North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum 2022
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Session 4: Boosting cooperation: How to incorporate academic expertise into the work on the ground

Presentation

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Russia (RUDN University / MGIMO University)
August 25, 2022
Association of Development Cooperation experts (academics & practitioners)
Aid agencies as learning organizations

Five disciplines of the Senge’s model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>Essences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 System thinking</td>
<td>An ability to analyse an entire organisational system by focusing on the inter-connection and inter-dependence of constituents rather than viewing merely the isolated parts of the system.</td>
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<td>2 Personal mastery</td>
<td>An ability to consistently attain personal goals that matter most for the person, to deepen personal vision, to develop patience, and to view reality objectively.</td>
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<td>3 Mental models</td>
<td>An ability to identify and recognise deeply entrenched ways of seeing and understanding things and to make fundamental shifts away from them.</td>
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<td>4 Building shared vision</td>
<td>The condition where a coherent vision is shared and committed by all members of an organisation not because they are told to do so but because they want to do so.</td>
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<td>5 Team learning</td>
<td>An ability to attain collective development through dialogue among members. The development process involves the identification of prejudices and the conquest of personal defensiveness and embarrassment.</td>
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Challenges of learning of aid agencies (1)

- Aid agencies – **overseas offices** (not common for public sector, but for MNCs) => Where to organize trainings?
- Development projects – **extreme cases of socio-political complexity** => leads to serious uncertainty => vulnerable to accountability & transparency pressures
- Proximity of agencies to politics (convenient and effective diplomatic tool for the governments of donor countries) => must fulfil political and diplomatic commitments
- Agencies act **on behalf of governments** => mandates are tightly regulated and performance is closely monitored by supervising ministries => discourage **double-loop learning** that questions the fundamental objectives and strategies of the organisation => agencies rely on single loop learning that seeks alternative solutions without challenging existing norms, values and practices
Challenges of learning of aid agencies (2)

➢ Pressure of accountability => discourage agencies from experimenting or taking risks (organizations need to allow their members to increase risk exposure both individually and at the organisational level BUT! Agency – is not a private firm => risk-avoidance attitude
➢ Embedded in political environment => pursuing politically-initiated actions (their top priority)
➢ Political commitments (promises of aid by state-leaders to aid recipients) override assistance strategies developed by agencies
➢ Difficulty of measuring performance (mixed or ambiguous goals) => improvements cannot be easily evaluated
➢ Cross-cultural challenges of organizational culture (Western VS Non-Western offices), different management styles
Foreign aid

«technocratic process»

Instrument of foreign policy
/national security

high standards of transparency and accountability
(improving efficiency)

Compliance with priorities of foreign policy doctrine and national security strategy
(formation of multipolar world)

What is it?

Convergence of Aid & Foreign Policy:
✓ Security-Development Nexus (Academic)
✓ 3D Concept (USA, Canada)
✓ ‘Diplomatic viewpoint’ (Japan)
✓ Merger of DFID + FO (UK, 2020)
✓ Concept of ‘Intervention’ (OECD, 2019)

Two contours of development cooperation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subordination</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Prime-minister</th>
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<tr>
<td>Major actors of development cooperation</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rossotrudnichestvo</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Development</td>
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Source: Compiled by the author using the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of January 21, 2020 N 21 (as amended on November 20, 2020) "On the structure of federal executive bodies."
Instability of Power Transit Period

During the period of Power Transit – Dominance of Political Factors over Economic ones
New global rules are establishing – International Political Economy

School of Power Transit- TransResearch Consortium (50 years, 4 generations): Abramo Fimo Kennet Organski (1923-1998); Jacek Kugler (1942); Ronald L. Tammen; Douglas Lemke

Sources of experience:

- International Experience (OECD)
- Bilateral Exchange of Experience
- National Experience
  - Current
  - Past
Bilateral Exchange of Experience

Russia-China bilateral academic cooperation

Joint Research Projects of Russian Foundation for Basic Research and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2017-2022)

RUDN-University & Institute of World Economics and Politics

2017-2020 – «Russian and Chinese Aid to Asian and African Countries: Comparative Analysis and Prospects for Coordination «

2020-2022 – “Russia and China in the World Political Space: Coordination of National Interests in Global Governance”

Some joint outputs:


Experience of the Past

Is Soviet Experience relevant to current Russian development cooperation?

TO BE PUBLISHED SOON:

Organizational structure of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations of the USSR [Postolenko 2004: 39].
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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