shared need, perhaps provoked by a crises. They operate with rudimentary structures, and use these to focus on single operating, or sometimes support or community activities. For example, fishermen in a coastal Kerala village banded together to get better prices for their catch (Srinivas, 2001).

Three organizational features particularly distinguish GRIs: their small size, group level of operation, and informal structure. GRIs tend to be the smallest possible aggregation of individuals unrelated by kin that engage in joint development activities (Carroll, 1992). As such, they tend to have narrow membership bases formed around some shared occupation, income group, or residential area, close to their communities (Uphoff, 1993; Batliwala, 2002). They often accommodate traditional institutions such as tribal and ceremonial groupings (Stephen, 1991; Bakshi, 1998; Warren, 2005) as well as informal village-level councils (Ananthpur, 2004). Small scale and direct involvement help such initiatives respond to local needs rapidly (Warren, 2005).

Because GRIs are often spontaneous, 'self-generating start-ups' (Avina, 1993, p. 457) or 'entrepreneurial initiatives' (Uvin *et al.*, 2000, p. 1412), they tend to have loose structures. Strong member involvement enhances mutual trust (Cleaver, 2000). In lieu of explicit hierarchies and clear divisions of responsibility, they are inclined to co-ordinate by informal, face-to-face communication notably mutual adjustment, and perhaps also some direct supervision.

Grassroots co-operatives

GRIs, once they settle down, often incorporate and formalize their structures to become *grassroots co-operatives* (GRCs). Or else people may create such co-operatives directly. Both happen in order to expand operating

activities, such as processing perishable produce (Baviskar and Attwood, 1996) for scale economies. Paddy grains, for example, require milling and cleaning, which can be costly. Instead of selling their crops to merchants, paddy farmers may create a co-operative to process it for a better price. [See also Pollnac and Poggie (1991) on shrimp harvesting in Ecuador and Aldaba (2002) on corn marketing in the Philippines.]

GRCs generally focus on operating activities, although some eventually diversify into support and community activities. For example, Mola co-operatives in Panama started with textile marketing, but over time offered savings and loans programs (Stephen, 1991, p. 113). Likewise the co-operatively owned sugar factories in Maharashtra, India, began by pooling sugarcane and processing it into sugar and molasses, and later offered subsidized loans to their agricultural members (Attwood, 1992).

GRCs are inclined to turn increasingly to work standardization for co-ordination as their operating activities become more reliant on routine technologies. Being member-owned, they tend also to have more formalized procedures for member governance, including by-laws for selecting and inducting members, as well as for electing representatives to their governing boards (see Rothschild and Whitt, 1986; Baviskar and Attwood, 1996). Each member usually has a single vote, which cannot be sold to another member [although sometimes it can be sold back to the co-operative, as in the Mondragon organization in the Spanish Basque area (Whyte and Whyte, 1991; Cheney, 1999)].

Due to their incorporation and activities, GRCs tend to be larger and more formally structured than GRIs, which has often created challenges for their management. For example, although successful co-operatives tend to be based in distinctive communities, such as the Basque country of Spain or the Canadian province of Quebec, growth and formalization can dilute that base and threaten their social coherence. The search for new members has taken many GRCs beyond their founding communities, leading to more heterogeneous membership, and increased dissent.

Co-operative federations

GRCs sometimes move to a next stage as a consequence of expanding their scope, whether by *scaling up*, namely expanding themselves, or by *scaling out*, namely combining with other GRCs through mergers. Scope can be expanded in two ways: across a wider geographic area (more rice paddies and more fishermen) and across a wider range of activities, for example, from production to support, such as financing members). At some point, the group becomes, *de facto* or *de jure*, a CF. Young *et al.* (1999, p. 328) labeled this 'federating upward', where pre-existing units create an overarching body to represent them. They distinguish this from

'federating downward', where existing CFs subsequently encourage the creation of more local-level GRCs. Note, however, that CFs remain member-owned and member-governed, at least officially, even if the members are organizations, as in the Anand Milk Union (AMUL) in the Indian state of Gujarat. The farmer producers belong to village-level co-operatives which are in turn members of the regional federation (Srinivas, 2001).

There tends to be a natural division of labor between the member co-operatives and the federation, with the former often focused on operating activities and the latter on support of a direct or indirect nature (such as financing and training).

Compared with GRCs, CFs tend to be large-scale and rather formalized in their structures, reliant increasingly on standardization for co-ordination, especially of outputs, (e.g. amount of milk produced). In AMUL, milk is collected on a strict schedule to ensure efficiency. This, of course, requires staff specialists, 'professionals' of one kind of another, who may not have come out of the grassroots. So balancing the influence of such staff with that of individual members can be tricky, especially given their different agendas – which takes us, of course, closer to the divide between the locals and the cosmopolitans.

Slipping away from the pull of need

To divisionalize a structure, as in the CFs, it is not necessary to decentralize it. In fact, the most famous example of the divisionalization of an American corporation was one that led to centralization, not decentralization. Alfred P. Sloan adopted the divisional structure at General Motors in the 1920s to rein in the wayward divisions of Chevrolet, Buick, etc., which had been acquired as separate companies [see Mintzberg (1979, pp. 386–387)].

Therefore, although there are strong incentives for CFs to remain rather decentralized, as valid 'federations' owned by their members (instead of outside shareholders), there arises the danger Michels (1966) pointed out in his 'Iron Law of Oligarchy': organizations, by their very nature, as they grow, tend to concentrate influence in the hands of managerial elites (see also George, 1990).

Staff specialists and managers, even when they come from GRIs and GRCs, often find themselves removed from the daily concerns of operating on the ground. At headquarters, they are helpers, not doers, more concerned with activities such as financing and community organizing than producing and distributing products. That distances them from the pull of need, and draws them closer to the push of help. As can be seen in Figure 1, compared with the GRIs and even the GRCs, the CFs edge closer to that empty space between the locals and the cosmopolitans. But

one fundamental difference keeps them on their side: they are essentially indigenous.

From the outside-in

From the 'outside-in', cosmopolitan helper organizations intervene for a larger, sometimes more global, public good. Compared with the 'inside-up' organizations just described, they emanate from a different place. Neither their activities, origins, nor ownership have roots on the ground. They are fundamentally *exogenous*, while the GRIs and GROs, even the CFs, remain fundamentally *indigenous*.

For example, the managers of the Cooperative Federation Coocafe in Costa Rica share 'a personal formative experience' linked to the underlying values of co-operation in Costa Rica. Many of these managers have a family background of economic scarcity. In fact some are themselves coffee farmers, still delivering coffee cherries to the co-operative (Luetchford, 2006). Contrast this with the cosmopolitan helpers who have no such local links and typically come from very different economic, social, and educational backgrounds. Entering in from the outside, they must connect with doers on the ground or else with local helpers who *are* so connected, i.e. indigenous.

Cosmopolitan helpers are a relatively 'recent offshoot of the co-operative imagination' (Vargas-Cetina, 2005, p. 230). After all, grassroots co-operatives have existed at least from the nineteenth century, and historically were able to exercise influence on policy makers. But undeniably today, development policy is often framed by governments with the assistance of unrepresentative (albeit well-intentioned) outside-in actors.

We describe these 'outside-in' actions in three organizational forms: development support initiatives (DSIs), development support organizations (DSOs), and development support alliances (DSAs).

Development support initiatives

DSIs are small groups of people with a shared interest in promoting particular development activities in local communities. Like GRIs, they tend to be informal in their structures. Mageli (2005), for example, describes the activities of a Calcutta DSI comprising architects, city planners, and social workers concerned with the urban poor, led by a charismatic leader. Similarly the Centre for Youth and Social Development (Uvin *et al.*, 2000, p. 1410) and the People's Participation Program (Desai and Preston, 1999, p. 461) in India, both started as initiatives by trained professionals concerned with social issues. Chatterjee (2003) also describes a DSI formed by students and professors in Ahmedabad, India to help rural weavers and leather workers market their products.

Development support organizations

DSOs are legally chartered organizations with the purpose of providing help in development; as such they tend to be more formally structured than DSIs. Like all helper organizations, their emphasis is on expertise: DSOs typically comprise people trained in solutions for developmental problems, who broker and channel financial, technical, and conceptual support for grassroots needs. Thus, they link specific local problems with established global solutions: finding micro-credit for local handicrafts, training leaders of agricultural co-operatives, and disseminating established techniques for developing economic infrastructure.

DSOs are rarely member-owned, nor are they privately owned in the commercial sense¹ (or else their goals would not be helping *per se*). They tend to be non-owned in the sense that they are chartered as 'trusts' or 'associations', without share ownership. Their professional staff report to boards of directors that select their own replacement members, who may represent particular constituencies (as with government-appointed members of the French Red Cross Society).

There are also DSOs owned by governments [popularly known as 'GONGOs' (government-owned NGOs), as distinct from 'BINGOs' (business inspired NGOs)], as is common in aid agencies (e.g. CIDA in Canada and the United Nations World Food Program). Many independent social sector DSOs are, of course, heavily influenced by governments, particularly when their budgets are dependent on them, or due to restrictive legal codes (Wiktorowicz, 2002).

Non-ownership does, however, confer a particular advantage, increased freedom to attract different stakeholders, such as business corporations, local governments, and GRCs (Aldaba, 2002). Moreover, while being formally chartered may make their procedures more formalized than those of the DSIs, being somewhat free of direct government control can allow these procedures to be less formalized than those of the typical GONGO. As a consequence, governments often choose to distribute their aid through these non-owned DSOs, or to work alongside them, as does the United Nations World Food Program with the Red Cross in some refugee areas (Mintzberg, 2001).

Support activities of the DSOs range from a local to a more international focus. Much of their development work involves the provision of local infrastructure. The US-based World Neighbors, for example, develops drinking water systems in communities around the world. Howes (1997, p. 823) has described how it organized and funded GRCs in Kenyan

¹ Here, we disagree with Uphoff (1995) who tends to classify NGOs with other private market-based actors.

villages to construct water tanks and dams. Training is also an important activity. The Hunger Project develops leaders in techniques 'to create lasting, self-reliant improvements in health, education, nutrition, food production, and family income' (<http://www.thp.org/overview/index.html>). Dastkar Andhra in South India promotes cultural and ecological conservation by training weavers in natural dyes and traditional designs (Bakshi, 1998; Srinivas, 2008). Financing, too, is a key activity. Perhaps most famous of all is the Grameen Bank, which provides micro-credit to landless women in Bangladesh (Holcombe, 1995).

International DSOs (IDSOS) have, of course, become enormously influential in development work in recent years, and as noted earlier, are often the ones associated with the label 'NGO'. Their growth in the past two decades has been dramatic, due in part to the combined effects of welfare privatization, liberal economics, lowered communication costs, and economic conditions favorable to them (Anheier and Themudo, 2002). These organizations spearhead developmental efforts in the third world, thanks to their influence on government disbursement of aid and their ability to mobilize public opinion (Padron, 1987).

Development support alliances

DSAs are groupings for development. They raise public awareness of issues of concern, often using modern information technologies to mobilize their efforts [hence they have been labeled 'dot-cause' organizations (Anheier and Themudo, 2002, p. 210) and 'transnational advocacy networks' (Keck and Sikkink, 1998)]. The DSAs can be seen as coalitions, as well as networks. Coalitions are more structured and formalized than networks (Yanacopulos, 2005, p. 3), with 'increased communication and information sharing' among members, to 'promote their mutual interests'.

A prominent DSA is Jubilee 2000, which began as an alliance of several UK-based IDSOS campaigning for debt reduction in poor countries. From there it grew rapidly to include organizations around the world (Anheier and Themudo, 2002, p. 192). The 'Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in the Rural Areas', a network of over sixty organizations, mobilizes for agrarian reform in the Philippines (Aldaba, 2002). Asha for Education, USA (<http://www.ashanet.org/>) is a coalition of DSIs committed to supporting poor Indian children and families. In its case, key decisions are made through consensus at bi-annual conferences; otherwise the coalition functions in a highly decentralized way, with local chapters having considerable autonomy in operational decisions. Well known too is Oxfam International, which describes itself as 'a confederation of twelve organizations working together with over 3000 partners in more

than 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty, suffering, and injustice' (<http://www.oxfam.org/eng/about.htm>).

This completes our map of organizations on the two sides of development. We now contrast their characteristics and identify tensions caused by their differences. We then discuss what may be the most interesting question of all, namely how to bridge the two sides of the development gap.

Respective dysfunctions

Since the pull of need tends to favor the member-owned form of organization, whether *de facto* or *de jure*, blended into local communities, and the push of help tends to favor the non-owned form, dependent on donors and government, these two sides are drawn in opposite directions, leading each to its own potential dysfunction.

The indigenous, local GRIs, GROs, or CFs, tend to be drawn down, toward local interests that can co-opt them, to serve narrow agendas instead of their broad membership. These used to be mainly political, as governments co-opted such organizations for their own purposes. But with the ascendancy of market forces in the last two decades, co-optation has shifted toward commercial interests in two senses: first the organizations risk being taken over by private businesses; second they may themselves choose to adopt the fashionable practices of business, and thereby undermine their co-operative nature (Anheier and Themudo, 2002, p. 206).

The exogenous, cosmopolitan DSIs, DSOs, or DSAs, in contrast, because they are detached from operating activities and specific communities, tend to be drawn up and away, to the generic, the 'global', as well as specific donor interests. This may be in the form of abstract dogma (e.g. the free market imperative), or the fashionable 'buzzwords' often associated with influential international organizations. The result can be a development agenda lacking local initiative, which in turn can impose inappropriate formalization and centralization within the recipient indigenous organizations. And that can exacerbate the conflict between their members and professional staff (Montgomery, 1996) or even shift power out altogether, to exogenous DSOs (Carroll, 1992; Howes, 1997, p. 821; Batliwala, 2002).

So while the local organizations face the dangers of co-optation by incessant involvement, the cosmopolitan organizations face the dangers of co-optation because of excessive detachment. The latter can exist in a closed circle of good intentions, insulated from the real consequences of their help. As Fowler (1998, p. 153) has asserted, NGOs have been criticized for tilting 'toward a self-serving professional class isolated and detached from constituency and citizenry at both ends'.

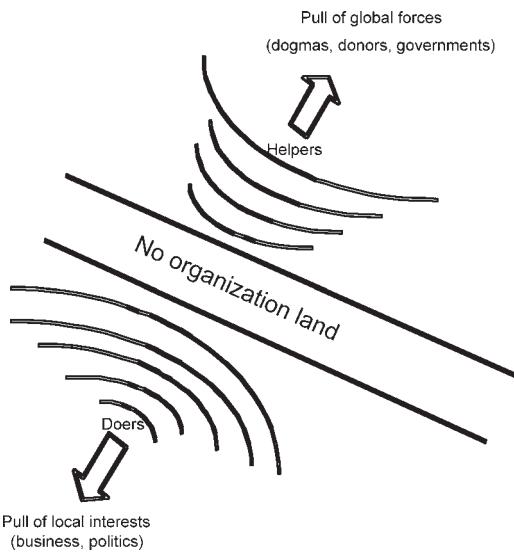


Figure 2 Respective dysfunctions in development

Accordingly, the arrows at the two corners of our map, as shown in Figure 2, can end up pulling in opposite directions, one toward local and private interests, the other toward global forces. Both pulls, in excess, are obviously dysfunctional: the locals are co-operatively owned precisely because they need to represent their members, whereas the cosmopolitans justify their existence by enabling people to solve real problems on the ground.

Bridging the development gap

To succeed, the inherent capabilities of the roots and the roofs must connect tangibly. Tacit knowledge has to combine with abstract expertise, and induction has to combine with deduction. Scott (1998) calls the former *metis*, and described it as intuitive and thick, hard to verbalize, let alone write down. This is knowledge based on an intimate understanding of a setting that is shared through practices of apprenticeship. The other, abstract expertise, he calls *techne*, which is largely verbalized knowledge. Based on logical propositions, it is best shared through systems of formal training and education. Just as *metis* can spawn innovative, generalized solutions, *techne* can offer valuable insight into seemingly intractable local problems. So development is aided when context meets concept, where problems deeply understood on the ground meet solutions carefully worked out on many grounds. This requires an honest and credible sharing of skills and knowledge between doers and helpers.

The question thus becomes: how do these sides connect, to bridge the gap between them? We begin by eliminating one obvious answer: through organizations that exist at the interface. Instead, we adopt as a working hypothesis that there is, more or less, a 'no organizations' land' between the indigenous and the exogenous. We find in our investigation organizations that exist on one side or the other, but not ones in-between. Consider, for example, the Grameen Bank, which connects closely to the indigenous women that it helps. But it does only that: namely it helps, especially in financing, while the women themselves, albeit encouraged to organize by the bank, engage in the doing. So helpers and doers must find ways to connect – they have to bridge the gap. We describe three ways in which this can happen: (i) handing over, (ii) crossing over, and (iii) meeting along.

Handing over

This first way maintains an arm's length relationship: the exogenous helpers stand on one side and merely hand over something of use to the indigenous doers, or their direct helpers on the other side: money or other resources, information, equipment, facilities, etc. They do not otherwise get involved, except perhaps to institute some kind of control to ensure appropriate usage.

This is likely the most common way to bridge the gap. One could say that most donor organizations and aid agencies as well as specialized intermediary DSOs essentially hand over. Developing inexpensive imitable technology is one way of handing over. Financing is another.

Of course, the danger of merely handing over is that there may not be much appreciation of the needs on one side or the capabilities on the other (Lewis, 1998, p. 504; Satterthwaite, 2001, p. 137). Beyond simply handing something over, therefore, can be the need to cross over.

Crossing over

Some exogenous helpers have attempted to become less exogenous: they have crossed the gap to involve themselves in recipient activities more closely, if temporarily, for example, by engaging in mobilizing and training activities.

Crossing over is what the Grameen Bank does in a temporary sense. A critical aspect of its success in providing micro-credit (handing over) has been its ability to organize local groups to monitor each of its loans (Holcombe, 1995). There are also cases where crossing over extends all the way to doing: the helper actually carries out the activity, as when a missionary goes into a community and creates canals to improve the farming.

A support activity such as training takes the form of handing over when it just conveys information, but crossing over when the educators

enter the community and actively educate for capability. (When they join with the others to learn together, we might call that meeting along.) The Cooperative Development Foundation in South India does both: it trains members of existing women's thrift co-operatives in accounting techniques (handing over), and it actively mobilizes village women to form co-operatives (crossing over). But after an initial period, it gradually steps back, leaving in place 'formal governance and management systems' (Srinivas, 2001; Stuart and Kanneganti, 2003, p. 5), perhaps enabling both sides to meet along (see Kabeer, 2003, p. 20 for a similar instance in Bangladesh).

Crossing over can suffer the opposite problem of handing over: interference from well-intended but condescending outsiders who believe they know better. 'Why do you hate me', goes an old Chinese proverb, 'I never tried to help you'. Or else those who cross over can get co-opted by those on the other side, and so cannot do their job effectively.

Meeting along

Perhaps, then, the development relationship works most effectively, if not always most easily, when the two sides meet in a more balanced relationship – on a bridge, so to speak, as a team, task force, or formal alliance. Here, the two sides exhibit a willingness to share knowledge, skills, and resources in an authentic partnership (Fowler, 1998), with only moderate disparities of power.

Myrada, India (<http://www.myrada.org/>) is one such partnership, operating mostly in rural southern India. It trains (handing over) and organizes (crossing over) village woman's 'self-help affinity groups'. Once on their feet, however, which can happen quite quickly, these groups stand largely on their own, arranging micro-financing for their members. But the different groups also band together, sending representatives to community-managed 'resource centers' that review their common problems and engage in joint training. Each of these centers is staffed with a Myrada employee, thus bringing the two sides together in an excellent example of 'meeting along'.

To meet along the development gap requires a commitment to mutuality and parity, accompanied by the capability to leverage social ties toward goal-directed action (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Weisinger and Salipante, 2005, pp. 33–34). Such action may begin with handing over, for example, financing, which can gradually be expanded toward other activities, and eventually lead to a balanced partnership, or even a shift the other way. As one grassroots leader put it (quoted in Batliwala, 2002, p. 408), 'In the beginning you may walk in front of us. After a

while as we grow stronger you must walk beside us. But finally you must learn to walk behind us'².

Dialogue is also a key to effective meeting along. Indeed, starting a dialog between the two sides can be an achievement in itself. The Development Resource Centre in South Africa initiated a national-level debate on mutual accountability of NGOs and government, particularly on ways in which government agencies could support and respond to local helpers and doers (Brown and Kalegaonkar, 2002, p. 242). The Indonesian Yayasan Wisnu conduct participatory community mapping exercises, where local communities network with each other (Warren, 2005, p. 66). In the people-governed system of municipal decision-making in Puerto Allegre, Brazil, local groups converse with municipal officials and DSOs on policy. Such dialog is strengthened by local knowledge acquired through 'seeing and hearing rather than... teaching and learning' (Appadurai, 2001, p. 39). Meeting along clearly requires redefining the role of helpers 'away from being the talkers, managers, and solution generators, to being listeners and supporters of community-generated solutions' (Satterthwaite, 2001, p. 136).

Handing over is certainly easier, if potentially less effective. And crossing over can appeal to DSOs under pressure from their donors to show tangible results, especially in light of scandals concerning wasted or stolen resources. Yet the effort to build respectful relationships across the gap can often prove more beneficial in the long run. If handing over is 'giving a person a fish', and crossing over is 'teaching a person to fish', then meeting along is addressing the problems of getting a proper diet in the first place. Building such respectful relationships requires reordering existing beliefs about knowledge, so that local experience, not only expertise, is valued.

Closing the gap

The gap between indigenous locals and exogenous cosmopolitans may be growing, not diminishing, thanks in part to the economic forces of globalization, particularly unregulated trade and market growth. Due to pressures from aid agencies, cosmopolitan helpers have often scaled-up for purposes of 'efficiency', and so further professionalized their staffs and acquired the technocratic languages of government and business. Many have also adopted approaches such as strategic planning, project-cycle management, and logical frameworks, even where they may not be compatible with the

² Precisely, the sentiments one of us heard in a meeting of representatives at a Myrada Resource Center in January 2006.

needs of development (Wallace, 2000, p. 25; Bornstein, 2003; Ebrahim, 2003, p. 71). Academic research may also be aggravating this problem, with an emphasis on the exogenous cosmopolitan side (Srinivas, 2009).

Nationalist development policies of some countries in the past strengthened the role of the public sector at the expense of local communities. Now market-liberalization beliefs relegate economic development to private-sector outsiders and their local imitators, still at the expense of local communities. It is time to balance the cosmopolitan with the local and the exogenous with the indigenous, and in so doing, strengthen the ties within and across communities.

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