Development intervention frameworks

We developed four frameworks to help us think about development interventions:

- How they were designed to change community control parameters, some of which would be easier to change than others;
- A framework for assessing the appropriateness of federal-level intervention designs;
- A framework for establishing the theory of change implicit in an intervention design;
- A framework for understanding why development interventions are never implemented as planned

Development interventions and control parameters

Government development interventions are designed to change community control parameters with the aim of triggering a development process within the community. Table 1 links the major interventions with the relevant control parameters.

Table 1: Community control parameters and selected development interventions

Parameter areas	Control parameters	Main community development interventions
1. Place	Terrain, settlement, climate, ecology	Watershed management, zero-grazing, tree-planting, land use Irrigation infrastructure, soil interventions
	Connections with wider world	Internal, feeder and external roads Electricity Mobile phones TV & radio infrastructure Small rural town interventions
2. People	Human resources/liabilities Aspirations Personal relations	Youth interventions Women interventions Interventions for poor & excluded Child-focused interventions (other than primary education)
3. Lives	Human re/pro-duction infrastructures and institutions	Safe water Health extension Primary education Pre-school, secondary, post-secondary education; Functional adult literacy Child health, curative services
4. Livelihoods	Farming system	Crop extension Access to farming land Livestock extension & vets
	Livelihood diversification	Migration regulation Non-farm extension
	Economic institutions	Credit Taxes & contributions Co-operatives (PCs & SCs)
5. Social relations	Community fault-lines Organised collective agency	Govt engagement with elites, ROs and CIOs Physical security Political security Justice
6. Cultural ideas	Customary cultural repertoire Modern cultural repertoire	Government 'awaring' and party propaganda Government regulation of other ideas Interventions to reduce 'Harmful Traditional Practices'
7. Politics	Political settlement Government-society relations Opposition party organisation	Kebele and party organisation Elections Accountability measures including reporting upwards Planning for the community
8. External aspects of intersecting functional systems	Economic – e.g. international coffee prices	
	Lives – e.g. contraceptive provision, food aid systems	
	Social – e.g. diasporas	
	Cultural imports –e.g. religious, political, modernisation ideologies	
	Political – e.g. EPRDF party	

Parameter areas	Control parameters	Main community development interventions
9. Encompassing meso systems	State of meso system: economy, society, culture, politics Government plans for the wider area	
10. Encompassing macro systems	State of country system: economy, society, culture, politics State of Horn of Africa systems State of global systems	

Local appropriateness of federal-level designs

Development interventions are attempts to change the way in which people behave and the physical and social landscapes within which they live and work. Their success partly depends on how well they connect with the place, people, and functional sub-systems in the particular community. In the Stage 3 research for each intervention we asked how appropriate the design was for the different types of community. We focused on material (dis)connects, timing (dis)connects and cultural (dis)connects in government and community aims and assumptions related to the field in which the interventions were implemented.

Material (dis) connects

How well do place-related interventions chime with the local place? For example. does the fertiliser provides by government suit the soil type? Does the community have a watershed which would benefit from a watershed management intervention?

Timing (dis)connects

How responsive is the programme design to relevant local structured time rhythms affecting different control parameters? A simple example is the frequent clash between nationally-designed school timetables and local daily and seasonal demands for household labour.

Cultural (dis)connects

Figure 1 Cultural disconnects between top-down and local cultural repertoires
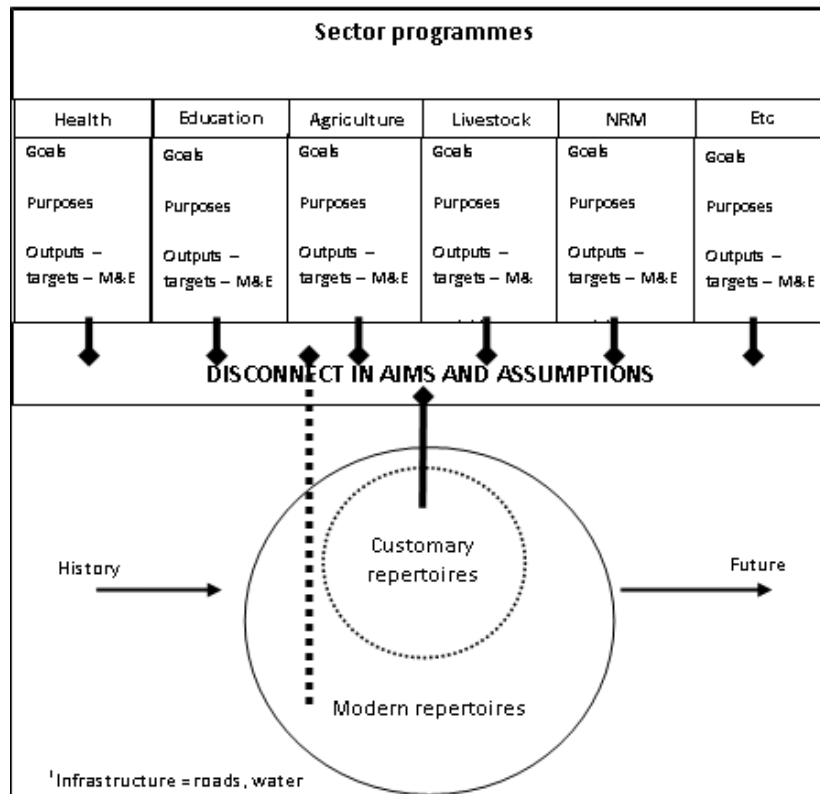
Figure 1 depicts potential cultural (dis)connects between the aims and assumptions implicit in the mental models (ideas) and institutional designs (norms and rules) associated with top-down sector policies and programmes and local beliefs, values, norms and ways of doing things which we are calling cultural repertoires.

Theories of change implicit in development intervention design

Each development programme is designed to produce changes in people, institutions, and/or the material environment which will supposedly lead to the achievement of certain outcomes. Each programme contains more or less explicit theories of how the combination of the planned resources and activities will produce the desired changes and outcomes. Each programme strategy can be de-constructed in terms of a designed intervention configuration of social construction, mechanisms and outcomes (CMO framework[1]). The same framework can be used to explore what actually happened when the intervention was implemented (see below).

Social construction in the design

We considered the theoretical social construction in the design of the development intervention under three headings:
- *Social actors*: identify the social actors given roles and how they were meant to behave and relate
- *Institutional location*: describe the planned intervention system, rules, and routines
- *Resourcing*: what material and human resources for implementing the intervention are assumed to be available?

Mechanisms of change in the design

What change mechanisms are built into the intervention design? Potential mechanisms include legislation, administrative *fiat*, incentives, pressure from others, targets, threats, fines, imprisonment, awaring, training, targeting 'models', learning by doing, learning by copying.

Outcomes in the design

What were the planned outcomes for people, institutions, and the community place?
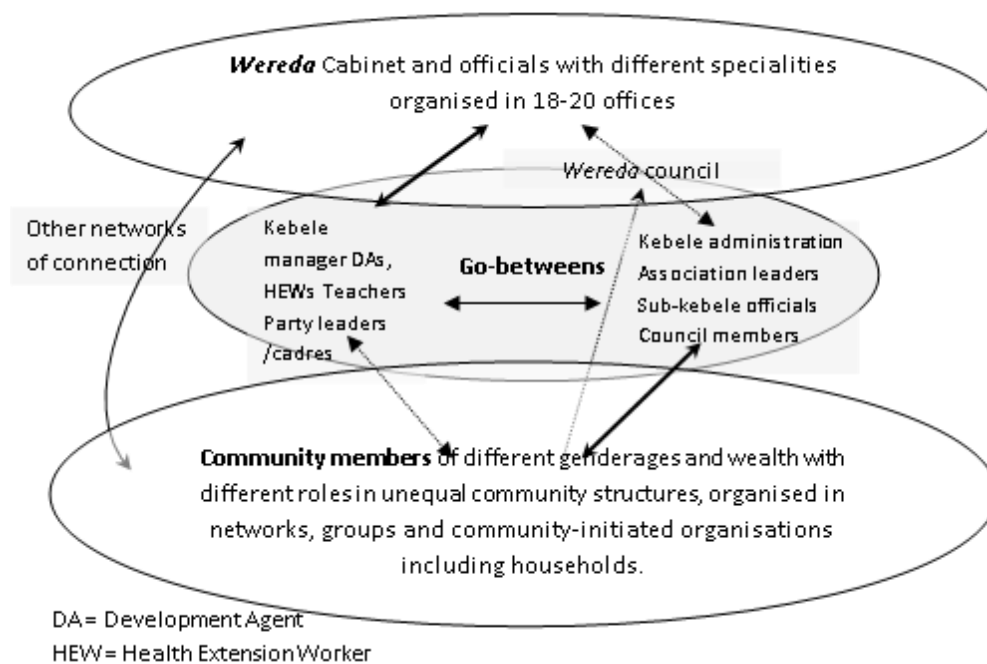
Intervention implementation never goes to plan

For a number of reasons development interventions are never implemented as planned. The reasons fall into two main categories. The first relates to the social construction of the interventions through actions and interactions in the development interface while the second relates to the passage of time including (1) internal system dynamics as time passes and (2) streams of interactions with other interventions and other relevant things going on with no intervention connections.

Social interactions at the development interface

The cultural contradictions between top-down and community development models are not easily resolved and they cause difficulties for those whose official positions require them to bridge the cultural divide. Figure 2 shows the key development players in the *wereda*, *kebele*, and communities and identifies a set of 'go-between' government employees who work in the development interface space interacting with *wereda* officials and community members.

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[1] Pawson, R. and N. Tilley, 1997, *Realistic Evaluation*, London: Sage.

Figure 2: Social interactions in the development interface

Wereda Cabinet and officials with different specialities organised in 18-20 offices

Wereda council

Other networks of connection

Kebele manager DAs, HEWs Teachers Party leaders /cadres

Go-betweens

Kebele administration
Association leaders
Sub-kebele officials
Council members

Community members of different genderages and wealth with different roles in unequal community structures, organised in networks, groups and community-initiated organisations including households.

DA = Development Agent
HEW = Health Extension Worker

Kebele managers, Development Agents (Agriculture, Livestock and Natural Resources), Health Extension Workers and teachers mostly, though not always, come from outside the community. They are employed by the *wereda* and given performance objectives (targets) which, if not met, may have repercussions for their careers. A second set of 'go-betweens' – *kebele* and sub-*kebele* officials and *kebele* Council members - are (s)elected from within the community and embedded in community networks and structures whilst by their function they are also linked to higher government structures and increasingly to party structures. They are unpaid 'go-between' government volunteers. This framework was used in Stage 2 to design new questions and inform data interpretation.

There are four types of response that members of a community can make in the face of planned change from above: exit, voice, loyalty, foot-dragging. We started to explore these different responses.

The CMO framework described above in relation to intervention design can also be used to deconstruct the implementation of an intervention.

Social construction in practice

In practice interventions in rural communities are socially constructed by the actions of, and interactions among, the local implementers some of whom are (1) government employees while others are (2) unpaid (s)elected 'kebele volunteers'; (3) the direct 'beneficiaries' and (4) other members of their households and in some cases (5) community contributors of resources and work and/or (6) others directly affected by the intervention while not benefiting.

Potential beneficiaries have lives outside intervention programmes and may also be expected to participate in a considerable number of different interventions; given that implementation requires the use of household resources and time they will often have to prioritise. Furthermore, participation in different interventions usually requires different combinations of resources, time and attitude on the part of implementers and other people in the beneficiary's network. For example to send a child to school regularly parents must believe education is a good idea, have

enough resources and time to cover the direct and opportunity costs throughout the school year or be willing to suffer a loss of household work or income, and the child must want to go to school. A school must have been constructed in the past, teachers must attend, there must be government resources for equipment and books, etc.

People not included in the intervention whose interests will be affected also have a role to play. For example, the success of the recent campaign for an increase in safe infant deliveries will depend not only on providing enough maternity beds, staff and equipment in health centres and ambulances and changing the minds and behaviour of pregnant women, but also on changed minds and behaviour on the part of husbands, mothers-in-law and traditional birth attendants, as well as neighbours expected to carry the women to waiting ambulances, HEWs and kebele officials expected to devote time and energy to the campaign, wereda officials expected to allocate scarce funds to fuel and drivers, health centre officials expected to treat rural women in labour with kindness and respect, and in some places households expected to contribute grain for customary ceremonies after delivery.

In addition there are a number of interventions, such as watershed management or the building of a Farmers' Training centre or a school classroom, which have collective (though not universal) benefits but depend on individual contributions in cash, kind, and/or work.

Another mechanism at work is that potential beneficiaries are influenced by opinion leaders and reference groups in the community. At one extreme an intervention may evoke *co-operative* individual or collective responses among the majority of intended beneficiaries and others and at the other it may be met with overt or covert *resistance.* In some cases responses may be more *complex* with acceptance of some aspects of the intervention and not others, or due to a clash of interests acceptance by some and resistance by others.

The other aspects of the social construction are (1) the actual institutional location which includes systems, rules, divisions of labour and routines and (2) the infrastructure and resources for implementing the intervention.

Mechanisms in practice

Development interventions rely on one or a mix of the social mechanisms listed earlier, for changing minds, bodies and behaviour of beneficiaries, implementers and others. People react to the social mechanisms differently. Threats may frighten some people into new behaviour but antagonise others into overt or covert resistance or foot-dragging. Constant persuasion or 'awaring' may change some minds but not annoy others. Incentives may be taken up by some people but not be large enough for others compared with anticipated costs and opportunity costs. People may conform to legal restrictions and decisions made by government fiat or they may find ways to avoid being affected by their implementation. Differences in reasoning as to how to respond may derive from differences in circumstance, priorities, past experiences and/or personality. As a result of these differences no intervention is going to work according to the simple theories of change found in intervention designs.

The successful implementation of an intervention depends on new behaviour on the part of those charged with implementation. Social mechanisms for getting implementing officials to do what they are meant to include instructions, targets, reporting, *gimgema*, opportunities for training, promotion and demotion and the way these are used and responded to has consequences for the progress of the intervention.

Outcomes in practice

Interventions have consequences during and after implementation for people, place, institutions and community-government relations; some may coincide with planned outcomes but some are likely to be unintended.

Comparing intervention design and implementation

While there is always a gap between intervention design and implementation this is larger in some cases than others. Table 2 presents a framework for comparing design and implementation which was used during the Stage 3 research.

Table 2: Framework for comparing intervention design and implementation

Development intervention processes		Theory of change in design	Implementation realities
Social construction planning	Roles of implementers, beneficiaries etc		
	Material infrastructure & inputs		
	Systems, rules and routines		
	Time-frame for activities, inputs, outcomes		
Social mechanisms for influencing the behaviour of beneficiaries and other community members	Legislation and administrative *fiat*		
	Material & status incentives		
	Targets		
	Threats, fines & imprisonment		
	'Awaring' and training		
	Dialogue and participation		
	Targeting models, learning by doing & copying		
	Organising and mobilising pressure from others		
Social mechanisms for influencing the behaviour of intervention implementers	Instructions		
	Targets & reporting		
	Gimgema		
	Opportunities for training		
	Promotion and demotion		
Outcomes	Place outcomes		
	People outcomes		
	Functional sub-system outcomes		
Collective responses to the interventions	Co-operation		
	Resistance		
	Complexity		