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# Gallery of Ideas

Breakout session 2:

What insights has the pandemic provided into more effective and ethical ways of designing and implementing development policies and programmes?

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# Postgraduate group 1

- Both challenges and opportunities:
- Deeper, more frequent and local engagement; empowering local partners and capacity building (different from research context where communication/technology was more of a challenge)
- New ways of doing things - new technologies, faster adaptation and uptake = opportunities for more creativity in process, monitoring and reporting e.g., new ways of teaching in Nepal through the new technologies
- Less travel = less greenhouse gas emissions
- A bit of COVID "tunnel-vision" - is it detracting from other needs??

## University of Canterbury - Christchurch hub

- Policy and projects have prioritised short term gains without thinking about the “Plan B”. There is a need to emphasise diversification and local knowledge.
- There is a shift in “power” in the absence of donors/international practitioners in the field but this, in turn, raises the question of *who* will fill the gap?
- Action-research/qualitative research and practice is being limited to adapt to the online environment... this is a concern.

# Dunedin hub

- So interesting to see an analysis based on the life course- generational understanding of future
- Shift from econometric metric-based indices toward culturally relevant understandings. Moving from global indices to locally appropriate ideas. Grounded in sustainable development but guided by non-western ideas of tiaki and guardianship-
- Resonance with other examples we have seen elsewhere, eg home-grown development in Africa
- Interesting example of localizing development- situating and grounding in who we are. In moments of crisis there is an opportunity to shift thinking. Think about Cook Islander perspective.
- New research methodology as a mechanism for in-situ thinking as a scenario planning methodology
- Raises questions about how partnerships can work across different conceptions and approaches. Are international development partners prepared to take seriously the conceptual approaches adopted by the Government of Cook Islands?
- Example of absence of tourism as facilitating greater control of own spaces, greater focus on community rather than explicit focus on outsiders/visitors. Look inward rather than always assuming the answers are outside (similar to NZ).

## Policy/Practitioner group 1

- Covid-19 has provided opportunities e.g. Being able to reframe development in the Cook Islands. Increased political will
- Having to be adaptable and being more human centred
- Using evidence to make development decisions in tandem with participatory approaches
- Consulting people and asking what they understand things to mean, such as 'wellbeing' - the meaning has to come from the people.

## Policy/Practitioner group 2

- Four words/requirements are key:  
Intergenerational Vision, and then:
- Adaptability (approach and management),
- Flexibility (budget and plan),
- Sustainability (resources and capacities)

## Policy/Practitioner group 3

- The pandemic has demonstrated the **central role of the state in providing social safety nets, and the role of civil society** (vs the private sector)
- Effective and ethical ways policy and practice includes **being flexible and adaptive**, eg through budget support, flexible funding models, bottom-up budgeting at the local level
- It's still too soon to know if responses have been effective - we need to **allow much more time**, we are expecting too much in too little time, longer-term and intergenerational approaches needed

Reflection on session 1 - shared characteristics across our understanding of what comprises ethical, and what comprises effective (two sides of same coin)

Also similarities around what we see as ethical/effective approaches in research, and what we see as ethical/effective approaches in policy/practice

What we didn't discuss in session 1 - what do we understand by 'development'?

- In CI context, need to understand who we are in relation to development/wellbeing - indigenous perspectives of development
- Development framed as 'wellbeing' - e.g. NZ living standards framework
- Broadening definitions/ notions of 'development', e.g. happiness, spirituality
- Definition of development and wellbeing contextual

## Policy/Practitioner group 6

### **What has the pandemic taught us about more ethical and effective ways of designing/implementing development policy and practice?**

- Policy fast paced - we need to slow down when interacting with partners - get better response when we slow down. reflect and listen
- Ethical/effective two sides of the same coin
- Importance of context - culturally appropriate frameworks - developed by communities (not what others think) - process as important as output (for well-being /development plans)
- Greater shift to localisation in Philippines (when expatriate leaders in organisation left) - : 'quite liberating for local actors to lead'
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What happened before covid and what happens now in policy/programme design/implementation? What changed (or didn't change?) And what did we learn from this?

Everyone to share one story

- Need to consider status of community, eg. ability to access internet to engage - connect more with community in terms of what they need, not what we think they need
- Highlighted gaps/ limitations/challenges in health system - consider health and wellbeing as priority
- Emersion in community - talk to elders / community leaders, make sure not conflicting with beliefs, feedback from community to inform practice - embrace local knowledge
- Coordination with development partners and NZ agencies
- Public health in spotlight - an opportunity
- Positionality of civil society - donors interacting with local communities directly - has this shifted power balance? E.g. MFAT working more closely with civil society organisations - more opportunity/ power for local actors to lead, e.g. in Philippines



## Researcher group 1

What have our research findings taught us about ethical/effective ways of designing development policies/programmes during the pandemic?

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For us researchers is about re-thinking ideas of development and ideas of wellbeing. Assumptions of 'being' in development that may trap people into constructs of 'being'. Locally and globally. Decolonising the process - who defines the process, the method, the purpose, the outcomes and the measuring of those programmes?

Wellbeing not as a state of being, but as a process, not as achieving something at the end (linear), but as a process of building relationships (a continuous process). Concepts of time (i.e. 100 years in the Cook Islands).

What existed here before? What are the factors that have prevented those ways from flourishing?

Innovations - may be new for development practice and academia, but many are millennia- old ways that are grounded in our cultures, our science, our knowledges and our ways of seeing the world. Taking into consideration our diversity and our own cultural structures. Leading to collaboration and partnerships that are locally and indigenous led.

Are there innovations in design and implementation of development policies/programmes that we have encountered in our research findings?

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Are there any ideas that can come from researchers to contribute to more ethical/effective design and implementation of development policies and programmes?

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What have our research findings taught us about ethical/effective ways of implementing development policies/programmes during the pandemic?

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Has Covid changed the power structure between donors and recipient countries?

How has the pandemic affected the mobilities of development practice?

## Researcher group 2

- What insights has the pandemic provided into more effective and ethical ways of designing and implementing development policies and programmes?
- New opportunities and new needs were identified during the early phase of pandemic, a more inclusive spirit at the outset, with new ways of practice identified. But more recently, a return to “business as usual” suggests missed opportunities to sustain these innovative changes. New info and knowledge is not getting disseminated.
- There are also new (and selective) mobilizations and immobilizations related to the pandemic. They reveal existing inequalities more clearly, observing how responses are mobilized (or not).
- Caution not to characterize pandemic effects on policy and practice as universal.

The logo features the word "devnet" in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. "dev" is purple and "net" is olive green. The background consists of large, overlapping, light-colored shapes resembling stylized eyes or abstract forms, set against a light purple and olive green color scheme.

**devnet**

**SYMPOSIUM 2021**

**25 November, 2021**

**Rethinking development research & practice  
in the time of Covid-19 and beyond**