A NEW APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT-

INTEGRATIVE IMPROVEMENT (II)™:
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS IF PEOPLE AND THEIR PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS MATTERED

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Introduction

The purpose of this article is to outline the core principles of Integrative Improvement (II) in comparison with current development approaches, describe key features of II and briefly comment on II in relation to the Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) approach of the United Kingdom Department for International Development (http://www.livelihoods.org/). The current development approaches considered are those selected in 6.1 of the SL Guidance Sheets, namely:-

"• Country-level Development Strategies, for example: Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Comprehensive Development Frameworks and National Strategies for Sustainable Development;
• Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks;
• Sector-Wide Approaches;
• Governance and Rights-based Approaches."

Core Principles of Integrative Improvement (II)

- II is a **bottom-up approach** involving everybody. Other development approaches tend to be imposed from the top down.

- II emphasises **connections, relationships and interactions** because it is based on the current scientific understanding of our world as tending to be self-organising with human beings whose minds are naturally integrative. Other approaches tend to accept an earlier view that we live in a world of parts that can and must be managed into a stable state or moved from one stable state to another by top-down managers trained to think unintegratively rather than integratively.

- II is about **improving** (making or becoming better) in a balanced, integrative and sustainable way the lives people already have, that is, it is about - sustainable development as if people and their physical, social and cultural environments mattered. Other development approaches tend to emphasise growth in particular aspects of the lives of some people and, hence, tend to adopt, as a common denominator, measurable economic growth in a sector, industry, area or country as the goal.

- II involves encouraging and facilitating **integrative governance™** enabled by technology in all government, business and civil society organisations. Other approaches based on and measured in terms of economic growth tend to accept as "best practice" the narrowly self-interested and profit-driven corporation governance model that has arisen since the Industrial Revolution and has been fostered in all fields in recent years.

- II progress is measured by indicators of national **wellbeing** such as The Australia Institute's Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) (please see www.gpionline.net for further information). Other approaches tend to use Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is not a good indicator of changes in wellbeing.

Process by which II is Developed and Applied

The process for applying II is centred on improving the creativity and performance of each person involved, improving the creativity and performance of each organisation involved and providing a common basis for communication among individuals and organisations. These improvements are sought through training in and practising of NEW Integrative Thinking (NEW IT)™ by all individuals involved and training in and adoption of Douglas Integrative Governance 247 (DIG 247)™ by business, government and civil society organisations. An outline of these follows. (Please see http://www.integrative-thinking.com for further information, low-cost training modules and templates. The NEW IT Modules are entitled Overview, Theory, Bibliography; Our Integrative Mind™; Reconciling Needs and Wants; Problem Solving and Planning; and Applying NEW IT. The DIG 247 Modules are entitled Overview of Douglas Integrative Governance 247 and DIG 247 Governance Templates for a Federation, an Enterprise and Direct Support Advocates Teams. The purpose and contents of each Module are summarised in free introductory paragraphs on the website.)

NEW Integrative Thinking (NEW IT)

After many years of practical experience and research it seems to me improvement in all areas is impeded by the way we are trained to think. **We are trained to think "inside the box".** This box is known as critical thinking. It has produced much knowledge of parts of the world around us but it is inconsistent with the integrative way in which nature, our bodies, brains and minds function. There is mounting evidence we should also be trained specifically in **NEW Integrative Thinking (NEW IT)** which is consistent with the integrative way nature, our bodies, brains and minds function.

In contrast to critical thinking, NEW IT is a process of habitually and almost automatically making connections to create a whole new picture rather than habitually and almost automatically breaking down an old picture into its parts.

NEW IT may be thought of as a successor to lateral thinking and using multiple intelligences but, not surprisingly, is fully integrated, not an add-on extra. It is a practical application of Mind Science so is a form of technology but it is human-based rather than machine-based technology. It is a NEW way of thinking which helps us think outside and inside the box and integrate the two as we plan and act.

The process of NEW IT may be thought of as our wondering (**W**) about a situation, creating a narrative (**N**) connecting our wonderings and managing our experiences (**E**) in acting out our narrative. It involves understanding and learning what our basic human needs and aspects of our human will are, what guides us in balancing those needs and will, clarifying what we have and what we want to set our goal, exploring possible connections when relaxed, arriving at a strategy to negotiate the change from what we have to what we want, devising tactics to advance the strategy, taking bold, assertive and timely action to achieve our goal, reviewing and evaluating our performance.

Becoming an Effective NEW Integrative Thinker (NEW IT) Is Not Difficult

For example, my SOARA (Satisfying, Optimum, Achievable Results Ahead) Process of Integrative Thinking™ involves the learning of a set of aids to memory to help trigger connections in our minds, help us see analogies in unrelated fields and provide a way of self-monitoring our thinking and acting. All these aids to memory are joined together in a meaningful sentence so the Process as a whole can be learned in about the time it takes to learn to drive a car (about twelve hours) and easily remembered. With practice its application can become almost automatic. At all stages of the Process provision is made for learners to record their reflections and possible actions based on those reflections. People can be introduced to the basic concepts of the Process at almost any age. The Process is culturally neutral.

With practice, applying the SOARA Process of Integrative Thinking becomes a habit that empowers people and makes easier our struggle to achieve successful outcomes on a life-long journey among possibilities. It helps us refine our perceptions, expand our horizons, sense and respond successfully to emerging trends and events. By helping us to make analogies from other domains it brings out and enhances our creativity. By helping us to always consider a comprehensive range of variables it ensures we always take others into account including our "customers" and stakeholders. NEW IT helps us and our enterprises thrive.

While improving our creativity and performance NEW IT helps us gain a sense of meaning, a sense of belonging and a sense of personal power. This is because NEW IT helps us reconcile our needs and wants and balance and integrate our thoughts, feelings and actions in harmony with our physical, social and cultural environment. In this way NEW IT helps us to a state of mind from which we can work towards sustainable development and the better linking of life and work.

In organisations of all sorts NEW IT provides an essential ingredient for sustainable successful relationships – a common basis for communication among individuals.

Douglas Integrative Governance 247 (DIG 247)

Governance is the process by which government, business and civil society organisations gain, exercise and maintain power in relation to individual end-consumers/citizens and their physical, social and cultural environments.

Modern means of transparent communication are making present governance approaches obsolete. Since the Industrial Revolution, organisations have developed governance arrangements in a climate of slow, uncertain, incomplete and often secretive communications to meet mass markets of relatively uninformed individual end-consumers/citizens in independent nation states. Bullying, corruption, poor accountability, poor responsibility, poor stakeholder engagement and lack of transparency are possible and are tolerated as being competitive ways of gaining, exercising and maintaining power over people and their physical, social and cultural environments. The cooperative and creative potential of most human beings is seen as inferior to the ultra-competitive nature of some people.

More generally, because of the influence of these top-down organisations over our lives, value and wealth generation are regarded as residing in the products and services supplied by them rather than in the end-consumers/citizens who generate demand and can now readily express it. This has inhibited sustainable improvement in the lives of many because it has valued production and distribution (supply) at the expense of physical, social and cultural environments and the potential for cooperation and creativity in each individual.

This is no longer the most efficient, effective and competitive way to organise because supply responses from such organisations cannot keep pace with the demand changes of a rapidly increasing number of informed end-consumers/citizens with access to world-wide, comprehensive and fast communications. End-consumers/citizens, for whom the organisations exist, have become alienated from the organisations. It is time for existing business, government and civil society organisations to change - voluntarily

or involuntarily - and for new enterprises to adopt a governance approach tailored to the realities of an emerging distributed economy.

Against this background, DIG 247 arose from NEW Integrative Thinking about how to negotiate the change from what we have to what we want in organisations, given we live in a world that tends to be self-organising and contains human beings whose minds are naturally integrative.

What We Have

This is summarised in the acronym FIRST**:-**

F ast and accelerating external changes affecting organisations;
I ndividuals who tend to think integratively but have been trained to think unintegratively, and their knowledge and motivation in organisations;
R elationships with individual end-consumers/citizens and their knowledge and motivation, and relationships among those within organisations;
S elf-organizing propensity of individuals and organisations;
T echnology improvements to enable end-consumers/citizens to deal with suppliers 247.

What We Want

What we want is good governance in organisations. This is summarised in the acronym START:-

S takeholder engagement at all times;
T rust based on the individual integrity of each person involved;
A ccountability;
R esponsible behaviour by persons in organisations;
T ransparency.

As a result of thinking integratively about the difference between what we have and what we want, Douglas Integrative Governance 247 (DIG247) offers a new approach to governance for existing and start-up organisations that want to survive, adapt and prosper by meeting 247 the sustainable needs and wants of individual end-consumers/citizens in balanced ways that benefit both parties. It offers a way of re-humanising relationships. It is governance for the emerging distributed economy.

In short, DIG 247 is about helping organisations employ fully the integrative capacity of individuals to ensure the organisations are stable enough to meet efficiently, effectively and competitively the needs and wants of end-consumers/citizens while remaining adaptable enough to self-organise to meet changes in those needs and wants.

Among organisations of all sorts DIG 247 provides an essential ingredient for sustainable successful relationships – a common basis for communication.

By a happy coincidence, DIG 247 is aptly named because it is based on digging deep into the roots of individual and organisational behaviour in a world where end-consumers/citizens are expecting their demands to be met any hour of every day (247). Also, these governance policies incorporate well-known understandings that 2 heads are better than 1, our limited short-term working memory is for 4 items plus or minus 1 when processing other information and 7 is the optimum size for a decision-making group. Because we all have limited short-term working memories, acronyms are used throughout DIG 247 material to help you remember it and help trigger connections between it and other information relevant to the situation being considered when applying DIG 247.

Key Aspects of Douglas Integrative Governance 247 (DIG247)

These key aspects are summarised in the IFEDS Model™. This IFEDS Model is for start-ups but its main features also apply to existing organisations in the transition from the managerial to the distributed economy. Each part of the IFEDS Model is a node in a network of relationships that employs fully the integrative capacity of individuals to ensure enough stability to meet efficiently, effectively and competitively the needs and wants of end-consumers/citizens while remaining adaptable enough to self-organise to meet changes in those needs and wants. Within the network are what have been termed "value exchanges" by Verna Allee at http://www.alleetoolkit.com/ rather than the "transactions" of the managerial economy.

The nodes of the IFEDS Model are:-

I ndividual end-consumers/citizens;
F ederations;
E nterprises;
D irect Support Advocates (DSAs); and
S uppliers.

The IFEDS Model works as follows:-

- Individual end-consumers/citizens who join a Federation in a geographical area express their changing needs and wants face-to-face and/or virtually to a Direct Support Advocate (DSA) for the area who is a member of that Federation.

- Direct Support Advocates (DSAs) obtain for end-consumers/citizens the goods and services they want through Enterprises of that Federation.

- Enterprises staffed by Enterprise Catalysts (ECs) and other Enterprise Integrators (EIs) facilitate the connections between Direct Support Advocates (DSAs) and suppliers. This includes training and coordinating of DSAs and provision of enabling technology.

- ECs, EIs, end-consumers/citizens and DSAs, are all members of the Federation.

- Federations are governed by Federation Catalysts (FCs) and other Federation Integrators (FIs) who provide coordination for up to seven Enterprises engaged in efficiently, effectively and competitively meeting the needs and wants of end-consumers/citizens through Enterprises and their DSAs.

- Individual end-consumers/citizens, when they are satisfied with the goods and services supplied, release cash into the Federation for distribution in accordance with prior contracts.

Policies covering all aspects of the relationships among the nodes of the Federation are included in Douglas Integrative Governance 247 (DIG 247) Policies customised for the Federation from DIG 247 Templates.

This federated network of "value exchanges" is a joint venture among independent parties. Each participant in the Federation is a joint venturer with a simple written contract defining their situation. In this regard, ALIVE-Advanced Legal Issues in Virtual Enterprises is of interest. (Please see http://www.vive-ig.net/projects/alive/index.html for further information.)

Meetings in the network employ Dynamic Facilitation Skills. (Please see http://www.ToBE.net for further information.) Financial planning, budgeting and activities for any period incorporate Intangible Management® which is "the new system of financially valuing, financially recording and scientifically managing time by reference to knowledge, relationships, emotional intelligence and speed- the four key value drivers." (Please see http://www.Standardsinstitute.org for details.) Also, the network incorporates Decisionality Self-Service Everywhere™ which "empowers the information worker with time-sensitive, optimum decisioning-flows in a way that cannot be avoided, whilst automatically generating the decisioning audit." (Please see http://www.decisionality.com/ for details.)

With some overlapping, this IFEDS Model may be aligned very broadly with existing organisations as follows:

Individual end-consumers/citizens – citizens, those served by a civil society organisation, customers of a business;
Federations – executive government, judiciary, legislature, civil society peak bodies, conglomerate businesses;
Enterprises - government agencies, civil society campaigns, businesses;

Direct Support Advocates – elected representatives, members of a civil society organisation, customer relations staff;
Suppliers – providers of goods and services to government departments, civil society organisations, businesses and end-consumers.

"Businesses that operate with a high degree of excellence, but in the transaction model, will continue to have an important role to play in the new networks. In these cases, the internal logic that governs efficient production will have to be subordinated to the necessity of alignment with the individual and thus the distributed imperative." ("The Support Economy" p379 http://www.thesupporteconomy.com .) For instance, a software company could become the Facilitation Enterprise of a Federation, a housing company the Housing Enterprise of a Federation and so on. It would all depend on the motivation and knowledge of the initial Federation Catalysts. Federations would compete to provide direct support for end-consumers/citizens and their success would be indicated by the extent to which end-consumers/citizens used this direct support and remained loyal to the Federation.

For a long time to come distributed economy organisations will be dealing with managerial economy organisations so DIG 247 policies for Federations, Enterprises and Direct Support Advocates are based on existing laws. Under DIG 247, entities can be whatever is legally permissible. The relationship between entities under DIG 247 policies is one of joint venturers and may be defined in simple contracts because of the trust-based and trust-enabled nature of the policies in the DIG 247 Templates. However, nothing in this article or the Templates constitutes legal advice. Advice from a qualified legal practitioner should be sought before adopting DIG 247.

DIG 247 and Carver Policy Governance®

Templates of Douglas Integrative Governance 247 (DIG 247) Policies for Federations, for Enterprises and for Direct Support Advocates Teams (DSATs) are available from http://www.integrative-thinking.com . They greatly simplify and reduce the cost of preparing governance policies for new or existing organisations. They owe much to the Carver Policy Governance® Model and my experience with it and other models in government, civil society and business organisations in the managerial economy. Some Carver principles are equally applicable in both economies and since both will exist in tandem for many years I strongly recommend people gain an understanding of Carver Policy Governance® at http://www.carvergovernance.com before using these templates.

Comment on II in Relation to the SL Approach

As stated in SL Guidance Sheet 1.1:-

"The livelihoods approach is a way of thinking about the objectives, scope and priorities for development. A specific livelihoods framework and objectives have been developed to assist with implementation, but the approach goes beyond these. In essence it is a way of putting people at the centre of development, thereby increasing the effectiveness of development assistance."

And

"The (SL) framework does not attempt to provide an exact representation of reality. It does, however, endeavour to provide a way of thinking about the livelihoods of poor people that will stimulate debate and reflection, thereby improving performance in poverty reduction. In its simplest form, the framework views people as operating in a context of vulnerability. Within this context, they have access to certain assets or poverty reducing factors. These gain their meaning and value through the prevailing social, institutional and organisational environment. This environment also influences the livelihood strategies – ways of combining and using assets – that are open to people in pursuit of beneficial livelihood outcomes that meet their own livelihood objectives."

The II and SL approaches seem to be compatible. The SL approach has originated from concern for poor people and their vulnerability so could be regarded as a special case of II which originated from concern for the vulnerability of all people and their physical, social and cultural environments.

The core principle of SL, namely, "putting people at the centre of development" is part of a core principle of II, namely, "sustainable development as if people and their physical, social and cultural environments mattered". Accordingly, the SL techniques and the practical experience gained in implementing SL would be valuable in implementing II and the II process would be valuable in advancing SL.

Conclusion

Sustainable Livelihoods and Integrative Improvement are both about changing the prevailing approaches to development. They are both about changing our minds and behaviour. To do this we will have to learn to think, organise and act differently – we will have to learn to think, organise and act integratively. II offers the principles and process for doing this.

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