Backgrounder

Forests

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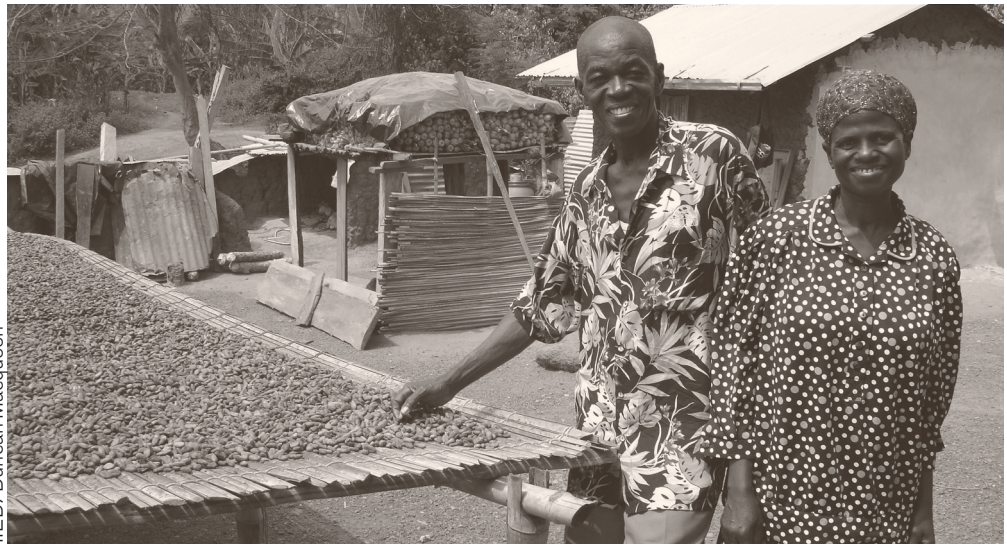

IIED/Duncan Macqueen

Love-infused development

A framework encompassing what development is, for stewards of distinction

Forests offer things of value to people (see 'Critical choices', overleaf). Research on what people value is informing how development is defined and measured (for example the Global Happiness Index and the Human Development Index). Negotiations around a new post-2015 development regime are also in progress, to replace the Millennium Development Goals, which end at that point. As part of this, sustainable development goals (SDGs) and indicators can be designed.

But it is not just what people value that matters, but how they pursue value. More important still, is how institutions that take on the nature of an individual (for instance, businesses and government institutions within nation states) pursue value. This is decisive for forests and for broader development outcomes.

What people value

Love-infused development is a framework that brings together, from a substantial literature, a minimum of six categories of what people value — that is, there are at least six types of value that cannot readily be aggregated into a single value scale, such as monetary value, and therefore require treatment as separate value scales. These are shown in the central column of Table 1, overleaf.

Love in biological and psychological science deals mainly with what people value — loves based on familiarity, common interest, and passion. But there is also considerable empirical analysis documenting a polarity in how people pursue such values ranging from self-enhancement at one extreme to self-transcendence at the other — itself a fourth type of love. Self-transcendence equates to Christian agape or 'loving-kindness', Islamic birr or 'deep kindness', Buddhist mettā or 'benevolent love', Hindu prema or 'elevated love' and Confucian ren or 'benevolent love'.

Love-infused development asserts that love's presence (or its absence) in individual, corporate and national behaviour matters. It

KEY TERMS

Value: The regard people give to something; its importance, worth, or usefulness.

Development: A process that enlarges people's freedoms to do and be what they value and have reason to value, and that empowers them in those pursuits.

Love-infused development: A framework asserting that development outcomes are shaped decisively by the 'polarity' (from selfless to selfish) in individual and institutional pursuit of at least six categories of value and exploring options for selfless reform.

Stewards of distinction: Individuals and institutions who, when making choices about producing or consuming, discern the full breadth of other peoples' values embedded in those choices, and choose to invest in the greater good.

VITAL STATISTICS

8 billion: expected global population in 2030, up from 1.5 billion in 1900, a fivefold increase. *(UN, Population challenges and development goals)*

US$100 trillion: expected global GDP in 2030 growing from US$2 trillion in 1900 (assuming constant prices), a 50-fold increase. *(Rademaekers, K. et al., Study on the evolution of some deforestation drivers and their potential impacts on the costs of an avoiding deforestation scheme)*

US$539 billion: the current annual scale of the advertising industry that tells people to consume more. *(PwC, Global advertising revenue from 2007 to 2016)*

2.3 million square kilometers: natural forests lost between 2000 and 2012 to demands from local and global consumers — roughly 17% of global carbon emissions.

50%: how far humanity's ecological footprint already exceeds the Earth's biocapacity (the area actually available to produce renewable resources and

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Table 1. Framework of love-infused development

Basis of action	Fondness through familiarity		Relationship through common interest		Passion through emotional or physical connection	
Value pursuit	Agape, love, self-transcendence					
Development outcome	Abundance and beauty for all	Healthy levels of material comfort	Trust and friendship	Law and order for social justice	Decent work, social stability and family time	Productive gender-balanced society
Institutional constructs	Inclusive resource rights and land use planning processes	Locally controlled health and business models	Federation to represent localised democracies	Redistributive justice backed by fair judicial system	Public entrepreneurial education and family support systems	Service-oriented gendered business and peer rewards
Virtues	Temperance, social behaviour	Prudence, empathy	Humility, respect for each other	Justice, charity	Creativity, self-expression, fidelity	Diligence, service, gender equity
What humans value	**Stewardship of natural and cultural heritage**	**Material health and wellbeing**	**Affirmative social relationships**	**Present and future security**	**Creative fulfillment of potential**	**Sense of identity, purpose**
Vices	Acquisitive, anti-social behaviour	Greed and criminal neglect	Pride, scorn for others	Injustice, oppression	Envy, career slavery, lust	Sloth, hedonism, sexism
Institutional constructs	Unplanned competitive approach to rights and land use	Capital controlled health and business corporations	Elites/lobbies control national decision making	Corrupted officials, judiciary and armed forces	Limited private education and incentives for work above family	Status tied to awards based on wealth, position
Development outcome — dystopia	Scarcity and restricted beauty	Illness and inequitable vulnerability	Mistrust and ghettoed securitisation	Corruption and conflict	Drudgery, social unrest and family breakdown	Culture of listless, sexist escapism
Value pursuit	Ego, selfishness, self-enhancement					

therefore charts loving or selfish behaviour through which individuals pursue value, the institutional constructs that emerge, and the development outcomes this brings (see Table 1).

The goal of love-infused development is to explore options for reform that move a situation closer to the state of self-transcendence for at least the six value categories outlined in Table 1. It prefers the term 'stewards of distinction' to notions of consumer or producer, and explores how individual and institutions might best pursue the most loving option in each value category.

Looking ahead

This framework has been developed for the forest sector but not yet applied more broadly. But the rapid SDG development process is opting mainly to define goals based on values (such as food security, water, energy, health poverty) conflating these with goals based on how value is pursued (means of implementation, education, equity, justice and so on).

This framework argues for abandoning SDGs based on value — recasting such values as indicators of progress — and for engaging with people to debate and define SDGs more clearly based on institutional constructs of how agreed values should be pursued, as proposed in the fourth row (shaded in orange) of Table 1 above.

Knowledge Products

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) promotes sustainable development, linking local priorities to global challenges. We support some of the world's most vulnerable people to strengthen their voice in decision making.

absorb CO_2). *(WWF, Living planet report 2010)*

0%: the increase in happiness in the USA between 1965 and the present despite a fivefold increase in average personal wealth. *(Speth, J., The bridge at the end of the world)*

CRITICAL CHOICES

Natural forests offer things of value to people: beautiful biocultural diversity; products for health and material wellbeing (foods, fibres, fuels, medicines and cosmetics); a landscape for community and relationships; secure water, soil and carbon cycles; fulfilling learning and employment; a nexus of cultural and spiritual identity. Their continuing loss presents an ethical dilemma of values (what matters and to whom) and principles (what ought to be done as a result).

Current development efforts seek mainly to (i) capture more forest values in decision making — carbon payments for Reducing Emissions for Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+), for example; or (ii) strengthen principles underpinning legality assurance systems, such as in trade-related voluntary partnership agreements linked to new EU Timber Procurement laws. But increasing demand from global consumers will over-run such efforts unless we grapple, not with what values matter, but how they are being pursued.

FIND OUT MORE

Our work on forest ethics is being undertaken by IIED's Forest Team and partners. This team drives our efforts to support locally controlled forestry for improved livelihoods, justice and sustainability. Find out more about our work at www.iied.org/forests