



DLP

Policy and Practice for Developmental
Leaders, Elites and Coalitions

DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

A Research and Policy Workshop Report

Politics, Leadership and Coalitions in Development

Findings, insights and guidance from the DLP's first Research and Policy
Workshop. Frankfurt 10-11 March 2011

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The Developmental Leadership Program (DLP) addresses an important gap in international thinking and policy about the critical role played by leaders, elites and coalitions in the politics of development. This growing program brings together government, academic and civil society partners from around the world to explore the role of human agency in the processes of development. DLP will address the policy, strategic and operational implications of 'thinking and working politically' - for example, about how to help key players solve collective action problems, forge developmental coalitions, negotiate effective institutions and build stable states.

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01

Introduction

This paper provides a summary of the key findings, insights and initial guidance arising from recent phases of DLP work and its first Research and Policy Workshop, held in Frankfurt on 10/11 March 2011. It is best read in conjunction with the Workshop document, entitled “Politics, Leadership and Coalitions in Development”, which can be accessed on the DLP website at www.dlprog.org/ftp/. That document contains all the Executive Summaries of the fuller research papers.

The workshop brought together the DLP researchers with key individuals drawn from policy-making circles, policy research institutes and NGOs. These included colleagues from DFID, GIZ, AusAID, Transparency International, The Asia Foundation, Oxfam Australia, The Policy Practice, the World Bank, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and GRIPS (Japan). A list of the participants is attached as an Appendix.

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of all those present at the Workshop but draw heavily on their many rich contributions.

The research findings presented at the Frankfurt Workshop were as follows: they can all be accessed on the [DLP website](#).

- Sarah Phillips: [‘Yemen: Developmental Dysfunction and Division in a Crisis State’](#).
- Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure: [‘The Anatomy of Political Predation: Leaders, Elites and Coalitions in Zimbabwe, 1980-2010’](#).
- Mariz Tadros: [‘Working Politically behind Red Lines: Structure and agency in a comparative study of women’s coalitions in Egypt and Jordan’](#).
- Rebecca Hodes, Jennifer Thorpe and Orly Stern: [‘Structure and Agency in the Politics of a Women’s Rights Coalition in South Africa’](#).
- Tom Harrison and Genia Kostka: [‘Manoeuvres for a Low Carbon State: The Local Politics of Climate Change in China and India’](#).
- Andrew Rosser, Ian Wilson, and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto: [‘Leaders, Elites and Coalitions: The Politics of Free Public Services in decentralised Indonesia’](#).
- Laura Brannelly, Laura Lewis and Susy Ndaruhutse: [‘Higher Education and the Formation of Developmental Elites: A literature review and preliminary data analysis’](#).
- Ulrich Mueller: [‘Ownership and Political Steering in Developing Countries’](#).

Two other recent research papers that were not formally presented at Frankfurt were:

- Heather Lyne de Ver and Fraser Kennedy, '[An Analysis of Leadership Development Programs Working in the Context of Development](#)'.
- Eduard Grebe and Minka Woermann: '[Institutions of Integrity and the Integrity of Institutions: Integrity and ethics in the politics of developmental leadership](#)'.

Each study has identified implications for development policy and aid practice as this work has relevance for many sectors and issue areas, ranging from security, governance and fragile states to education, women's leadership and capacity building. This report distils and elaborates some of those findings and insights. While recognising that development is an inherently political process, the workshop strongly endorsed the importance of the particular focus of the **DLP** on how better to understand and support the emergence, role and success of local developmental leaderships and coalitions in promoting positive institutional and policy formation in the politics of development. The **DLP** will continue to refine and communicate the messages of its on-going research for development policy, programmes and operations as well as for modes of working by both developing countries and external actors.

02

The DLP: Core Assumptions and Concerns

*The **Developmental Leadership Program (DLP)** is an international research and policy initiative, directed by an independent steering committee. Its central concern is to explore and explain the critical role of developmental leaderships and coalitions in promoting institutional and policy reforms across the public, private and civil society sectors of developing countries. It is identifying and communicating the policy, programme and operational messages of this work to the international development community. **DLP** is supported by partners including AusAID, GiZ, The Asia Foundation, Oxfam Australia and Transparency International. Its primary funding is currently from the Australian aid programme. Details may be found on the website at www.dlprog.org*

- It is now widely understood that institutions¹ and policies matter crucially for all aspects of development. But what is often ignored is that the institutional and policy environment is negotiated, shaped, maintained, undermined or changed by people and organisations *through political processes*. It is thus not *only* the appropriate institutions, as 'rules of the game', that matter for development, but also the players and, in particular, the role of developmental leaderships and coalitions that can make or break them.
- There is also now a wide consensus that politics 'matters' for development – a view that can be traced back over 30 years in policy discourse (World Bank, 1989) and longer in the work of many social, economic and political scientists and historians² – and as far back as Aristotle and Confucius.
- At the core of most development challenges is a set of nested collective action problems,³ ranging from the smallest village-level issues to large national- (or even regional) level problems. If such problems are to have stable and lasting answers, rather than one-off or *ad hoc* ones, they will require *institutional* solutions, that is 'rules' (formal or informal) for their resolution in the collective and developmental interest.
- The traditional focus of the international development community has been on technical fixes which recommend at state level the adoption of formal structures and formal institutions, often modeled on western precedents. By contrast, the **DLP** is an initiative combining government, academic and

¹ 'Institutions' should not be confused with 'organisations'. Institutions are best understood as the 'rules of the game' (laws, conventions, traditions, standard procedures) which shape, but do not determine, human behaviour. We all participate in many different but overlapping spheres of activity in our economic, social and political lives with institutions, or rules – formal or informal – at their core. Human society is impossible without them. The challenge is how to forge institutional arrangements that promote rather than hinder development, stability and inclusion, and that are both locally appropriate and locally legitimate.

² Representative studies, old and new, include those by Baran (1957); Huntington (1968); Bates (2001); Acemoglu and Robinson (2006); North, Wallis and Weingast (2009); and Fukuyama (2011).

³ Collective action problems are those pervasive 'social dilemma' situations found in all societies and human groups where the pursuit of short-term self interested strategies leave everyone worse off than other possible alternatives might do (Ostrom, 1997).

civil society partners whose aim is to analyse, understand and promote the role of **local leaderships and coalitions** as the key mechanisms for resolving collective action problems by building and reshaping the formal and informal institutions that promote or frustrate sustainable growth, security, political stability and inclusive social development.

- The **DLP** has analysed examples of how individuals, organisations and coalitions have understood and used their 'room for manoeuvre' within constrained social, political and cultural space, how they have been able to consider alternative futures, and how they have taken collective action to change institutions and structures. By directing attention to human agency, the **DLP** aims to improve aid effectiveness and is building the evidence base to underpin new approaches.
- 'Leadership' is a difficult concept and practice to comprehend. But it is not simply a matter of individual leaders, as in the idea of the 'great man' or 'great woman' of history. Leadership is a **political process** involving the skills of mobilising people and resources in pursuit of a set of shared and negotiated goals (which of course can be either developmental or predatory). Understood in this way, leadership is important for development in both the public and private sectors and in their relationships. It refers not only to national political leaders but equally to leadership at sub-national levels and in all sectors of society – in businesses and business organisations, trades unions, NGOs, professional associations, churches and the bureaucracy - and in the relations between them.
- The term '**political processes**' refers to activities that go well beyond the usual and limited association of politics with parties, elections and governments. Politics is found in all spheres of social life, both in the private and public fields – in families, factories and firms, as well as in bureaucracies, corporations, religious and other organisations. In any society, organisation or group, politics is best understood to consist of all those activities of non-violent disagreement, cooperation and negotiation in taking decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources, or in establishing the institutions for doing so. Unlike Carl von Clausewitz (2008), who regarded war as the continuation of politics, we see war as the *failure of politics*. Thus, if violence and civil strife is to be avoided, politics is thus both a necessary and desirable aspect of all social, economic, administrative and technical processes, innovation or reform.
- While *stable institutions* are shaped and sustained by a network of political processes, it is also the case that *stable politics* require legitimate and agreed institutional arrangements and players who both know and agree the rules of the game.
- Successful leadership – in an organisation, movement, society or even a religion – also involves *building coalitions* with other people and organisations so that together they can achieve objectives that they could not achieve on their own. And successful *developmental* leadership necessarily involves forging such coalitions within and across the public and private sectors, civil society and NGOs.
- As a policy initiative, the **DLP** is, therefore, primarily concerned to develop short, medium and long term policy and practical messages to guide the international community in understanding and promoting the role of human agency and, particularly, to support, broker or facilitate the emergence and success of developmental leaderships and coalitions, rather than predatory or collusive ones, in and across all sectors and levels of society.
- The research programme of the **DLP** continues to gather evidence of the conditions under which developmental leaderships and coalitions emerge and the factors that make for their relative success or failure. It will be working with its partners to develop a cumulative set of case examples of

where, how and with what effect donors and other non-traditional actors have already worked (or are currently working) to support and encourage such leaderships and coalitions in very different contexts and conditions.

03

Key Concepts, Findings
and Understandings

This section spells out some of the key ideas that have emerged from the research programme and from the discussions at the Frankfurt workshop. They are insights into how development happens whether in the presence of aid or not. They will be of interest and use to international development assistance agencies and national governments and communities alike in advancing their thinking and policy about the political dynamics that shape the processes of change and development.

Leadership matters: bringing agency back in

Leaders and other actors (agents), both individuals and organisations, in and outside the public and political sphere, work within institutional (formal and informal) and structural contexts, but they play a fundamental role in building and reshaping institutions and in influencing development policies, processes and outcomes. However, the focus of the international community (and to a lesser extent developing country bureaucrats) on the role of technical assistance and investment, urging the 'right' policies and recommending particular institutional and structural change as the means to overcome poverty has, for almost half a century, almost entirely eclipsed the role of human agency in promoting or constraining development. Yet all the research undertaken by the **DLP** has illustrated graphically the critical role played by leaders, elites and coalitions in determining outcomes at different levels and in diverse sectors in Yemen, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Jordan, Egypt and South Africa. It is therefore a matter of some urgency that we re-align our approach to the politics of change to pay greater attention to the role of leaderships and coalitions as key elements in developmental processes.

Politics matters

While it is now something of an established truism to stress that politics matters for development, and that better frameworks for political and political economy analysis are needed to understand local political realities, the points need to be noted again.⁴ However, if the international community increasingly acknowledges and seriously believes that politics matters, what is far more important than restating this refrain is how the international community can engage with these realities to support the emergence of and success of developmental leaderships and coalitions in the local political processes that drive institutional and policy formation in developing countries.

⁴ A useful contemporary re-statement of these points may be found in a recent ODI publication, *Politics into practice* (Wild and Foresti, 2011).

Coalitions and collective action problems

Coalitions are normally thought of only as combinations of political parties in government or opposition. But the actual practice of forming coalitions to achieve collective objectives is a much more common and standard practice of every day politics in all organisations and groups in all societies. Whether formal or informal, whether transient or longer lasting, whether public or private or a combination of both, coalitions play a significant and under-recognised role in resolving collective action problems through institutional and policy change; and in strengthening (or resisting and frustrating) development processes, at all levels and in all sectors and issue areas, from agriculture to health, gender to public sector reform. Whether referred to as alliances, partnerships, co-production (Ostrom, 1997) or cooperative arrangements, coalitions are best understood as groups of individuals or organisations that come together to achieve goals they cannot achieve on their own. Whether more or less inclusive, and depending on their aims and objectives,⁵ coalitions are one of the key political mechanisms for overcoming the pervasive *collective action problems* that define most development challenges and are also at the heart of politics and the concerns of political science (Ostrom, 1997). Coalitions may form around many issues, whether local, national or sectoral. Understanding the political and social dynamics of their formation, practices and success is therefore an important research task. Even the most predatory, anti-developmental and brutal authoritarian leaderships require coalitions of support to retain power (Ezrow and Frantz, 2011).

Pre-existing networks

Existing or prior networks can be important in facilitating the emergence of coalitions around new issues. They are often based on prior common social, class, professional and educational backgrounds and experiences as became clear in earlier DLP research on Botswana, Mauritius and the highly successful campaigning HIV Aids organisation, TAC,⁶ in South Africa. DLP research on women's coalitions in Jordan, Egypt and South Africa, and on decentralised service delivery at district level in Indonesia, all showed just how important such prior networks can be in constituting the form and focus of coalitions for *or against* change. Case study evidence from DLP research on Yemen and Zimbabwe underlines this.

Development as a political process

Each of the research papers underlined the need to understand not only that politics matters for development but, more directly, that ***development is a political process*** that occurs at all levels and in all aspects of society. Governments are not neutral actors implementing technical development plans as the case of DLP emissions reduction research in China and India has shown. They represent specific political interests which may be developmental or predatory - or a mixture of both. Development and governance shortcomings are seldom caused simply by a lack of technical capacity, but by structures of power and the constraints imposed by vested political interests and established ways of doing things. Devising legitimate and effective institutions to resolve such problems and constraints must come from domestic political processes where the role of leadership is fundamental.

Effective and durable institutions will only be put in place and secured by *local actors* who are more likely to have a fine-grained understanding of the context and a legitimate local voice and who may better be

⁵ Coalitions may have any number of aims. They may, for instance, set out to achieve some specific policy or institutional change, to open up debate in a previously taboo area, to facilitate cooperation, to empower smaller and less effective groups or to oppose another coalition of interest or ideas. The nature of the goal may influence the extent to which a coalition seeks to be more rather than less inclusive in its membership. It may seem the case that 'inclusive coalitions' are important for stability and development (World Bank, 2011), but the evidence also suggests that the larger the coalition, the more difficult it may be to establish and maintain a clear set of common goals – above the level of the lowest common denominator – and to sustain the coherence of the coalition for any length of time, though other factors also affect duration. Equally, less inclusive coalitions may antagonise excluded interests, individuals or groups, and hence may engender unproductive opposition. In the final analysis, its goals and context will influence the constitution and structure of any coalition.

⁶ The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC).

able to take account of the social, cultural and political context.

Not by politics alone

However, effective and sustained development does not happen *by politics alone*. Technical, administrative and practical components are just as important as political processes for the successful building and maintenance of a deep tube-well, a new village road or a waste management system; or for the establishment and consolidation of a constitution or a piece of legislation concerning rights, gender inequalities or health and safety; or institutional reform concerning, say, competition, emissions reduction or aviation policy. Both political and technical dimensions are central to developmental processes and outcomes. There is no technical solution to a problem without an associated political solution; and the resolution of political problems will always require technical support and implementation (for instance in drafting water-tight legislation or regulations for an Act). What may be technically correct must also to be politically feasible. The key challenge is how the 'political' dimensions of reform and institutional innovation can be addressed, and what roles external players can play.

Not by government alone

Development is about much more than what governments can or cannot do, or should or should not do, just as politics is about much more than parties and elections. Thus, while institutions matter for both development and politics there are many other organisations, groupings and interests that have legitimate roles and potential to help shape the local institutional and policy landscape, even in the most institutionally stable democratic polities. Donors and others need to find ways in which they can support the emergence, professional competencies, diplomatic, and political negotiating skills of such organisations so that they can effectively engage and consult with government on common policy issues. Such organisations might include professional associations (doctors, lawyers and teachers, for example), women's organisations, business associations, think-tanks, trades unions, community and advocacy organisations and many others. A key feature of transparent and accountable government is having open and accountable policy-making processes. For that to occur, organisations which aggregate and articulate the interests and views of their members need to be empowered to participate more effectively in the endogenous negotiation of locally appropriate and legitimate institutions and policies on the model of the 'best fit' approach identified in the *World Development Report, 2011*.⁷

The role of intermediary organisations

If donors and other external players are to engage beyond government on difficult issues, this will certainly require very different ways of thinking and working; and some aspects of it may appear too challenging to their business practices, too sensitive, or simply beyond the competence of their workforce. Under these circumstances, the pragmatic and much wider use of *intermediary organisations* can also play an important role in work of this kind. Often, their autonomy from national governments, their familiarity with local conditions and the high proportion of their staff who are local, may give them a unique comparative advantage over donor offices and officials.

Critical junctures, 'triggers' and windows of opportunity

Sometimes called 'policy windows', 'critical junctures' (Collier and Collier, 1991/2002; Mahoney, 2001) have often provided 'moments' or opportunities for change – both positive and negative – which would be less likely under other circumstances.⁸ These may be internal or external events or contingencies.

⁷ That is, institutions and policies which are best suited to local needs and conditions. Important work on a parallel track is being done by the DFID-funded research consortium, *African Power and Politics Programme* at: <http://www.institutions-africa.org/>

⁸ Mahoney describes 'critical junctures' as 'moments of relative structural indeterminism when wilful actors shape outcomes in a more

Decentralisation in Indonesia, democratisation in South Africa and the establishment of CEDAW⁹ are all examples from DLP work. Others examples might include the global financial crisis which struck in 2008, a natural disaster (such as the tsunami and its consequences in Japan in May 2011, or a mass shooting in a school). Each of these 'moments' created an opportunity for institutional or policy changes which might not have been there before. Other research findings and the record of many key changes in history show that leaders at all levels and in all sectors and issue areas need collectively to have the understanding, knowledge, political skill, will and capacity to respond to relevant 'triggers', moments or windows of opportunity to promote institutional or policy reform or to defend previous gains. Understanding these openings, 'being ready', 'seizing the moment' and defining realistic limits of the possible is a key political analytical skill required by local leaders and donors alike.¹⁰ Research evidence from politics and policy-making processes as far apart as Japan in the 1870s, Latin America in the early 20th century and the US political system in the 1980s and 1990s confirms the importance of being able to make use of these moments (Collier and Collier, 1991/2002; Banno and Ohno, 2010; Kingdon, 1984/2011: 165-195).

Structure and agency

But networks, leaders and coalitions are not free agents. And windows of opportunity do not guarantee successful institutional innovation or change. All DLP research projects, and much other work, shows clearly that agents of change have both to understand and work within, and often against, existing institutional, cultural and, inevitably, political contexts and structures of power. Yet structure, while constituting restraint, is not destiny. There is always opportunity, always room for manoeuvre by agents. Understanding the particular relationship between structural constraints and opportunities, on the one hand, and agential possibilities, on the other hand, is an important political skill for both agents of change and those who wish to support them.

Framing

The way in which objectives are 'framed' can be critical for success and can help to circumvent some of the constraints on the political space. Leaders, supporters and coalitions in any sector or issue area need to frame their objectives carefully, taking account of the social, cultural and political space in which they operate, and depending on how broad a coalition they are seeking to establish and for what purpose.¹¹ Sometimes it is necessary to frame an issue or institutional proposal in multiple ways and for a multiplicity of audiences, so as to ensure compatibility with international conventions on the one hand, for example, and with cultural and religiously prescribed frameworks and norms, or even national constitutions, on the other hand. Framing involves not only finding appropriate ways of describing and representing the cause to others, but also ensuring that the packaging of the message is acceptable to the collective leadership. Donors acting to support such developmental coalitions require both detailed and nuanced understanding and great sensitivity about context and conduct if they are to be helpful supporters.

National and cultural legitimacy

Whether actual or perceived, local legitimacy can be as important for achieving successful institutional or policy change as the cause or issue itself, the moment of opportunity, or its framing and timing. When a cause or institutional objective is not only framed appropriately but can also be shown to be legiti-

voluntaristic fashion than normal circumstances permit' (Mahoney, 2001: 7).

9 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

10 This has also been called 'planned opportunism' (Eyben, 2010: 11).

11 The extent of inclusivity may be determined by goal and strategy. Coalitions may seek to educate, to campaign on specific issues, to mobilise stake-holders or to empower those without access or influence.

mate within a local, national or cultural context, its prospects of success and its ability to mobilize wider support will be significantly enhanced. This has important implications for how donors behave, including how they talk about some of their assistance and what success they claim as their own.

Higher education

Higher education, both secondary and tertiary, is almost certainly an important and necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the emergence of leadership; largely through its contribution to the formation of a broad middle class, the capacity to think conceptually at a level of generality and theory, and the establishment of networks on which coalitions are often based. Yet higher education has received little serious attention or funding from policy-makers over the last 30 years (Brannelly, Lewis and Ndaruhutse, 2011). There is further important work to be done on understanding what qualitative, pedagogic, curricular and organisational characteristics of higher education can enhance the establishment of these networks and increase the likelihood that the leadership that emerges from them will be developmental and not predatory. Further research on this is being undertaken by the DLP. The first phase of a three-part DLP study of the role of higher education has analysed this issue and a second phase of work is under way.

Processes as well as projects

Recognising that institutional and policy change that enhances developmental processes will always involve both technical/administrative and political dimensions underlines the importance of *investing in processes* that empower developmental leaderships and coalitions and enable them to contribute to the formation or evolution of effective local institutions and positive outcomes. Recognising and being able to document process-level results will be important if donors are to be able to justify continuing investments.

Long-term investment for empowerment and accountability

Long-term strategy is therefore a logical corollary of any commitment to empowerment and accountability and the processes of institutional formation. Comparative evidence shows that enabling and consolidating institutional change is a slow process across all social, economic and political sectors, especially (but not only) where the basic institutional arrangements of a society are uncertain, insecure and (often violently) contested. While some institutions may change or be changed relatively quickly, many of the principal under-pinning institutions in the economy, polity and social structure of any country (to do with property rights, the distribution of power, the relations of inclusion and exclusion, and social norms, for instance) are often 'slow moving' and take considerable time to change (Dixit, 2006; Roland, 2004; World Bank, 2011). If the international community is to take seriously the need to support the emergence and practices of developmental leaderships and coalitions and to invest in political processes that facilitate empowerment, inclusion and legitimate local institution-building, it will need to take a long view and devise not only short and medium term strategies, but also long term strategies of up to 20 years or more.

Integrity and ethical leadership

Concern with 'integrity' and 'ethical leadership' often tends to focus on the personal characteristics or traits of individual leaders. But for policy-makers to think seriously about integrity in development, they need to think about three distinct but related aspects of integrity and how they interact: (a) the *institutions of integrity*, that is the formal and informal institutionalised norms and codes of behaviour which shape behaviour; (b) *individual integrity*, that is the conventional understanding of integrity as 'doing the right thing' according to the norms and rules; and (c) the *integrity of institutions*, that is whether institu-

tions are fit for purpose, locally appropriate and function effectively to restrain or prescribe behaviour in the social and cultural context. In short, integrity is not simply a matter of individual behaviour but of the relations between individuals and the often multiple and conflicting demands of competing institutions of integrity.

04

Implications and Messages for Donors and Others

Where the previous section set out some of the wider implications for the theory and practice of development, this section identifies some of the more specific messages for donors and other development organisations.

Aid is political

Though some in the international development community still continue to avoid the 'P' word, it is now widely recognised that ***all aid is political***. No matter how neutral assistance appears to be, it will have a political impact on the recipient country, region, sector or issue area and it will disturb or reinforce the preferences, ideas, interests or power of some group, as the many practices of conditional lending so clearly show. Aid donors should understand which interests they are reinforcing and which they are undermining - and why and how - before they act or allocate funds

Developmental leaderships and coalitions

It should be clear from the previous section that the key message of this work for the international community in general is to learn how to work to support the emergence, practices and success of developmental leaderships and coalitions (rather than predatory or collusive ones), and the networks on which they are often based. This will involve short, medium and long term strategies and will apply at both national and sub-national levels, and in all sector and issue areas. Re-aligning the balance of analysis and policy attention away from its current and almost exclusive state-level focus on institutional and structural aspects of reform to include a more systematic concern for understanding and promoting the role of human agency (individuals, organisations and coalitions) in shaping these institutions is the key.

On-going and iterative political analysis

In order to work in politically-informed ways to support leaderships, coalitions and processes that drive institutional change, both donors and intermediaries ***need a deep, on-going and iterative understanding of the political and social context***. Knowledge of context is important in deciding which development issues to address, in which countries, when and how to act, which processes to support, and what actors and coalitions can play a productive role.

Integration of political, social and cultural analysis essential

A lack of understanding of the political, social and cultural context can seriously compromise the effec-

tiveness of development assistance. For instance, governance programmes, (which may even support non-developmental or ineffective political actors), that focus largely on the technical aspects of 'constitutions', 'government' and 'public administration', and that rely solely on offering technical support, or externally modelled institutional solutions, have seldom been successful or lasting. A narrowly technical focus on environmental issues, education or security is equally unlikely to generate positive outcomes. Accordingly, donors and their intermediaries need a deep understanding of the social, political and cultural context. To ignore the need for knowledge about context, what processes are happening, which actors and coalitions might play a productive role, the internal politics and likely reactions, is to operate blindfolded. But understanding will inevitably be quite imperfect. So, committing resources to ongoing and iterative political analysis and knowledge-building must go beyond the formal application of political economy analytical templates. A detailed and intimate knowledge of 'who's who' and 'who's doing what' locally should be a standard component of all programmes and activities, at whatever level they operate. Equally important, retaining and passing on such knowledge and understanding within donor and other organisations will be crucial. Currently much knowledge and experience is lost in the rapid turnover and recycling of staff between divisions, sections, responsibilities, head-quarters or country offices/posts. And the capacity of organisations – government departments in particular – to learn and adapt is often a major constraint on policy development.

Staffing issues in donor agencies

Skilled and empowered workforces are needed in donor organisations, their contractors, and intermediary organisations to ensure better use of appropriate political analytical skills and experience, and to encourage experimentation with new programmes. Change in structures, incentives and business systems will be needed to enable donors to take full advantage of the new knowledge which **DLP** and others have highlighted. But those with implementation, management, monitoring, and design responsibilities can already take leadership issues into account even in existing activities. Donors need to explore how they attract, develop and retain a cadre of staff with both a deep interest in, and understanding of, the social, cultural, historical and political context of the countries they work with.

Room for manoeuvre

High quality political analyses and understanding are required at country, programme, sector and issue-area levels. Staff often have considerable leeway in programme/project identification and design, and could benefit from clear lessons and guidance on how to take political and leadership context into account.

Developing better frameworks and guidance for political and social analysis.

The currently available methods and frameworks for political and political economy analysis (commonly and mechanistically referred to as tools) sometimes appear confusing and offer little guidance for when, where and how each is best used. Often, too, their national and often institutional focus precludes an understanding of the specific roles, power and relations of particular actors or organised interests, formal and informal in a variety of different sectors or levels. Given the diversity of approaches to the analysis of politics and power in political science, clarifying where, when and how different frameworks for analysis can be most usefully deployed will help to instil and deepen confidence in incorporating political understanding in day-to-day work.

Donor Framing

Donors, too, need to understand how to frame development **issues** in order to facilitate local political

and leadership support. Donors also need to be able to recognise where and when to downplay their involvement in order not to undermine or antagonise local allies.

Institution-building must be endogenous

Without seeking to create them, donors can play an important role in enabling and facilitating local coalitions to resolve collective action problems in support of institutional and policy change. However, the processes need to be locally-led, locally-shaped, locally-legitimate and locally-appropriate because local leadership is best placed to understand the true nature of the constraints, opportunities and risks, and hence is best placed to negotiate local political space. Without a depth of local leadership – in and across both the public and private domains - external actors' inputs are generally ineffective.

Aid and political settlements

There are cases where aid should not support existing political settlements. If the political status-quo is anti-developmental, aid programmes should consider carefully how to support or empower alternative actors and agents who may be marginalised from the political settlement.

Flexibility of Aid Programmes

Critical junctures, 'triggers', windows of opportunity and other contingencies and unpredictable determinants of political change do not align well with, or fit into, rigid project designs or logical frameworks. Programme design and funding needs to both accommodate local political realities and be flexible enough to respond to critical junctures and 'openings'. There should be room for long-term and slowly disbursing funding, and also a capacity to respond when opportunities open up.

The path to a desired development outcome will not be linear or predictable

Because development is much more than a technical process, its course will depend on the changing context, will be affected by critical junctures and exogenous contingencies, will face setbacks, and will require 'work-arounds', as complexity theory suggests. Planning tools and activity management which cannot take account of, and respond to, this complexity will be counterproductive for donors and recipients – and for development. Likewise expectations about timing must allow the space and time for local processes to be worked through, otherwise the work will be donor driven – a serious risk to sustainable success.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be improved

The current move toward rigid results-based management needs to be rendered compatible with flexible programming. Results-based management needs to recognise the importance of 'process' level results in contributing to outcomes. Donors should invest in new monitoring techniques, possibly including more participatory evaluations, in order to capture the effects of different kinds of intervention in support of processes that empower local agents to help shape locally appropriate institutional innovation or reform.

05

Some Strategic Priorities in the Next Phase of DLP Work

Workshop participants suggested a number of areas that merited attention in the next phase of DLP work. These are set out briefly in this section.

Continue to identify shortcomings of current aid policies

There is considerable disappointment with the performance of aid programmes, and governance work in particular, often because of its 'technical', 'administrative', 'state-centred' and 'top-down' forms and its failure to engage with the specifics of local political contexts, agents and processes. This frustration could be channelled toward pressure for more innovative and politically-aware programmes rather than a turn toward rigid results metrics.

Highlight and communicate existing experiences

Many aid agencies already have experience of working politically and supporting developmental entrepreneurs, leaderships and coalitions, including the Asia Foundation's role as a political actor; the Justice for the Poor investment in ethnographies, the GIZ's work on sovereignty and political steering, and the Japanese strategy of long term commitments. These experiences should be shared and communicated.

Promote pilot programmes and innovative organisations

Aid bureaucracies will not become flexible and politically aware overnight, but it is possible to encourage and suggest pilot programmes which can work differently, the results of which can be monitored and evaluated in new ways.

Identify, explain and illustrate less controversial ways of 'working politically'

For development agencies, taking politics into account does not necessarily mean directly supporting particular national political actors or engaging with regimes. A sub-national, issue-focused or sector-focused approach can work within areas such as education, health and gender to design programmes that are informed by careful political analysis and that both empower and are led by local leaderships and coalitions to promote institutions and policies for pro-poor change and social inclusion.

Influence the international aid effectiveness agenda

It is important to promote ideas, approaches and policies that focus on support for the short, medium

and long-term emergence and encouragement of developmental leaderships and coalitions in the politics of development and to get these ideas on to the agenda of the next High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and in the next round of Millennium Development Goals.

Develop a community of practice

It will be useful to form coalitions with people, organisations and departments inside and outside development agencies to push in a more coordinated way for greater identification and recognition of leadership issues and political processes in the daily dynamics of development processes.

06

New DLP Research Work
in the Next Phase

The DLP research to date has shown the importance of leadership and coalitions in the politics of development. Drawing on suggestions from the workshop and building on its own plans and findings, the DLP will continue to commission research projects in a number of areas, including the following:

- **Developmental leadership** and how it comes about.
- **Coalitions.** The theory and comparative analysis of the formation, forms, functions, strategies and performance of **developmental coalitions**. Drawing on experience from both developed countries (for instance public-private health-promotion coalitions in the United States) and developing countries, in and across the public and private sectors, the work will provide operational guidance for local actors and donors about whether, when, why and how and to support, broker or facilitate reform coalitions.
- **Development interventions.** Case studies will be undertaken of where, when, how and why **development interventions** have supported, brokered or facilitated developmental leaderships and coalitions and their effects on institutional change, growth, poverty reduction, stability and inclusion and the reasons for their success or failure. Research might also be compared with work on similar topics that did not take a politically informed or leadership perspective in order to determine whether the leadership focus brings extra explanatory power.
- **Concept Notes.** Given the sometimes loose, confused and multiple ways in which key concepts are used in this complex field of the politics of development, the DLP will produce a series of 'Concept Notes. Distinct from Policy Briefs, the series will offer policy-makers and practitioners alike a 'lexicon' of key concepts which will serve as 'tools for thought', analysis, and operational practice.
- **Thinking and working politically.** Clarifying the operational meaning of, and justifying the case for, **working politically** through detailed case studies of the advantages and disadvantages, successes and failures of working in this way in different contexts and on different topics/issue areas.
- **The role of higher education** in creating networks and generating pools of leadership within and across the private and public sectors which have helped to underpin subsequent coalitions which have worked to initiate developmental processes and institutional formation.

- **Women's leaderships and coalitions.** Research and guidance on the provenance, functioning and effects of *women's leadership and especially coalitions* on empowerment, inclusion and poverty issues; and how donors and other organisations can most effectively use resources to broker or facilitate their emergence and successful operation, will continue.
- **Frameworks for political analysis.** Comparative assessment of the uses, advantages and disadvantages of the different *frameworks for political analysis*, coupled with improved guidance for practitioners of when, where and how to deploy such analytical frameworks for understanding context, sectors and issues.
- **The role of social media** in forging networks and coalitions in key sectors and issue areas, and the implications of this for policy-makers in seeking to pursue commonly stated developmental goals such as sustainable, growth, empowerment, accountability and social inclusion.
- **Action research** which will track and trace the effects of the incorporation of political analysis into programming and operational activities, and its outcomes in practice.
- **Political settlements** involve leaderships in very significant ways. But in what ways are they different to 'elite pacts' or 'elite bargains' amongst leaders? While some of this work will be covered in the Concept Notes stream, mentioned above, the **DLP** will also explore: Whether and which 'political settlements' lead on to agreed and consolidated institutional arrangements that facilitate growth, stability and inclusion? Do they influence the formation of governments of national unity (GNUs), which are often encouraged by the international community? And, what has been the record of GNUs? Have they helped to consolidate the institutional basis of stable polities or have they led to better growth, security and social inclusion? And, if so, what kind of GNUs and under what circumstances? Detailed comparative empirical and historical work is needed to answer these questions and to derive relevant and usable policy messages.
- **Bureaucratic and political leaderships.** In many polities (as some research in the Caribbean states has shown) tensions between the leaderships of the political and bureaucratic elites can thwart institutional consolidation and developmental policies and practices, especially where populations are small and informal relationships pervasive. How can effective developmental coalitions be facilitated amongst bureaucratic and political leaderships around consensus about the rules of the game to enhance policy-making processes about growth, stability and inclusion?
- **Data-base and query tool.** The database of leaders generated from each of the **DLP** research projects will continue to be developed.
- **Political Analytical Tool (PAT).** The PAT developed by the **DLP** to map the formation and evolution of relations of formal and informal networks and coalitions will be tested and trialed in research environments to refine and deepen its use for analytical purposes.

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Appendix

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DLP Publications

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1. Jo-Ansie van Wyk (2009) "Cadres, Capitalists and Coalitions: The ANC, Business and Development in South Africa".
2. David Subudubudu with Patrick Molutsi (2009) "Leaders, Elites and Coalitions in the Development of Botswana".
3. Eduard Grebe with Nicoli Nattrass (2009) "Leaders, Networks and Coalitions in the AIDS Response: A Comparison of Uganda and South Africa".
4. Deborah Brautigam with Tania Diolle (2009) "Coalitions, Capitalists and Credibility: Overcoming the Crisis of Confidence at Independence in Mauritius".
5. Jo Beall with Mduduzi Ngonyama (2009) "Indigenous Institutions, Traditional Leaders and Developmental Coalitions: The Case of Greater Durban, South Africa".
6. Adrian Leftwich (2009) "Bringing Agency Back In: Politics and Human Agency in Building Institutions and States".
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