The Future of Global Cooperation is Circular

Lecture

This paper presents a lecture given by Jonathan Glennie in November 2023 as part of the Kapuscinski Development Lectures.



Global Nation

By Jonathan Glennie



Photograph. Retrieved from Kapuscinskidevelopmentlectures.eu

This paper was originally presented as part of the Kapuscinski Development Lectures series by Jonathan Glennie on November 14th, 2023, hosted by the Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius. In his lecture, Glennie introduced a new approach to cooperation that he and his colleagues at Global Nation are developing.

The Kapuscinski Development Lecture series, named after Ryszard Kapuscinski, a renowned Polish journalist and writer, is a collaborative effort between the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme, and partner universities and think tanks. Since 2009, it has attracted over 40,000 participants, both in-person and online, across more than 130 lectures. Covering topics ranging from climate change to aid effectiveness, these events provide students with a unique platform to engage in discussions on pressing development issues. Livestreamed on various platforms, including KAPTalks social media channels, these high-profile lectures play a significant role in shaping European development policy.

Vilnius, Lithuania.

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A lecture by Jonathan Glennie

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Global Nation

A new era of cooperation

We are hemmed in by conceptual constraints, post-colonial paradigms, 20th century thinking. We need to evolve our understanding of international cooperation and the institutions and processes that carry it out if we are to have a chance not only to avoid the risks we face as humanity but to take advantage of the opportunities.

And the central aspect of the new vision for cooperation is **MUTUALITY**.

And I will use the spatial analogy of **CIRCULARITY** to bring that home, building on the best of vertical, horizontal, and even triangular approaches.

You might question; Isn't cooperation inherently mutual, implying collaboration toward a shared goal?

Well, the reality has been very different. Cooperation has actually been just as frequently a euphemism for top-down charity in the best of times, and top-down pressure in the worst.

The fundamental shift we need to see in 21st century international cooperation is from "us and them" to just "us".

If we don't make this shift, we will fail to bring together the kind of strong, sustainable, effective cooperation we need as humanity.

I will guide you through:

- The mess we're in
- Why we're in this mess
- And the principles of a new era of mutual, circular cooperation, to get us out of it. With a particular focus on a new approach to financing global objectives, which we call Global Public Investment.

Finally, I will explain why I am hopeful that we can do this...



Our world is in trouble



Let's start with the mess.

A pandemic that shut everything down.

An economic collapse that is leading to rising, possibly unpayable debts in most countries and causing economic havoc, unemployment on the rise, less money for social services.

Rising social tension.

A climate crisis that is becoming daily more evident and frightening.

The threat of not knowing what the hell Artificial Intelligence is going to become.

Armed conflicts.

Rising migration related to all these things.

Tensions between the great powers and disunity between countries in the Global South and Global North, leading to doubts about the future of multilateralism.

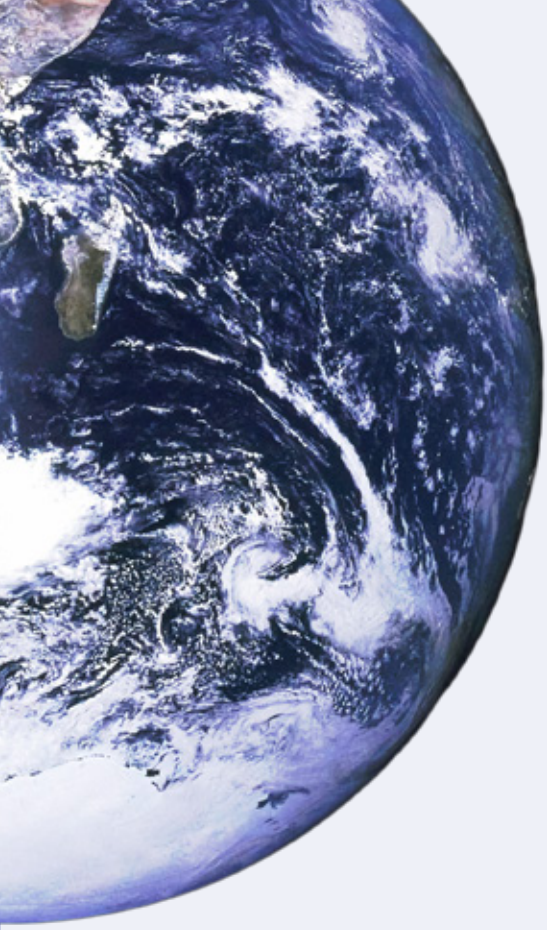
In 2023 the Sustainable Development Progress Report announced that only 12% of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030.[1]

Now more than ever we need **GLOBAL SOLIDARITY**.

Solidarity, as my Co-Founder at Global Nation, Hassan Damluji, has said, "is the golden thread that offers hope for a planet in which we thrive in the twenty-first century."

"Solidarity is the difference, for example, between 1.5 degrees of global warming and 4 degrees or more. It is the difference between millions of the most vulnerable people dying in a new pandemic and rapid coordinated action to stop that pandemic ever taking hold."

But when we published the first Global Solidarity Report in September 2023, we had sombre news to share. We are seeing solidarity reduce at the global level. We are, according to our Global Solidarity Scorecard, in the **DANGER ZONE**.



Now more than ever we need Global Solidarity

And what about the money side.

- The Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance concluded in 2023 that an additional 2.4 trillion dollars is needed PER YEAR by 2030 to meet the climate finance needs of the planet.[2]

- A recent report of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism puts that figure at between 4 and 7 trillion dollars per year.[3]

And we haven't even been able to muster the 100 billion dollars of climate finance promised eight years ago in Paris. Traditional multilateral funding approaches are struggling to adapt their decades-old design and mandates to 21st century geopolitics.

The first decade or so of this century was focused on "aid effectiveness" and "more effective development cooperation" and there have been some important successes: the strides made by the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, for instance, or the strong international focus on women's rights and girls' education.

But as we enter the second quarter of the century, efforts to update aid and development cooperation seem tired. Initiatives to expand and improve international cooperation to the scale so obviously required seem to come up against political barriers presented as inevitable.

- Replenishments of important global funds follow the traditional model of asking for funding every few years – but without a formula, responsibility or predictability.

- Reforms proposed to the ODA (official development assistance) system such as localisation[4] are welcome but lack depth.

There is talk of "decolonising" aid, but can you really decolonise something that might be by its very make up and history, colonial?

The dominant "aid" paradigm, cooked up about 80 years ago, is preventing the world's nations from taking the steps we desperately need to reform and rebuild our world.

We are driving a broken-down car. Without any fuel.

The world needs a coherent, ambitious, effective global response to the multiple challenges it faces. We need all corners of our world to be pulling together.

Instead, we face a crisis of multilateralism. Incoherence, lack of vision and, inevitably therefore, weak and ineffective attempts at cooperation for our common good.

Look at the Climate Conference COP28 – I have lost count of the number of people that ask me if it is worth going, because it won't achieve actual change. And it's not just because global leaders are failing. And it's not just because it's a fiendishly difficult political context. Although both of those are true.

But the more I studied this over the years, the more I realised that a major reason our institutions are struggling is the outdated way we have been taught to think about global cooperation.

The dominant "aid" paradigm, cooked up about 80 years ago, is preventing the world's nations from taking the steps we desperately need to reform and rebuild our world.

History of aid

The world's grand experiment with foreign aid began in the aftermath of a devastating world war. The vision behind it is perhaps best articulated by US president Harry Truman in his Point Four address in 1949 which called for "a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas."[5]

Aid has been through many changes over the years: from the "big push" rhetoric of the 1960s, the setting of the 0.7% GNI target for the wealthy OECD countries in 1970, structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s, and then the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the first 15 years of this century, which saw a renewed focus on social sector spending.

At different times and in different places, foreign aid has focused on everything from infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing, conflict prevention, human rights, women's equality, health and education, institution building, environmental protection, emergency response and pretty much everything else. The current fad is using aid to leverage private capital in support of economic development.

But while aid has had many faces, two of the most fundamental aspects of the aid narrative have remained unchanged. I call them conceptual constraints, and until we break through them, we will remain unable to build the cooperation system we now need.

Conceptual Constraints

1 First, that aid is temporary support to help foreign countries out of exceptional difficulties related to poverty and poor governance while other financial options, like taxes and private investment, are unavailable. Aid will eventually end when the economies of recipient countries are big enough, leaving aid departments (in the EU, in the UK, in the US) to close their doors for the last time.

2 And second, that aid is a transfer of money and knowledge from richer "developed" countries to poorer "developing" ones. Aid is a charitable endeavour, with self-described "donors" calling the shots on how and where it is spent. Donor-recipient. Us & them.

But that is wrong on both counts.

We need a permanent and growing system of international cooperation, not a temporary diminishing one.

And it needs to include all parts of the world as contributors, not only the Global North.



From ad hoc and temporary to structured and permanent

The challenges facing the world have evolved and expanded. Eradicating extreme poverty remains the central focus of international cooperation, but it can no longer be the only priority. As living standards improve in many parts of the world, so do expectations.

Meanwhile, the environmental challenge, from saving forests to cleaning up the oceans and, ultimately, the need for humanity to address climate change is more urgent than ever.

Add to that a list of international policy issues that seems to be getting longer all the time - think peace and security, controlling communicable diseases (most recently Covid19), science and research, international tax matters, organised crime to name a few - and you have a long shopping list of top priority items requiring a significantly sized wallet.

Rapid technological advance creates opportunities, but it also raises risks and uncertainty.

Meanwhile structural inequalities remain fully intact, with many indicators of inequality worsening in recent decades.

We need far more money, better spent, to support global prosperity and counter global threats.

But rather than planning for the expansion of cooperation that is so clearly required, our “aid” system is actually constructed for gradual shutdown.

This shutdown is built into the theory of aid, a bit like the obsolescence famously built into old-fashioned lightbulbs. And possibly iPhones. Gradually narrowing its focus onto those countries arbitrarily described as Low Income until one day finally the whole era of aid comes to an end.

Any number of quotes could demonstrate this.

Take Donald Kaberuka, a former President of the African Development Bank, who said, "Aid is not successful unless it has a sell-by date. If aid does not stop, it will have failed."[6]

Barack Obama put it succinctly (as one would expect): "Foreign Assistance is not an end. The purpose of aid must be to create the conditions where it is no longer needed."[7]

According to Paul Collier, an influential British academic, "There is basically no role for international development cooperation in middle income countries."[8]

Almost all countries are now either middle- or high-income[9].

This has been the common view in the aid business for years. It's the logical consequence of traditional assumptions about aid and the implication of the economic theories that have been rolled out to support it. It's also the expectation of the taxpaying public whose money is being spent.

But it is wrong.

In my work on international development and cooperation over the last two decades I have become convinced that the era of largescale public investment in international progress and development is not coming to an end.

Quite the contrary; it is only just beginning. In fact, it has taken on a new importance as humanity grapples with rising inequality and unsustainability to add to the central challenge of poverty reduction.

Public money

Fine, you say, so we need to find more money. But won't private money do? And can't poorer countries pay with their own taxes? And can't billionaires help out with their philanthropy?

When the countries of the world met in Addis Ababa in 2015 to discuss how to fund the Sustainable Development Goals they were soon to acclaim, that was certainly the vibe. Ramp up other types of money – private, domestic, philanthropic.

But public finance has a unique set of characteristics, at the international as well as the national level, which mean it cannot simply be replaced by other types of money.

A different Motivation

Higher levels of Concessionality

More Flexibility (e.g. counter-cyclical)

Simple Availability

And different channels of Accountability

Even when other funds come on stream, public money is still often the best type of finance for some interventions, not a last resort, but a first resort. As the economist Mariana Mazzucato says, prodding societies in the right direction and promoting global benefits. In other words, it is not just the quantity of a particular type of money that matters, but its unique qualities as well.

From North-South to Mutual



It is quite obvious that we need more global solidarity, more cooperation, and more public money at the international level to spend on crucial joint global objectives.

If that's the problem, then the solution in my view, is to change the way we think about international cooperation and make it **more mutual**.

And let me first give you some good news.

Despite the unremittingly grey cloud of post-Covid problems, there does seem to be one fairly consistent silver lining; a new readiness to name structural injustices – whether related to race, gender or geography – and call for fundamental changes in global institutional architecture in a way that seemed unlikely only a few years ago.

Young people seem particularly impatient with glossing over unpalatable historical realities or tinkering with manifestly outdated approaches. Meanwhile, post-capitalism, post-neoliberalism and post-colonialism are activities now funded by the world's universities and foundations.

We are no longer in the era of improving aid but decolonising it, an altogether more profound objective.

But while the speeches of global leaders seek to present a sector that has moved on from the days of patronizing pleas to feed starving peoples, in its underlying assumptions and dominant institutions, it is not clear that much has changed.

The World Bank is still the World Bank. The UN Security Council is still the UN Security Council. The OECD club of rich countries still sits in Paris to discuss how to spend aid.

A fundamental division remains at the heart of "development" cooperation: the idea that some countries are "developed" while others, the majority, are under-developed/undeveloped/developing, depending on the latest iteration found in university textbooks.

This is the theoretical basis upon which the "development" industry has built its edifice. Progress is to be found in one part of the world – namely Europe and North America – and other parts of the world need to look North for answers and help. While presented in terms of generosity and charity – "aid" – rather than oppression and extraction, it is nevertheless hard to imagine a more colonial mentality.

The process of building the SDGs appeared to have broken through this narrative with universal aspirations for all countries not just so-called "developing" countries.

But global cooperation has lagged behind, still largely communicated as top-down, one-way, not really cooperation at all, in the sense of mutual assistance, rather more transactional, with so-called "donors" offering support to "recipients".

And that means that while aid has often been a force for good, it has also been misused and wasted, in part due to the institutions and processes through which it is managed.

Aid governance is stuck in the 20th century, with a handful of countries taking the major decisions and contributions fluctuating depending on "donor" circumstances.

An improved system of Global Cooperation requires more democratic decision-making about the size, purpose and accountability of contributions, moving away from a donor-recipient mentality and towards more respectful partnerships with all countries and other stakeholders (including civil society) sat at the decision-making table.

There is no easy answer to the problem of global governance - power is power - but, if we get it right, we could push new types of partnership, which will be the difference between an era of global progress and one in which we are unable to curtail the constant jostling of nation states for supremacy to the detriment of marginalised communities and our planet as a whole.

The good news, more good news, is that countries are more closely connected than ever before, expanding opportunities for states and societies to collaborate on issues of shared concern.

As historically poorer countries do better economically, all countries are increasingly contributing to solving the world's problems.

The fact that some leading countries are currently going through a kind of blinkered isolationism does not change these fundamentals.

Three principles of 21st century cooperation

So we need a **bigger**, **better organised**, **long-term system** of global cooperation in which **all** countries are fully a part.

From poverty	to inequality & sustainability
From national progress	to international goods
From north-south	to mutual
From voluntary	to contributory
From charity	to investment
From foreign	to global
From transactional	to cooperative
From *ad hoc*	to structured
From temporary	to permanent
From stingy	to sufficient
From "them & us"	to just "us"

With colleagues in the new Global Public Investment Network, we have come up with three core principles for cooperation in the 21st century:

All contribute

Building on the SDG principle of universality and challenging the donor–recipient dichotomy of traditional aid.

All benefit

Resources channelled towards internationally agreed global objectives – such as climate stability and pandemic prevention and preparedness – allocated regionally and nationally.

All decide

Becoming co-contributors rather than recipients strengthens the Global South's demands for a stronger voice in decision-making. A more representative structure, globally and in particular projects, including civil society, leading to enhanced accountability and effectiveness.

And these principles can be applied to all types of global cooperation.

Global Public Investment

Let's look at the two main forms of development cooperation: **Financial and Capacity building**.

If any of you have read anything I have written you will know that these three principles, this new way of thinking, underpins a new system of international public finance we are calling Global Public Investment.

And this graphic is from a new report we have recently published.

In place of the insufficient and ineffective funding provided today, our Global Public Investment approach proposes a better-governed system of fiscal allocations, a new way to pay for our global objectives.

GPI is a solution to the conundrum that we need tonnes more international public money, much of it in grant form, not just lending, but that it can't come from the "aid" system, which still has a place, but is increasingly anachronistic.

The new international public money cannot be managed in the same top-down limited way we have become used to. It needs to be based around mutuality, not us-and-them. All contribute, all benefit, all decide.

Countries at all income levels need to participate in the creation of a new global financing arrangement, one that recognises their voices and modernises accountability processes.

Changes in global wealth and power have shaken up international development practice for the better, with emerging economies now contributing more than ever to global objectives.

All countries, even the very poorest, should contribute funds for global sustainable development according to their ability to do so, and all, even the very richest, should receive, according to their need. Some will see this as a radical idea - they will be surprised to see that this is increasingly the new normal.

More money. Better decisions. More accountability. More impact.

It is really important to note here that GPI is not the only approach to pay for things globally. There is a strong case for large-scale reparations from former colonial powers and from major polluters, and there will be an ongoing need for humanitarian support in crises which are by their nature located in a particular geography.

But the mutuality at the heart of the GPI approach should be the basis of a new era in global cooperation.

The GPI approach affords respect, power and dignity to countries and communities with fewer financial resources, because it recognises them as globally relevant co-contributors at the international level.

So for instance spending on global goods and services is not a question of charity, but of sensible investment in mutually beneficial objectives (just like public sector spending at the national level). It should be an obligation, not a voluntary gift, and while it should expect a return, that return is not a financial one, but rather social and environmental impact for our global common good.

But this isn't just about dignity and respect. Mutuality is the key to unlocking and sustaining large scale global cooperation. You don't get effective cooperation in the 21st century without mutuality.

Lower income countries will see this new approach as a way to build their voice and power. Meanwhile the richer countries will see it as a way to share responsibility and make the changes we all need to see for a safer, fairer, greener world.

In the words of William Ruto, the President of Kenya:

We do not want anything for free [...] we will pay commensurate to our economy and we want those resources controlled, not by the IMF and World Bank, because you have the final say [speaking to Macron] [...] We want another organisation of equals where you have as much say, because you pay, as we do, because we also pay [...] We need a new financial architecture where governance, where power is not in the hands of a few people.[10]

From vertical, horizontal, triangular to

Vertical

Alright, we've discussed the application of our new principles to global finance, but cooperation extends beyond mere financial contributions. What about capacity building?

And this is where, finally, we come on to the language of circularity, circular cooperation, and I explain why we use that language.

Why aren't there more Bangladeshi organisations helping Germany with its flood defences. Or Colombian organisations advising Norwegians on mental health. Or South Africans sharing insights on women's rights in North America.

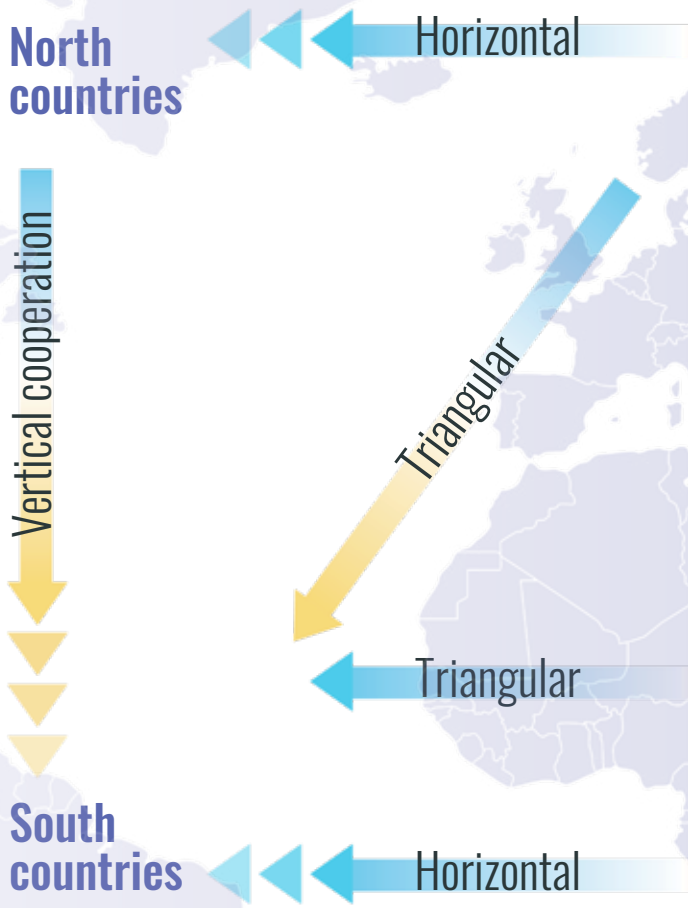
The "international cooperation" ecosystem still theorises supposedly "developed" countries to be the repository of knowledge, to be shared with "developing" countries.

Yes, of course there is more money and resources in some countries than others, and that has implications for global financial responsibility including redistribution. But it is false to imply that countries in the Global North cannot benefit from cooperation with poorer countries, their expertise and solutions they have piloted, just as it is also false, not to say insulting, to imply that countries in the Global South cannot contribute to development in other parts of the world, including much wealthier countries.

This becomes an especially urgent point when you add that the development model typical of the Global North is not itself sustainable.

I always say that I have no problem with the concept of a "developing" country – all countries are "developing". It is the idea that some countries are already developed which is so terribly arrogant, and unhelpful. We all have much to learn.

I know most people listening to this will be nodding in agreement. So how do we build a programme model that reflects this insight. That's where the circular cooperation approach comes in.



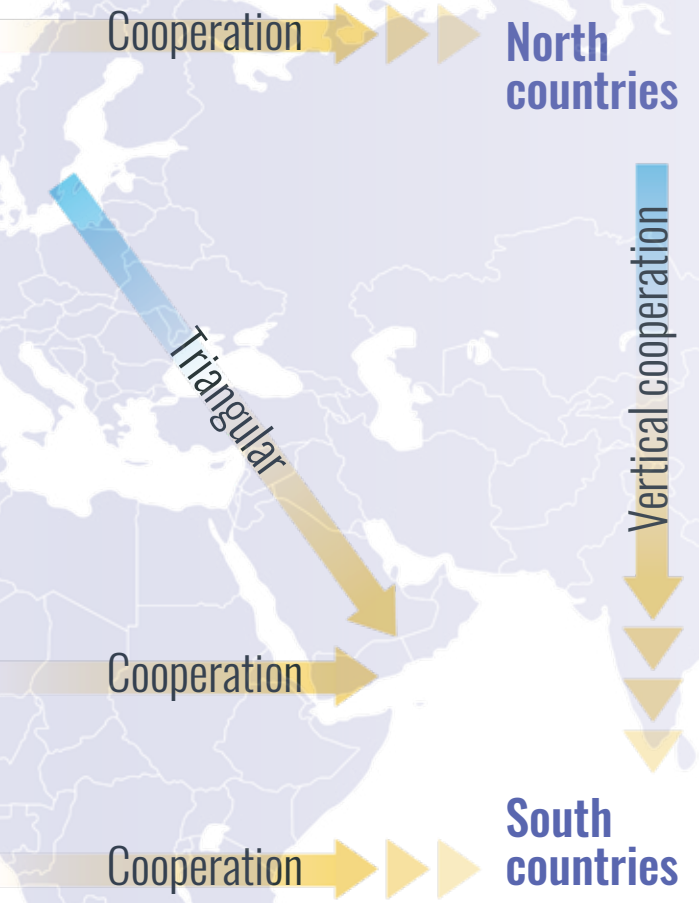
Horizontal

We have already talked about the typically top-down nature of much 20th century international cooperation. This could be described as "vertical".

In response, many countries in the Global South have for many years been carrying out South-South Cooperation which emphasises "horizontal" cooperation between peers.

The growth in South-South Cooperation in recent decades has widened the base of countries contributing to international cooperation (and therefore the resources available for development), and generally

circular cooperation



emphasised in-country control of project selection and management.

It is worth noting that some South-South Cooperation projects are actually quite vertical in nature – think China-Zambia.

And that horizontal approaches could also describe North-North cooperation, such as the cooperation carried out between European countries.

What we mean by "horizontal cooperation" then is cooperation carried out by countries of a similar size or type.

Triangular

In recent years the concept of "triangular" cooperation has come to the fore, intending to erode the binary donor/recipient relationship and allow communities of different wealth levels to engage in development projects in a new way, building on complementary strengths.

Typically,

- a high-income country provides funding, sometimes known as the FACILITATING PARTNER,
- a middle-income country provides expertise – sometimes called a PIVOT PARTNER,
- and development impact is targeted at a low-income country, known as the BENEFICIARY PARTNER.

However, even this TRIANGULAR approach maintains VERTICALITY, namely that a poorer country is supported in its development by countries higher up the income scale.

So while all these modalities of cooperation are useful and important, they are all in their own way, still quite 20th century.

Fragility and challenges exist in countries of all income levels, and 21st century patterns of education, mobility and technology diffusion make it increasingly possible for countries and communities at all income levels to contribute and lead.

Positioning the people of one community or country as "recipients" or "beneficiaries", and others as "experts" or "donors", creates barriers to progressing sustainable development across the world.

Luckily, the use of spatial analogies to describe these three modes of cooperation – vertical, horizontal, and triangular – allows us to propose the next evolution in international cooperation projects.

Circular cooperation



The "circular" cooperation approach breaks down the North-South, donor-recipient divides and treats all countries as both contributors and beneficiaries of development cooperation.

It emphasises that all countries are in transition towards sustainable and dynamic development – none are developed – and that they can be helped by other countries regardless of their GDP per capita – because experience, ideas and wisdom are not the preserve of the wealthier nations.

The Millennium Development Goals said the problem is poverty, that is predominantly located in the Global South, so other countries were asked to help South countries reduce it. It was a 20th century framing.

The Sustainable Development Goals say the problem is unsustainability. That is a problem found in different ways in all countries. Work together as a world to become more sustainable. It's a 21st century framing.

A modern approach to cooperation should emphasise reciprocity. A 'Circular Cooperation' approach would be the final rejection of the colonial thinking that has so undermined global relationships.

It would break down the donor-recipient divide and treat all countries as both co-contributors and co-recipients of ideas, experience, resources and support.

Where one country has more material resources it would contribute more money, but that would not accord it leadership status. All countries would jointly strategise and implement a programme of work from which all would benefit in different ways.



Themes that lend themselves to Circular Cooperation include those where a priori and in practice there is no reason to assume more knowledge/ experience in Global North than Global South.

Issues such as:

- **Human rights**
- **Gender equality**
- **Urban sustainability**
- **Social programmes to fight hunger, drug abuse and loneliness**
- **Education**
- **Conflict resolution**

And I want to make the same caveat as I did with Global Public Investment. Other modalities exist and are useful. The choice of modality – vertical, horizontal, triangular, or circular – depends on the context and purpose of the cooperation project. But we should be actively seeking out opportunities to build circular cooperation when possible.

Lessons from the EU Funds



The good news – even better news – is that clues to how to build this approach can be found here in the EU. The European Union showcases what a reciprocal approach to cooperation within a region can look like: countries clubbing together to solve common problems.

The goal of convergence is at the heart of the theory behind the EU Structural and Cohesion funds, whereby the EU's wealthier countries, including some of the world's major donors, transfer billions to poorer European countries, which are nevertheless wealthy by global standards.

With the adoption of the SDGs, the door for applying EU-style thinking to a broader global context seems to be wide open.

Countries in Europe do not "graduate" from concessional assistance, upon reaching a certain (arbitrary) level of income per capita.

Notably, even the wealthier countries in the EU grouping, net contributors to the overall pot and some of the richest countries in the world, also benefit directly from EU grants. The money they receive is generally used to promote social cohesion, generate jobs, and invest in green growth, as well as to support broader objectives such as culture.

While EU Funds do focus on poverty and social cohesion, and special funds for humanitarian responses, their thematic focuses go well beyond these concerns, looking at greater connectivity between countries, infrastructure development, job creation, small business development and entrepreneurship, research and innovation, and environmental protection.

The most important aspect of EU Fund governance is that, because all countries pay in and all receive, so all sit around the table deciding how funds should be spent – much in the way those backing a Global Public Investment approach propose.

Critical to the theory underpinning the EU funds, and to garnering public support for this redistribution of wealth is the recognition that reducing disparities in living standards and building shared infrastructure is important for the progress and security of all parts of the union, not just the direct recipients of grants.

Towards dignity, but strategic

Mutuality means enhancing human dignity between peoples and communities. It removes power imbalances due to education, wealth and resources; paternalism; causes of dependency and cultural arrogance.[11]

Many organisations, governments, communities and experts in the Global South understand and support these concepts without hesitation, in part because their countries are elevated above the status of recipient, and take the mantle of contributor.

Words matter. They can convey respect or condescension - and too often in the world of "aid" it is the latter.

Too often the psychological aspects of the 'development' relationship are overlooked by bean-counter approaches to impact, but with the self-esteem associated with power and dignity, communities are more motivated to contribute and lead, which could itself

mean stronger impact even in terms of 'hard outcomes' – a virtuous circle of leadership, dignity and impact.

On the other hand, being classed as co-beneficiaries will assist Global North countries to adopt an attitude of humility to counterbalance the hangover of colonial arrogance.

GPI and Circular cooperation provide a more compelling, and ethical, self-interest rationale for contributions from all types of contributor – as continued financing for development may increasingly rely on demonstrating local benefits.

There are mixed messages on public support for international cooperation in Europe and other continents, but some evidence of a positive response to the idea of mutual cooperation to prevent, for example, a pandemic crossing borders or multiplying climate crises.

We need to demonstrate the direct benefits of increased cooperation to publics in all country types, North and South.

Is this idea possible?

Co-creation leads to better ideas AND more legitimacy. That's why we have set up the Global Public Investment Network, which has member organisations from all over the world building this idea. And we are building Circular Cooperation meetings in the coming year.

The great thing about this cocreation approach is that while we already have some clear ideas about how to implement it, there are many other ideas emerging all the time. The more energy there is behind it, the more new ways the principles will be adopted in ways not yet imagined.

As we have developed this approach it has been exciting to see more and more people back it:

- Top economists like Mariana Mazzucato to Thomas Piketty to Jayati Ghosh.
- Representatives of the governments of Chile, Norway and Colombia.
- Leading multilateral experts like Helen Clark and Winnie Byanyima.
- NGO leaders from the ONE Campaign, Global Citizen, Christian Aid, Civicus and many more.[12]

There have been examples over the years of attempts to circularise cooperation, both financial cooperation and capacity building, some more successful than others.

Indeed GPI and Circular Cooperation are not just important evolutions, they are a better description of what is already beginning to happen.

What we need now is a concerted push, backed by theory and methodology and led by leading actors in the cooperation ecosystem.

We need to continue to develop the idea, turning Triangular and Vertical projects into Circular ones, and helping new funds follow GPI principles. We need to build these approaches into the coming FFD discussions at the G20 and the Summit for the Future set for September 2024.

In conclusion...

Our world is in transition, as power shifts, unbalances rebalance; demographies and democracies evolve rapidly; technology surges ahead, and our climate changes.

It is time of peril. And it is also a time of great opportunity.

Anything is possible. And I mean that in the worst sense and the best sense. Tragic possibilities in our lifetimes. Tragic realities already, every day, for so many.

But also this permacrisis, polycrisis, that we are living through can lead to changes that have not so far really been contemplated. Changes of the type that brought our current, creaking international system into being. Changes that could put us on the right road.

When Keynes and others put together the pieces of a new world order after the Second World War, culminating in the Bretton Woods Institutions, their ambition, clarity and strategic nous overcame the inevitable political barriers. They did what was necessary in the face of great global challenges.

We are at a similar moment today. We cannot limit our vision to fit five-year strategy periods or electoral cycles, or what seem to be the current political constraints, which can anyway change in an instant, as we have seen only too clearly in recent years.

The fact that nationalist ideologies hold sway in some parts of the world means that internationalists need to fight ever harder for their ideas and ideals. Rather than self-censor to fit more neatly with what is perceived to be a popular (and populist) reaction against globalism, we need to make more persuasive arguments, based on evidence, and touching people's hearts as well as their minds.

Cooperation holds intrinsic significance in combating poverty and promoting sustainability.

But it is also the guardrail to help the nations of our world work better together on tense issues like trade and conflict.

There has never been a better moment to stress the importance of internationalism and global cooperation for just and sustainable progress, with mutuality as its guiding principle.

END

Endnotes

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