

The New Development Paradigm: Organizing for Implementation

Turid Sato and William E. Smithⁱ

INTRODUCTION

In September 1993, ten countries sent delegations representing their governments, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and academic communities to discuss implementing a new development paradigm with representatives from development assistance agencies. At the request of the project's sponsors - the governments of Japan and the Netherlands and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - the project organizer, Organizing for Development, an International Institute (ODII), prepared a workshop report, on which this chapter is based.

ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

The inspiration for the project emerged from the many reviews, discussions and white papers - in Japan, Europe, Africa, Latin America and the United States - which evaluated the results of four decades of development assistance. There was broad agreement that the current system, having accumulated some \$1.5 trillion in debt, has not produced results commensurate with the resources expended. Disillusioned with the results, many development practitioners and institutions are actively exploring new and more appropriate approaches to development by which much more can be done for much less.

Initial support for the idea of exploring a new development paradigm came from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Having critically reviewed its own philosophy and strategy for development, NORAD was already beginning to turn away from its donor-driven approach. It knew that it must encourage self-help, self-reliance and empowerment. However, such strategies would not work if they were not supported by other development agencies and governments. A global workshop offered the possibility of developing more consensus on new paradigms.

Japanese officials supported a workshop to allow diverse cultures to come together to explore the implications of such a development paradigm. The Netherlands and the UNDP also became project sponsors.

'The New Development Paradigm' applies to development work the qualitative changes that have already taken place in other fields. Thomas Kuhn, in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, helped to popularize the term 'paradigm'. While popular usage has come to interpret a paradigm as simply a 'world view', Kuhn's definition of a paradigm is more precise: 'Universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners.'ⁱⁱ Kuhn used the term paradigm in relation to the tremendous shift in the scientific worldview, from the mechanistic approach of Newton to the relativistic one of Einstein. In the political world, the new paradigm has created a vortex of change swirling from

eastern Europe, dismantling the Soviet Union, and bringing rumbles of democratic change through Asia, Africa and Latin America.

A paradigm shift in development, to be minimally consistent with Kuhn's concept, would need to meet three conditions:

1. It must provide a meta-theory, that is, one that serves to explain many other theories.
2. It must be accepted by a community of practitioners.
3. It must have a body of successful practice, 'exemplars', that are held up as 'paradigms' in practice.

If there is indeed a new development paradigm, then:

- What is the meta-theory?
- Who is the community?
- What are the successful exemplars?
- Who has made and who has yet to make the shift?

PURPOSE

The first specific purpose of the 1993 workshop on development was to communicate the ideals, practices and implications of the 'New Development Paradigm' to a broad, cross-cultural sector of the development community that includes many cultures. The defining trait of the new development paradigm was that development must be human-centered, coming from within, rather than imposed from the outside. In addition, the center of effort in development needs to shift from resource-based strategies to interactive or participative strategies. In many ways, local practitioners are far ahead of the international donor agencies and the recipient governments.ⁱⁱⁱ

Second, the intention was to provide an opportunity for country teams engaged in programs consistent with the ideals of the new paradigm to learn from each other and to help translate these ideals into practical applications that could serve as exemplars. In order to conduct future development work consistent with the new paradigm, three strategic clusters of questions needed to be addressed:

1. how to design learning institutions and processes that could change the attitude and mindsets of those still caught in the old paradigm;
2. how to ensure the necessary shifts in priorities, roles and responsibilities that would produce more holistic, sustainable development, and
3. how to ensure financial support for the use of democratic processes for full involvement.

Finally, the project attempted to open a new dialogue between donor institutions and developing countries to encourage a new pattern of relationships more consistent with the requirements of the new development paradigm. Many development assistance institutions find it difficult 'to let go of the rope', wishing to control the outputs and the terms of interaction between stakeholders. The costs of this reluctance to change in terms of administration and the destruction of initiative are enormous.

The Meta-theory

There was clear acceptance that development should be people-centered; democratically organized; responsive to the whole environment, not only the ecological and the economic, but also the political, social, and cultural; and balanced, for example, between center and periphery, between public and private, between the roles of men and women. Development was described as an increase in one's capacity to pursue purposes, while taking into account the effects of achieving that purpose on others and on the whole community. The achievement of human purpose becomes the goal of development, the touchstone against which development is assessed.

The new development paradigm puts human purpose at the center as the driving force or source of power for development. It draws on all human values - social, political, aesthetic and spiritual, as well as the economic and scientific - as criteria for success. This philosophy differs considerably from that driving the development paradigm of the last four decades. The stories told by the participants showed how unreal and how costly the former analysis from the outside has proven to be. The story of the Grameen Bank, in contrast, reveals what can be done when human purpose is placed at the center and supported by interaction among peers (see 'Grameen Bank' in Glossary). This new philosophy enables much more to be accomplished for much less.

Visualizing the Meta-theory

Building on the visual presentation of the ideals in Figure 5.1, the new development paradigm is illustrated in Figure 5.2, which encompasses and synthesizes these ideals. The image extends the organizing principle used to construct Figure 5.1.

The new paradigm is organized around the three fundamental systems' relationships:

1. the relationship to the whole system (in this case identified as the circle containing the scientific, spiritual, social, political, economic and ecological context of development);
2. the relationships among the parts of the system (in this case the organizations, agencies and institutions involved in development), and
3. the relationship of the individual part to itself (in this case the individual or organization acting as part of the development system).

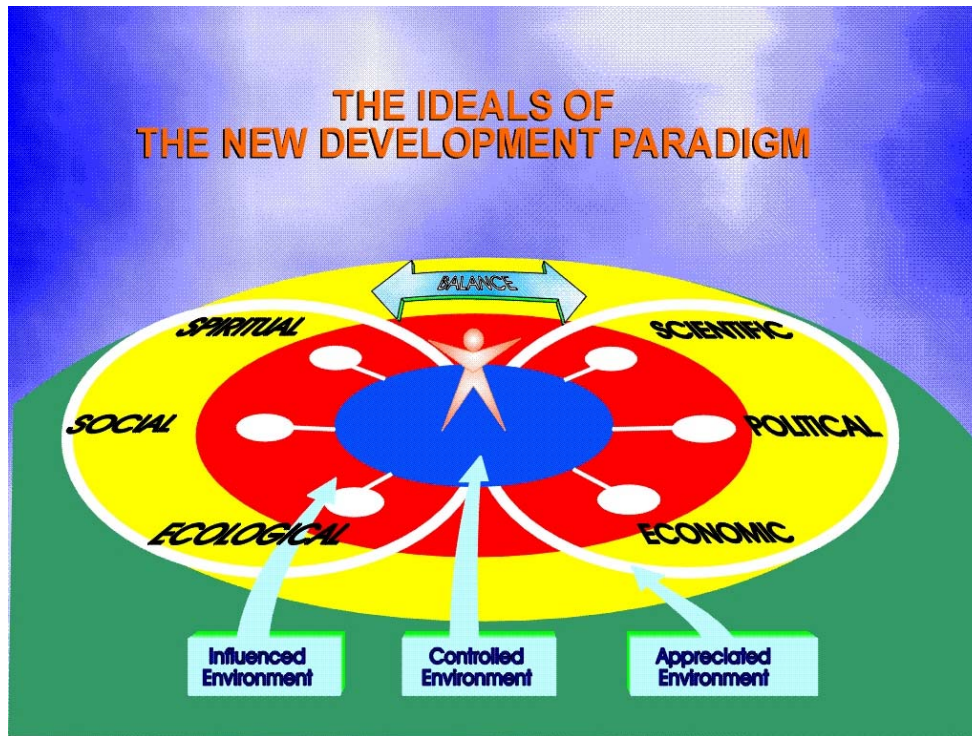


Figure 5.1 The Ideals of the New Development Paradigm

The essence of each relationship consists in different forms of power:

- appreciation of the whole - understanding the realities and the potential inherent in the whole system;
- influence of and among the parts - determination of which part has priority and what the relationships among the parts should be, and
- control of the individual part - the autonomy of the individual part and the resources it possesses.

It can be concluded that the traditional model of development is based on control. It is assumed that underdevelopment is caused by lack of resources, technology and skills. The remedy, governed primarily by economic values, is to transfer the missing resources from the developed to the developing world. The failures of this strategy are myriad. For example, an overemphasis on control has led to the over-bureaucratization of development and to the fragmentation of development efforts into small projects with high overhead costs and little coordination in relationship to the whole country. There are frequent 'disconnects' in traditional development projects and in many projects carried out by different departments or entities, often pursuing opposite goals. The effect is one of 'winning the battle but losing the war', that is, the immediate goal may be reached, but the overall purpose is not advanced.

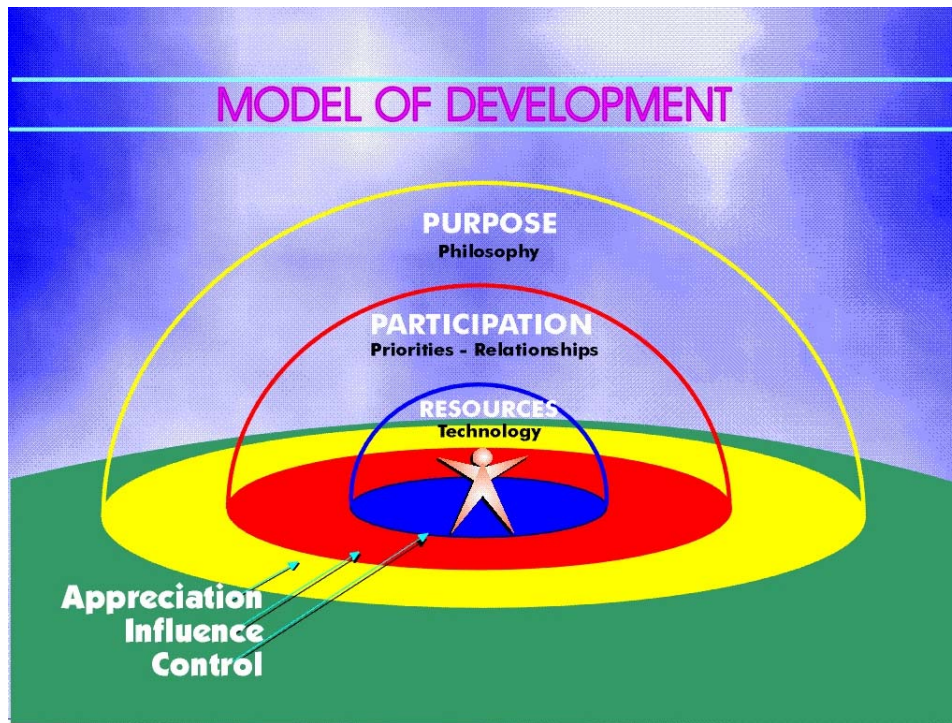


Figure 5.2 Model of Development

This failure points to the need to move to the second level, labeled 'participation' in Figure 5.2. Characterized by exchange of influence among the stakeholders (the parts) of the development system, this level determines who sets development priorities, and what roles different parties (stakeholders) should play. In the traditional model, the primary interaction is among experts. Experts decide priorities and design the structures which determine roles and relationships. Often those who have most influence on successful implementation are not party to the design, management or evaluation of development programs.

Staff of many development agencies see participation as another implementing technology - a sub-component of resource allocation, and one with which they are quite uncomfortable. A typical positive response by the agencies to the requirement for more participation is to increase training programs and produce guidelines and handbooks to teach the new techniques of participation. This approach totally misses the point. Participation is not just another implementing technology; it represents a whole new philosophy of development that leads to new policies, new roles and new relationships. Participation is the strategic centerpiece of a new model and a new philosophy of development. It is also more democratic than the current top-down model of development. This leads to questions about the third level of the model.

What is the purpose of development? Different interpretations of the purpose are based on different philosophies and lead to different models and practices. To be effective, development must address the long-term needs of the whole community; it must include all aspects of development - political, social and cultural, as well as the more traditional economic and technical.

The new model of development shifts the center of effort from a focus on control of resources to the participative dimension, the interaction among the key parts of the development system. It is driven by the purpose of the stakeholders rather than by expert planning.

The Community of Practitioners and Some Exemplars

Because much of the search for improved practices of development over the last four decades has concentrated on better mechanisms of control, attention needs to shift to practices that lead to greater appreciation and greater influence.

Thailand's 'Five Star Partnership Program' provides a dramatic illustration of such new practices. To implement the new development paradigm, the government of Thailand has entered into a partnership with the NGO community, the private sector, academic and religious organizations in the form of the Thai Foundation. The main purposes of the Thai Foundation in promoting this 'five star partnership' are: to facilitate a process in which villages, districts, and provinces establish their own priorities in the context of the realities and potential that exist; and to encourage the formation of similar partnerships at the local level to help in the implementation of those priorities.

The key elements of their practice were:

- change of attitudes through learning (appreciation);
- working together with the help of facilitative processes (influence), and
- involving people in improving their own lives and their own environment (control).

Thailand's new paradigm exemplar has features that are essential for successful implementation. First, people are not expected to switch to new paradigm practices without a change in attitude or mindset. Some experiential learning processes are required to produce such changes. The role of the national organization, the Thai Foundation, is to promote these facilitative processes.

Second, participation is required across projects and programs to meet the needs of whole districts, whole provinces or the whole nation. Participation of many parties requires strengthening of coordinative mechanisms. The Thai partnership concept represents • coordinative mechanism at the national level. They also call for • similar system at each level, each providing a learning, a facilitative and a funding function for learning and facilitation for the level below. The relationship between the three levels is governed not by control or bureaucratic norms, but by influence and appreciative relationships. Government of higher-level systems creates the conditions for private parties and organizations to appreciate their impact on the whole, partnerships are used to create constructively cooperative and appropriately competitive relationships among the parts of the whole system.

Third, within this field of appreciation and influence, individual organizations and communities are free to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own actions.

The most well-known case is the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which has appealed to the purpose of development (appreciative power) and social pressures (influence powers) to ensure repayment of loans at a higher level than almost any other development bank. For borrowers, initial credit is not contingent on collateral (control), and future credit depends on repayment performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS

The paradigm shift now overtaking practitioners of development has major implications at each of the three levels:

1. **Appreciation:** What is the purpose of development institutions? Is this Purpose congruent with current realities and opportunities? What is the current mindset of the leadership of the emerging paradigm? What is the mindset needed for the new development paradigm?
2. institutions to other stakeholders in the development system, for example, the private sector, NGOs and local communities?
3. **Control:** What are the core processes used by development agencies? Are they appropriate for implementing the new paradigm of development? Are the selection and development of human, financial and informational resources appropriate to the new models?

Improving Appreciation

There are numerous ways to improve the appreciation of the whole system and change old attitudes toward the development process, including:

- involve leadership of development agencies in Search Conferences to support new purposes, models and practices;
- extend the Thai idea of a National Institute to facilitate new paradigm processes at the global level;
- support cross-cultural programs and exchanges with countries
- practicing new paradigm approaches. Focus on women and youth in particular;
- create institutional support for facilitation of democratic organizing processes for sustainable development;
- create a dynamic media strategy and support for the free press, and broadcast, televise and publicize exemplars of the new philosophy in action.

Improving Influence

To improve the influence of those people most affected by the decisions taken, the following steps are recommended:

- Increase participation of women. This will automatically shift priorities, roles and relationships towards more appreciative values which are part of the new paradigm.
- Increase participation of all those with a stake in development through democratic processes and institutions.
- Create competition between existing institutions by giving organizations and countries access to new forms of assistance that will support partnerships and teaming processes.
- Create new partnerships at national levels among governments, the private sector and NGOS.
- At the regional and local levels, create partnerships among governments, private sector, NGOs and local communities.
- Modify the role of the multilateral development banks to more closely fit their financial expertise and to reduce the conflict of interest involved in their role in the selection, design and preparation of projects.
- Modify the role of UNDP to ensure that it emphasizes its coordinative rather than project preparation role. This implies a major shift away from selecting and preparing projects to one of strengthening the facilitative role of government in support of partnerships between governments, the private sector and NGOs and of sustainable development. UNDP's support for technical assistance should be offered only as a last resort after all local resources and skills have been exhausted.

Improving Peoples' Control

Several concrete steps can be taken to ensure more effective peoples' control over their own development and their own environment:

- Give greater emphasis in planning and implementation to dealing with problems and programs holistically - involve whole organizations, whole villages, whole provinces and whole regions in the design and implementation process.
- Decentralize control of programs to levels that can take a holistic perspective and give them control of resources and responsibility for managing the whole, rather than continue to micro-manage development from the top.
- Redesign the project selection and planning processes of the development agencies in the light of participative principles.
- Shift the emphasis of development interventions from analysis and report writing to interaction and commitment to action.

- Make evaluation the first, rather than the last, step of the organizing process; make appraisal an ongoing process to be carried out by the stakeholders; and make monitoring part of a self-managing process carried out by the implementers.
- Select and reward staff for greater breadth of understanding of development. Encourage more flexible and less controlling relationships between development agency staff and clients.
- Create new funding mechanisms that would encourage broader, more transparent and flexible planning, budgeting and accounting procedures.

NEXT STEPS

ODII plans to engage the leadership of the development agencies, governments, and implementing organizations in an ongoing dialogue about progress in implementing the new development paradigm. It plans to test the degree of interest in creating a 'development facility' to support implementation of the new development paradigm at the global level involving a partnership of interested donors and recipient governments, the private sector, NGOs and academic and religious organizations.

Modeled on the Thai Foundation, the function of this facility would be to provide the leadership of the global development community with the support required to shift to the new paradigm, to identify constraints that exist in the existing development frameworks and to meet the learning needs of practitioners of new paradigm approaches. The 50th anniversary of the Bretton Woods institutions offered a symbolic time for the initiation of such an effort.

ODII will encourage countries planning to create similar facilitative foundations and programs to link their experiences to such an international learning and co-creation process and join in its creation. At the local level, ODII plans to extend its transcultural experience into the local community of Washington, DC and other US communities, thereby reconfirming the end of the distinction between the First, Second and Third Worlds and recognizing that we are only one developing world.

CONCLUSION

The wave created by the new paradigm in science, in politics, and now in development, has reached tidal proportions. Kuhn has explained that people do not accept new paradigms through arguments and reason. The switch is made through experiencing the new phenomenon; it is made all at once or not at all. Paradigms are wholes that are, according to Kuhn, 'incommensurable'. One must 'fight or switch', and the time to fight is over.

The Thai experience provides a true exemplar of the new paradigm. It encompasses the 'purpose' or 'appreciative' dimension by drawing on the spiritual traditions of Buddhism. It proposes the spread of this new philosophy through the creation of a facilitative organization (the Thai Foundation) ensuring that it meets the needs of the whole Thai community. It conceptualizes and has started to implement the participative 'influence' dimension through its Five Star Partnership of government,

private sector, religious organizations, grassroots organization, and academic institutions. It has ensured that its resource based programs, at the local level, themselves became centers of development, each containing the whole spirit and participative model of the new philosophy.

The major challenge of the new development paradigm is to shift the emphasis of development assistance to a higher plane - from a focus on resources to a focus on human purpose and interaction. In practice, it means changing the mindset of those who still see participation or interaction as methodology. It means developing new structures and processes that will identify and facilitate interaction among the key stakeholders of the development system. It means creating new financial mechanisms that can respond to the needs generated by such a process rather than being tied a priori to the financiers' view of development needs.

There are many cases in which such constraints had been overcome, and many others where such efforts continue to be undermined. The biggest obstacles to the implementation of such ideas have been institutionalized attitudes, patterns of relationship, and core processes that are based on the philosophy that sees development as expertise to be transferred along with technology and financial resources.

The governments, development agencies and other bureaucracies holding on to the resource philosophy fear that the move into a more participative mode will mean loss of control. The cases of success show admirably that the opposite is true: 'letting go of the rope' can lead to more power. As Halvor John Hanssen of Norway asserted: 'Governments and development agencies have to learn to operate with more appreciation and influence and less control.'^{iv} If they do not, they are likely to end up in the same predicament as many of the controlling institutions in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, existing without a purpose and, eventually, without resources.

On a hopeful note, many governments and the development agencies are becoming aware of the new ideas. Although lack of support, and even sabotage, of such new efforts are still too common, many practitioners feel that a new climate has already been created that encourages experimentation with new models, strategies and practices. A change of attitude is taking place.

Human-centered development, then, requires a shift in the center of development effort - one which is inspired from within rather than imposed from without - one which empowers, rather than disempowers. Human-centered development cannot be achieved by gradual changes or improvements in methodology. Human-centered development requires a whole new attitude and philosophy, new models and new practices, and new roles for governments and for development assistance agencies.

Human-centered development requires a change in attitude. Each of us is that human being at the center of the development model in Figures 5.1 and 5.2. None is the skin-bounded self, but the self which includes relationships to others and to the whole. Whether as individual practitioners, or as whole organizations or governments, all are responsible for the effect of our actions on others and the whole. All are collectively responsible for the current mess in the development domain. All share the responsibility to improve it.

ⁱ The authors are co-directors of Organizing for Development, an International Institute (ODII), which they helped to found in 1988. This chapter is based on the report they prepared for the sponsors of ODII's September 1993 workshop on implementing the new development paradigm.

ⁱⁱ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962 and 1970), preface to the second edition, p. viii.

ⁱⁱⁱ For greater detail, see ODII's 1994 report, *The Magic of Interaction* (Washington, DC: ODII, 1994).

^{iv} Halvor Hanssen at the ODII Workshop on the New Development Paradigm, at the Airlie Center in Virginia, September 8-11, 1993.