Doing development differently

Two years on, what have we done?

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ODI's engagement with efforts to 'do development differently' has deep roots. Research from the Politics and Governance programme has consistently highlighted the need for aid programmes to take better account of political context, and to be smarter about how aid works.

While we have a long history of providing political economy analysis products and training, our experience has taught us that while this analysis is necessary, it is not sufficient to deliver better programmes. Instead, aid programmes themselves need to be designed from the start in ways that allow them to adapt and respond to changing conditions on the ground and to take advantage of the potential space for reform that any analysis might signal. We've also had a longstanding commitment to 'get out of the governance ghetto'. That is, to move beyond a focus solely on stand-alone governance programmes and instead, to show how unlocking institutional constraints in different sectors can help deliver concrete improvements in peoples' lives.

This spurred our interest in co-convening the doing development differently agenda – wanting to change how development programmes themselves are designed and delivered, and an enthusiasm for engaging with those who share these ideas but work across a range of sectors and themes.

Two years ago, we were part of a group that met at a workshop at Harvard University to share examples of successful programmes and identify some common principles. Out of this, we created a manifesto for change, and since then, we've been working to put these principles into action. From documenting case studies and action research, to convening discussion and reflection around the world, to advising on how to design and deliver programmes differently, we've learnt a lot about what it takes to make these ideas a reality.

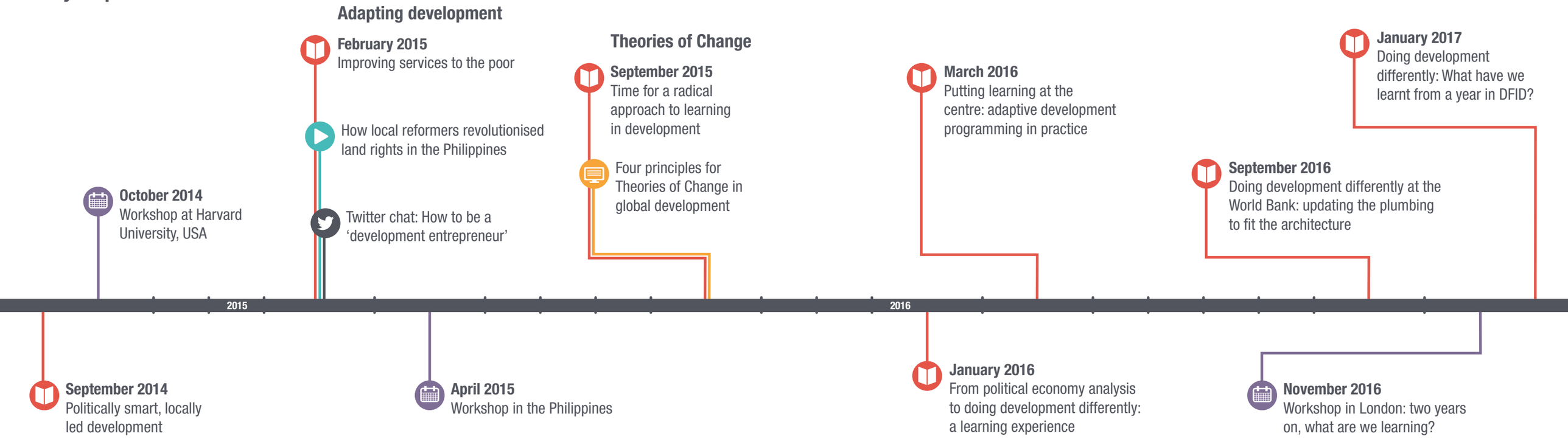
This is therefore an opportune moment to take stock. As this agenda has moved from a set of isolated examples to real debate about how to institutionalise these approaches within big development agencies, we are learning more about the changes in rules, incentives and behaviours that are really needed. We are becoming clearer about what it takes to do this well on the ground, including the need to be humble and modest about a way of programming that avoids simple fixes.

Look out for our forthcoming work, including a write-up of our experience advising the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and an analysis of how the 'results agenda' interacts with these themes. Please get in touch if you want to know more.

Since June 2014, we have published a number of outputs under the theme of doing development differently:

For a full list of our outputs, please visit **odi.org/doing-development-differently**

Key outputs


Adapting development
February 2015
Improving services to the poor
How local reformers revolutionised land rights in the Philippines
Twitter chat: How to be a 'development entrepreneur'
Theories of Change
September 2015
Time for a radical approach to learning in development
Four principles for Theories of Change in global development
March 2016
Putting learning at the centre: adaptive development programming in practice
January 2017
Doing development differently: What have we learnt from a year in DFID?
September 2016
Doing development differently at the World Bank: updating the plumbing to fit the architecture
October 2014
Workshop at Harvard University, USA
2015
2016
September 2014
Politically smart, locally led development
April 2015
Workshop in the Philippines
January 2016
From political economy analysis to doing development differently: a learning experience
November 2016
Workshop in London: two years on, what are we learning?

ODI has worked with partners to conduct research in 12 countries across the world. From running workshops with DFID offices in Nepal, to analysing donor support in Nigeria, we have engaged at all levels to find out how adaptive development works in theory and practice.

01 UK

- Our latest workshop, 'Doing development differently: two years on, what are we learning?, will be held in London in November 2016. The community will discuss their experiences of adaptive development in their organisations over the last two years, and what lessons they have learnt from this process. It will also chart the way forward for the community and the doing development differently principles.
- Ongoing engagement with the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

02 USA

- The first doing development differently workshop was held in collaboration with the Building State Capacity programme at Harvard University's Centre for International Development. The workshop aimed to showcase practical experience on new strategies for designing, implementing and evaluating development programmes in more innovative ways.

03 Philippines

- Doing development differently: Philippines workshop.
- Our report analysed two reforms in the Philippines (the formalisation of residential land rights, and taxation and public health) to see how aid could be delivered and mobilised for change in an adaptive way.
- Our report, 'Politically smart, locally led development' profiled an example from the Philippines.
- Our short film told the story of how local reformers revolutionised land rights in the Philippines.

04 Myanmar

- Our report, 'Politically smart, locally led development' profiled an example from Myanmar.

05 India

- Our report, 'Politically smart, locally led development' profiled an example from India.

06 Nepal

- Our report, 'Politically smart, locally led development' profiled an example from Nepal.
- Our report analysed DFID-funded initiatives in Nepal and Nigeria which aim to support economic growth processes through politically smart, targeted interventions.
- We conducted one of a series of workshops with DFID in-country offices, aiming to understand their experience of adaptive development and offering reflections on how they could implement the doing development differently principles in their work.

07 Bangladesh

- This case study, of successful pro-poor legal mobilisation in Bangladesh, documents how innovative approaches to legal empowerment and ways of working can make a difference in terms of achieving development results.

08 DR Congo

- Our report, 'Politically smart, locally led development' profiled an example from the DR Congo.

09 Tanzania

- We conducted one of a series of workshops with DFID in-country offices, aiming to understand their experience of adaptive development and offering reflections on how they could implement the doing development differently principles in their work.

10 Nigeria

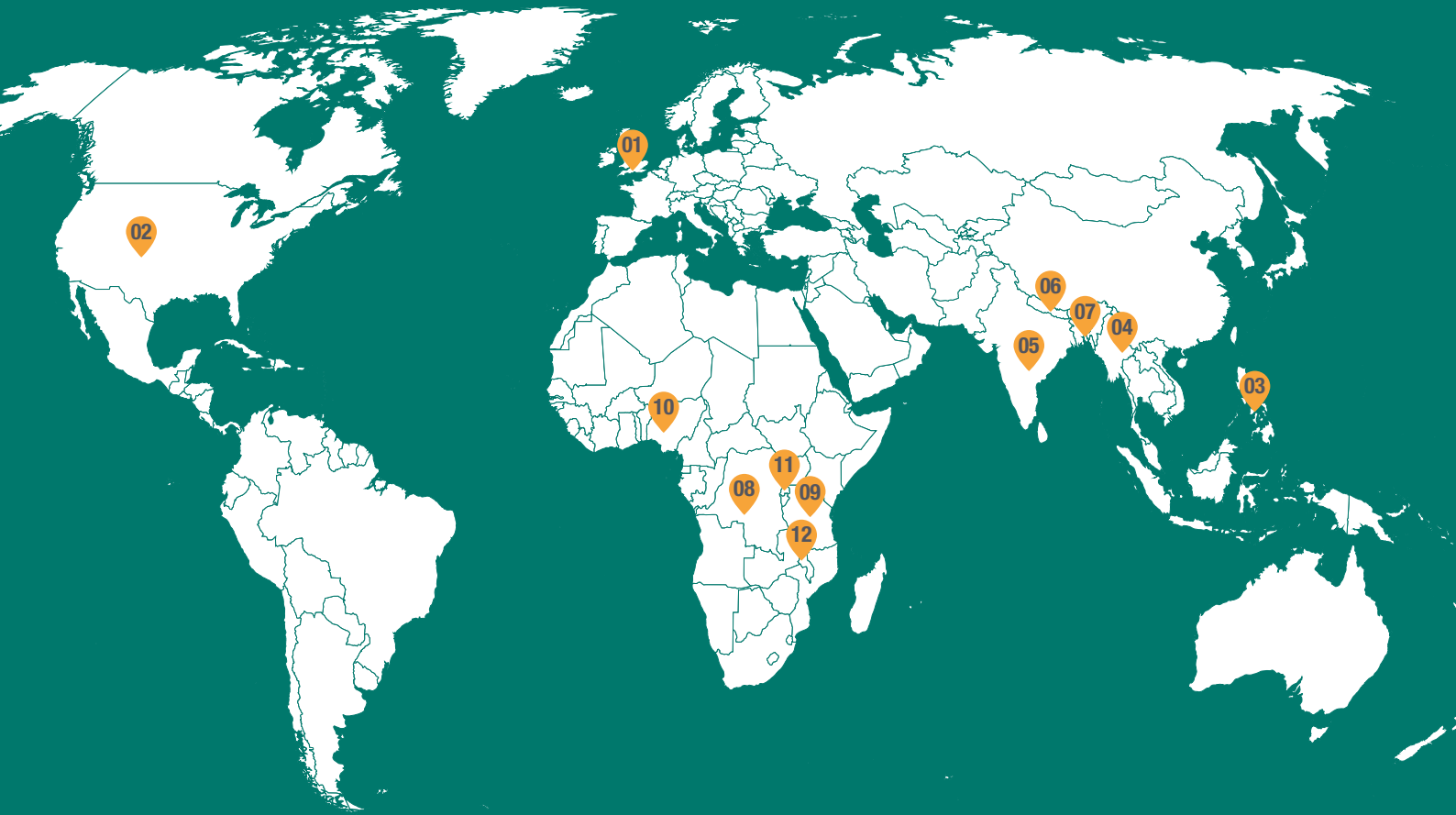
- Our report analysed the experience of SAVI, a state-level DFID-funded programme in Nigeria, to assess whether the programme can really be termed politically smart and locally-led.
- This policy brief looks at two public sector programmes in Nigeria that have achieved results by facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships to address issues that really matter locally, and adopting internal management arrangements that, support flexible, iterative and adaptive ways of working.
- Our report analysed DFID-funded initiatives in Nepal and Nigeria which aim to support economic growth processes through politically smart, targeted interventions.
- Our report describes a recent pilot attempt in the World Bank's Nigeria country portfolio which aimed to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of the Bank.
- Workshop held on Doing Development Differently in Nigeria, with DFID and the World Bank.

11 Rwanda

- We conducted one of a series of workshops with DFID in-country offices, aiming to understand their experience of adaptive development and offering reflections on how they could implement the doing development differently principles in their work.

12 Malawi

- We conducted one of a series of workshops with DFID in-country offices, aiming to understand their experience of adaptive development and offering reflections on how they could implement the doing development differently principles in their work.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All outputs

2014

Learning why and how reform works will improve UK aid (Leni Wild)
Six Key Findings on the Use of Theories of Change in International Development (Craig Valters)
Radically rethinking governance: a manifesto (Marta Foresti and Leni Wild)
Towards politically smart, locally led development in Africa (David Booth)
It's Time to Rethink How We Do Development (Matt Andrews, Leni Wild and Marta Foresti)
Nigeria: What to do when wealth doesn't mean development? (Clare Cummings)
Can Theories of Change Help Us 'Do Development Differently?' (Craig Valters)
Will international development in 2015 see radical change, or more of the same? (Marta Foresti and Leni Wild)

2015

Adapting development: Why it matters and 3 ways to do it (Leni Wild)
Five myths about governance and development (David Booth)
We need to focus on reformers, help donors change, and share what works (Leni Wild)
Five steps for reorienting governance work in development (David Booth)
Doing development differently: Breaking the glass ceiling (Leni Wild and David Booth)
3 big problems with how we think about results and development (Craig Valters)
Four principles for Theories of Change in global development (Craig Valters)
Of Sasquatches and Flexible Programming: A genuine sighting (Lisa Denney)

2016

Using insights on governance reform to achieve economic transformation: lessons from Nepal and Nigeria (Aoife McCullough)
Learning and adaptation: 6 pitfalls to avoid (Craig Valters)
Putting #adaptdev into practice on gender, conflict, health and learning (Olivia Tulloch, Tam O'Neil and Craig Valters)

2014

Aiding institutional reform in developing countries: lessons from the Philippines on what works, what doesn't and why (David Booth)
Politically smart, locally led development (David Booth and Sue Unsworth)
The SAVI programme in Nigeria: towards politically smart, locally led development (David Booth and Victoria Chambers)
Politically smart and locally led justice programming: learning from other sectors (Lisa Denney and Erika Kirwen)
Development entrepreneurship: how donors and leaders can foster institutional change (Jaime Faustino and David Booth)

2015

What does 'adaptive programming' mean in the health sector? (Olivia Tulloch)
Adapting development: improving services to the poor (Leni Wild, David Booth and Clare Cummings)
Doing legal empowerment differently: learning from pro-poor litigation in Bangladesh (Tam O'Neil, Craig Valters and Cynthia Farid)
Improving the odds for progress in Nigeria (Victoria Chambers, Clare Cummings and David Booth)
Theories of Change: time for a radical approach to learning in development (Craig Valters)
Beyond the toolkit: supporting peace processes in Asia (Lisa Denney and Patrick Barron)

2016

Thinking and working with political settlements (Tim Kelsall)
From political economy analysis to doing development differently: a learning experience (David Booth, Daniel Harris and Leni Wild)
Politically smart support to economic development (David Booth)
Putting learning at the centre: adaptive development programming in practice (David Booth)
Innovating for pro-poor services: why politics matter (Nathaniel Mason, Clare Cummings and Julian Doczi)
Using adaptive development to support feminist action (Tam O'Neil)
Rule of law, politics and development: the politics of rule of law reform (Pilar Domingo)
Doing Development Differently at the World Bank: updating the plumbing to fit the architecture (Katherine A. Bain, David Booth and Leni Wild)

Aiding reform: lessons on what works, what doesn't, and why
Politically-smart and locally-led justice programming: Learning from other sectors
Doing development differently: Harvard workshop
Twitter chat: how to be a 'development entrepreneur'
Adapting design, adapting programming
Doing security and justice sector reform differently: what, why and how?
Doing development differently: can it be managed?
Theories of Change in international development
Doing development differently: Philippines workshop
Putting the politics into international public health
The politics of reform

Doing development differently: rising to the challenge
Doing development differently: what does it look like?
Adapting development: how local reformers revolutionised land rights in the Philippines
How is 'doing development differently' evolving?
Doing development differently: what should change?

Still watering white elephants? The blueprint versus process debate 30 years on (David Booth)
Achieving governance reforms under pressure to demonstrate results: dilemma or new beginning? (David Booth)

Thinking and working politically reading pack (David Booth)

Design: Sean Willmott

For more information, visit ODI's page on doing development differently.
odi.org/doing-development-differently
#adaptdev

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