KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

An annotated bibliography on knowledge management and organisational learning from an international development perspective

Accenture (2002) Typology of work settings. Presentation given at the Knowledge Management seminar, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), 31 October. London, UK: ODI.

In October 2002, ODI organised a one-day seminar and workshop on knowledge management (KM). The rationale behind the workshop was that knowledge is, or at least should be, an essential component of evidence-based policy making; that knowledge is ODI's principle asset in achieving its mission; and that a better understanding of how knowledge contributes to policy and better internal KM systems should make ODI more Over 30 participants attended the seminar, which focused on the principles and practice of KM in public, private and non-government organisations. Speakers were invited from Accenture, DFID and IDS

Argyris, C. (1992) Overcoming Organizational Defences; Facilitating Organizational Learning. Boston, USA: Allyn and Bacon.

Argyris has been one of the most cited writers on organisational learning during the 1990s. Based on his experience as a consultant for big companies, he argues that the primary problem facing these companies is not the ability to remember past lessons, but rather the ability to acquire new knowledge. This ability is strengthened when organisations gain an understanding of two key features of their operation: single versus double loop learning, and tacit versus explicit knowledge

Bailey, FG (1971) The Peasant View of the Bad Life. In T. Shamin (Ed.) Peasants and Peasant Societies. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

Bailey's ethnographic study of peasant communities in rural India and their relationships with outsiders a few decades ago still has relevance for the challenges of cross-cultural communication today. Bailey argued that most of the foreigners who tried to implement projects among the peasant communities failed to understand the cognitive map of the peasants and therefore invariably failed. For example, Bailey showed that the peasants had very different ideas about the possibilities of planning than e.g. development workers in the area had. While development workers tried to convince the peasants that people are in control of impersonal forces, and that therefore it is possible to make plans, to learn from experiences, to correct the plans, and to reap the rewards. This did not only clash with the peasants' perception of reality, it also clashed with their ideas about how people with resources should behave.

Baumann, P. (1999) Information and Power: Implications for Process Monitoring. A Review of the Literature. ODI Working Paper No 120. London, UK: ODI.

This paper reviews literature from several academic fields in order to examine whether there are conceptual frameworks and/or existing empirical work which invalidate the (Western liberal) assumption underlying process documentation and monitoring (PDR and PM), namely that actors (whether NGO or GO) will be willing to put information in a common pool for access by others from similar or different organisations. The brief review of the literature illustrates that there is abundant literature which invalidates the assumption that one can assume that information will automatically be placed in the public realm. Theoretical development in social theory, anthropology, development methodologies and economics have all pointed to the close relation that exists between knowledge and power. In fact one can assume that actors will not be prepared to reveal the knowledge from which they derive their power; whether this power is the ability to exercise control over large resources, or simply to maintain a margin of survival. Further, the literature suggests that this trend is likely to continue as information generation and exchange become increasingly important components of development projects.

Bellanet International Secretariat (2000) Knowledge Management for Development Organisations. Report of the Knowledge Management Brighton Workshop, 26-28 June 2000. Brighton,UK: University of Sussex.

This is the report from the Knowledge Management Workshop held in Brighton in June 2000. The aim of the workshop was to explore whether development organisations could better meet their objectives through the use of KM models and techniques. It also examined the possibility of adapting KM practices in the private sector to organisations working in the development field. The report contains notes from 23 presentations, covering areas such as knowledge resource mapping, enablers of knowledge access, communities of practice, strategies for virtual collaboration, and getting leadership and organisational buy-in. Presentations also covered case studies of KM in various agencies, including UNDP, DFID, GTZ, SIDA, CIDA, Tearfund, BP and Nokia.This resource can be found at: http://www.bellanet.org/km/km2

Binney, D. (2001) The Knowledge Management Spectrum – Understanding the KM Landscape. Journal of Knowledge Management 5(1), 33-42.

Binney sets out to provide a framework of all the existing KM options, applications and technologies available, in order to assist organisations in understanding the range available to them. His framework, entitled the 'KM spectrum', has a two-fold aim: firstly to minimise confusion in the field, and secondly, to provide a quick checklist for organisational assessments. The KM spectrum is made up of six categories or 'elements', each of which captures a particular aspect of the KM field. The author suggests that all current KM applications can be fitted into one of these six categories, as illustrated in the KM spectrum table below. The first three elements (comprising transactional, analytical and asset management KM applications) are mostly used by 'technologists' seeking to collect and systematise existing information. The last three elements (comprising process, developmental and innovation/creation KM applications) are mostly used by those KM consultants focused on organisational management and processes. Binney concludes by urging organisations to use the KM spectrum as a tool to choose KM applications from a wider range than they might normally tend to.This resource can be found at: http://www.bellanet.org/km

BOND (2003) Learnig form Work: An opportunity missed or taken? BOND survey. London, UK: BOND.

This paper is based on two surveys about learning carried out by BOND in 2001 and 2002 – one survey of four donor organisations, and one of 53 BOND member NGOs. The survey was designed to capture insights about organisational learning tied to the project cycle. In the project cycle, learning is seen as a means to increase organisational efficiency and reduce repetition of mistakes.This resource can be found at: http://www.bond.org.uk/lte/think.htm

Carlsson, J. (1998) Organization and leadership in Africa. In L. Wohlgemuth, J. Carlsson and H. Kifle (Eds.) Institution Building and Leadership in Africa. Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute.

Carlsson starts from the proposition that prospects for development in Africa are closely linked to institutional capacity on the continent. He shows that there has been a lack of institutional strengthening due to the historical legacy of colonialism and the attempts of independent African states to continue to implant Western-type bureaucracies and organisational models. This has led to a gap between indigenous institutions and public sector institutions, which in turn has resulted in reduced capacity to manage change. Carlsson suggests that public organisations in Africa are caught in a micro/macro paradox: good results may be evident at a micro-level, but these fail to translate into indicators of progress at a macro-level.

Chapman, R. and Slaymaker, T. (2002) ICTs and Rural Development: Review of the Literature, Current Interventions and Opportunities for Action. ODI Working Paper 192. London, UK: ODI.

This paper investigates the role that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have to play in developing countries, focusing particularly on those rural areas that are currently least affected by the latest advances in the 'digital revolution'. The need for flexible and decentralised models for using ICTs is discussed in the context of 'content and control'. The challenge of achieving rural development goals by supporting knowledge and information systems is analysed through an epistemological perspective illustrated by case studies from the literature and the authors' research on the operation of these systems at the community level. The concept of building partnerships at the community level based around information exchange is explored, using ICTs to improve systems for the exchange of information sources that already exist locally and also providing established information intermediaries with the facilities to enhance their capacity for information sharing.

Collison, C. and Parcell, G. (2001) Learning to Fly; Practical Lessons from one of the World's Leading Knowledge Companies. Oxford, UK: Capstone.

Learning to Fly aims to be an accessible and lighthearted book on the challenges and possibilities of knowledge management. The authors draw on their experience of implementing knowledge management strategies in BP, one of the world's largest organisations, and several smaller organisations they have worked with. Their account of the tools they used, the problems they faced and the different solutions they tried out are meant to enable the reader to reflect on his or her own organisational context and possibilities. The recommendations given range from universally applicable advice ('Start by asking simple questions'; 'What is the main issue you have to deal with?') to models of information processes and knowledge sharing behaviours. The authors suggest that it is usually helpful to implement learning as a 'before-during-after' process, and spend a chapter on each of these three learning steps. They also point out the importance of connecting people and of fostering cooperation, and emphasise that cooperation and asking for help should not be construed as a weakness.

Coyle, E. (2001) Consensus and Dissent in Washington: Negotiating Change in the World Bank and IMF. MPhil thesis, Centre of International Studies. Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge.

The attitudes of the Washington multilaterals, the WB and IMF, are often labelled the (post) Washington 'consensus'. However, the policy-making processes in these two multilaterals are, as in any other institutions, characterised by a tension between consensus and dissent. The institutions in question are not wholly rational and technical policy-making machines, but rather complex social systems. One of the aims of Coyle's thesis is to examine how, and to what extent, these policy processes are able to draw on wider debates and new ideas, and to convert new ideas into policy formulations in order to create evidence-based policies. The author does this by using poverty and PRSPs as a focal point. The introduction and implementation of PRSPs in the WB and IMF's policy processes originally relied on a reorientation of the multilaterals' complex institutional processes towards the single goal of poverty reduction. But formulating evidence-based policies for poverty reduction presents the WB and IMF with a difficult challenge: On the one hand, they need to be able to engage in a broad and informed poverty debate, which involves drawing in new perspectives and redefinitions of poverty, in order to accommodate global shifts and revitalise themselves as institutions. On the other hand, established organisational perspectives and processes are often deeply ingrained, and the new agenda of PRSPs also needs to be integrated with the institutions' needs to present 'an official point of view'. The thesis seeks to highlight how the tension between consensus and dissent in the WB and IMF has an impact on the PRSP policy process, and, vice versa, how the PRSPs have brought out the consensus/dissent dynamic in the institutions. The findings are based on both documentary evidence and interviews.

Crewe, E. and Young, J. (2002) Bridging Research and Policy: Context, Evidence and Links. ODI Working Paper No 173. London, UK: ODI.

Crewe and Young have developed an integrated framework for examining and understanding the relationship between research and policy. They argue that ideas percolate into development discourse and people learn about how the world is ordered through their practical experience of it. The paper fuses literature on political interests, formations of actors, and discourses, taking account of the role played by wider civil society and 'street bureaucrats', and borrowing ideas from psychology and marketing.This resource can be found at: http://www.odi.org.uk/publications. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Davies, R. (1998) Order and Diversity: Representing and Assisting Organisational Learning in Non-Government Aid Organisations. PhD thesis, Centre for Development Studies. Swansea, UK: University of Wales.

The aim of this thesis is to develop a coherent theory of organisational learning which can generate practical means of assisting organisational learning. The thesis develops and applies the theory to one class of organisations known as non-government organisations (NGOs), and more specifically to those NGOs who receive funds from high income countries but who work for the benefit of the poor in low income countries. Of central concern are the processes whereby these NGOs learn from the rural and urban poor with whom they work.This resource can be found at: http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/thesis.htm. Last accessed 4/14/2009

De Vibe, M., Hovland, I. and Young, J. (2002) Bridging Research and Policy: An Annotated Bibliography. ODI Working Paper No 174. London, UK: ODI.

This annotated bibliography, carried out as part of ODI's Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) Programme, contains summaries of 100 documents from various streams of literature relevant to the issue of 'Bridging Research and Policy'. The bibliography contains a narrative summary of the literature reviewed, and the summaries have been divided into three key themes that roughly, though not completely, correspond to the three dimensions elaborated in the framework paper 'Bridging Research and Pro-poor Policy; Context, Links and Evidence' (Crewe & Young 2002This resource can be found at: http://www.odi.org.uk/publications. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Denning, S. (2000) Knowledge Management at the World Bank. Knowledge Management for Development Organisations, Report of the Knowledge Management Brighton Workshop 26-28 June 2000, Bellanet International Secretariat. Brighton,UK: University of Sussex.

Steve Denning, in charge of Knowledge Management at the World Bank, shared his view of internal KM processes with other participants at the Bellanet workshop in June 2000.This resource can be found at: http://www.bellanet.org/km/km2

DFID (2000) Doing the Knowledge; How DFID Compares with Best Practice in Knowledge Management. London, UK: DFID.

This paper springs out of the recognition that 'Knowledge is a key resource for DFID and increasingly one of our products'. It also points out that apart from the Information Management Committee, KM initiatives are often not coordinated across the organisation. This is a disadvantage, as one of the central aims of KM is to contribute to 'joining up': the author of the paper argues that DFID needs to be joined up internally, within Whitehall, and with partners. This is viewed as largely a matter of creating the right environment and culture for sharing and learning, rather than a technical IT issue.

Dia, M. (1996) Africa's management in the 1990s and beyond: Reconciling indigenous and transplanted institutions. Washington, USA: World Bank.

Contrary to traditional Afro-pessimism, the World Bank's Africa's Management in the 1990s (AM90s) research programme illustrates that Africa possesses a substantial reservoir of capacity endowments and best practices on which to build in order to improve the institutional and economic performance of the continent. While not denying the existence and extent of the economic crisis, the AM90s research illustrates that institutional reconciliation will be a key to the institutional and economic development of Africa. More importantly, the proposed solutions are mostly homegrown and are therefore likely to strengthen self-sufficiency and reduce dependency on foreign assistance. The overarching theme of the research is that the institutional crisis affecting economic management in Africa is a crisis of structural disconnect between formal institutions transplanted from outside and indigenous institutions born of traditional African culture. Building on the findings and recommendations of the new school of institutional economics, the AM90s research posits that both formal and informal institutions are here to stay and are needed in Africa, but in a more flexible form. It is through adaptation that formal and informal institutions can converge and build on each other's strength and that transaction costs can be reduced and institutional performance maximised. This process for building convergence is at the heart of the institutional reconciliation paradigm proposed in the report.

Drew, R. (2002) Learning in Partnership; What constitutes learning in the context of south-north partnerships? BOND Discussion Paper. London, UK: BOND.

Drew's paper was commissioned by BOND to explore issues concerning learning that occurs within partnerships between Southern and Northern organisations. The first issue he examines is power. Unequal power relations between Southern and Northern institutions may easily lead to a one-way relationship of the North 'teaching' the South – rather than facilitating the access and impact of Southern voices in policy processes. This is frequently linked to what he terms 'conventional' capacity building, where the Southern institution is seen as a delivery mechanism for Northern-generated development programmes, rather than as an actor in its own right. In 'teaching' or 'conventional' North-South relationships, learning is transferred one-way from the Northern organisation to the Southern one. Drew argues that it would be beneficial to attempt to focus more on mutual learning partnerships where both the Northern and Southern institution learns something from the other. This would for example facilitate a process whereby experiences and findings from action learning in the South are used to inform policy processes in the North. This resource can be found at: http://www.bond.org.uk/lte/think.htm

Edwards, M. (1994) NGOs in the age of information. IDS Bulletin 25(2), 117-124. Brighton, UK: IDS.

Edwards links the rise of NGOs within the development field to the emergence of the information age, and poses the question of whether NGOs have a comparative advantage in linking information, knowledge and action in an efficient and relevant way.

Fowler, A. (1992) Prioritizing Institutional Development: A New Role for NGO Centres for Study and Development. IIED Gatekeeper Series No 35. London, UK: IIED.

Fowler introduces his topic by describing the new international order of a post-Cold War world, characterised by increased interdependence, waning sovereignty, a renewed emphasis on democratisation, heterogeneity and pluralism, and new openings for state-society relations. Most importantly, he argues that Third Sector organisations are becoming a stronger force in the new global dynamics. If development NGOs are to take advantage of this opportunity, they need to actively work on their self-development

Hailey, J. and James, R. (2002) Learning Leaders: The Key to Learning Organisations. Development in Practice 12(3,4), 398-408.

This article attempts to answer a few important questions related to learning NGOs by drawing on experiences from nine 'successful' South Asian NGOs and their learning processes (including BRAC and PROSHIKA in Bangladesh, BAIF and Sadguru in India, and AKRSP and IUCN in Pakistan). The first question is why learning is seen as so significant for NGOs today. The authors explain this by referring to the volatile political and economic environment that NGOs have faced in the 1990s, which has required them to change at a faster pace than before. Northern NGOs have also had to learn to find new roles for themselves as the importance of Southern civil society institutions is increasingly emphasised. The second question is whether NGOs are natural learners. This is answered in the negative; the authors argue that NGOs have to implement deliberate learning strategies if they are to have any success in this area. Thirdly, how do successful NGOs actually learn? This question is explored by drawing on the South Asian case studies. Central points are briefly reviewed, including: Learning from the poor, learning from practice, learning through staff participation, learning from external actors, learning from formal training, learning through research, and learning from monitoring and evaluation. The glue that holds these disparate elements together is the organisational culture, and in particular the attitude of the NGO leadership towards learning.

Heeks, R. (2002) Failure, success and improvisation of information systems projects in developing countries. Development Informatics Working Paper No 11. IDPM.

This paper starts off from the observation that most information systems in developing countries fail either totally or partially. This trend has not been halted by the recent spate of ICT projects that have been initiated by development NGOs and the private sector, despite the ICT rhetoric of success. The author argues that the reality of frequent failure of information systems projects is a problem that should be taken seriously within development, as it keeps developing countries on the wrong side of the digital divide. He suggests that the high rates of failure can begin to be addressed by examining the design-reality gap that exists in so many information projects. Success and failure depend on the size of this gap.This resource can be found at:
http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/research/publications/wp/di/di_wp11.htm. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Jenkins, R. and Goetz, A.M. (1999) Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India. Third World Quarterly 20(3), 603-622.

The work of a small and unusual activist group in the north Indian state of Rajasthan has raised a series of practical and theoretical issues for promoting accountability more generally. The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) – literally: Workers' and Farmers' Power Organisation – has waged a campaign to secure the right of ordinary people to gain access to information held by government officials. In the process of experimenting with methods of compiling, sharing and verifying expenditure data at very local levels – thus far, in the absence of a statutory entitlement to such information – the MKSS has developed a radical interpretation of the notion that citizens have a right both to know how they are governed and to participate actively in the process of auditing their representatives. This article examines the process by which this campaign emerged and the means by which it pursues it goals. It then analyses the implications of the MKSS experience, and the larger movement it has spawned, for contemporary debates in three areas: human rights, participatory development and, of course, anti-corruption.

Keeble, S. (2002) The Role of Northern Civil Society in International Development. Speech by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development at the BOND AGM, 11 July. London, UK:

Keeble introduced the topic 'the role of Northern civil society in international development' by placing it in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The new focus on poverty eradication and the importance of ownership within international development has, among other things, contributed to more direct engagement between Northern donor agencies and Southern civil society. In addition, there is increasing recognition that there is a real need for credible governments in the South that are supported to provide services to their citizens. However, this does not necessarily mean that Northern NGOs are redundant. If progress is to be made towards the MDGs, both DFID and UK development NGOs will have to consider what their appropriate role is. Especially for Northern NGOs, this role is a changing one.

KFPE (2001) Enhancing Research Capacity in Developing and Transition Countries. Bern, Switzerland: KFPE.

This book is an overview of activities related to research for development in several donor agencies, including DANIDA, DFID, the European Commission, NORAD, RAWOO, SDC, SIDA, UNESCO and WHO. It was prompted by the acknowledged need for more equitable participation in the generation and application of new knowledge within the development field, and the associated need to promote North-South and South-South research partnerships. At the moment there are large differences between agencies in terms of their ability to process and use knowledge, and one way of addressing this imbalance is to support relevant institutional capacity building in developing and transition countries

King, K. (2001) Knowledge Agencies: Making the Globalisation of Development Knowledge Work for the World's Poor? Learning to Make Policy Working Paper No 9, Centre of African Studies (CAS). Edinburgh, UK: University of Edinburgh.

Do trends towards knowledge-based aid and the globalisation of knowledge benefit the North more than the South? Knowledge-based aid has grown dramatically in emphasis within agencies in the last 5 years. There is still a lack of evidence on the impact of these knowledge strategies but there are grounds for concerns and possibilities for alternative approaches

Knowledge, Technology and Policy – Special Issue (1999) Evaluation in Developing Countries: Experiences with Agricultural Research and Development. Knowledge, Technology & Policy 11(4). KT&P.

This Special Issue of KT&P reflects an initiative of the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) to invite evaluators from the South to present their experiences on evaluation. Evaluation is increasingly becoming important for public and private organisations. And the trend can be observed that national organisations are more and more using evaluation to improve their own decision making and performance. A vast quality of literature has been written on how to do evaluation, but rather little is known on actual evaluation practices in the South. This paper tries to respond to this gap by presenting a set of articles on evaluation practice from Africa, Asia and Latin America in agricultural research and development organisations.

Korten, D. (1984) Rural Development Programming: The Learning Process Approach. In D. Korten and R. Klauss (Eds.) People-Centered Development; Contributions toward Theory and Planning Frameworks. West Hartford, CT, USA: Kumarian Press.

Korten maps out several important concerns related to learning processes in development projects. He distinguishes between blueprint and process project models, and argues that in development it is far better to work towards a process approach than a blueprint approach. The reason for this is that

development projects nearly always operate with limited knowledge, in environments that are constantly changing. Therefore it is futile to adopt a blueprint model which forces one to behave as if one had perfect knowledge in a perfectly stable setting.

Levitt, B. and March, J.G. (1988) Organizational Learning. Annual Review of Sociology 14, 319-340.

Levitt and March's oft-quoted article highlights the limitations and ambivalence of organisational learning.

Lloyd Laney, M. (2003) Advocacy Impact Assessment Guidelines. Wallingford, UK: Communications and Information Management Resource Centre (CIMRC).

DFID's major advocacy activities focus on influencing agencies and governments to invest in infrastructure. However, it is hard to find concrete evidence of the contributions that advocacy makes towards poverty eradication. This paper provides guidelines for an approach that many NGOs take to assess advocacy impacts. Being clear about the changes you want to effect means that you can develop measurable advocacy objectives. Designing indicators that act as milestones towards the achievement of your objectives provides a basis in your search for evidence. There are different types of advocacy impacts, known as different dimensions of change, and some indicators are described for the following dimensions: changes in policies and their implementation, private sector change, strengthening civil society, aiding democracy and improving the material situation of individuals.

Madon, S. (2000) International NGOs: Networking, information flows and learning. Development Informatics Working Paper Series No 8, Institute of Development Policy and Management (IDPM). Manchester, UK: University of Manchester.

How can international NGOs (INGOs) use networking, learning and information systems to increase their development impact? What is the state of their systems for accessing and processing information? How could they become more successful in sharing and learning information? In research by the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Institute for Development Policy and Management it is argued that learning from the field is essential to enable INGOs to influence wider policy-making and improve local accountability. The research paper urges radical change in the way INGOs receive and manage information.This resource can be found at: http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/research/publications/wp/di/di_wp08.htm. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Malhotra, Y. (2001) Organizational controls as enablers and constraints in successful knowledge management systems implementation. In Y. Malhotra (Ed) Knowledge Management and Business Model Innovation. Hershey, PA, USA: Idea Group Publishing.

In this chapter, Malhotra discusses the role of organisational controls and procedures in relation to knowledge management, and raises the question of whether organisational controls enable knowledge sharing and knowledge generation, or whether they constrain them. His main argument is that 'knowledge management' is too often seen as a way to control the knowledge sharing behaviour of the organisation's staff, and that when this happens, effective knowledge management is in fact severely constrained. Constraining knowledge procedures are usually presented with pre-decided goals, blueprint recipes for achieving these goals, and recipe guidelines for employees to follow. Such procedures tend to reinforce organisational stability.

March, J.G. (1991) Exploration and exploitation in organizational learning. Organization Science 2(1), 71-87.

March is less optimistic about the possibilities of organisational learning than his colleagues in the field of corporate knowledge management, such as Senge and Argyris. March tends to emphasise

the limited and ambivalent nature of learning, and challenges the allegedly simple learning guidelines that many other authors espouse.

Marchand, D. (1998) Competing with Intellectual Capital. In G. von Krogh, J. Roos and D. Kleine (Eds.) Knowing in Firms; Understanding, Managing and Measuring Knowledge. London, UK: Sage.

Marchand aims to present a framework for the interaction of knowledge and information, and then to demonstrate the business value of this linkage. He does this through discussing the way in which one large company, Skandia, has managed to link their business strategy and performance with measurements of their 'intellectual capital'. According to Marchand, it is crucial to understand the relationship between knowledge and information. While knowledge is personal and resides in people, information is embodied in written documents and verbal messages. Information always encompasses an act of transfer between people. It is through information that we develop new knowledge. Once this relationship between knowledge and information has been established, Marchand goes on to suggest that the processes of conversion from information to knowledge and vice versa ought to be a key part of any business strategy.

Marsden, D., Oakley, P. and Pratt, B. (1994) Measuring the Process: Guidelines for Evaluating Social Development. NGO Management & Policy Series No 3. Oxford, UK: INTRAC.

Marsden and Oakley have edited two books on social development evaluation, based on two conferences on this theme organised by INTRAC in 1989 and 1992. The participants, over a hundred in all, came from a wide range of NGOs, both Northern and Southern, as well as donor institutions. Marsden and Oakley synthesised the significant themes that were addressed at the conferences, and their second book, Measuring the Process (written together with Pratt), sums up the most important issues and the learning that had occurred throughout the process.

Maxwell, S. (2002) Development Research in Europe: Towards an (AII) Star Alliance? EADI Newsletter 3-2002. European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI).

The starting point for this brief paper is the observation that the 'business environment' of development research and training institutes in Europe is rapidly changing,

McElroy, M. (2000) Second-Generation KM; A White Paper. Knowledge Management 4(3).

According to McElroy, head of Macroinnovations, KM strategies can be divided into two 'generations'. The first generation of KM strategies focused on addressing the problem of inadequate knowledge sharing. The approach taken to address this problem was heavily supply-side driven, and frequently involved implementing technical solutions such as data warehousing, document management or codification of existing knowledge. The second generation of KM strategies, on the other hand, have tried to move beyond this technical approach and towards more process-oriented and demand-side driven initiatives. This requires moving beyond codification of existing knowledge to strategies designed to facilitate the creation of new knowledge. An environment that stimulates creativity is vital.

McGann, J. (2002) Think tanks and the transnationalization of foreign policy. US Foreign Policy Agenda 7(3).

James McGann is President of McGann Associates, and a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he directs the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Programme. In this critical reflection on the role of think tanks in today's changing transnational policy context,This resource can be found at:
http://www.fpri.org/enotes/thinktanks.20021216.mcgann.transnationalforeignpolicy.html. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Mehta, L. (2001) The World Bank and its Emerging Knowledge Empire. Human Organization 60(2),189-196.

This paper critically examines the emerging knowledge agenda at the World Bank. From the publication of the World Development Report 1998/99 on 'Knowledge for Development' to present discussions around the Global Development Gateway, the World Bank is attempting to carve out a niche for itself as the 'Knowledge Bank'. In so doing it appears to have shifted from merely focussing on the transfer of capital. Instead, it seeks to be a leading player in development expertise and knowledge transfers in international development. The paper examines the Bank's conception of knowledge, the rise of knowledge enterprises at the Bank and the various tensions in its knowledge discourses. It argues that the Bank's knowledge agenda often tends to be centralised and absolutist and draws on economistic and technocratic models. These trends contribute to the emergence of a narrow knowledge agenda which both neglects socio-cultural issues and those concerning a wider political economy. Thus, the plural nature of knowledge is denied and the Bank's own problematic role in knowledge generation is not reflected upon.

Mosse, D. (2002) The Western India Rainfed Farming Project; Seminar and Discussion. PARC Document No 8, presented at DFID learning organisation seminar, 5 July.

At a workshop framed by the question of how DFID could become a 'learning organisation', Mosse presented a case study of a DFID rural development project in Western India ('the Kribhco project'). The questions guiding the paper concerned the relationship between policy and practice in this projectThis resource can be found at:
http://www.parcinfo.org/index.php/rl/downloads/doc_download/59-western-india-rainfed-farming-project-seminar-and-discussion. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Mosse, D., Farrington, J. and Rew, A. (eds) (1998) Development as Process; Concepts and Methods for Working with Complexity. Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Policy Studies. London, UK: Routledge.

How can the complexity and unpredictability of planned development be understood? How can project managers deal with the social relationships and institutional contexts in which they operate? Linking practical experience and contemporary social theory, this book offers alternative ways of thinking about 'development as process' and new methods for field research and programme monitoring. Conventionally, the complexity of development work has been 'managed' through the use of simple project models in which planned inputs lead logically to predictable outputs. In focusing on the unintended outcome, the unmanageable element, the local variability of effects, and the importance of social relationships, the contributors in this book challenge simplistic managerial models and suggest new approaches and methods which acknowledge, explore and positively engage with the unexpected and with diversity in the development process. Drawing on work in agriculture, irrigation, forestry, and fisheries in countries in Asia and the former Soviet Union, Development as Process examines changing information needs faced by development agencies as they shift form simple technology-led project approaches, towards an emphasis on policy change, institutional reform and inter-agency partnerships. In looking critically at the politics of information production and use in different cultural and institutional settings, Development as Process goes beyond method and technique and proposes a new look at the role of monitoring information in planned development.

Moussa, A. and Schware, R. (1992) Informatics in Africa: Lessons from World Bank Experience. World Development 20(12), 1737-1752.

The World Bank has become more and more involved in information technology (IT) lending in Africa. The authors mention that in fiscal 1990, 90% of all Bank lending operations in Africa had significant IT components – such as operations in information and statistical services and

telecommunications infrastructure. In this article, Moussa and Schware present the findings, interpretations and conclusions of a study by the World Bank's Development Informatics Unit that reviewed 76 World Bank projects in Africa, with the aim of evaluating the returns of the use of IT. In brief, the study shows that the returns are mixed. The dominant users of IT in Africa are governmental agencies, which frequently have limited absorptive capacity when it comes to taking into use new technology. The main constraints are linked to limited human and organisational capabilities.

Nicholson, T. (1994) Institution building; Examining the fit between bureaucracies and indigenous systems. in S. Wright (Ed) Anthropology of Organizations. London, UK: Routledge.

Nicholson introduces this paper by pointing out that evaluations of development projects frequently cite institutional weaknesses within developing countries as one of the main causes of poor performance. The solution is often seen to be local institutional development – including capacity building, better learning systems, information systems, and knowledge management systems in local institutions. Nicholson argues that local institutional development has tended to rely on implementation of Western organisational models, including the implementation of 'Western' values (which perhaps over-emphasise rationality and formality) and colonial bureaucratic structures. This type of blueprint institutional development has largely ignored local cultural concepts, such as kinship loyalty and obligations, and the way local institutions would usually be built by taking into account these cultural concepts.

Nonaka, I. (1995) The Knowledge-Creating Company; How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation. New York, USA, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Nonaka, a leading Japanese business expert, has become widely known in the West because of his analysis of knowledge creating strategies. Nonaka argues that the competitive advantage of Japanese firms is based on the interaction of four modes of knowledge creation: socialisation (from tacit to tacit knowledge), externalisation (from tacit to explicit), combination (from explicit to explicit), and internalisation (from explicit to tacit).

Nuijten, M. (1992) Local organization as organizing practices; Rethinking rural institutions. In N. Long and A. Long (Eds.) Battlefields of Knowledge. London, UK: Routledge.

Nuijten argues that institutional development cannot be based on a universal blueprint. Instead, local institutional development must always be seen in the local context. Her paper is based on an examination of local land tenure institutions, ejidos, in rural Mexico. She compares the local ejidos to the formal types of organisations that development projects would like to implement. The comparison shows that local institutional development projects are overly based on ingrained notions of Weberian formal bureaucratic rationality. If these 'Western' forms of organisation are implemented in this rural area, the formal organisational processes are bound to be used in different and unexpected ways by rural people. In order to strengthen institutional processes that will be used effectively by people, it is necessary to understand local concepts of institutions and management practices, as well as local disputes and alliances, and the way this (often silent) local knowledge shapes the institutions in question.

Nutley, W., Walter, I. and Davies, H. (2002) From Knowing to Doing: A framework for understanding the evidence-into-practice agenda. Discussion Paper 1, Research Unit for Research Utilisation (RURU), University of St Andrews. St Andrews, UK: University of St Andrews.

This overview paper aims to map out the terrain of research utilisation and evidence-based practice (RU/EBP) through examining six inter-related areasThis resource can be found at: http://www.ncsl.org.uk/de/media-f7b-94-randd-engaged-nutley.pdf. Last accessed 4/14/2009

O'Malley, D. and O'Donoghue, G. (2001) NGOs and the Learning Organisation. London, UK: British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND).
In this scoping paper on learning in NGOs, commissioned by BOND, O'Malley and O'Donoghue outline their definition of a learning organisation and ways of becoming a learning organisation.This resource can be found at: http://www.bond.org.uk/lte/lngo.htm

Pasteur, K. and Scott Villiers, P. (2003) Minding the gap through organisational learning.
Drawing on case studies from DFID and SIDA, the authors suggest that there is a gap between the rhetoric of development (e.g. the rhetoric of 'participation' and 'ownership') and what is actually happening in practice. They argue that this gap can be bridged through organisational learning, more specifically through members of the organisation taking time to reflect on personal and systemic practices. People who are able to reflect on their own attitudes, values, goals and behaviours will be able to form new types of relationship and learn in new ways. The authors include a typical quote from a member of staff in a donor agency to illustrate the need for time to reflect: 'I have a sense of not taking time to reflect on why it didn't work. Instead we just throw it out and do something new.' The lack of time and space to reflect is a recurring refrain in development agencies. Practicalities, including meetings and reports, take up a large part of the day, and there is usually no incentive attached to setting off time simply to think.

Pervaiz, A. and Zairi, M. (2000) Innovation: A Performance Measurement Perspective. In J. Tidd (Ed.) From Knowledge Management to Strategic Competence; Measuring Technological, Market and Organisational Innovation. London, UK: Imperial College press.
Ahmed and Zairi, from the University of Bradford's European Centre for Total Quality Management, state that clarity concerning performance measurement is a pre-requisite for establishing what impact, if any, practices such as knowledge management have on business results

Powell, M. (2003) Information management for development organisations. Oxfam Development Guidelines Series. Oxford, UK: Oxfam.
Oxfam has recently issues a second edition of their Guidelines for information management, aimed at Oxfam staff, partners, and other interested development organisations. The Guidelines suggest that if information flows well between and within organizations, it empowers people by enabling them to make evidence-based choices; it promotes efficiency; and it enables creativity. Information does not flow well by chance: the process needs to be managed, by everyone concerned. This book introduces tools to analyze how information is used in an organization and discusses both strategic and practical options for improvements, in the context of the broader information-related changes and debates currently taking place in the world. This edition covers the major developments in these external debates. Discussions of knowledge management, capacity building, institutional learning, evaluation and impact assessment, research, information products and evidence-based work have been added, together with a number of case studies.

Roche, C. (1998) Organizational assessment and institutional footprints. In A. Thomas, J. Chataway and M. Wuyts (Eds.) Finding out Fast: Investigative Skills for Policy and Development. London, UK: Sage / Open University.
Roche sets out to show how one might 'find out fast' about an organisation in either the public, private or not-for-profit sector. He suggests a number of different approaches that complement each other

Rondinelli, D. (1993) Development Projects as Policy Experiments; An Adaptive Approach to Development Administration. London, UK: Routledge.
Rondinelli's book from the early 1980s is a sustained critique of the large-scale development

planning and administration methods used at the time. While most other authors on organisational learning focus on organisations, Rondinelli tackles the issue of learning in conventional bureaucracies. His main criticism is that national-level development planning generally is too control oriented and top-down, thus cutting off the possibility of learning. He suggests that development projects and policies would be far more likely to achieve their stated objectives if they were designed to be adaptive, i.e. to respond to different contexts and circumstances as projects are carried out.

Savage, C. (2000) The development of knowledge management and why it is important. Knowledge Management for Development Organisations, Report of the Knowledge Management Brighton Workshop 26-28 June 2000, Bellanet International Secretariat. Brighton,UK: University of Sussex.

Charles Savage, president of Knowledge Era Enterprises, argues that if organisations want to succeed today, they have to adopt significantly different practices.

Schein, E. (1992) The Learning Leader as Culture Manager' in his Organisational Culture and Leadership. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Schein argues that one of the most important factors determining successful innovation and learning strategies in organisations, is the ability of the leadership to manage change processes. He suggests that organisations can be divided into three categories: newly formed organisations, mid-life organisations, and mature organisations. These three different types of organisations require different approaches to change management and different types of leadership. New organisations need leaders with self-insight, mid-life organisations need leaders who are able to read the surrounding culture and assess the added value that the organisation can bring, while mature organisations need leaders that are able to break the tyranny of old organisational patterns and communicate renewed vision.

Senge, P. (1990) The Fifth Discipline; The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation. New York, USA: Doubleday/Currency.

Senge's Fifth Discipline has been widely cited within the knowledge management field. Unlike many other private sector consultants, he has also become influential outside the business sector and is used in international development organisations. Senge's book is based on his work as a management consultant, and he makes the same distinction as Argyris between first order and second order learning. While Argyris uses the terms single loop and double loop learning, Senge prefers to call them adaptive and generative learning. Adaptive learning simply responds to past errors and modifies future action. Generative learning, on the other hand, brings in the creative element and the ability to use new knowledge and change courses of action. Senge maps out five 'disciplines' or bodies of practice that organisations need to engage with in order to become generative learning organisations:

Song, S. (1999) Guidelines on the use of electronic networking to facilitate regional or global research networks. Ottawa, Canada: IDRC.

Recent developments in information and communications technologies (ICT) - including the rapid spread of telecommunications infrastructure and the growth of the Internet - have dramatically lowered the barriers to research collaboration in the developing world. Electronic networking offers the potential for researchers anywhere to communicate with peers in their field and to gain access to valuable research information via the Internet. However, while the problem of access is a substantial hurdle which has been overcome, there are many other barriers to successful electronic collaboration. This paper highlights some key issues to be aware of in fostering electronic collaboration.This resource can be found at: http://www.idrc.ca/books/focus/890/15aSong.html

Stacey, R. (1995) The Role of Chaos and Self-Organization in the Development of Creative Organizations. In A. Albert (Ed) Chaos and Society. Amsterdam, Netherlands: IOS Press.

Drawing on chaos theory (transported from the physical sciences to social science issues), Stacey discusses the possibilities of moving away from 'equilibria' models of organisation to models that focus on nonlinear dynamics. In this paper he sets out the argument that organisations are nonlinear feedback networks. He argues that the 'nonlinearity' of networks is precisely what makes networks such valuable sites for innovation – e.g. the spontaneous relations formed between people, the irregular sharing of information, the informal learning processes that occur through interaction, etc. In formal institutions, the networks that form often function as 'shadow organisations' that creatively interpret and modify official strategies. More importantly, the informal networks continuously generate new and alternative strategies. Those unofficial strategies that survive and are picked up by various actors through the informal channels and networks, will normally after a time become institutionalised, thus making them official. This reinforces the control of the formal management and provides some stability. However, new unofficial ideas and responses will already be forming. Stacey argues that this constant interaction between stable organisational elements and unstable informal networks is vital if an organisation wishes to succeed.

Stiglitz, J. (1999) Public Policy for a Knowledge Economy. Remarks at the Department for Trade and Industry and Centre for Economic Policy Research, 27 January. London, UK.

The new information economy is changing market demand and supply. Economic fundamentals have to be revalued. Stiglitz' speech comments on these changes by focusing on three broad issues: the role of knowledge in development; the culture of the knowledge economy; and the implications of the new economy for democratic processes. Within development, there has been a shift from the 'weighty' economy where progress was measured against tangible infrastructure and factories, to a 'weightless' economy where monitoring focuses more on intangible outcomes such as increased awareness or policy change.This resource can be found at: http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/extme/knowledge-economy.pdf. Last accessed 4/14/2009

Stone, Diane (1996) (1996) Capturing the Political Imagination; Think Tanks and the Policy Process. London, UK, Portland, USA: Frank Cass.

Ideas matter. It is also the case that ideas do not matter. If the intellectual weight of ideas alone were sufficient to influence political thinking, then the organisations that are the subject of this book might not exist. Ideas need organisations to propel them within the hearing range of decision-makers. Organisational infrastructure plays a significant role in the influence of ideas alongside the individual agents of ideas – scholars and intellectuals. Accordingly this book argues that independent policy research institutes – better known as think-tanks – have become increasingly visible policy actors.'

Struyk, R. (2000) Transnational Think Tank Networks: Purpose, Membership and Cohesion. Washington, USA: Urban Institute.

This short paper provides a brief overview over issues related to think tank networks. Think tank networks are different from public policy networks in that think tank networks are usually made up of organisations with more or less the same interests and fundamental views. In this respect they are similar to epistemic communities. Think tank networks are typically characterised by webs of relatively stable relationships and informal interactions based on these relations. They are also generally non-hierarchical, and attempt to pool and share resources in a mutual manner.

Surr, M. et al (2002) Research for Poverty Reduction: DFID Research Policy Paper. London, UK: DFID.

This paper proposes policies and principles to guide DFID's research work over the longer term. The critical issue for the future is how to improve researchers' effectiveness in producing outputs that

directly and indirectly change both policy and practice, are truly relevant to poor people's needs, and are effectively taken up. The report argues that to be effective, 'research' must be located more securely in the context of wider 'knowledge' or 'Innovation systems'.

Sutton, R. (1999) The Policy Process: An Overview. ODI Working Paper No 118. London, UK: ODI.

This paper offers an introduction to analysis of the policy process. It identifies and describes theoretical approaches in political science, sociology, anthropology, international relations and management.

Suzuki, N. (1998) Inside NGOs: Learning to Manage Conflicts between Headquarters and Field Offices. London, UK: ITDG Publishing.

Suzuki's book is about the practical issues that confront staff in an international NGO, particularly the issues that arise out of the distance between head quarters and field offices. The geographical distance is only one dimension of the gap between the centre and regional NGO offices. There is also frequently a gap in terms of strategic outlook. While staff at the head office tend to be concerned with funding, strategy and organisation-oriented practices, field staff find themselves occupied with a need to understand contextual factors, and to make immediate and independent project decisions. Typically, field office staff are annoyed at the constant requests sent out from the head office and see this as adding to their already overburdened work load – while imagining that head office staff exclusively spend their time composing the next request to the field. Head office staff, on the other hand, lament the fact that field offices cannot even comply with the simplest appeal for project information, and when the project information is finally sent, it is invariably in the wrong format.

Uphoff, N. (1992) Learning from Gal Oya; Possibilities for Participatory Development and Post-Newtonian Social Science. Ithaca, NY, USA: Cornell University Press.

This book recounts the drama of a remarkably successful experiment – the Gal Oya irrigation project – that introduced farmer organization for self-managed development in the largest and most run-down conflict-ridden irrigation system in Sri Lanka. The project involved ten to fifteen thousand farmers, and what fascinates Uphoff is the system of cooperation and mutual support that gradually developed between them as the project progressed over the span of a decade.

Volkow, N. (1998) Strategic Use of Information Technology Requires Knowing How to Use Information. In C. Avgerou (Ed.) Implementation and Evaluation of Information Systems in Developing Countries, Proceedings of the Fifth International Working Conference of the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP), IFIP WG 9.4. IFIP.

Information technology is often promoted as the solution to most of the information and communication problems that organisations face today. IT is marketed as a technology with the competitive advantage in terms of increasing productivity and communication efficiency, and in facilitating responsiveness. Volkow argues that these assertions are myths, and that installation of IT systems is not on its own enough to improve performance. Her argument can be summed up in the sentence: 'Strategic use of information technology requires knowing how to use information'. If organisations are to benefit from IT, they have to consider to what extent their structures, practices and management are geared towards handling information itself. The wider national context, culture and human resources capacities are also important factors in this process.

World Bank (1999) World Development Report 1998/99: Knowledge For Development. Washington, USA: World Bank.

Knowledge is like light. Weightless and intangible, it can easily travel the world, enlightening the lives of people everywhere. Yet billions of people still live in the darkness of poverty—unnecessarily. Knowledge about how to treat such a simple ailment as diarrhea has existed for centuries—but

millions of children continue to die from it because their parents do not know how to save them. Poor countries—and poor people—differ from rich ones not only because they have less capital but because they have less knowledge. Knowledge is often costly to create, and that is why much of it is created in industrial countries. But developing countries can acquire knowledge overseas as well as create their own at home. Forty years ago, Ghana and the Republic of Korea had virtually the same income per capita. By the early 1990s Korea's income per capita was six times higher than Ghana's. Some reckon that half of the difference is due to Korea's greater success in acquiring and using knowledge. Knowledge also illuminates every economic transaction, revealing preferences, giving clarity to exchanges, informing markets. And it is lack of knowledge that causes markets to collapse, or never to come into being.