

Endogenous development

The importance of participatory approaches and of integrating local knowledge into development interventions has become broadly recognised. However, many of these approaches experience difficulties in overcoming an implicit western bias. Endogenous development seeks to overcome this bias by making peoples' worldviews and livelihood strategies the starting point for development. Many of these worldviews and livelihood strategies reflect sustainable development as a balance between material, social and spiritual well-being. This balance is illustrated in each article with a box containing the three interacting worlds (see also p.3). The main difference between endogenous development and other participatory approaches is its emphasis on including spiritual aspects in the development process, in addition to the ecological, social and economic aspects.

Endogenous development is mainly based on local strategies, values, institutions and resources. Therefore priorities, needs and criteria for development may differ in each community and may not always be the same as those of the development worker. Key concepts within endogenous development are: local control of the development process; taking cultural values seriously; appreciating worldviews; and finding a balance between local and external resources.

The aim of endogenous development is to empower local communities to take control of their own development process. While revitalising ancestral and local knowledge, endogenous development helps local people select those external resources that best fit the local conditions. Endogenous development leads to increased bio- and cultural diversity, reduced environmental degradation, and a self-sustaining local and regional exchange.



*Rehue, ritual ladder near Temuco, Chile used by Mapuche healers for ceremonies and healing.
Photo: Regine Rhem*

Editorial

Over 2000 years ago the Roman playwright Plautus (254-184 BC) said '*No man is wise enough by himself*'. I cannot think of a better way to express the importance of sharing our experiences and ideas. For many years the Compas Magazine has provided a platform for readers interested in endogenous development. But what is true for men may also be true for networks. After ten years of sharing amongst like-minded people, we feel the moment has come to broaden the COMPAS network. It is time to engage in strategic dialogues with critics and non-network members as well. We mark this new challenge with the first issue of the *Endogenous Development Magazine*.

The new magazine differs from the Compas Magazine in several ways. Most importantly, the articles are less about 'within-network learning' and more about mainstreaming the concepts, methods and results of endogenous development. Indeed, the main challenge facing 'endogenous development' is to involve new organisations and people (such as policy makers), so that more people benefit.

We invite all readers to actively participate in strengthening the concept of endogenous development by discussing the motion proposed in each issue (p.27) and on the website, and by sharing and reflecting on ideas and results. For those who want to read more about the approach, COMPAS publications are available at www.compasnet.org. Men might not be wise enough by themselves, but together we can broaden our minds.

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