

# D-Lab Development

2009.09.14

## D-Lab Philosophy

- DIALOGUE / Talking + Listening  
Understanding the User Context
- DISCOVERY / Get Your Hands Dirty  
Explore  
Active Learning
- DEVELOPMENT / Creative Capacity  
Encourage Community  
to create themselves  
-confidence  
-belief  
-skills  
Cultural barriers to  
work through
- DESIGN / Technology can improve  
people's lives.
- DISSEMINATION / Real Work, in the field  
More than academic exercise }
- RESPECT / Community members you are working with  
Be aware of your own Knowledge

Collaboration = Richness

HUMILITY / As much to learn as to teach

OPTIMISM / There are many failures  
Difficulties + Barriers  
Continue to believe



ENTHUSIASM / out of idealism

IRREVERENCE / Sense of Humor  
A Grain of Salt



## ANECDOTE

Uganda Refugee Camp

Technologies to assist refugees

Grinding Stone

Commercial Grinder

1,000,000 Shillings (300USD)

Too much for refugees

Diesel Inaccessible

Bicycle Powered Meat Grinder

Piece of Crap! (was made by us)



Engaged  
Community

{  
-Made it accessible to  
community to improve  
-People had critiques of  
how they would improve

Economic & Technological Accessibility

Work with villagers. Really work, you learn  
and it is a small relief for community. Creates  
an exchange of respect.

"If we lose the humanity in  
who we are and what we do,  
what is the point of scaling?"



## Bish Sanyal History of Development

Colonialism - When countries became independent (post WWII) What was left to work with?

1. There was an association of 'primary' cities to view of amount of development
2. All good land was taken by European Colonials
3. When countries became independent
  - what does "catching up" mean?
  - how did we frame the conversation at stake "the know how"
  - material extracted, processed away from colonies then sold back
  - need universities to educate people
  - subsidize technologies of the future
4. Local Government
  - was used to telling people what not to do.
  - there was no respect amount people and authority
  - big changes happen by giving power to local governments
- 5.
6. Poverty associated with ignorance
  - was justification by colonizers
  - this mentality was internalized by colonies
  - Gov't started to say people weren't smart

## How Is Thinking DIFFERENT NOW?

Thought of taking labor from rural area to cities for industrialization.

"unlimited supply of labour"

- capitalize on inequalities
    - industrialization was seen to have a higher rate of return (over Ag)
    - don't squander money on poor
- FOCUS ON ELITE  
subsidies put here
- >> And now (today) cities are packed

### STRATEGY OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

- Import substitution - create your own base
  - focus on large scale industry
  - ignored small household goods
    - thought they could come later
    - [things D-Lab works on now]
- Up To Date Technology
  - you don't catch up gradually
  - how do you keep labor cheap?
    - subsidize food in the city
    - force farmers to sell cheap

### QUESTION

#### Size + Scale

How does this matter?

Countries with less people have it easier  
less mouths to feed

need to create food surplus to invest

Natural resource also an element

Smaller not a problem, later on labour may be a problem

## POLITICAL MODERNIZATION

1. Allow people to participate and have a say in government  
Something not available in colonialism  
Create a nation state (WHY?)
2. Ability to move around, without ties to pre-existing standards  
(with new labor force)
  - Also able to exert your own preferences

## QUESTION

Conflict of nationalism + personal identity  
how do you appeal to personal identity for votes

NOW  
Today

People trying to organize  
Unorganized Labor (informal sector)

Public policies get put in place  
by (pressure) from political parties

{ Who are the political leaders?  
What do they represent? } ASK THIS WHEN  
VISITING PLACES

Connections to political parties and  
organized labor can be important [for Development]

## SOCIAL MODERNIZATION

Need to understand the arrogance previously had when  
dealing with colonized people

Seen as irrational {religion/superstition/etc}  
- Makes it seem as if they have nothing  
to offer  
- Not respecting their knowledge

Choosing your identity

- a socially modern concept  
{this is what I believe, want to do, etc}
- often we are quick to define the identity of  
those we visit

! COPING WITH CHANGE IS VERY DIFFICULT

- consider what is going on though their head
- change causes deep levels of uncertainty
- our idea of change is mechanical  
{doing A causes B}  
this is not always true though
- consider America's own situation, credit  
is not as readily available as it once was

At another time, Bish will tell us  
how this model didn't work.

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

SP.721 / 11.025J / 11.472 D-Lab I: Development  
Fall 2009

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.