



**TRANSFORMATIONAL  
COMMUNICATIONS FOR  
GLOBAL JUSTICE**

**REFRAMING TOOLKIT**

# WHAT'S THIS?

In October 2015, DEEEP hosted a workshop for people working across Europe in the (so-called) 'development' sector. In the two days, we explored the framing of 'development' and ways to make it better – ways to make it truly *transformational* – so we create the world we would all like to live in. Thanks **Hélène, Tobias & Grace** of **DEEEP** for organising!

Facilitated by **Richard & Elena** of **PIRC**, we were excited and inspired by input from **Fiona Doyle** of **Dóchas**, Ireland; **Amy West** of **Think Global**, UK; **Emilie Larsen** of **Reframing the Message**, Denmark; and **Eloísa Nos Aldás** of **DevReporter**, Spain.

**This toolkit has been created using the materials used and created during this session.**

There are activities for you to do, things for you to cut up, and signposts to further reading if you're interested. And if you have any questions, please do get in touch!

[info@publicinterest.org.uk](mailto:info@publicinterest.org.uk)

**We look forward to hear how you are getting on reframing your work!**

## CONTENTS

<b>FRAMING</b> <b>WHAT ARE FRAMES?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>VALUES</b> <b>WHY THINGS MATTER</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DEEP FRAMES</b> <b>CONNECTING VALUES &amp; BELIEFS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COMMUNICATIONS</b> <b>DOCHAS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT</b> <b>THINK GLOBAL</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WORKING WITH THE MEDIA</b> <b>DEVREPORTER</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>NARRATING THE STORY</b> <b>REFRAMING THE MESSAGE</b>	<b>15</b>

*DEEEP is a project co-funded by the European Union.*

*Icons in this guide used with gratitude, taken from the Noun Project, Christopher T. Howlett, Pham Thi Dieu Linh, Iconographer, Gregor Črešnar, EliRatus, Mohamed Amine Benzajour, Melissa Hendricks, Demograph, dw, Isabel Foo, Cesar Reynoso, Luis Prado, Mourad Mokrane, Martin Vanco, DesignNex, Alexandr Cherkinsky, Anisha Varghese, Michele Zamparo, Bruno Castro, Roger Cline, Daniel Llamas Soto, Lorie Shaull*



**DEEEP**

citizens'  
Empowerment  
for  
Global  
Justice

**PIRC**  
PUBLIC  
INTEREST  
RESEARCH  
CENTRE

# Framing

## What are frames?

*Framing* is about creating meaning: defining an issue through focusing on specific elements or making particular associations. A *frame* is one of these distinct definitions or chunks of meaning that tell a particular story about an issue.

*Development* can then be *framed* as an issue regarding international solidarity or one regarding human rights - or any number of other things!

Framing is achieved through the choice of particular language and images that convey one particular meaning over another. By consistently using pictures of African people in poverty in charity communications, for instance, we frame development as being about poverty (reduction) and about Africa. These are the associations that people have with development.

Below and on the next page we have summarised the frames that were identified at the workshop. *Cut them out!*

**Q. How does your organisation *frame* development?**

**Q. Which of these frames do you recognise? Where do you see them?**

Framing tells us a little story about an issue. On the other side of this page is a worksheet we use for starting to analyse frames.

### **Development is international solidarity**

Moving away from traditional ideas of the 'North' helping the 'South', this framing emphasises interconnection, global awareness, and working together. It implies a global community in which rich and poor, across borders, are all affected by one another. Examples of this framing might include the language of 'think global, act local' or 'I am not free until you are free', or showing strong and equal partnerships.

### **Development is equality**

The solutions of this framing might be equal access to resources, equitable outcomes, or social justice. We are reminded of the harm inflicted by inequality. We might be led to focus on gender equality, equality between nations, or equality of individuals with different identities.

### **Development is achieving targets**

Here we might place UN targets such as the MDGs or SDGs, or poverty reduction. This framing often asks us to view progress as linear and quantifiable. Poverty or emissions are reduced to numbers, dollar signs and graphs. We short-cut to evaluating success as quantity over quality. We are asked to ignore the power relationships and ideologies involved in setting these targets as quantification is presented as 'values-neutral'.

### **Development is economic growth**

A particular framing within the frame of 'achieving targets', this asks us to see GDP as the measure of success of a nation. Investment, open markets and ODA are the solutions to poverty. Underpinning this frame is the belief that financial success brings wellbeing. We might be invited to look at images of China or Dubai.

# Life as a play



**What's the play's focus?**

*What's important? What's the problem?  
Who's to blame? What's the solution?*



**What imagery is used?**

*Are there any visual or metaphorical  
images in this frame?*



**Who are the characters?**

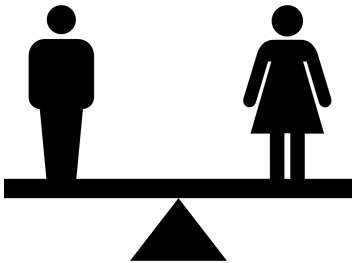
*What roles are played? And what  
are their characteristics?*



**What are the relationships?**

*How do the characters interact?  
Where does the power lie?*

**Development is equality**



**Development is international solidarity**



**Development is economic growth**



**Development is achieving targets**



### **Development is futile**

There are two key pillars of this framing, either one of which may be what we are asked to focus on. One is that development doesn't work, and one is that poverty is natural. The poor are feckless, stupid, lazy, have no birth control, corrupt, or it's 'just the way it is over there'. We can give charity, but this just alleviates the impacts and will never 'solve' it.

### **Development is addressing root causes**

Poverty, inequality, conflict, migration or climate change are here framed as structural or systemic problems that require similarly structural responses. We must identify and address the roots of the problem in order to better the situation of our global compatriots. These might include unfair trade rules, the capitalist system, or the colonial legacy.

### **Development is the 'North' saving the 'South'**

This framing sees development as linear and hierarchical. The 'South', often just portrayed as 'Africa', are at the bottom, and need the benevolent hand of the 'North' to help them up. We see the White Saviours, active benefactors in t-shirts with logos, and the Brown Needy, passive victims. We must feel pity but also moral superiority. Eurocentrism is encouraged, and the causes of poverty or conflict are obscured.

### **Development is empowerment**

The work of development is here framed as being about changing lives, dignity and transformation. Individuals and communities are enabled to carve their own futures and better their own situation. Here we might include equal partnerships, fair trade, capacity-building and emancipatory education. The framing is positive and hopeful.

### **Development is a moral obligation**

This framing relies heavily on the notion of charity. It sees the rich as benevolent, and implies that we can just give money to solve problems rather than changing behaviours or structures. There is a strong guilt motivator and language and imagery is often very emotive. This also frames development aid implicitly as a burden, and risks becoming a luxury that we need not fulfil when 'we' (richer countries) have other problems.

### **Development is sustainability**

This framing asks us to focus on the longer-term, and on the wellbeing of people and the environment over time. This might be expressed through calls for degrowth or action on climate change.

### **Development reduces conflict**

This framing focuses on violent conflict and its impacts. We might be particularly asked to focus on child soldiers, the impacts on women, or on humanitarian aid. There are victims - often passive and vulnerable - and those with the power to change the situation, often the 'benevolent' West. The framing engages our sense of fear or pity.

### **Development is implementing human rights**

In this frame, human rights are a universal, objective (neutral) concept. Development is depoliticised. Yet this implementation is usually seen as something to be done in the 'South', in the poorer countries. We are presented with despots, war, and disempowered women in far off lands, and the Western / Northern nations' own adherence to human rights law is obscured. Governments and states are the rightful leaders of this change.

Development is addressing root causes



Development is futile



Development is empowerment



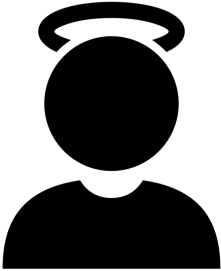
Development is the 'North' saving the 'South'



Development is sustainability



Development is a moral obligation



Development is implementing human rights



Development reduces conflict



# Values

## Why things matter

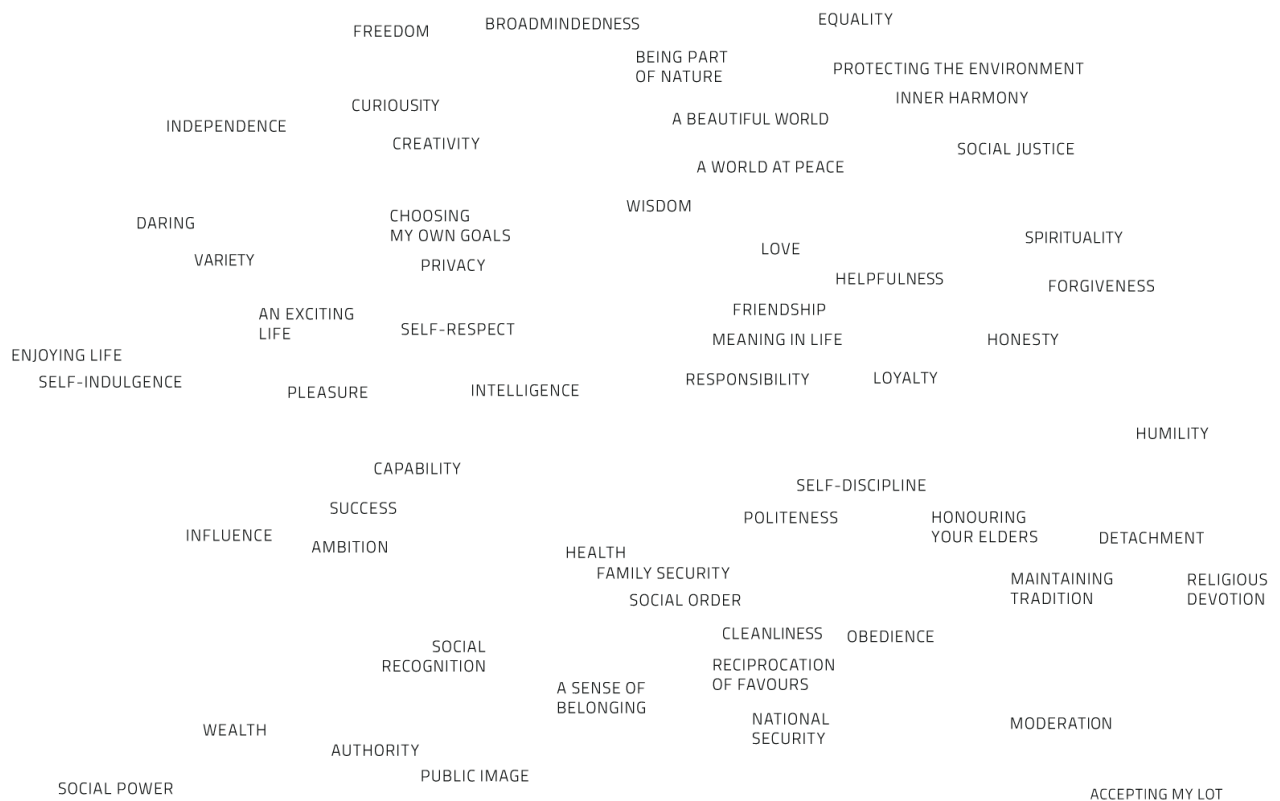
**Values are a core element of frames: articulating why the issue matters.** Values are motivations or guiding principles (such as *equality* or *social justice*). We all broadly share the same set of values, but differ in the scale to which we rate them as important. Researchers have compiled a list of nearly 60 values that people around the world seem to share.

**Our values can be engaged** (and made temporarily more important) by things we read, see or experience. So the way we frame an issue and the values we encourage will influence how people think and feel about it. *Use the word cloud below to answer the questions.*

**Q. What do you value?**

**Q. What do you think your organisation values?**

**Q. What values do you think would be helpful, and which would be harmful, in achieving development goals?**



These values aren't just an interesting list: they are related. The word-cloud is a map, in which related values – those generally held strongly by the same person at the same time – appear closer together. Other values are unlikely to be considered similarly important at the same time, and these values are found further apart on the map.

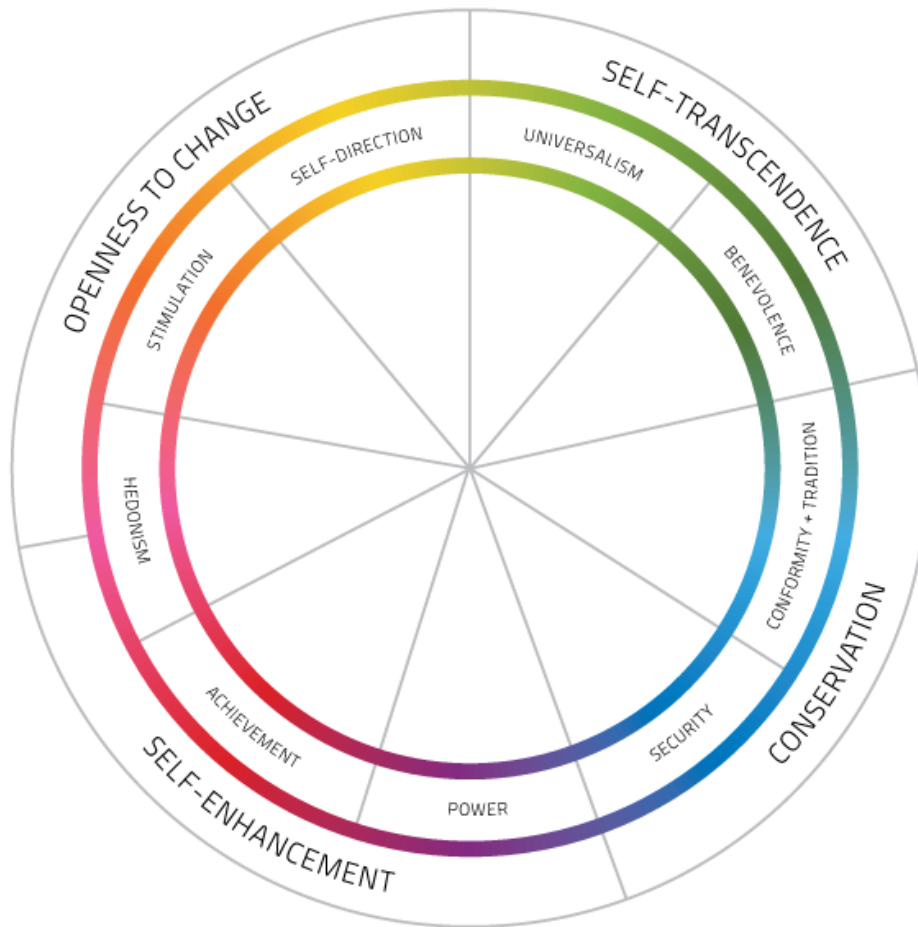
Values that appear closer together on the map, then, are more closely associated than those further apart. *Neighbouring values on the map tend to be compatible; values on opposite sides tend to clash.*





# How Values Work

## Values circle



### UNIVERSALISM

UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION, TOLERANCE AND PROTECTION FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL PEOPLE AND FOR NATURE.



### BENEVOLENCE

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE WELFARE OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM ONE IS IN FREQUENT PERSONAL CONTACT.



### TRADITION

RESPECT, COMMITMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CUSTOMS AND IDEAS THAT TRADITIONAL CULTURE OR RELIGION PROVIDE THE SELF.



### CONFORMITY

RESTRAINT OF ACTIONS, INCLINATIONS AND IMPULSES LIKELY TO UPSET OR HARM OTHERS AND VIOLATE SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OR NORMS.



### SECURITY

SAFETY, HARMONY, AND STABILITY OF SOCIETY, OF RELATIONSHIPS, AND OF SELF.



### POWER

SOCIAL STATUS AND PRESTIGE, CONTROL OR DOMINANCE OVER PEOPLE AND RESOURCES.



### ACHIEVEMENT

PERSONAL SUCCESS THROUGH DEMONSTRATING COMPETENCE ACCORDING TO SOCIAL STANDARDS.



### HEDONISM

PLEASURE AND SENSUOUS GRATIFICATION FOR ONESELF.



### STIMULATION

EXCITEMENT, NOVELTY AND CHALLENGE IN LIFE.



### SELF-DIRECTION

INDEPENDENT THOUGHT AND ACTION - CHOOSING, CREATING, EXPLORING.

# Why Values Matter

## Attitudes, behaviours & society

**Universalism** and **benevolence values** (top-right) are particularly associated with concern for other people, lower discrimination, lower levels of sexism and racism, more environmental behaviour, more progressive policies, higher child wellbeing, more concern for big problems.

**Self-direction values** (top left) are also associated with positive environmental and social behaviours, particularly related to empowerment and choice.

**Power, achievement (bottom left), security, tradition and conformity (bottom right) values** are more strongly related with dominating behaviour, discrimination, authoritarianism, racism, sexism, and less environmental behaviour.

### Q. What values do you think are expressed in your organisation's communications?

Some example statements and beliefs with suggested values analysis:

*"Marriage is good for the economy, as weddings are big business now."* The main focus is on the economic benefits. This may most express **power values**.

*"All you need is love"*. The main focus is love. The values expressed are **universalism** or **benevolence**.

*"We rely on a community of committed volunteers."* These dependable characters and the way they relate connect with **benevolence values**.

*"He's the king of the swingers, oh."* Whoever he is, and whoever the swingers are, there's a hierarchical relationship expressed and without more information we'd probably say this expresses **power values**.

*"God exists"*. Religious belief may relate to **conformity** and **tradition values** if it is focused largely on established institutions and strict rules. It may also relate to **benevolence** and **universalism values** if it connects with spirituality and unity, or with expressing compassion.

*"There are too many immigrants."* There are lots of possible values expressed by this: **security**, because of a concern for social order or national borders; **power** because it assumes immigrants have fewer rights than other citizens; **benevolence** if it arises from a concern about the impact on their own community.

## FURTHER READING

Common Cause website, with resources & case studies: [valuesandframes.org](http://valuesandframes.org)

PIRC website, with resources & case studies: [publicinterest.org.uk](http://publicinterest.org.uk)

Finding New Frames For Development: [valuesandframes.org/development](http://valuesandframes.org/development)

# Deep Frames

## Connecting values & beliefs

There are a set of overarching, 'deep' frames that we can relate to the framings we use in development and broader, societal worldviews. **Cut them out & think about them!**

<p><b>Rational actor</b> <i>Beliefs about human nature</i></p> <p>The <i>homo economicus</i>-type idea of the human mind, in which people are 'rational', utility-maximising individuals.</p>	<p><b>Embodied mind</b> <i>Beliefs about human nature</i></p> <p>The <i>Homer Simpson</i> model acknowledges the human mind as being embedded within the social and cultural environment, and reasoning is a complex set of process including physiology and emotion.</p>
<p><b>Free market</b> <i>Beliefs about how society / economy should function</i></p> <p>The world is full of profit-maximising, self-interested individuals (rational actors) and wealth is created via the hard work of these individuals. Markets are therefore the right, and moral, way to organise society and the economy and alleviate poverty.</p>	<p><b>Shared prosperity</b> <i>Beliefs about how society / economy should function</i></p> <p>Wealth and wellbeing are created through the 'commons' and our access to it. The commons are owned by everyone. Wealth is created by shared infrastructure and cooperation.</p>
<p><b>Elite governance</b> <i>Beliefs about decision-making</i></p> <p>Governance of our societies is too complicated for the every-person, who are irrational idiots. An elite, rational decision-making process is required as a vanguard.</p>	<p><b>Participatory democracy</b> <i>Beliefs about decision-making</i></p> <p>Belief in the <i>wisdom of the crowd</i> – that people have the innate capacity to govern themselves and should be empowered to be self-determining. Elected officials are representatives and accountable to the public.</p>
<p><b>Moral order</b> <i>Beliefs about how the world works</i></p> <p>There is a natural hierarchy, that has evolved over the earth's history. Since these hierarchies are natural, they are also moral or right. Power is therefore rightfully held by some; differences are moral and vertical, and convey superiority (male over female, white over black, etc.)</p>	<p><b>Non-hierarchical networks</b> <i>Beliefs about how the world works</i></p> <p>Based on cooperation, networks, and horizontal relationships. Morality is not conveyed via social standing, rather is embedded in non-hierarchical, connected relationships.</p>

# Deep Frames

## Connecting values & beliefs

The frames are antagonistic – they are in opposition. If we engage one of the deep frames on the right, we suppress the deep frame on the left (and vice versa).

### Embodied mind

What beliefs about human nature do you encourage in your communications?



### Rational actor

What beliefs about human nature do you encourage in your communications?



### Shared prosperity

What beliefs about society do you encourage in your communications?



### Free market

What beliefs about society do you encourage in your communications?



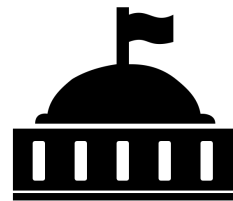
### Participatory democracy

What beliefs about governance do you encourage in your communications?



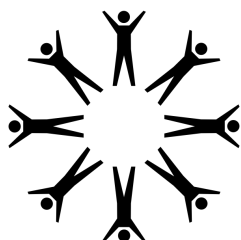
### Elite governance

What beliefs about governance do you encourage in your communications?



### Non-hierarchical networks

What beliefs about the world do you encourage in your communications?



### Moral order

What beliefs about the world do you encourage in your communications?



# Code of Conduct for Communications

## Dóchas

Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. In 2007, Dóchas members adopted a shared *Code of Conduct on Images and Messages* to encourage a shift to more transformational communication. Member organisations must report annually on nine implementation criteria.

Here are a few activities to continue to explore the framing of development communications through some of the key principles of this Code of Conduct.

### QUICK THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

By yourself, or with colleagues, think about the most memorable photo in a recent advertisement from an aid agency. What emotion did that it create? Did it inspire you to give? Imagine that it is your child, sister, or parent in that photo, would you want that picture used in an advertising campaign?

### BREAKING DOWN A COMMUNICATION

#### STEP 1) Choose materials to break down

The following exercise can be used with different communications materials:

- A. **Your organisation's communications** - use the questions below to evaluate the communications that your organisation has produced. Pick a few communications, ideally from different places within the organisation, i.e. a campaign flyer, fundraising appeal, press release or advocacy briefing.
- B. **Your sector's communications** - use the questions below to evaluate the communications that the sector in your country produces. Pick communications from around the sector, including the variety of sources outlined above.
- C. **A communication in development** - use the questions below as you're working on the communication to help improve it.

#### STEP 2) Answer the following questions

Who is doing the speaking? Who is not speaking?

What is the stated problem? What are the stated causes of the problem?

What is the stated solution? Who is depicted as the heroine in bringing about the solution?

Do you think this message depicts the full truth overall?

What perspectives are missing, and why do you think this is?

#### STEP 3) Reflect & adapt

Go through your answers and make notes on what could be improved in the communication(s).

### STRETCH GOAL

Q. Is there a Code of Conduct in your country? If not, could you work to develop one? If there is, how could you build in implementation criteria as Dóchas have done?

### FURTHER READING

For more information on the Dochas Code of Conduct, see: [bit.ly/dochas-code](http://bit.ly/dochas-code)

See how the Dochas code was applied to a wider context by CONCORD: [bit.ly/concord-code](http://bit.ly/concord-code)

# Theories of Development

## Think Global

Think Global is a UK charity focused on education around global issues. Their approach is based on the belief that people hold the understanding of how to solve issues themselves and just require the tools to be empowered to do so.

Here is a short activity for you and colleagues to explore how communications of global issues may connect with or reinforce particular ideas about what development means.

### UNDERSTANDING THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNICATIONS

#### STEP 1) Choose materials to analyse

Such as pre-existing communications materials from your organisation or sector.

#### STEP 2) Read the six theories

**MODERNISATION** Science and technology can be used to advance industry and stimulate economic growth. Development is achieved when a country has high industrial outputs and exports goods to the world economy.

**DEPENDENCY** In a globalised world, all countries are interconnected. Some countries are winners of global trade, whilst others are losers. Countries become wealthy by exploiting and under-developing the poorest nations through unfair trade.

**NEOLIBERALISM** Free global trade can stimulate economic growth and large businesses can profit more without government intervention. Universal development can therefore be achieved through the promotion of 'trade not aid'.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** Taking environmental factors into account, sustainable development 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,' according to the Brundtland report.

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** Development cannot be achieved through economic improvement alone. Multiple dimensions (e.g. social, cultural, political) need to be taken into account. Development means individuals have freedom to make life choices.

**POST-DEVELOPMENT** The rich cannot lift the poor out of poverty. Local communities need to address their own problems, using their own ideas. People have to develop themselves, rather than relying on ill-suited ideas from overseas.

#### STEP 3) Match theories & communications

Run through the communications materials one by one and answer the following questions:

- A. What theories of development does it refer to and why?
- B. What message does it give the UK public about poverty and development?
- C. How this example aligns with your organisational mission/vision.

### FURTHER READING

Think Global Building New Responses toolkit: [bit.ly/tg-toolkit](http://bit.ly/tg-toolkit)  
Six Theories of Development: [bit.ly/6-theories](http://bit.ly/6-theories)

# Working with the Media

## DevReporter

DevReporter is an inter-regional collaboration between NGOs, journalists and academics in Spain, Italy and France. They undertake research, create toolkits and guidance, interview practitioners, deliver trainings and make grants to journalists.

**Here is a short activity to start thinking about your experience of NGO interaction with media communications, and how 'development' is framed in the media.**

### **STEP 1) Understand the problems**

Below is a list of ten common issues/problems DevReporter have identified with regard to the 'development' sector and the media.

1. Information on 'development' events focused on NGOs or local actors of Northern solidarity
2. A lack of visibility of actors from the South
3. A lack of general information / context of the South
4. The vision of ['development'] is related to emergency and humanitarian action
5. Africa is the most covered and stereotyped continent
6. Information based on projects and fundraising actions, away from the local and international media agenda
7. Interference between information and fundraising
8. NGOs and actors of solidarity have little and irregular contact with the media
9. Lack of professionalism in smaller NGOs
10. The media are no longer the central communication channel for NGOs: they are now social media and the web.

### **STEP 2) Reflect**

Having considered the problems above, answer the following questions:

- A. How much do these problems fit your experience? Are any more or less of a problem?
- B. Are any problems missing?
- C. What are you, or your organisations, doing about these problems?
- D. What would help you better address these problems? How can you get those things?

### **FURTHER READING**

DevReporter website, with resources & case studies: [bit.ly/devreporter](http://bit.ly/devreporter)

# Narrating the Story

## Reframing the Message

Reframing the Message is an EU-supported training and communication project implemented by three organisations in three European countries: Wilde Ganzen from the Netherlands, Divoké Husy from Czech Republic and CISU – Civil Society in Development from Denmark. The project aims to strengthen the communication on development so it reflects the structural causes of poverty in a balanced manner. The object is to produce reliable and respectful communication that will affect the citizen's commitment to development cooperation.

**Here is a provocation and exploration of one key element of reframing the message in this way: whose voices are heard in stories about development cooperation.**

### **KILL YOUR VICTIM**

*We need to empower others to tell their stories.* As much as possible this should be directly, through video of them, or through their own writings. However, in many situations, we will still need to interview them, to explore different stories and experiences. The way we approach these interviews matters, the questions we ask can highlight an endless list of problems and disempower the speaker. Alternatively our questions can explore the positive, the hopeful, the complex and uncertain.

#### **STEP 1) Be aware**

When conducting an interview with people who have either gone through tragedy or whose life situation is difficult, there are typically three states of mind in which they may find themselves:

1. **Resigned.** There is nothing constructive or encouraging to say.
2. **Open and spontaneously reflective.** The penny drops during the interview. "Come to think of it..."
3. **Reflective.** Ready to reflect on the situation.

If you are aware of these three phases of response before starting your interview, you are more likely to take care to inquire into the state of mind concerned with the right questions. We can choose if we want to focus on the individual or broaden the story to include what has caused their situation.

#### **STEP 2) Ask constructive questions:**

Some examples include:

- What will it take to solve [...]?
- Would you like to help solve [...]?
- Is there anything others should help to do?
- How can you overcome possible obstacles?
- What happens if you solve [...]?
- What have you learned that others may learn from?
- How have you taken responsibility for changing [...]? And how did you experience it?

*What others can you think of?*

#### **STEP 3) Kill your victim**

Represent feelings and experiences other than those that are difficult!

### **FURTHER READING**

Reframing the Message communications toolkit: [bit.ly/reframing-message](http://bit.ly/reframing-message)  
Reframing the Message course materials: [bit.ly/reframing-materials](http://bit.ly/reframing-materials)