

cohredcolloquium2011

Research for Health and Development

BEYOND AID

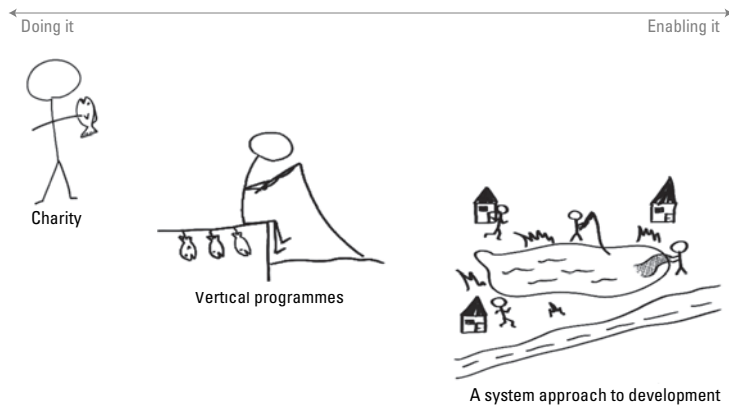
Research and Innovation as key drivers for Health,
Equity and Development

Interactions and conversations on:

- Can we define the 'beyond aid' vision more clearly?
- How can we make 'research, science and innovation' more relevant to achieving sustainable health, equity and development in low and middle-income countries?
- How can the development community, including the COHRED Group, best support this?

'COHRED – 'extending conventional wisdom' – 'redefining development'

Giving a man a fish Teaching a man to fish Build a system in which everyone can fish (sustainably)



The COHRED Group

Acknowledgments

This report is a synthesis of conversations held at the second COHRED Colloquium 2011 in Geneva. The contents are the result of the exchanges and contributions of all participants at the Colloquium.

About the COHRED Group and the COHRED Colloquia

The COHRED Group is an international non-profit organisation whose aim is to improve health, equity and development in low and middle-income countries by building systems for research and innovation.

COHRED Colloquia are a key component that helps us achieve this goal. With the *COHRED Colloquia* series, we intend to create a new space, a new format of exchange and interaction between a small group of people who are interested in promoting research and innovation as drivers of socioeconomic development, equity and health. Our aim is not for more 'global health research', but for building research and innovation systems at country level. This is where we believe real and sustainable development will be achieved.

There is a real need for such a space. Beyond the global meetings addressing global priorities, the Colloquium brings together a small group of 'change makers' – people who can make change happen, in their programmes, organisations and countries – who will inspire and complement each other to achieve this.

COHRED Colloquium 2010, which focused on the connections and contributions of science, technology and entrepreneurship to health, equity and development in low and middle-income countries, was the first of these meetings. *COHRED Colloquium 2011* is the second in the series. In line with the emerging debates about shifting the global development approach, *COHRED Colloquium 2011* focused on a 'beyond aid' environment in which research and innovation are seen as key drivers for health, equity and development.

The Colloquium series deals with different themes or topics – inviting a different audience each time to reflect on critical issues where change is needed. The format is highly interactive and informal. It uses a modified Chatham House Rules¹ approach to facilitate open and frank exchange. We believe it is the interaction among those present that counts the most. This synthesis report is intended as a record of the meeting.

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¹ Chatham House Rules provide a private space, in which decision makers can comment and discuss openly; their comments are not attributed and a list of participants is not published. The modified approach applied at the COHRED Colloquium does not attribute comments to individuals in the reporting, but with participants' permission, does include a list of attendees at the meeting.

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Moving towards a 'beyond aid' environment: an exchange on how research and innovation can act as key drivers for health, equity and development

The second COHRED Colloquium 2011 brought together a small group of people with an interest in going beyond the business-as-usual of global health and the current approaches to development and aid.

It resulted in a rich one-day exchange on the issue of 'beyond aid' – research and innovation as key drivers for health, equity and development.

While we could not address in depth all questions raised by this perspective, this second Colloquium sparked good discussions on how we can approach health and development in a different way.

This synthesis report is intended as a record of the meeting, for information, and to stimulate the on-going exchanges concerning the upcoming (April 2012) Global Forum for Health Research (www.forum2012.org) that is set to look into the question of 'beyond aid' and health research within the context of a much broader forum. I encourage you to join in the debate and to attend the Global Forum.

The Colloquium set out to bring together a group of around 40 people who – collectively and individually – can take development to another level by exploring the potential parameters for a post-aid environment in development discourse and practice. I feel that we achieved the short-term outcomes – participants left with inspiration, insight and ideas for innovation – and a new network to create change, not just exchange.

The spirit of this second Colloquium draws on the push for the formation of genuine partnerships for development, action and change by relying on research and innovation.

Drawing on an open and dialogic approach to the sharing and generation of ideas and actions, the second Colloquium also worked to showcase some examples from low and middle-income countries (LMICS) on the transformation of research and technological innovations into social innovations. The focus was on practical solutions rather than problems, and on defining the objectives and strategies for going 'beyond aid'. The COHRED Group is committed to supporting countries that want to achieve this goal.

We look forward to hearing about changes that participants make in their ways of working, and about others they have engaged with or the ideas taken away from this meeting.

It was a great experience for my colleagues and myself – I hope it was for you too!

Carel IJsselmuiden

Director COHRED

www.cohred.org/colloquium

COHRED Colloquium 2011: Research for Health and Development

At this second COHRED Colloquium, a group of 30 people – including professionals in health and health research, representatives of development partners, development professionals and leaders of research and policy from low and middle-income countries – met for an open discussion on how to move ‘beyond aid’ using research and innovation as key drivers for health, equity and development’.

The exchange was an Open Space session, with participants setting the agenda, interspersed with short comments and statements on a range of related topics.

Conversation topics – Open Space sessions

- What are the new models for global solidarity in the ‘beyond aid’ environment? What can we consider as some of the gains and losses in terms of pushing for a ‘beyond aid’ environment?
- How can we use health technology assessments (HTAs) appropriately to support health, equity and development?
- How can we move beyond the concept of ‘poverty reduction’ to ‘wealth creation’ in LMICs?
- What are the preconditions – in countries – that can make aid work and enable policy makers, partners and researchers to move ‘beyond aid’?
- Who or what are the on the ground influencers and connectors that we need to engage with to influence genuine social change?
- How can we work from and build on the existing development strategies that are on the ground?
- How can we foster emerging research institutions, universities and development organisations?
- How can we create opportunities for people at the very bottom of society to take-up ownership of social change for themselves?
- How can we persuade the public and private sectors to work together in research and innovation for health, equity and development?
- How can we put knowledge into practice within the context of research and innovation?

This year's conversation

Rethinking Aid – There is increasing doubt about traditional aid, and an apparently increasing gap between the relevance and nature of aid between North and South. The COHRED Colloquium 2011 looked at research and innovation as key drivers for health, equity and development in a 'beyond aid' environment.

Research and innovation development – How can low and middle-income countries mobilise research and innovation to drive socioeconomic growth and create health equity? Here, a lead case is the global 'access to drugs' effort of providing medicines, contrasted with the emerging efforts of strengthening pharmaceutical innovation in Africa.

How can the development community, including the COHRED Group, best support this? Countries often take a long-term view of the development of health systems. They need time and resources to invest in all the other key building blocks that can improve the health sector. The development community needs to work towards the creation of the preconditions that need to be in place to build the systems both in the South and in the North that can enhance aid effectiveness and sustainable development.

Participants making comments or statements to the meeting

- Suwit Wibulpolpraser, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand, Senior Adviser on Disease Control;
- Hannah Akuffo, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Senior Expert, Research Cooperation;
- Alioune Dieye, Institut Pasteur, Senegal, Director;
- Jasmin Dirinpur, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Technical Adviser;
- Armin Fidler, World Bank, Lead Adviser, Health Policy and Strategy;
- Carel IJsselmuiden, COHRED, Director;
- Diarmuid McClean, Irish Aid, Development Specialist, Global Health Programme;
- Hassan Mshinda, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), Director General;
- Chris Pearce, Clarity Partnership, Management Consultant (Moderator); and
- Tamara Rajah, McKinsey (London Office), Junior Partner.

Can we define the ‘beyond aid’ vision more clearly?

Over the last decade, aid policy debates have increasingly centred on how to make aid more effective. Global frameworks such as the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action captured the importance of partnerships in the management of aid.

The most recent global engagement towards making aid more effective and relevant to development was held in Busan, South Korea, at the end of November 2011. While no specific commitments were made, it is also apparent that Busan underlined the importance of country-level ownership, South–South cooperation and the use of local systems to support development.

In a sense, the debate appears to have moved on from an obsession with aid itself to a much broader understanding of the co-operation, financial and otherwise, required for development to take place. Focus appears to have finally moved towards creating an enabling environment for civil society to thrive and a general shift towards a new global reality in which the North plays a supportive rather than a dominating role. The BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) proved to be critical in Busan as they pushed for horizontal relationships in development. Despite the lack of measurable commitments, the framework is now in place for an improved and much more inclusive model of international co-operation for development.

It is in this context that the second COHRED Colloquium – on a ‘beyond aid’ environment in which research and innovation are seen as the key drivers for health, equity and development – was also held in the same week as the Busan conference.

What does a beyond aid world look like?

Aid is in some ways one of the easier things that can be delivered by rich countries. Everything else – in terms of genuine social change – requires long-term investment and reforms, institutional capacity building, knowledge generation and so on.

Aid is in some ways crucial, particularly when one thinks of raising contributions for the fight against AIDS, TB and malaria or how it has led to genuine improvements in support of the agriculture and education sectors of LMICS. These are important areas, but the argument is that there is a long list of weightier issues – capital flight, tax regimes, infrastructure, climate change and improved global business regulation, to name but a few, that are crucial to genuine sustainable development. In other words, it is not simply about reaching into the pocket and making funds available for some quick fix.

Some of the broad hallmarks of a 'beyond aid' development context that can enhance aid effectiveness and sustainable development include:

- The generation of context relevant information or knowledge;
- Entrepreneurship at the local and national level; and
- Promotion of transparency and governance² by national governments.

Drawing on these hallmarks and more specifically on some of the most (or least) successful innovation ecosystems in the world, key characteristics of innovation and research that foster genuine development include:

- **Presence:** 'a reputation as a world-leading cluster, and the physical infrastructure that supports this and stimulates innovation';
- **Connectivity:** 'the right people networks linking the enterprise community';
- **Capability:** 'world-class skills and the ability to acquire them locally'; and
- **Support:** 'financial, regulatory and professional support designed around the needs of the entrepreneur'.

Examples from emerging economies in Asia, Latin America, Africa and various knowledge and research hubs in the North suggest that these characteristics can create an enabling environment for successful innovation ecosystems that catalyse development. But, the most successful innovation ecosystems have not come about simply because of one key overriding factor. What has often worked well is when national governments, academia, the financial sector and service providers all pull together.

How can we move beyond the concept of poverty reduction to wealth creation in developing countries?

This calls for a rethink on development, poverty and its causes, and on how to measure these concepts. Why do we continuously limit development to reducing poverty? It can be argued that in the health sector in particular the concept of 'beyond aid' is limiting in that it does not speak to the creation of wealth, knowledge, innovations or even the research required to push for development. Development is not simply about reducing poverty, but about wealth creation.

Governments, communities and donors work together in the development process and they need to move together in defining new roles and responsibilities for each other in the move towards a 'beyond aid' environment.

- **For governments** – if there is no transparency, aid will never reach the intended people. The culture of dependence must also stop.
- **For communities** – people must take ownership of the development process. The key issue is to empower the citizen and to put in place processes that can bring on board transparency and good governance at all levels. Empowerment can come in

² See Julius Katune. Africa's development beyond aid: Getting out of the box. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 632: 103–120, 2010 (Oct). DOI: 10.1177/0002716210378832

the shape of a small innovation in the village – an innovation that can have a huge impact on the wellbeing of the population (but not so much on wealth as such).

- **For donors** – the focus should move towards bottom-up decision making and not top-down development processes.

What are the preconditions in countries that can make aid work and those that can enable us to move beyond aid?

Case studies from Singapore, Israel, the state of North Carolina and Tanzania's health sector show that good governance, leadership and stability, infrastructure, entrepreneurship and skilled human resources are prerequisites for an enabling environment. Another key factor is the role of women and their potential in development through mechanisms targeted at enhancing their role in business, leadership and knowledge creation.

But aid can breed a culture of dependency. States can use aid as an excuse for not carrying out serious structural reform. For donor countries, aid seems problematic if the country – the USA, Italy or Portugal – cannot pay its own debts. In some cases, aid is inappropriate, coming from the donor's perception of a problem rather than the actual problem or sustaining a government that might itself be the cause of the problem.

Recently, policy makers and academics have begun worrying about targeted programmes that specifically tie aid to structural reforms in a specific sector. In addition, policy makers and even development partners are recognising their failures with aid and are instead calling for more risk assessments and for more trade and investment and not so much aid.

What are the models for global solidarity in the 'beyond aid' environment?

The 'beyond aid' agenda is not simply about stopping aid. The 'beyond aid' slogan can only work when accompanied by a strong message that we are not walking away from global solidarity against poverty. It is about identifying new frameworks for aid effectiveness focusing on doing those things that deter dependence while supporting local systems, capacities and innovations for development, taking account of the emerging issues of climate change, human security and new technologies.

What are some of the gains and downsides of pushing for a 'beyond aid' environment?

The main message here is that the transition phase is important given that many countries are unable to put in place the requirements needed to create a 'beyond aid' environment. This requires a rethink about the redistribution of global wealth. Some aspects must be developed further or improved for this rethink to take root. These include sustainable development, capacity building, infrastructure, transparency, good governance, accountability and the mechanisms for giving aid.

How can we make 'research, science and innovation' more relevant to achieving sustainable health, equity and development in low and middle-income countries?

How can we start creating an environment for research and innovation?

Examples from Mozambique, Tanzania and elsewhere suggest that sufficient capacity and local resources to ensure future sustainability of healthcare systems can be built in some countries of the South. This increased capacity – involving research institutions, policy makers, academia and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – has enabled these countries to network more effectively and to make their voices heard at national and regional health forums.

Practitioners can find out exactly who is involved in which aspect of a country's healthcare system from health technology assessments (HTAs). They can see what people are doing and what they can bring to the table in terms of the push for sustainable health systems. This is one reason why HTAs are so important.

We also need to bring on board business, researchers, experts and leaders. Leaders are critical – but they are not necessarily the drivers at the forefront of the process. Emerging innovation hubs in the South and the North rely on research and local entrepreneurship much more than on leaders.

HTAs – value and links to research and innovation and the 'beyond aid' agenda

How can we use health technology assessments (HTAs) appropriately as part of the process of healthcare reform? That is, in a way that is acceptable, available and affordable.

The example of China shows us that HTA methodology must be included from the start of the research and innovation process and that its application must be based on healthcare reform.

Development partners often want to deal with immediate tangible issues and deliverables, so they often ignore HTA issues. Countries tend to have limited resources and yet they want to be more efficient and effective in their healthcare service delivery. Through its healthcare system reform, China is trying to get a clear sense of its basic healthcare needs. The HTA is very important here since it assesses the full range of technologies – drugs, devices, medical procedures, rehabilitation.

HTAs are crucial because they provide policy makers, donors and practitioners with a picture of how their HTAs are bringing value (or not) to their healthcare systems and to the socioeconomic development of the country. A careful evaluation of HTAs can provide governments in the South with evidence to help their technology admission, pricing and related policymaking. In the environment in which many countries are working – limited health resources with an increasing demand for health services coupled with a global process of disseminating new technologies into LMICs very quickly through the promotion of multi-national corporations – an HTA can provide the tools to respond in a way that promotes looking 'beyond aid' and relies on local capacities.

How can we put knowledge into practice in the context of research and innovation?

The lack of access to knowledge – databases and the Internet, but also actual information – is still a key challenge to research and innovation. Communication between policy makers and researchers is another key challenge that also needs to be looked at more specifically.

The Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) is a very good example of what happens when you put a programme in place using local researchers and local entrepreneurs to invest in the researchers' work (see box).

From research to innovation: insecticide treated nets (ITNs) and the implications for development in Tanzania

“When you argue that government funded some of the basic research that then led to this innovation, people often find it hard to believe”.

This success story shows that when the right ingredients are in place, research and innovation can translate into development that is self-reliant within the context of a 'beyond aid' environment.

Research by COSTECH on ITNs in Tanzania showed that they could help reduce exposure to malaria, and reduce parasites in schoolchildren. These results created a lot of interest from policy makers, donors and entrepreneurs. Further research revealed that ITNs could help to improve child survival by 23%.

This research led COSTECH to:

- Adopt a social marketing approach using a demand and supply approach to bed nets;
- Set up a national programme of malaria control; and
- Promote a memorandum of understanding between a local manufacturer, Moshi District and the Ministry of Health on standardising and distributing the nets.

Government moved to:

- Reform its tax system by waiving taxes and tariffs on bed nets; and
- Work with COSTECH, manufacturers, CSOs and financial services providers to create a voucher system for nets.

A recent evaluation of COSTECH's work and the ITN programme has shown that 60% of children sleep under bed nets and there is now four times more bed net coverage across the country. Under-5 mortality went down from 147 in 1999 to 81 per live births today.

The manufacturing firm has also strengthened its capabilities, as it is now one of the leading bed net manufacturers in Africa. The company employs almost 20% of the people working in the manufacturing sector in Arusha and 25,000 people in the town are benefiting indirectly from the factory.

How can the development community, including the COHRED Group, best support research, science and innovation leading to health, equity and development?

We should move away from an 'authorising' approach to development in which the focus is on immediate tangible results and on deliverables that are too narrow and specific.

Research and innovation frequently needs long-term support and investment by development partners and national governments, and even in the present global economic crisis, it is evident that agencies such as COHRED need to push for this.

How can we build on existing development strategies that are on the ground?

In supporting a move towards a 'beyond aid' environment it is important to take into account what countries have done already. The point of departure for this process could include:

- Prioritised list of what needs to be done better in the health elements of the country's development strategy;
- Shared learning and peer review of country and regional-level experience;
- Improve existing transparency and accountability mechanisms;
- Ride on the momentum of (post-)Busan by focusing less on centralised decision-making and more on local-level decisions;
- Devise indicators that capture development as a process and not by simply focusing on numbers and specific short-term outputs; and
- Scale-up from what is good and working.

How can we create opportunities for people at the very bottom of society to take ownership of social change for themselves?

We must level the playing field for the majority of the citizens in a country. We must invest in health, infrastructure and agriculture. In short, we must have some sort of redistribution of wealth with safety nets in place. But, there has to be societal consensus for this to happen.

A functioning democratic process is important for this – especially in terms of empowering people so that they can use their (political) voice to enact change. New technologies, micro-credit and cash transfers also offer interesting opportunities for wealth creation.

How can we get public and private sectors to work together in research and innovation for health, equity and development?

In most low-income and many middle-income countries, governments manage 'research' and 'science and technology' as largely public sector functions. A key innovation and often one that is lacking is a move to mobilise entrepreneurs.

There is a need for effective coordination between development partners, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), academia and NGOs. This could help kick-start collaborative work and projects, as in the case of the West African Health Organisation and the Institut Pasteur – organisations that are able to connect the various elements in the private and public spheres.

Some countries – for example, South Africa, Brazil, Burkina Faso and Mozambique – are involved in the process of setting up national innovation systems and hubs for use as platforms for networking between researchers, the private sector and policy makers. In these cases, the presence of the political will of the national governments has helped get the hubs up and running.

Lessons learned

- The need to design a vision of a world beyond aid, so that we can start working more clearly and more collectively on this goal;
- The relevance of positioning 'knowledge' or 'research, science and innovation for health' as a key way forward for sustainable development;
- There may be more value and clarity around the 'beyond aid' agenda when it is thought of within the context of 'research, science and innovation';
- Development partners are likely to see more clearly how 'there can be life after aid' by becoming brokers and experts in supporting the building of national research and innovation systems in LMICs;
- The phrase 'aid and beyond' may be preferable to 'beyond aid' given that the latter appears to imply that there is no value at all for aid in development;
- Aid is not simply about reaching into the pocket and making funds available for some quick fix;
- Most successful innovation ecosystems have not come about simply because of one key overriding factor – what has often worked well is when national governments, academia, the financial sector and service providers all pull together;
- Development is not simply about reducing poverty, but about wealth creation; and
- Emerging innovation hubs in the South and the North rely on research and local entrepreneurship much more than on leaders.

Recommendations

1. Define and implement a framework or planning process (for 2012) through which partnerships (at the national or regional level) can be built in order to move on the key issues of the theme in a practical way.
2. Conduct an evaluation (national and regional) of the research and innovation landscape particularly in those areas where there are already enabling factors and conditions (such as centres of excellence) for health, equity and development.
and/or
3. Determine the local needs of the people on the ground. Do a monitoring and evaluation survey of the health systems structures and related support at the national level.
4. Identify new opportunities or expand existing opportunities for capacity building at the local level in a way that can help open the potential for CSOs, governments and the private sector to work together.
5. Kick-start advocacy or campaign work or promote a programme building on the colloquium that opens up opportunities for policy makers, researchers and development partners to better understand the benefits and value of research and innovation for long-term sustainable development.

The COHRED Group



Supporting research and innovation systems for health, equity and development

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