

Intervention or collaboration?

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STELLINGEN

BEHORENDE BIJ HET PROEFSCHRIFT:

Intervention or Collaboration?

Redesigning Information and Communication Technologies for Development

ANNA BON

MAASTRICHT,

15 DECEMBER 2020

1. Transfer of technology* from wealthy to poor countries in international development cooperation is based on a deterministic model in which *technology* is abstracted to a *black box*, without considering the social and adaptive nature of technology, the complexity of the poor contexts, and the flexibility of design and design thinking.

*) <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/technology>

2. If the voice of the beneficiaries of ICT4D is to be taken seriously, contextual ethics – i.e. the ethics that emanate from or are part of specific context or culture, must be included in the policy and practice of ICT4D.
3. Policies that promote *transfer of technology and knowledge* from technologically advanced countries to poor regions are based on an imperialistic worldview in which superiority of western knowledge and culture is tacitly assumed.
4. Adaptive management, consisting of collaboration, adaptation and iteration, is the most appropriate method for solving *wicked problems***).

**Brown, V. A., Harris, J. A., & Russell, J. Y. (Eds.). (2010). *Tackling wicked problems through the transdisciplinary imagination*. Earthscan.

**Stowell, Frank. "Peter Checkland Interview." *International Journal of Information Technologies and Systems Approach (IJITSA)* 6.2 (2013): 53-60.

5. Randomized control trials in international development projects are donor-oriented and not beneficiary-oriented. They reduce communities to sets of individuals disregarding existing social structures, do not leverage the potential of diffusion of innovations to scale up successes and do not shed light on the mechanisms behind success or failure of an intervention.
6. Large-scale farmer-managed greening***) in Africa's drylands as an example of self-organization and diffusion of innovation in a complex adaptive system, is often overlooked by standard project evaluation methods that use the interventionist cause-effect approaches.

*** Reij, Chris, and Dennis Garrity. "Scaling up farmer-managed natural regeneration in Africa to restore degraded landscapes." *Biotropica* 48.6 (2016): 834-843.

7. EU policy to anticipate future negative social developments of artificial intelligence is focused on managing the *known unknowns* and too little or not at all on the *unknown unknowns*.
8. The methodology of iteratively constructing an emerging theory in geological field research is also useful for the ICT4D researcher in the field.
9. All national governments should take this Corona Crisis as a learning project on how to jointly manage transnational global crises, as a preparation to the looming (and much more threatening) Climate Crisis.
10. Big data, artificial intelligence and powerful social media are too risky for human wellbeing to be left to the private sector. A decentralized global governance structure is urgently needed in which all countries of the world are represented. In the Netherlands, the Dutch government should begin by appointing a minister and establishing a Ministry of Digital Society to deal with this societal challenge.