

# An Introduction to Integral International Development

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In this article I introduce Integral Theory, a multiperspectival approach, to international development and explore its capacity to foster conditions for systemic, collective, and personal change. My analysis focuses on the perspectives of “I,” “We,” and “It/Its,” which illuminate interior and exterior aspects of individuals and groups; in Integral Theory, these are known as quadrants. Here, I describe the way each quadrant relates to international development and offer some methodologies to work with phenomena and dynamics arising in each quadrant. At the end, I give an example of an all-quadrant development intervention in Peru.

## Introduction

Don Mario and I sat on the shore at dusk, the tide coming in slowly in front of us. The colorful *lancha* boats bobbed on the water, their hulls glinting in the fading sunlight. He is an elder in this small fishing village of Los Cobanos, El Salvador, with a unique view of the past fifty years.

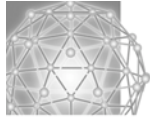
This evening he recalls the days when the sea was bountiful, with large fish and sharks just off the beach. Today, fishermen have to take their boats kilometers off shore to find these larger sea predators. He speaks of poverty and hardship, of economic activities that occur far away but impact the community greatly. He shares his concerns about the future of his people in this little village that curves around the bay like a vibrant half-moon of human life.

The silence that follows is punctuated only by the lapping of seawater and children’s chatter nearby. Then, Don Mario explains that these concerns weigh heavily on him and that his faith helps to lift this weight, like a rock being lifted from his heart.

These deeper layers of the conversation emerge slowly, through trust and with time. It is a voice that cares deeply to find solutions for himself, his own family, and for others. It is a voice I hear in many other places in the world. Although it can be heard in many different contexts, its essence is shared. It is a voice that weaves me, a Canadian, inseparably into lives that unfold far from my home. I get this strange and beautiful sense that this voice is my own voice, being spoken through another.

## International Development as Evolution

International development attempts to address the pertinent issues of society, whether in fast-paced urban centers or in poorer communities like Los Cobanos. Historically, development was embedded in scientific rationality and focused on technological fixes, economic growth, and quantitative indicators for measuring social change. These are important elements for society, and yet I hear from Don Mario and from so many other voices all over the world that *there is more*.



There are also the interior aspects of humanity that infuse our lives with meaning: dignity, aspiration, concern, sadness, exuberance, spiritual belief, and so on. These aspects are difficult to measure or quantify and thus tend to be excluded from purely economic or technological fixes. Yet they are often the necessary elements to initiate and sustain development efforts. What is behind innovation? What motivates and initiates social change? What encourages and sustains progress?

Taking a wider and deeper perspective of international development, it becomes apparent that development is a process that not only promotes systemic change but also fosters collective and personal change. Systemic changes, such as economic growth, institutional development, improved education and medicine, are clearly important. Collective and personal change, such as changes in ethics, morals, social norms, worldviews, skills, and capacities, are also important. Discrete changes in any of these areas are helpful, but simultaneous change in all three fosters transformational change of a society.

Our shared global history speaks beautifully of these concurrent areas of change. Wilber compiled this co-evolution of systems, cultures, and people in *Integral Theory*.<sup>1</sup> He explains how systemic changes progressed from foraging, to horticulture, to agrarian, to industrialization, and so on to the informational age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These can correspond with changes in individuals' worldviews, from archaic, to magic, to mythic, to rational, to integral, and onward. Personal changes that also emerged through this shared history include changes in our ways of knowing (from symbols, to concepts, to concrete operational, to formal operational, to vision-logic) and our values (from survival needs, to self care, to care for the group, to cross-cultural care, to care for all beings). As described by Wilber, evolution emerges in these three spheres of "I," "We," and "It/Its," or the Big Three (see figure 1).

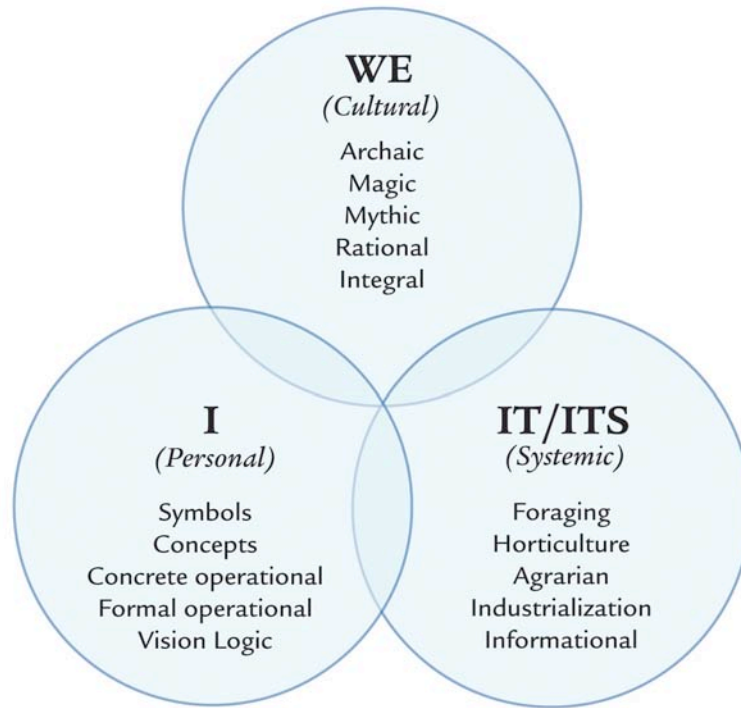
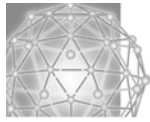
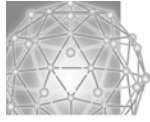


Figure 1. Co-Evolution in the Big Three (“I,” “We,” and “It/Its”)

## The Integral Approach

An Integral approach to international development aligns development interventions with the inherent process of evolution occurring in these three spheres of change. Systemic change involves organization and operation of our systems (i.e., telecommunication, social needs, production of goods, information channels, social institutions, etc.). Collective change involves our interrelationships and care for each other (i.e., ethical conduct, justice, governance, social norms and taboos, etc.). Personal change involves training and building capacity, sharing skills and knowledge, and empowering ourselves to become contributors to social wellbeing and leaders of social change. This latter area involves personal growth and the expansion of personal horizons, capacities, and sense of self. These three areas interrelate closely: collective and personal changes contribute to enabling and sustaining systemic change, and vice versa.

The Integral approach acknowledges the exterior and interior dimensions of individuals and groups. It includes a diverse and integrated array of methodologies for working with the material, measurable components of development as well as the interior, subjective dimensions of individuals and groups. None of these domains are “better” than any other; each one reflects an aspect of reality that contributes an *essential yet partial* piece to any development intervention. Acknowledging and working with each of these three areas of change can assist practitioners in mapping development issues, identifying root causes, and designing appropriate interventions.



## Interiority

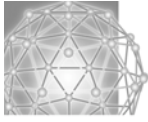
The interiority of individuals and group is a particularly important aspect of international development. Many practitioners and theorists in international development realize that interiority has received inadequate attention in mainstream approaches to development.<sup>2</sup> An Integral approach does not intend to overemphasize interiority but rather will point out its unique and necessary contribution to exterior success in development projects.

Research in international development has found that interventions tend to be more effective when interiority is included in project planning and implementation.<sup>3</sup> Positive gains in the local economy and land use practices, for example, tend to include changes in people's interiority—their attitudes, beliefs, and worldviews—which in turn sustain these interventions. If a development objective is to provide potable water to rural communities in developing countries, one must ask: how deeply rooted is the understanding and value for clean water in the individual's beliefs and the collective's values and norms?

As practitioners, we must ask the same question of sustainable land use practices, forest conservation, or the education of girls, and so on. If people do not value the project, if it does not relate meaningfully to the local beliefs and worldviews, or if there is little motivation to sustain it into the future, it undoubtedly will fall short of its intended goals. These values, beliefs, worldviews, and motivations are essential for long-term success. Thus, an Integral approach to international development acknowledges and integrates the interior and exterior realities of humanity.

## The Quadrants: Interior and Exterior, Individual and Collective

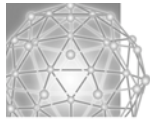
The quadrants of the Integral framework draw upon many different disciplines and their respective methodologies to address a broader, deeper spectrum of human needs.<sup>4</sup> The quadrants include the exterior domains of *systems* (social, political, economic, and ecological) and *behaviors* (individual practices and actions), and the interior domains of *self* (psychology) and *culture* (traditions and social norms) (see figure 2).



<p><b>UPPER LEFT</b> <b>Experience</b> <i>(individual, interior)</i></p> <p>Involves the psychological and cognitive processes involved in making meaning, constructing identity, structuring reasoning, and forming worldviews; perspectives of roles within the community, society, environment and world; attitudes, feelings, self-concept, and value systems.</p>	<p><b>UPPER RIGHT</b> <b>Behavior</b> <i>(individual, exterior)</i></p> <p>Involves the quantifiable, measurable interventions in development, such as diagnostic statistics (i.e., health and education indicators, fertility rates, etc.), medicine (i.e., vaccines, basic medical care, etc.), nutrition, skills training and education.</p>
<p><b>LOWER LEFT</b> <b>Culture</b> <i>(collective, interior)</i></p> <p>Involves worldviews, social norms, customs and values that (subtly or explicitly) inform relationships, community processes, mutual understanding, and social appropriateness.</p>	<p><b>LOWER RIGHT</b> <b>Systems</b> <i>(collective, exterior)</i></p> <p>Involves economic prosperity (i.e., economic feasibility studies, marketing and/or fundraising, management and administration, etc.); ecology and natural resources (i.e., resource management, sustainable land use practices, and pollution control); and social institutions and political arrangements (i.e., the councils, associations, cooperatives, banks, schools, medical services, etc.).</p>

Figure 2. The Quadrants in International Development

Each quadrant points to different perspectives and each has its own set of methodologies, processes, and outcomes (see figure 3).



<p><b>UPPER LEFT</b>  <b>Experience</b>  <i>Subjective, qualitative methodologies</i></p> <p><b>Includes:</b> self-reflection, introspection, contemplation, emotional capacity building, self-inquiry, counseling, body scanning, journaling, goal-setting, meditation, prayer, rituals, vision quests, wild-nature experiences.</p>	<p><b>UPPER RIGHT</b>  <b>Behavior</b>  <i>Objective, quantitative methodologies</i></p> <p><b>Includes:</b> quantitative research, scientific studies, diagnostic testing, assessments, skill building, technical capacity development.</p>
<p><b>LOWER LEFT</b>  <b>Culture</b>  <i>Intersubjective, qualitative methodologies</i></p> <p><b>Includes:</b> dialogue, participatory methodologies, focus groups, collective visioning, trust-building exercises, group facilitation, participant-observer techniques, storytelling, appreciative inquiry, collective introspection, and other approaches of reaching a common vision and shared goals.</p>	<p><b>LOWER RIGHT</b>  <b>Systems</b>  <i>Interobjective, quantitative methodologies</i></p> <p><b>Includes:</b> monitoring and evaluation, gap analyses, feasibility studies, technical training, policy-making, rapid appraisals, assessments, scientific studies.</p>

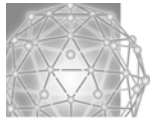
Figure 3. Methodologies of the Quadrants

Phenomena and dynamics arise in each quadrant in any development initiative. Practitioners that work with methodologies and consider perspectives from each quadrant are more capable of comprehensively addressing development issues. The interface between these quadrants is overly accentuated in theory. In practice, they blend and morph together with stunning ease and beauty, since they are constantly co-arising and were never actually separate to begin with. It is our human perception that tends to separate and compartmentalize them. The value of teasing them apart theoretically is to acknowledge and identify their intrinsic value and inter-connectedness in practice.

Below, I review the perspective of each quadrant in detail, describing what each involves and providing examples of some of the methodologies employed in each.

### Upper Left: Self and Consciousness

This quadrant includes self-development, epistemologies (or ways of thinking), emotional and moral capacities, values, beliefs, and attitudes that undoubtedly influence development



outcomes. An individual's attitude towards the environment, development, and other people can give rise to behavior that either thwarts or supports sustainable development. As Brown explains:

If a group of children is terrified of needles and refuses to be vaccinated, how does that affect the success of an immunization program? If a development project manager feels jealous of the media attention other NGO leaders are getting, what role does that play? If someone feels degraded, left out and unheard during training, but never says anything, what consequences ensue? If an analyst holds a strong bias toward rationality, and dismisses other ways of knowing, how does that influence her report and suggestions?<sup>5</sup>

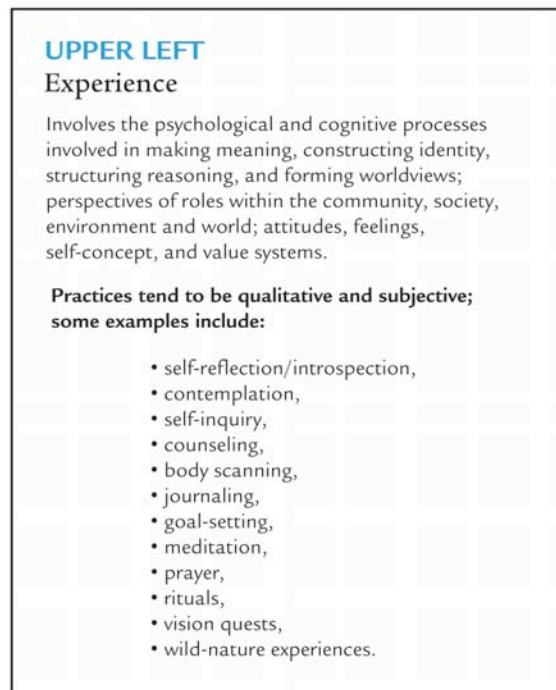
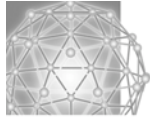


Figure 4. Upper-Left Quadrant

Methodologies in this area assist in fostering self-care and empowerment, creating the conditions for shifts in worldviews, and finding ways to communicate that resonate with local worldviews. The methodologies are subtle and subjective, and they require active and compassionate listening and the ability to create a safe space for self-inquiry. Examples include “informal counseling” and holistic healing practices used in grassroots community development initiatives in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

In this quadrant, methodologies also aim to foster health within existing worldviews and ways of thinking. Practitioners do not assume that individuals have to transform but rather that a healthier expression or translation of their current worldview exists, and their work aims to bring that forward. This “horizontal health” is available to anyone and is usually found as the quadrants become balanced, such that awareness is given in similar amounts to each quadrant. Too much attention to a single quadrant tends to produce unhealthy expressions of a worldview. For example, too much attention on “I” (Upper-Left quadrant) is expressed as narcissism; excessive



attention on “We” (the Lower Left) gives rise to a herd mentality; and over-emphasizing “It” (Upper Right/Lower Right) results in dissociative or depersonalized behaviors. Methodologies that work with translation in this quadrant are being developed, and many can be found embedded in the practice of Integral coaching (see figure 4).

This quadrant also helps practitioners remain mindful of their experience in a development program: where are their biases, what interior experience influences their perspective, and how can their own awareness expand to “step into another’s shoes” in development projects?

### **Upper Right: Brain and Organism**

This quadrant includes the health, behaviors, skills, and capabilities of individuals—a vital component for project success. For example, an inadequate amount of vitamins can impact a person’s ability to participate meaningfully in community or society; malnutrition can threaten a child’s learning capacity; the inability to read can thwart efforts to raise awareness on development issues. This quadrant also addresses how a development practitioner’s behavior will impact local people and governments and how their skill level will influence development outcomes (see figure 5).

**UPPER RIGHT**  
**Behavior**

Involves physical health, intentional behavior; skills; capabilities; actions, such as nutritional intake; pre- and post-natal care; conduct toward environment or opposite sex; routines; response to rules and regulations; birth control use; money management; computer skills

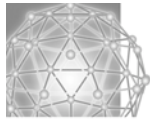
**Practices tend to be quantitative, using scientific measurements and diagnostic tests; some examples include:**

- social indicators (life-expectancy rates, literacy rates, infant mortality rates, etc.);
- diet and hygiene;
- preventative medicine;
- exercise;
- skill-building and training;
- technical capacity building;
- providing clear rules, regulations, and guidance from a respected authority.

Figure 5. Upper-Right Quadrant

Methodologies used in this quadrant tend to be quantitative, employing scientific measurement and diagnostic tests, including life-expectancy rates, literacy rates, infant mortality rates, etc.





This quadrant also includes training and capacity building for technical skills, exercise, and appropriate behaviors with norms, protocols, rules, and regulations.

### Lower Left: Culture and Worldview

This quadrant includes perspectives, worldviews, social norms, rituals, taboos, traditions, and the group rules that underpin and inform community systems. The shared understanding of the world is shaped by local religions, ideologies, morality, backgrounds, and the attitudes of families and societies. These shared meanings can be silently or verbally agreed upon, and they operate like the invisible ties that bind a people together in their culture and customs (see figure 6).

This quadrant has an enormous influence in development work. Brown:

If a shaman is honored within a community, what are the consequence of not truly understanding why and designing a program insensitive to this truth?... What impact does a foundation of traditional values have on the introduction of new policies and technologies?<sup>6</sup>

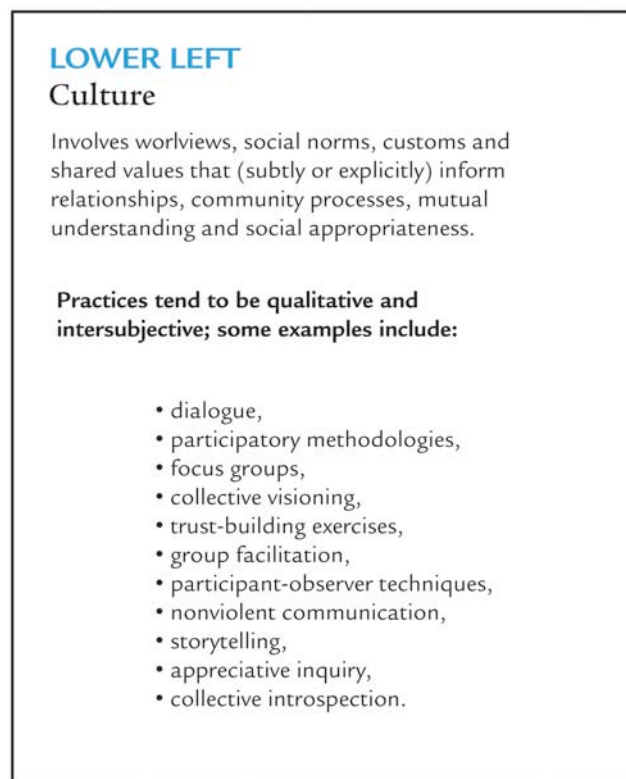
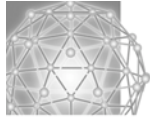


Figure 6. Lower-Left Quadrant

Methodologies in this area are more qualitative, intersubjective, participatory, dialogical, and process-oriented. This is a vital and dynamic aspect of development. Freire, for example, explained that dialogue in community development is characterized by “subjects who meet to *name* the world in order to transform it.”<sup>7</sup> Communication and participation is crucial for citizens



to discern whether certain political and economic structures are “right” for their particular context, culture, ecosystem, and tradition. These group processes are needed for people to foster mutual understanding, create shared visions and goals, collectively assess community needs, collaboratively plan and implement actions, participate in monitoring and evaluating project outcomes, and develop strategies for sustainability.

### Lower Right: Social System and Environment

This quadrant involves systems, applications, and outcomes used for fulfilling economic, social, ecological, and political needs through various types of infrastructures, designs, and arrangements. This area seeks to address the tangible, material aspects of development, such as economic growth, infrastructure, potable water, disaster relief, housing, resource management, and policy change, among others. This also includes the modes and structures in place for information exchange and communication transfer, which is a critical aspect to development in all other quadrants. Many development projects focus on this quadrant for the majority of their activities and outcomes (see figure 7).

**LOWER RIGHT**  
**Systems**

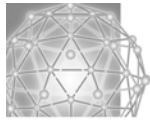
Involves the quantifiable, measurable and exterior components of development, such as diagnostic statistics, economic and ecological systems, and social institutions and political arrangements.

**Practices tend to be quantitative and objective; some examples include:**

- quantitative research,
- scientific studies,
- monitoring and evaluation,
- gap analyses,
- diagnostic testing,
- assessments,
- rapid appraisals,
- skill building,
- policy-making,
- technical/social capacity development.

Figure 7. Lower-Right Quadrant

This area largely relies on quantitative measurement for data collection, analysis, action, application, and problem solving. Taking the example of water borne diseases and the need for clean water and appropriate health care, an approach in this area might include analyzing the situation with water quality tests, scientific analysis, and medical diagnosis, which may then result in application of chlorine to drinking sources, construction of water purifying technology,



enhanced education, and provision of health services regarding water-borne illnesses. Brown explains:

How does USAID development policy concerning birth control influence an initiative to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS? What role does the organizational structure of a development agency play in unleashing the creative potential of its practitioners? How can local ecosystems be restored while generating revenue for the community? This quadrant incorporates all of the social, economic, material, and environmental factors that help ignite or extinguish local, national, and global development dilemmas.<sup>8</sup>

These methodologies take stock of a situation by carrying out diagnostic tests, gathering statistics, doing a community-wide census, and using other measurement tools that guide or direct which actions and applications are taken.

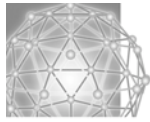
### All-Quadrants in Action

The community-based development organization Institute for Action and Progress (INAPRO) in Huancavelica, Peru works to alleviate poverty in Quechua indigenous communities in rural areas of the Andes. I worked with INAPRO in May 2005 to learn more about its methodologies that deal with the psycho-cultural dimensions of sustainable development, and to assess its connection to, or potential use of, an Integral approach. This was part of a project entitled Case Studies on an Integral Approach to International Development.<sup>9</sup> My research methodology followed an Integral framework and thus included: open-ended interviews with key informants and desk research (Upper and Lower Right); participant-observer techniques, collective reflection, visioning exercises, appreciative inquiry, and non-violent communication (Lower Left); and presencing, compassionate listening, and informal counseling (Upper Left).<sup>10</sup>

The region of Huancavelica was particularly affected by the civil violence from 1990-2000, including both the guerrilla movement called the Shining Path and the state armed forces. INAPRO was founded in 1992 with a focus on developing economic self-sufficiency and building community infrastructure. After the first six years of their work, the founders of the organization realized the objectives of economic prosperity and social infrastructure (Lower Right) were only part of the development needs expressed in these communities (see figure 8). In 1998, they reformed their strategy and objectives to focus on an all-quadrant definition of “community resilience”:

Community resilience is the emotional, cognitive, socio-cultural capacity of people and groups that enable them to recognize, confront and constructively transform situations caused from suffering and/or damages that threaten development. (*Es la capacidad emocional, cognitiva socio cultural de las personas y grupos que permiten reconocer, enfrentar y transformar constructivamente situaciones causadoras de sufrimiento y/o daño que amenaza su desarrollo.*)<sup>11</sup>

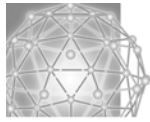
Today, INAPRO uses several methodologies that address phenomena and dynamics arising in each quadrant (described in text and depicted in figure 9). While INAPRO directors and staff are not explicitly familiar with Integral Theory, their approach emerges from their response to the



challenges facing Quechua communities in this region of the Andes. Their experience since 1992 provides a concrete example of how partial approaches are not sufficient. Over the past 13 years, they have adapted and evolved their work to be more holistic, and the result is an organic, intuitive, and effective all-quadrant approach.

<p><b>UPPER LEFT</b> Self and Consciousness</p> <p>Foster healthy psychological and emotional development of children, youth, and families.</p> <p>Raise awareness on the cycle of violence, impacts of child abuse, and the need for community development.</p>	<p><b>UPPER RIGHT</b> Action and Behavior</p> <p>Work to improve nutrition.</p> <p>Carry out skill-building activities for children, youth and adults.</p>
<p><b>LOWER LEFT</b> Culture and Worldview</p> <p>Foster participation, group cohesion, interpersonal skills, and cultural identity.</p> <p>Build group awareness on key issues, and provide collective pathways for collaboration and action.</p>	<p><b>LOWER RIGHT</b> Social System and Environment</p> <p>Work to address economic, environmental, and social needs via microcredit schemes, environmental projects, and social networking.</p>

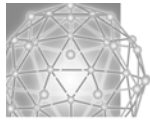
Figure 8. Summary of INAPRO’s Objectives in Each Quadrant



<p><b>UPPER LEFT</b> Self and Consciousness</p> <p>Orient and understand interior development of children and youth using a framework with four stages of healthy psychological development (including level 1: basic capacities, level 2: participation, level 3: leadership, level 4: social change agent).</p> <p>Do workshops and training to build personal capacities and awareness on pertinent family and community issues (child abuse, economic security, community development). Use videos that dramatize these issues to provide space for self-reflection.</p>	<p><b>UPPER RIGHT</b> Action and Behavior</p> <p>Construct green houses, made of adobe and planted with local varieties of crops, that provide adequate nutrition to children and youth involved in their projects.</p> <p>Train participants (children, youth, and adults) to take care of the green houses - agricultural skills for tending the plants and economic skills for selling some of the crop to buy more seeds for re-planting the subsequent crop.</p>
<p><b>LOWER LEFT</b> Culture and Worldview</p> <p>Staff speak the indigenous language Quechua and wear traditional dress to build trust with the community.</p> <p>Carry out training workshops with parents and families on the cycle of violence, the impacts of child abuse, and the need for community development.</p> <p>Organize inter-cultural events for several communities, in which games are played and art is presented.</p> <p>Work in collaboration with schools, community associates, and local leaders, and also promote opportunities for inter-community learning.</p>	<p><b>LOWER RIGHT</b> Social System and Environment</p> <p>Create and promote micro-enterprises with appropriate donations, capacity building, and consulting.</p> <p>Assist with the production systems, quality control, commercialization, and export.</p> <p>Work in rural development, including agro-ecology, livestock and soil management, environmental conservation, etc.</p>

Figure 9. Examples of Methodologies Used by INAPRO in Each Quadrant

In the Upper-Left quadrant, INAPRO seeks to address some of the trauma and low self-esteem caused in part by the political violence (1980-2000) and the ongoing social and economic oppression experienced by rural indigenous people. They use a four level framework of psychological development to guide their work (see table 1). This framework provides the theoretical ground for their psycho-emotional interventions and activities that foster healthy development in children and youth.



<b>Stage 4</b>	Social Change Agent: capacity to participate and lead in the family, the social and economic systems (councils and assemblies), to work for political rights, to vision and act for oneself and one’s community.
<b>Stage 3</b>	Leadership: capacity to propose and vision for the future, ability to negotiate.
<b>Stage 2</b>	Participation: confidence in the group, socialization, cooperation.
<b>Stage 1</b>	Basic Capacities: self-esteem, autonomy, creativity, humor, and identity.

Table 1. INAPRO’s Stages of Healthy Psychological Development in Quechua Youth<sup>12</sup>

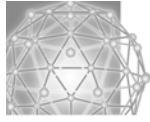
INAPRO engages in the dynamics of the Lower-Left quadrant by working with groups of children to foster participation, group cohesion, and interpersonal skills. The field team also does training workshops with parents and families on the cycle of violence, the impacts of child abuse, and the need for community development. They also foster cultural identity by holding inter-cultural events in which neighboring communities can interact, dialogue, and display their unique songs, artwork, games, and traditions. INAPRO field staff speak the Quechua language and dress in the traditional clothing to build trust with the community people. Complying with these social norms, which are key aspects of the Lower-Left quadrant, is an important aspect to their work.

The psycho-emotional work (Upper Left) carried out by the INAPRO field staff with children corresponds with many of their activities and programs (Upper Right). Therefore, the field staff promote activities and behaviors that illicit change in the children’s sense of self. For example, they use particular games and songs, as well as riddles unique to the Quechua culture, to promote healthy psycho-emotional development in participants.

INAPRO’s other objectives that arise in the Upper-Right quadrant include skill building and nutrition—two important factors in child and youth development, as well as overall community wellbeing. They have constructed green houses made of adobe and planted with local varieties of crops that provide adequate nutrition to children and youth involved in their projects. The participants have learned skills to take care of the green houses—agricultural skills for tending the plants and economic skills for selling some of the crop to buy more seeds for re-planting.

Regarding the pervasive economic, social, and environmental needs in the Lower-Right quadrant, INAPRO focuses on capacity building, micro-credit programs, and the environment. They work in collaboration with schools, community associations, and local leaders, and also promote opportunities for inter-community learning.

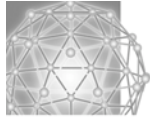
INAPRO offers some important insights into working with an all-quadrant approach in international development. From its results thus far, this approach is effective in promoting the integral development of these rural communities. The focus on the interior quadrants (Upper Left and Lower Left) is particularly important in reaching effective outcomes in the exterior quadrants (Upper Right and Lower Right). Freddy Riviera, executive director of INAPRO, explains that development organizations risk creating dependency and a sense of disempowerment if they aim to solve a community’s problems, such as malnutrition, child abuse,



or extreme poverty, without also building capacity for the community itself to address such problems.<sup>13</sup> Efforts that disregard this interior capacity building tend to have only short-lived successes and not long-term sustainable change. By also working with the interior quadrants, INAPRO fosters motivation and capacity in local people so that they are empowered and skilled to address their own problems and envision their own future. This all-quadrant understanding of community resilience has a more effective impact over the long term than any single quadrant approach.

## **Conclusion**

Participants and practitioners of international development are calling for a more inclusive approach in international development. Salvadoran fishermen and Quechua community leaders, along with international development professors and practitioners, increasingly recognize that an Integral approach is needed to boost effectiveness in project outcomes. Such an approach recognizes a wider spectrum of human needs, ranging from social, political, economic, and environmental to psychological, cultural, and spiritual. This approach is able to draw upon a diverse array of methodologies to relate and respond to the varied ways of knowing and being present in any human community. The quadrants of Integral Theory refer to the exterior and interior dimensions of individuals and groups and offer a guiding framework for such an approach.



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**Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> Wilber, *A brief history of everything*, 1996 and *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution*, 1995

<sup>2</sup> Reidy, "The eye of the storm: An integral perspective on sustainable development and climate change response," 2005; Hochachka, *Developing sustainability, developing the self: An integral approach to community and international development*, 2005; Silos, "The politics of consciousness," 2002

<sup>3</sup> Hochachka, *Developing sustainability, developing the self: An integral approach to community and international development*, 2005; Esbjörn-Hargens, "Integral ecology: The what, who and how of environmental phenomena," 2005; Hargens, "Integral development: Taking the middle path toward gross national happiness," 2002; Silos, "The politics of consciousness," 2002

<sup>4</sup> Some such disciplines include natural sciences, systems theory, cultural evolution, philosophy, sociology, and psychology.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, "Theory and practice of integral sustainable development part 1: Quadrants and the practitioner," 2006, p. 383

<sup>6</sup> Brown, "Theory and practice of integral sustainable development part 1: Quadrants and the practitioner," 2006, p. 388

<sup>7</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy for the oppressed*, 1972, p. 136

<sup>8</sup> Brown, "Theory and practice of integral sustainable development part 1: Quadrants and the practitioner," 2006, p. 391

<sup>9</sup> This project was carried out by the Drishti Centre for Integral Action and funded by the International Development Research Centre in Canada.

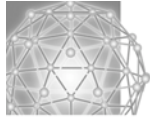
<sup>10</sup> Sources for research methodology include: McNamara, "Appreciative inquiry," 2005; Rosenberg, *Nonviolent communication: A language of life*, 2002; Estrella, *Learning from change: Issues and experiences in participatory monitoring and evaluation*, 2000; Reason & Bradbury, *Handbook of action research*, 2001; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski & Flowers, *Presence: Human purpose and the field of the future*, 2004; Hoffman, Knudsen, Monroe & Green, *Compassionate listening: An exploratory sourcebook*, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Rivera, personal communication, 2005

<sup>12</sup> Rivera, personal communication, 2005. This stage conception was developed by INAPRO in their fieldwork and in consultation with local psychologists in Huancavelica.

<sup>13</sup> Rivera, personal communication, 2005



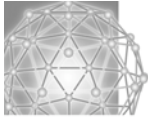


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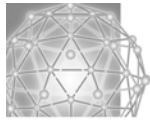
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# An Overview of Integral International Development

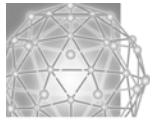
Gail Hochachka

International development is a diverse field attempting to address some of the most pressing global problems facing humanity today. Although the field has come a long way over the past five decades, it is far from perfect. In this article, I discuss how the quadrants, lines, and levels of Integral Theory assist in this ongoing refinement of international development practice. The quadrants provide a framework to identify and work with interior and exterior realities of individuals and groups. Quadrants also enable an integrated use of objective, subjective, and intersubjective methodologies in development interventions. An understanding of developmental lines offers a detailed and nuanced view of capacity building, which can more accurately identify and work with the existing skills and potentials in individuals. Working skillfully with levels in international development can help practitioners engage in the psychology of empowerment and more effectively communicate to a variety of worldviews and value systems. In applying quadrants, lines, and levels, an Integral approach recognizes that development problems need both interior and exterior solutions. Finally, I offer a practical example of the Integral approach in a community development project in El Salvador.

## Introduction

International development is a field that bridges divergent disciplines in attempt to deal with some of the most complex global issues facing humanity today. For six decades, development practitioners (from companies, communities, agencies, donors, research institutes, civil society organizations, and universities)<sup>1</sup> have worked in disaster relief, income generation, sustainable livelihoods, education, health care, vaccinations for widespread epidemics, poverty eradication, and more. Through various paradigms of development, practitioners have pioneered and implemented an array of methodologies in attempt to adequately address this diverse range of issues. These different concepts and toolkits for the international development field are continually being refined, as practitioners expand the collective toolkit to be more responsive to the ever-burgeoning spectrum of issues.

Despite this hard work and the billions of dollars spent, challenges and problems in international development continue to increase and perplex. In a globalized world, local development problems (i.e., resource depletion, lack of economic security, etc.) can become greatly exacerbated, and challenges to sustain ecological systems and economic prosperity are shared within and between countries. The current situation requires practitioners to further advance the practice of development, integrating the beneficial aspects of past approaches, stepping into new areas of inquiry, and working in new partnerships with the numerous and diverse stakeholders at all levels of the development process.



Many practitioners now recognize the degree to which economic, social, political, ecological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual realities overlap and intertwine in international development. Economic prosperity often depends on sustainable management of natural resources; good governance depends on the ethics and commitment for social wellbeing; participation of local people in development projects depends on personal empowerment, and so on. Each development issue has its own layers of complexity that span interior (psychology and culture) and exterior (behavior and systems) realities of individuals and groups. For example, the causes of poverty can be traced to economic and socio-political systems, which are also connected to historical and cultural phenomena, and those are similarly linked to psychological dimensions of oppression, low self-esteem, and lack of awareness.

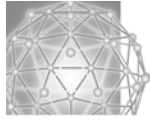
Addressing these meshed and interrelated issues requires a comprehensive approach that is able to address the complexity of life. Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world now realize that development interventions need to include cultural, psychological, and spiritual aspects of life, alongside the more conventional economic development initiatives.<sup>2</sup> To foster individual wellbeing, the needs of the whole person must be met—food, clothing, and shelter, as well as meaningful work, healthy interpersonal relations, and spiritual and artistic expression, to name a few.

To bring such an approach forward, we need new ways to address these multiple dimensions of development that cut across disciplines and methods of inquiry. We need innovation. Certainly scientific and technological innovation is needed to tackle some of the most dire and far-reaching issues our planet has ever faced. But also psychological and cultural innovations—new ways to know ourselves, to recognize our shared realities, to honor and bridge our differences, to negotiate in good faith, and to step into our own personal power on behalf of the whole.

## **The Integral Approach**

The Integral approach offers such innovation. The Integral approach draws upon different perspectives in order to respond to the diversity of challenges before us. It integrates positive elements of the “traditional perspective” of philanthropy and helping others; the “conventional perspective” of exterior systems analysis (e.g., a market-based analysis of economic development or the web of life analysis of interconnectedness); and also the solutions promoted by the “postmodern or multicultural perspective” (e.g., promoting egalitarianism, pacifism, and communalism). I explore how the Integral approach does so in the following pages of this article.

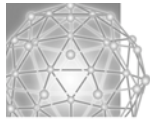
Results from integrally informed programs and projects suggest its benefits are profound. At the local level, practitioners report how including dimensions of psychology and culture is vital in addressing socioeconomic needs and improving overall development outcomes. Matilde Clarisa Cabrera Cámac of the Institute for Action and Progress (INAPRO) in Huancavelica, Peru explains how, in twelve years of working with rural indigenous Quechua communities, they have realized that local people not only need sustenance for the physical body (i.e., nutrition, potable water, livelihood, shelter, etc.) but for the mind, in terms of psychological and emotional health. In this historically oppressed and impoverished region of Peru, INAPRO’s team of practitioners use a community resilience approach that fosters healthy psychological and emotional development, cultural well-being, as well as economic self-sufficiency. Their focus on psycho-emotional, cultural, and socioeconomic objectives is unique, and their outcomes to date are impressive.



At the international level, the Integral approach has also proved to be useful in reaching effective solutions. Several international NGOs employ elements of an Integral approach, such as Educate Girls Globally (primarily working in India and Pakistan) and the Caribbean Institute for Sustainable Development and Human Rights (in Suriname). Other larger development agencies, such as the UNDP, are also increasingly seeing the potential benefits of this approach. Certain practitioners are finding that the inherent interdisciplinary nature of international development requires an Integral approach that can reflect and respond to such diversity and scope. More detailed case studies on the benefits of an Integral approach at community, national, and international levels are currently being compiled.<sup>3</sup>

### **Integrating Disciplines**

The Integral approach brings together previous and existing approaches to development, each with its own set of methodologies (see table 1 and figure 1).<sup>4</sup> The Integral approach draws upon the conventional model of international development, with its emphasis on empirical positivist research (quantitative and scientific), as well as the alternative pluralistic model, which offers a focus on intersubjective and subjective modes of inquiry (qualitative, hermeneutic, and introspective). This approach also ushers in legitimate space for human interiority—spirituality, consciousness, and culture—as a key component of development practice and provides subjective modes of inquiry to engage this part of humanity. Figure 2 outlines how these methodologies merge in an integral embrace.



<b>Conventional</b> <i>Modern/rational</i>	<b>Alternative</b> <i>Postmodern/pluralistic</i>	<b>Integral</b> <i>Integral/systemic</i>
<p>Uses scientific rigor, quantitative methodologies, and concrete problem solving to address tangible material needs.</p> <p>Characterized by centralized power and extractive, linear flows of non-local resources from territories.</p> <p>Notable advances include technology, medicine, education and communications, as well as contributing to the foundations for democracy, economic prosperity, gender equality, and civil rights.</p>	<p>Brings participatory and emancipatory methodologies that engage local beneficiaries as active contributors to, and co-creators of, social change.</p> <p>Promotes and emulates circular economies and heterarchical decision-making; is embedded in, and reinforces, "local."</p> <p>Notable advances include community-based approaches to natural resource management and local economic sufficiency, decentralized governance, addressing unjust power dynamics, as well as fostering human rights, gender equality, and ecological sustainability, among many others.</p>	<p>Includes the interiority of communities with the objectives of economic security and environmental sustainability, and also works with the transformative processes of personal empowerment.</p> <p>Seeks to integrate the positive aspects of the conventional and alternative systems.</p> <p>Notable advances include and all-quadrant approach (addressing socioeconomic, political, and ecological needs, <i>as well as</i> psychological, cultural, and emotional needs); a framework for working with developmental psychology (levels); a focus on creating conditions for self-development; and tools for identifying local worldviews and appropriately translating communications.</p>

Table 1. Some Benefits from the Major Paradigms of International Development<sup>5</sup>

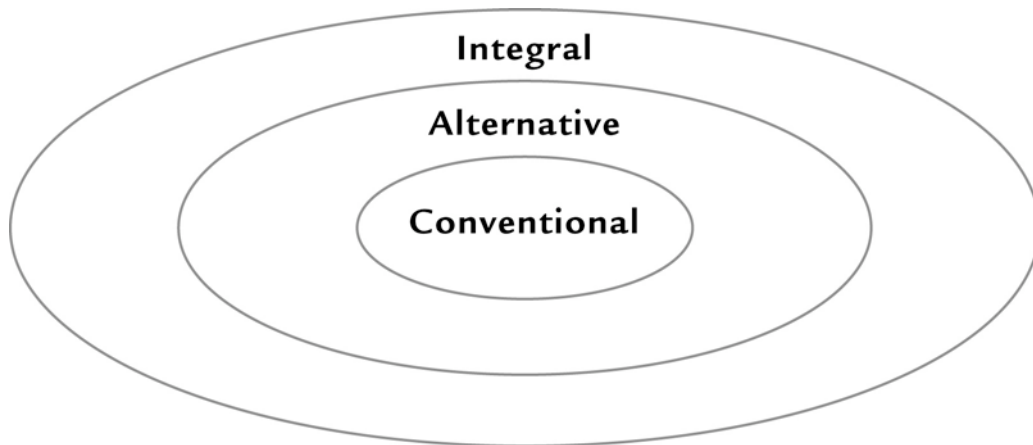


Figure 1. International Development Paradigms Nested within Each Other

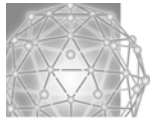
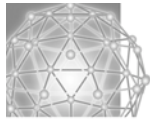


Figure 2. Integrating Ways of Knowing in International Development Practice<sup>6</sup>



The ability to draw upon multiple perspectives and methodologies is beneficial in international development for (at least) three reasons. First, it enables a more comprehensive understanding of a given situation, including the intentions, traditions, strategies, and behaviors of individuals and groups. Second, it provides practitioners with an array of methodologies for working with the varied dimensions of that situation. And third, it links external change (i.e., behaviors and systems) inseparably with inner change (i.e., psychology and culture) and thus increases the success and sustainability of a given development intervention.

### **Integrating Interiority**

One of the more notable advances of an Integral approach in international development is how it includes human interiority (feelings, beliefs, worldviews) in development interventions. The Integral approach “acknowledges the importance of the natural and human sciences, but...[maintains] that the domains of culture and spirituality are just as important.”<sup>7</sup> The invisible, interior aspects of human societies—ethics, worldviews, morals, culture, and consciousness—play an influential role in development interventions. For example, low self-worth from decades of oppression may thwart participatory processes to foster sustainable livelihoods; a traditional belief may irreparably contradict efforts to promote girls’ education.

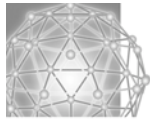
Practitioners with decades of experience in international development suggest that a major limitation in the field is its over-emphasis on exterior needs and phenomena (and its associated scientific-rational epistemology).<sup>8</sup> Weaving interiority into international development thus expands the methodologies used in project design, implementation, and evaluation. It also provides an applicable understanding of interpersonal dynamics, global processes, cultural evolution, and psychology.<sup>9</sup>

In particular, some components of development look very different when the interiority of individuals and groups are included. “Capacity development” becomes a process of engaging in both interior and exterior dimensions of capacity: technical and social as well as emotional, psychological, and moral capacity, which relate to different lines of human development. Fostering “empowerment” involves creating emergent ground for self-development, such that local change agents increase their personal power, creativity, and initiative to take the lead in addressing development issues. “Participation” becomes a process in which participants bring their whole selves, including their self-concept, trauma, feelings, perspectives, and attitudes, to authentically engage in social change. “Local ownership” involves seeking to know (as much as possible) people’s worldviews and values, and then communicating and designing projects to resonate with these worldviews so that local people become committed initiators and leaders of change.

With its attention to interiority, an Integral approach subtly but profoundly changes the intention, direction, and practice of international development. Esbjörn-Hargens explains how one of the key strengths of Integral International Development is that it

does not impose multiculturalism, liberal pluralism, conservative approaches or even holistic notions on any culture, but rather...[understands the importance for] each culture to cultivate its own unique interior dimensions such as values, mutual understanding, felt-experiences, intentionality, integrity, trustworthiness, and justness [related to development]. By honoring both the interior and exterior





domains each individual and culture [is enabled] to develop in their own way, at their own speed based on their unique psycho-social-historical situation.<sup>10</sup>

This points to a critical balance of meeting people where they are and also creating emergent ground for change. An integrally informed approach suggests that effective outcomes lie in the skillful balance between the current and emerging expressions of self and society.

In the remainder of this article, I describe how the quadrants, lines, and levels of Integral Theory relate to international development, providing brief examples where appropriate.<sup>11</sup> At the end, I outline the use of an Integral approach in practice, based on my work in El Salvador.<sup>12</sup> I do not pretend that this article covers all the intricacies of Integral International Development. Rather, I invite the reader to participate in this emergent discipline, adding his or her own creativity and insight as we co-create together.

### **Quadrants—The Four Dimensions of International Development**

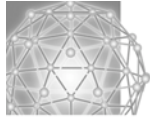
The Integral framework organizes the perspectives and methodologies of international development into four quadrants that correspond to *experience*, *behavior*, *culture*, and *systems* (figure 3). These quadrants essentially depict first-person, second-person, and third-person perspectives—the “I,” “You/We,” “It,” and “Its” of international development.

Every development issue can be viewed and understood from any or all of these four perspectives. Efforts to promote gender equality, for example, are influenced both by an individual’s perceptions of his/her self (Upper Left) and the society’s cultural traditions and norms (Lower Left). The social institutions (Lower Right) and behaviors (Upper Right) that emerge from these perceptions and traditions can have an influential role in promoting or preventing gender equality from being accepted. Other development issues, such as poverty, education, capacity building, HIV/AIDS, and resource management, can also be understood and addressed from all quadrants.<sup>13</sup>

Effective work in international development requires, at the very least, that practitioners or teams of practitioners engage on all four fronts. Wilber explains this in reference to sustainability:

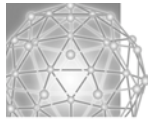
Before we can even attempt an ecological healing, we must first reach mutual understanding and mutual agreement among ourselves as to the best way to collectively proceed. In other words, the healing impulse comes not from championing functional fit (Lower Right) but mutual understanding (Lower Left). And that depends first and foremost...on individual growth and transformation (Upper Left).<sup>14</sup>

Use of an Integral framework enables practitioners to validate and employ objective, intersubjective, and subjective ways of knowing, whereas other approaches tend to give preference to one quadrant over the others (see figures 1 and 2). The conventional/modern approach employed a primarily scientific-rational epistemology to the extent that “truth” was that which could be measured and replicated. This supported much of development to date, including most scientific, medical, and economic gains, but contributed to environmental degradation and systemic gaps between rich and poor. To mitigate this epistemological bias and its impacts, the alternative/postmodern approach gave preference to dialogical processes that were collective, circular, and bottom-up, seeking to create level playing fields in social, political, and economic



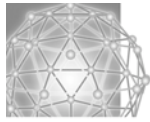
spheres. The former gave preference to “It/s” and the latter to “We,” while both claimed that their “truth” was the whole truth.

The Integral framework is based on the understanding that there are important truths to both these (and many other) paradigms. It seeks to integrate the positive components of all of them, in service of a more complete and responsive approach to development issues.<sup>15</sup>



		INTERIOR	EXTERIOR
INDIVIDUAL	Upper-Left Quadrant Self and Consciousness <i>The subjective reality of an individual</i>	<p><b>Context:</b> intrapersonal consciousness; intentions; personal values; attitude; commitment (cognitive, emotional, spiritual, moral, etc.); cognitive capacity; depth of responsibility; degree of care for others and the environment.</p> <p><b>Examples of areas addressed:</b> psychological health; educational level; emotional intelligence; motivation and will; understanding of one's role in the community; personal goals; the development of practitioner's intrapersonal intelligence and self-knowledge.</p> <p><b>Tools for transformation:</b> psychotherapy; religious/spiritual counseling; phenomenological research; self-questioning; introspection; prayer; meditation; journaling; goal-setting; emotional literacy training.</p>	<p><b>Upper-Right Quadrant Brain and Organism</b> <i>The objective reality of an individual</i></p> <p><b>Context:</b> physical health; intentional behavior; skills; capabilities; actions.</p> <p><b>Examples of areas addressed:</b> nutritional intake; pre- and post-natal care; conduct toward environment or opposite sex; routines; response to rules and regulations; birth control use; money management; computer skills.</p> <p><b>Tools for transformation:</b> diet; hygiene; preventative medicine; skill-building; clear rules, regulations, and guidance from a respected authority; exercise.</p>
	COLLECTIVE	<p><b>Lower-Left Quadrant Culture and Worldview</b> <i>The intersubjective reality of groups</i></p> <p><b>Context:</b> shared values and worldviews; shared meaning; cultural norms and mores; language; customs; stories; symbolism; agreed upon ethics; often the implicit cultural context, or the "pre-understanding" of cultural context and its background meanings.</p> <p><b>Examples of areas addressed:</b> collective vision; relationship between development practitioners and the community; relationship between community members; family relationships.</p> <p><b>Tools for transformation:</b> dialogue; community-directed development; inclusive decision making; consensus-based strategic planning; organizational learning; support groups; participant-observer research; community visioning; cooperative participation; storytelling; collective introspection; group therapy; critical and ontological hermeneutics.</p>	<p><b>Lower-Right Quadrant Social System and Environment</b> <i>The objective reality of groups and Nature</i></p> <p><b>Context:</b> visible societal structures; systems and modes of production (economic, political, social, informational, educational, technological); modes and means of communication (i.e., systems of information transfer and communication technologies); strategies; policies; measures; work processes; natural environment.</p> <p><b>Examples of areas addressed:</b> stability and effectiveness of economic and political systems; legal frameworks; strength of technological, education and healthcare infrastructure; social justice; poverty alleviation; global inequity; job creation and trade; national debt; corporate regulation; food security; health of the biosphere; climate change; restoration, protection and sustainable use of natural resources.</p> <p><b>Tools for transformation:</b> policy-making; capacity building; systems theory; organization redesign; micro-credit and micro-enterprise; interest rates; subsidies; regulations; natural resource restoration and management; appropriate technology; geographic information systems; natural environmental changes; population changes; scientific discoveries.</p>

Figure 3. The Four Quadrants of International Development<sup>16</sup>



### Developmental Lines

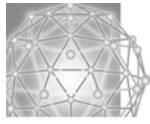
As practitioners focus on the dynamics and phenomena arising in each quadrant, the diversity of capacities, skills, personalities, and motivations quickly becomes evident. Some individuals excel more in certain areas than in others: some people have an aptitude and skill set for practical problem solving (LR, UR), for holding reflective space for individuals (UL), or for facilitating dialogues and negotiations (LL), and so on. These individual strengths and weaknesses can be understood as the inherent *multiple intelligences, capacities, and functions of individuals*, which psychologists refer to as *developmental lines* (see table 2). Some of these lines include cognitive (intellectual/technical), interpersonal (social), affective (emotional), moral, and spiritual.<sup>17</sup>

Lines	Theorist	Asks the question:	Examples
<i>Cognitive line</i>	Kegan	<i>What am I aware of?</i>	First Order: Impulsive (perceives and responds by emotion) Second Order: Imperial (motivated solely by one's desires) Third Order: Interpersonal (defined by the group) Fourth Order: Institutional (self directed, self authoring) Fifth Order: Interindividual (Interpenetration of self systems)
<i>Moral line</i>	Kohlberg, Gilligan	<i>What should I do?</i>	Preconventional, conventional, and postconventional; self-care, care, universal care
<i>Needs line</i>	Maslow	<i>What do I need?</i>	Physiological, safety, belongingness, self-esteem, self-actualization, self-transcendence
<i>Self-identity line (ego-development)</i>	Loevinger	<i>Who am I, how do I define myself?</i>	Presocial, symbiotic, impulsive, self-protective, conformist, conscientious, individualistic, autonomous, integrated
<i>Values line</i>	Graves	<i>What is significant to me?</i>	Instinctive, animistic/tribalistic, absolutist, individualistic-achiever, relativistic, systemic-integrative, and global-holistic

Table 2. Major Developmental Lines

### Developmental Lines and Capacity Building

Lines are particularly relevant in international development in the area of capacity building (also called capacity development). From an Integral perspective, capacity building is essentially the process of fostering growth along these lines as they relate to a development issue. For example, activities that intend to build know-how and intellectual capacity work with the *cognitive line*, such as capacity for improved financial accounting, report writing, advocacy techniques, public speaking skills, and effective policy influence. Other capacity building initiatives seek to build technical capacity via both the kinesthetic and cognitive lines, such as capacity for building



appropriate technologies, using sustainable resource management techniques, and carrying out participatory evaluation and monitoring methodologies. Some capacity building activities also work with the affective line to develop emotional capacity (e.g., important for fostering self-esteem, confidence, and leadership); or with the interpersonal and moral lines to build social and moral capacity (e.g., working with and caring for others). Capacity building exercises seek to enable the latent but possible potentials that reside in individuals and emerge through the human development process.

For international development interventions that seek to build or develop capacity, pertinent questions include: what type of capacity is being developed for whom, and is it appropriate? Often development interventions emphasize the intellectual and technical capacities (cognitive and kinesthetic lines). Yet this intellectual and technical capacity may need to be supported by emotional and social capacities that involve affective, interpersonal, moral, and values lines. If so, and these latter capacities are missing, then the initiatives seeking to build cognitive and technical capacity may fall short or even fail.

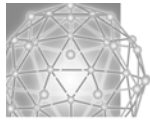
For capacity building interventions to bring forth new modes of being (either with development practitioners or local beneficiaries), a new way of thinking *and* a new way of being is required. In other words, not only does change require the cognition to *imagine* new possibilities, but also growth upon other developmental lines to actually *inhabit* those new frames of reference. Research suggests that the cognitive line precedes and opens up new awareness into which other developmental lines grow. A person has to be aware of something in order to act on it, feel it, relate with it, identify with it, or need it. Wilber explains this further:

When specific developmental lines are studied—such as moral development, self development, and role-taking development—it has almost always been found that *cognitive development is necessary (but not sufficient) for these other developments* [my italics]. In other words, before you can develop morals, or a self-perspective, or some idea of the good life, you have to be able to consciously register those various elements in the first place.<sup>18</sup>

Looking at the example of sustainability in international development, local people may *understand* the concept of sustainability, but behaviors, traditions, and institutions will not change to be more sustainable until their affective, moral, and interpersonal lines have sufficiently developed as well. People's roles and interactions are embedded in traditions and self-concepts, and growth often has to come through changes in local customs and one's sense of self, as well as through new concepts of sustainability.

Another example is seen with the progressive methodologies used in development (such as participation, sustainable livelihoods approach, action research, and even the Integral approach). For many practitioners, the conceptual understanding of these progressive approaches is often better than their use in practice.<sup>19</sup> Reason and Torbert describe how many practitioners of action research struggle with the shift away from a positivist modern approach:

Action research has for the past 50 years failed to fulfill its promise, failed to make the kinds of contributions that [have been] advocated, because it has remained caught in an empirical positivist view of academic knowledge as being of value for its own sake.<sup>20</sup>



Capacity building in several developmental lines is necessary to stimulate and stabilize new mindsets, behaviors, socioeconomic institutions, and cultural norms.

Methods to work with these capacities in international development vary according to each particular line. However, some general guidelines exist. First, it is important to understand and be able to identify lines (various characteristics and patterns of some developmental lines are described in table 2). Second, suitable methodologies can be found for fostering growth and development of these lines (some of which are included in the quadrants of figure 3). Developing tools based on the life questions in the third column of table 2 may provide a good starting point to identify and work with lines. Creating professional teams of people with a diversity of perspectives may be useful in working with several lines in larger international development projects. Integral theorists and practitioners are conducting research on how to recognize developmental lines and how to design multi-faceted capacity building activities accordingly. I will offer an example of this at the end of the article.

## Levels of Self and Social Change

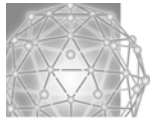
Extensive research by cognitive and developmental psychologists explains how certain lines (such as values, self-concept, and cognition) unfold in nested stages of increasing complexity.<sup>21</sup> Wilber describes and summarizes the various bodies of research on this process of unfolding, explaining how it occurs both in individuals (referred to as “self-stages”) and in the collective (reflected in morals and perspectives).<sup>22</sup> Taken together, these point to a “center of gravity” or worldview from which a person operates. Worldviews give rise to how people understand and act in the world and do not just influence an individual’s behaviors but also manifest in a society’s institutions. Wilber explains:

Each time the self’s center of gravity identifies with a new and higher [stage], it doesn’t just have a new sense of *identity*, it has a new and higher *view* of the world, with a wider and more encompassing set of *morals* and *perspectives*.<sup>23</sup>

Most research has found a similar pattern of development through these stages, be it in values development,<sup>24</sup> ego development,<sup>25</sup> cognitive development,<sup>26</sup> and so on. These stages (or levels) transcend and include the previous stages, opening up into new, expanded modes of perception, consciousness, and care.<sup>27</sup> Full and healthy development at certain stages enables more complex stages to emerge, such that each stage encompasses and builds on the capacities of the previous stages.<sup>28</sup> Worldviews tend to emerge through a process of the self first identifying (or embedding) at a certain level of development, and then transcending (or de-embedding) from that level as it moves on to the next.<sup>29</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that each of these worldviews offer important components to a society—they are concurrent waves of existence that mesh and blend together, each adding something particular and unique to the whole. Moreover, they are holarchically arranged (such that each higher stages contains all the lower stages), and each is necessary at particular moments.<sup>30</sup>

As one’s worldview begins to transcend and include more than immediate self-needs, an individual begins to also care about the group, community, or society, and then other beings and the environment (see table 3). At each new stage, an individual constructs their reality accordingly.<sup>31</sup> In other words, through psychological development, one’s sphere of “self” widens

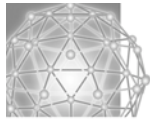


to include more in its embrace—other people, other communities, other nations, other species, other beings. Since we tend to extend rights and concerns to whom we identify as “self,” more compassionate and caring ways of being emerge through higher levels of self-development.

The important point about these worldviews with respect to international development is that at each stage, the world is seen differently—with different needs, tasks, capacities, guiding principles, problems, and pathologies.<sup>32</sup> A person’s worldview includes a psychological structure, value system, and a mode of adaptation, which is expressed in numerous different ways, from laws to fashion to institutions to monetary flows.<sup>33</sup> For an international development practitioner to know where to begin in a project, they must first know what development issues are present and also have an understanding of where people are coming from (i.e., how do people make sense of that context based on their own psychology and their cultural traditions). Knowledge of how worldviews emerge through stages, and how they relate to morals, perspectives, behaviors, and institutions, can be useful in practical ways for practitioners to more appropriately design and carryout projects, which I explore further below.

<b>Wilber</b> (worldview and wave of existence)	<b>Kohlberg</b> (stages of moral development)	<b>Gilligan</b> (stages of female moral development)	<b>Relates to ethics, values, attitudes, and motivations</b>
Egocentric  (magic)	Preconventional	Self-care	Preconventional is amoral and egocentric, in which "what I want" is what is right.  Concern only extends as far as "me and mine" -- my self and my needs and desires are most important.
Ethnocentric  (mythic, mythic-rational)	Conventional	Care	Conventional is ethnocentric, and thus "what the group, tribe, country wants" is what is right.  Concerned for others in one's social group (family, nation, religion, ideology, etc.). Care extends only to the group, community, and society. Cooperation and teamwork within the social group are driving forces.
Worldcentric  (rational and beyond)	Postconventional	Universal care	Postconventional has a more worldcentric embrace, in which "what is fair for all peoples, regardless of race, color, creed" is what is right.  Concerned for all beings, ecosystems, and cultures.

Table 3. Stage Conceptions of Worldviews<sup>34</sup>



## Applying Knowledge of Quadrants, Lines, and Levels

These elements of an Integral approach are useful in international development to identify where people are coming from: What do they need? How do they make meaning? What do they care about? Who does she identify with? How does he define himself? What does she think is important, and why? What does he think is really valuable, what motivates him? These types of questions touch on several lines, have ramifications in all quadrants, and relate to the levels depicted in table 3.

Tools for identifying “where people are coming from” include Kegan’s Subject-Object Test, Susanne Cook-Greuter’s Sentence Completion Test, and Beck and Cowan’s Spiral Dynamics. Others have applied these tools in mapping values and worldviews regarding the environment, ecology, and sustainability. These include Esbjörn-Hargens’ work on Eco-Selves (values development in environmental concerns),<sup>35</sup> Brown’s work on value systems in sustainability work,<sup>36</sup> and DeKay’s ways to identify the dissolving and developing traits in values with respect to green architecture.<sup>37</sup>

Some of these are quite complex measurement tools; others are more intuitive. I have used a simplified and intuitive method for identifying worldviews (using attentive listening and documenting key motivations) based on Wilber’s stages of egocentric, ethnocentric, and worldcentric (see table 3).<sup>38</sup>

Once practitioners have a sense of where people are coming from, they can apply this knowledge of levels in several ways. First, an understanding of personal and cultural development through these stages can help practitioners and participants to better understand themselves and their own worldviews, as well as assist them in relating to and communicating with other people. Also, understanding how people make sense of their world, how they relate morally and ethically to their surroundings, and what motivates them to take action, can help practitioners to foster healthy societies and to create emergent ground for empowerment, leadership, participation, and social action.

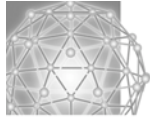
### Empowerment as Self-Development

Empowerment is a word common in international development that refers to the process of moving into new modes of political power and social action. Most practitioners in international development know the importance of empowerment in social change, yet few practitioners inquire deeply into *what the process of empowerment is*.

Integral Theory provides a framework that highlights how empowerment relates to several components of an individual’s interior development (which includes the Upper-Left quadrant, several developmental lines, and self-stages). Case studies from various countries suggest that development projects are more successful when methodologies are used to foster empowerment in its true sense of self-development.<sup>39</sup> For example, the staff of the community development organization *Centro Bartolomé de las Casas* in El Salvador use a variety of grassroots methodologies (from the UL quadrant) to foster self-development of local people.<sup>40</sup> They have found that as they address local people’s trauma and low self-worth (affective line and overall development of self-stages, UL), their work to foster participation and promote local economies (LL, LR) becomes more effective.

Maslow’s two tiers of needs—*survival needs* and *being needs*—explain why empowerment is essentially a process of self-liberation. According to Maslow, survival needs include





physiological, survival, and belonging needs, and being needs relate to self-esteem, self-empowerment, and self-transcendence. If an individual is concerned with their next meal or whether they truly belong to the larger cultural group, it is difficult to step into one's own personal power and be able to participate meaningfully. Thus, an effective empowerment strategy would address the first few levels of needs—of survival, safety, and belonging—before moving into the other modes of empowerment such as self-esteem, self-expression, and personal power. To disregard or “skip” certain stages does not speed up the process—these are holarchical stages, in which the previous stages enable further stages to unfold.

These changes in the self (needs, values, self-concept) co-arise with the material objectives of a development project. As Maslow puts it:

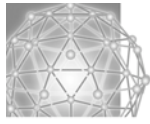
No social reforms, no beautiful programs or laws will be of any consequence unless people are healthy enough, evolved enough...to understand them and to want to put them into practice in the right way.<sup>41</sup>

As international development practitioners come to understand the process of self-development, they can more readily and effectively *create emergent conditions* for empowerment.<sup>42</sup> These emergent conditions provide situations in which individuals can engage in their own self-development, participate with others, and take action in their own community's development. Some examples include fostering reflective space, self-inquiry exercises, and carrying out activities in which people can “try on” other perspectives (see figure 3). This emergent ground can foster profound transformations in worldviews, thus also giving rise to exterior outcomes (i.e., democratic institutions, sustainable land use, poverty reduction, etc.).

### Healthy Translation

In addition to self-development, an integrally informed understanding of empowerment also includes “healthy translation,” which I will explain briefly here. According to empirical research, a third party cannot definitively foster self-development in another person, primarily because shifts in worldviews and ways of thinking take time and specific life conditions.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the interior development process is not guaranteed; regardless of how we strive to create emergent conditions for self-development, some individuals will not necessarily transform through higher stages of development. In actuality, a large proportion of development is horizontal—it is a filling out of that particular stage of growth and an elaboration of what it means to live and be at that stage. This is as critical a process as vertical growth.

Taking this into consideration, an Integral approach to empowerment also includes fostering *healthy expressions* of the existing worldviews of people, groups, and communities, at any stage of development.<sup>44</sup> For example, if an individual's worldview is egocentric, there are often very important reasons for that—namely, the need to take care of one's self. This may mean taking time to rest, caring for one's own material or emotional needs, or investing in one's self, in any number of ways. However, self-care also has an unhealthy expression of selfishness and self-centeredness, often to the detriment of others. It can become stealing from others, over-harvesting a common resource, or dominating over weaker people to get what “I want.” These can be thought of as the healthy and unhealthy expressions of this particular worldview. As practitioners, the question we can hold is: how can we draw focus from selfish expressions of this worldview and instead promote and honor the real need for self-care? Likewise for the healthy and unhealthy expressions of ethnocentric and worldcentric worldviews, or any stage of development along a particular line.



Often, when people are balanced in how they engage and attend to the quadrants, their expressions of that particular stage become healthier.<sup>45</sup> For example, when someone is almost entirely focused on the Upper-Left quadrant, they may disconnect from their social group (LL) and withdraw almost completely from worldly engagements (UR, LR), provoking a narrow expression of that particular stage of development. Similarly, when someone is constantly doing things (i.e., engaging predominately in the Upper Right), to the exclusion of simply being (UL), taking time to interrelate and process with others (LL), or even taking time to create an assessment of what is being done (LR), this can provoke an unhealthy expression of their worldview.

The main point here is that there is nothing intrinsically “wrong” with any particular stage; what can be considered “wrong” are the unhealthy ways that stage is expressed. When these quadrants come into balance, often people are more able to access the healthy expressions of their stage of development. Thus, as development practitioners, our work also includes fostering healthy translation, which involves facilitating a process of balancing quadrants with individuals, groups, communities, and (especially) ourselves.

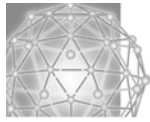
### **Effective Communication and Local Ownership**

Although a widespread transformation to worldcentric awareness is desirable, if not necessary, it is also unlikely in the near future, considering the profound nature of such a shift in consciousness. Practitioners can also apply the knowledge of levels (in self and social change) in how they communicate development concepts. This often means translating the meanings of worldcentric concepts into forms that can be heard, recognized, and acted upon by people at ethnocentric and egocentric stages. Brown explains this further:

If our economic, environmental and social challenges require values that will drive new behavior—values which are fundamentally different than most people have—then we might not be successful in our efforts, as those values may not change fast enough on a large enough scale. Yet if we can learn to work with the values that people hold and translate what needs to be done so that it resonates with those core values, then we may go much farther, much faster toward sustainability. This is fundamentally a process of truly honoring people for who they are—not trying to force a change in values upon them—yet simultaneously explaining shared goals (like sustainability) in ways that are meaningful to them.<sup>46</sup>

This ability to appropriately translate a development intervention into terms that resonate with local people (with their worldviews, meaning-making, and values) makes a crucial difference in the ultimate effectiveness of a project. One could design the perfect development intervention, but if no one in the local region understands or values it, then it will most likely fail. Beck explains that, the question is not “how do you motivate people,” but how do you relate what you are doing to their natural motivational flows?<sup>47</sup>

Projects that foster “local ownership” and that are “community-based” tend to be effective precisely because local leaders are able to translate and communicate development objectives in ways that resonate with local worldviews. In these types of projects, local people infuse the development project with their own meaning and sustain it with their own motivations. This leadership skill for creating bridges between current and emerging worldviews is not necessarily restricted to local leaders; external practitioners can also develop this same connection and resonance with local people.<sup>48</sup> The origin of the practitioners (community-based or otherwise) is



less important than their process and form of communication. Without building such bridges of understanding for complex development objectives (such as democracy, equity, and sustainability), new concepts can be seen as socially and culturally disruptive and even rejected.

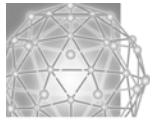
The techniques I use for working with different worldviews include attentive listening, taking cues from the language used by local people, and then introducing development concepts using their frame of reference. Perspectives are expressed and “show up” differently in different contexts and cultures, therefore I find general guidelines for recognizing the *deep structures* of worldviews to be most helpful (some of these are shared in table 4).<sup>49</sup>

<b>Worldview</b>	<b>Possible translations</b>
<b><i>Egocentric</i></b>	<p>Translate communications about development issues (e.g., poverty, gender inequality, unsustainability, etc.) in ways that serve the individual's interests.</p> <p>For example, if an individual is primarily concerned with his/her own gain (e.g., food, resources, money, status, ideological argument, etc.), explain how complying with rules and regulations for sustainability helps to secure that gain.</p>
<b><i>Ethnocentric</i></b>	<p>Development issues must be "languageed" in ways that resonate with the social group's morals and frame of reference.</p> <p>For example, find ways to translate the value of development issues into the social norms of the group, using the appropriate texts, authorities, principles, and practices that are agreed upon and honored by the group.</p>
<b><i>Worldcentric</i></b>	<p>Explain or present development issues as forms of care for others, across and between cultures, countries, species, and groups.</p> <p>For example, engage people's motivations by framing development issues as those that lead to the welfare of you and other people, species, and generations.</p>

Table 4. Translating Communications to Resonate with Different Worldviews

### **Interior and Exterior Dimensions of Development**

One unique aspect of an Integral International Development, which I have discussed throughout the previous sections and will emphasize here, is the recognition it gives to interior development. Most of the problems that international development interventions seek to address appear to be problems requiring a Right-Hand quadrant solution. For example, problems such as extreme poverty, gender inequality, and natural resource depletion tend to be met with solutions such as economic growth, equitable institutions, and sustainable resource management, respectively. An integrally informed approach, however, emphasizes that solutions must *also* involve people's interior development so that they care about, and are motivated to address, such problems. In other words, we *definitely* need the aforementioned exterior, Right-Hand solutions, but we also need the transformative occasions to nurture and sustain progressive changes via interior, Left-Hand quadrants. Wilber explains:



Gaia's main problem is not toxic waste dumps, ozone depletion, or biospheric pollution [or any other international development problem]. These global problems can *only* be recognized and responded to from a global, worldcentric awareness, and thus Gaia's main problem is that not enough human beings have developed and evolved from egocentric to sociocentric to worldcentric, there to realize—and act on—the ecological crisis. Gaia's main problem is not exterior pollution but interior development, which alone *can* end exterior pollution.... [To re-emphasize] Gaia's primary problems and threats are *not* pollution, industrialization, overcultivation, soil despoliation, overpopulation, ozone depletion, or whatnot. Gaia's major problem is lack of mutual understanding and mutual agreement *in the noosphere*.<sup>50</sup>

Many social change agents and international development practitioners sincerely believe that by teaching or explaining phenomena using techniques and tools (i.e., statistics, projections, and data) from the Right-Hand quadrants, people will understand, care about, and be motivated to solve these problems. From Wilber:

The problem is *not* how to demonstrate, in monological terms and with scientific proofs, that Gaia is in desperate trouble. The general evidence of this serious trouble is already and simply and absolutely overwhelming. Anybody can grasp the data. But most just don't *care*.... Change in *objective belief* [with more data and facts] is *not* the driving force of *interior development*.<sup>51</sup>

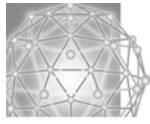
Today's globalized world has access to immense quantities of information—information on practically any and all topics that is increasingly becoming accessible to anyone, whether in small communities and towns or in the bustling urban centers. Providing more data, statistics, and projections is not sufficient for people to actually change. Wilber explains how this belief misunderstands the importance and the process of interior development itself; that misunderstanding

believes the inadequacy of attempting to change people by altering the object instead of growing the subject. Focusing merely on monological and objective and exterior and scientific terms—no matter how *utterly true*—beyond a certain point simply detracts away from the fundamental problem, hides the fundamental problem, which is not exterior pollution but interior development....

In other words, the real problem is *not* exterior. The real problem is *interior*. The real problem is how to get people to *internally transform* from egocentric, to sociocentric to worldcentric consciousness, which is the *only* stance that *can* grasp the global dimensions of the problem in the first place, and thus the *only* stance that can freely, even eagerly, embrace global solutions.<sup>52</sup>

Humanity does not lack the information about global problems nor the technological skills to devise solutions; rather we lack the interior development to care about and be motivated to authentically manifest change.

With that said, however, I must also emphasize that an Integral approach does not preference interior over exterior development; rather, these are both important dimensions of holistic and profound social change. Moreover, these two dimensions cannot be separated: the more an



individual develops internally, the more they worry about the world, are concerned about others, and take action to address these concerns.<sup>53</sup> As international development practitioners focus on fostering interior change, they do not exclude, but rather stimulate, care and action in the exterior world. Therefore, an Integral approach emphasizes interior development yet links and embeds it in all quadrants, such that self-development is “embraced in culture, embodied in nature, and embedded in social institutions.”<sup>54</sup> Practitioners who use an Integral approach not only work to alleviate exterior problems but also seek to create conditions for interior development as well.

### **Integral Life Practice—A Note on Self-Change**

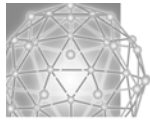
Interior development can be engaged in, and understood, from several different disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, and spiritual or religious practice. Self-transformation can naturally occur through time and living, but it is also fostered by certain conditions and exercises. Theorists from the disciplines of social science explain how changes in worldviews often begin when individuals are deeply moved by something.<sup>55</sup> Personal transformation can also be propelled by a “disorienting dilemma” (which can be a traumatic and dramatic experience).<sup>56</sup> Others describe how inner change is propelled by a (conscious or even unconscious) search for a missing element in one’s life (also called an “integrating circumstance”).<sup>57</sup> Development practitioners in Sri Lanka say that through meditative practice, individuals are motivated and mobilized to act for the development of the village with a more connected and compassionate perspective: “only through inner transformation can the outside world change.”<sup>58</sup> Other empirical and well-documented methodologies of interior development come from transformational learning and action research<sup>59</sup> and other grassroots approaches (such as *Centro Bartolomé de las Casas* in El Salvador and INAPRO in Peru).

Wilber uses the term Integral Life Practice (ILP) to refer to those practices that help foster an individual’s integral development (that is, interior development that is embraced in culture, embodied in nature, and embedded in social institutions). ILP includes working with the self-development process in all quadrants, including physical health, community service, psychological well-being, and spiritual unfolding.<sup>60</sup> Numerous individual practices can be integrated into an Integral Life Practice and the specifics of an ILP will depend on the culture, context, and background of the individual.

Integral Life Practice (or cultural variations of it) is useful to anyone involved in international development (i.e., in communities, companies, civil society organizations, donor agencies, and research centers). This is especially the case for practitioners who intend to apply an Integral approach with the competence, care, and compassion that it intends. Cognitive understanding of the Integral framework is not sufficient to compassionately and accurately apply it to real life contexts.<sup>61</sup> Humility and care is required, which tends to come through one’s own self-development. Engaging in practices that deepen one’s own capacity and consciousness may be the single most important component for effective international development programs.

### **Summary**

*Lines* refer to the multiple intelligences, capacities, and functions of individuals and groups. Lines emerge in all quadrants: for example, emotional (UL), interpersonal and moral (LL), technical and physical (UR/LR). They particularly relate to capacity building in international development and help practitioners to identify and work with individuals’ existing skills and potentials.



*Quadrants* reflect the four fundamental dimensions and perspectives of any development issue, including experience (“I”), behavior (“It”), culture (“We”), and systems (“Its”). Each perspective adds to a more complete understanding of the issue at hand. Methodologies in each quadrant span interior and exterior domains of inquiry and action.

*Levels* explain how some lines, or groups of lines, emerge in developmental stages unfolding toward more complexity and compassion. Each person has a “center of gravity”—an average level of development—that (implicitly) informs self-concept, morals, and perspectives. A person’s worldview is born of these elements of the self, and this view informs how a person understands, cares for, and navigates his or her world. This is particularly important in international development for creating emergent conditions for self-development (toward more compassionate and sustainable modes of being), effective communication with others, and one’s one engagement in the self-development process.

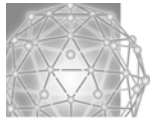
The Integral framework can help practitioners:

- ∞ Map the situation as comprehensively as possible—at each appropriate stage, in all four quadrants, and with the appropriate lines engaged—to better understand the phenomena, dynamics, and dimensions of the context.
- ∞ Create conditions for empowerment as part of the self-development process (including self-stages, morals, perspectives, and worldviews) and engage in the process of effective communication by using appropriate language to particular worldviews.
- ∞ Design development interventions (or teams of practitioners) that can respond to the dynamics and phenomena arising in each quadrant, address several developmental lines through capacity building activities, and connect and communicate with the particular levels present.

## **Integral International Development in Practice**

In 2000-2002, I carried out my MA research project in the community of San Juan del Gozo in a region of islands, wetlands, estuaries, turtle-nesting grounds, and extensive mangrove forest on the central-eastern coast of El Salvador called Jiquilisco Bay. I worked in partnership with the Salvadoran environmental organization CESTA (Salvadoran Centre for Appropriate Technology), in collaboration with CESTA’s EcoMarine team,<sup>62</sup> and with a research grant from the International Development Research Center’s John G. Bene Fellowship: Forests and People. (For the remainder of this section, when I refer to “us” or “we,” I am referring to myself and my research assistant, Concepción Yesenia Juarez.)

In this project, we used a participatory action research (PAR) methodology embedded in an Integral framework. With this combined methodology, we worked with two focus groups: a fisherfolk cooperative and a women’s group. Through the process, we created a space for discussion on common needs, for collaboration to respond to the community’s pertinent concerns, and for deciding upon a course of action to address these concerns.



The approach enabled participants to identify the appropriate instruments (social, economic, and ecological) for carrying out their intended projects and fostered reflection on roles within focus groups, the community as a whole, and the surrounding environment. This approach also helped us to pay attention to the interior dimensions of the research, such as the complexity of the human psyche, the local spirituality and belief systems, and the cultural context. (See figure 4.)

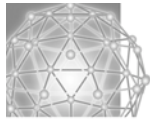
		INTERIOR	EXTERIOR
INDIVIDUAL	<b>Upper Left – Experience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a "safe" and trusting space for exploring oneself and self-in-relation.</li> <li>• Encouraging self-esteem and leadership.</li> <li>• Fostering appreciation of other perspectives.</li> <li>• Activating the "what if" mind in workshops.</li> <li>• Being present, open, and heartfelt with people (i.e., engaging in sympathetic resonance with them).</li> <li>• Being aware of my own biases and perspectives, to the degree that I was able.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>I</b></p>		<b>Upper Right – Behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open-ended questionnaires.</li> <li>• House-to-house meetings.</li> <li>• Interviews with key informants.</li> <li>• Skill-building activities (e.g., how to fundraise).</li> <li>• Desk research on diagnostic tests and socioeconomic assessments done by other organizations.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>IT</b></p>
	COLLECTIVE	<b>Lower Left – Culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust-building with individuals by visiting their home, conversing, and sharing personal stories.</li> <li>• Group dialogue on issues and concerns.</li> <li>• Attentive, compassionate listening.</li> <li>• Collective visioning and collaborative problem solving.</li> <li>• Fostering creativity and exploration in focus groups.</li> <li>• Emulating a process in which "success" includes not only material achievements but also healthy group dynamics and new understandings of self and community.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>WE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>ITS</b></p>

Figure 4. Overview of Methodologies and Tools Used in the Project

### Quadrants, Lines, and Levels in San Juan del Gozo

In this project, we sought to create emergent conditions for self and social change in the community. Our approach created a supportive and challenging space where participants could develop several types of leadership and social action capacities, as well as reflect on their own sense of self, their contribution to the community, and the possible futures for themselves, their families, and the community as a whole.

In the project, we used a community-directed approach in which participants identified their needs, interests, and goals through house-to-house interviews and focus group dialogue. This enabled us to understand the spectrum of local worldviews and to begin at the participants' level of needs, morals, and capacities. For example, with the women's focus groups, we used appreciative inquiry to illuminate and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the group, and



then tailored the subsequent phases of the project to these identified needs, capacities, and worldviews.

The women's group's main concern was the lack of economic security for the family, and they wanted to form a cooperative to generate income. Behind these concerns was a feeling of disempowerment to ensure family security (i.e., health care, food, education). Thus, we focused first on addressing this acute economic concern by fostering creativity, collective visioning, group esteem, and solidarity as an organization. In a later stage, we focused on strategic thinking, fundraising, negotiations for land tenure, and other practical strengths. Although I worked in collaboration with an environmental organization, I did not mention the environment until the participants themselves raised the topic (approximately four months into the project).

We used workshops, training, and informal mentoring (methodologies from the Lower Right and Upper Right) to build technical and social capacity (cognitive and interpersonal lines) for addressing critical concerns of low fishing production and lack of employment. Through collective visioning, appreciative inquiry, and dialogue in the focus groups (methodologies from the Lower Left), we sought to build moral capacity (moral/interpersonal line) to foster better collaboration and caring for others. With self-reflection and sharing (methodologies from the Upper Left), we sought to nurture emotional capacity (affective line) to build self-esteem, self-confidence, and personal power.

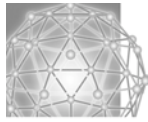
We sought to create conditions for self-development in community development by using attentive listening skills, encouraging self-reflection, and providing ways for individuals to "try on" new perspectives. Individuals "tried on" other perspectives by listening to other people's stories and doing exercises that portrayed the community situation in different ways. One exercise with the fisherfolk involved tracking the qualitative changes in lagoon production over several decades and then drawing this trajectory of change to see where the group had been, where they were now, and where they were going. At the end, one of the fisherfolk remarked, "I have never thought of it in this way before!"

Throughout this project, my daily practice of Yoga was a container for my own self-development, in which I set my intention, connected with my higher Self, and became permeable and present to what was arising. This practice also pervaded every moment, providing opportunities to reflect on and illuminate both my moments of expansion and self-contraction. In El Salvador, I found that as I became more present to the moment, I also became more "available" to other people around me. This helped me to engage more completely with my work, to see interpersonal dynamics more clearly, and to hold with more respect the varied ways that other people go about their lives. Whether paddling in the lagoon, dialoging in a workshop, or participating in prayers with community people, my practice included simply being present to the unfolding moment.

### **Evaluating Success**

In this project, the Integral framework helped us to understand the complexity of the community's systems and culture, as well as the individual's worldviews and beliefs. Through qualitative evaluations and quantitative assessment, our "successes" in all quadrants became apparent (figure 5).





		INTERIOR	EXTERIOR
INDIVIDUAL	<p><b>Upper Left – Experience</b></p> <p>Some individuals, particularly some of the women and youth who had never been “community leaders,” were taking on such roles with self-esteem and confidence, learning as they went along how to facilitate a larger group of varied interests and needs.</p> <p>Trends showed participants’ perspectives shifted toward more socio- and worldcentric awareness, including an acknowledgement of others in the group, other communities, future generations, and the surrounding ecosystem.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>I</b></p>	<p><b>Upper Right – Behavior</b></p> <p>Individuals had learned new skills in group dynamics, meetings, and fundraising.</p> <p>There were some changes in resource use for fisherfolk (equitable partitioning of the lagoon).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>IT</b></p>	
	COLLECTIVE	<p><b>Lower Left – Culture</b></p> <p>Focus group participants shared their own needs and interests and collaborated together on shared concerns.</p> <p>People discussed their individual needs and differences, found solidarity in their similarities, and began to recognize each others' needs and value-systems even if different from their own.</p> <p>Women's focus group fostered mutual understanding on their local economic development project through dialogue and collective visioning exercises</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>WE</b></p>	<p><b>Lower Right – Systems</b></p> <p>The fisherfolk focus group had mitigated disputes between fishers by organizing more equitably and effectively. They had discussed and began implementing (short- and long-term) sustainable management strategies for the lagoon and had sought financial and technical support to identify and address the reasons for low production.</p> <p>The women's focus group was forming a cooperative, attending capacity-building workshops, and working on raising funds to develop their lagoon and ecotourism project. They had gone from being excluded in local decision-making, and thus also from issues regarding family security, to having a voice in local governance and participating (to some degree) in income-generation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ITS</b></p>

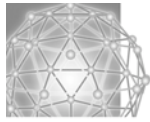
Figure 5. Evaluations of This Project in the Quadrants

As participants reflected on their individual roles in the community and began to work towards their own community’s development, we noticed changes in their perspectives of themselves and others, moving from egocentric, to sociocentric, and, in some individuals, to worldcentric awareness (see figure 6).<sup>63</sup>

The shift from subsistence or survival needs to “being needs” also occurred for some individuals. During the evaluations, Samuel Rivas, a local fisherman in the fishing cooperative, explained that

[while economic security is important,] I finally realize that you come not with money or things to give us, but with knowledge to share. Sometimes money isn't worth anything, and it is this knowledge and understanding that is most important.

For a community infamous for its dependency on external aid, to hear his remark at the end of the project made my heart sing.



These quantitative and participatory evaluations suggest that the Integral approach was important in enabling the community to move beyond the dependency model of development to a more self-empowered and ultimately sustainable process.

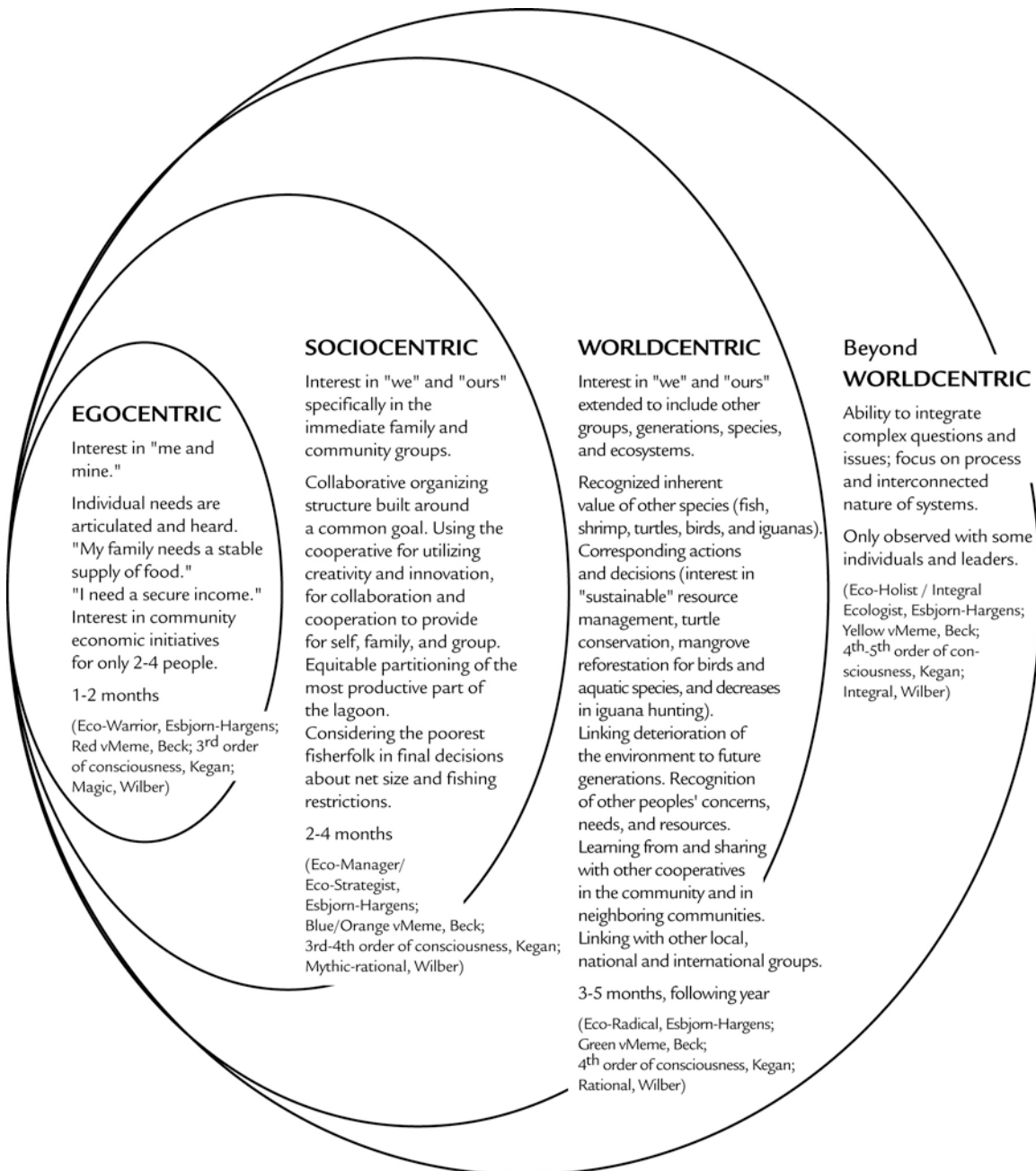
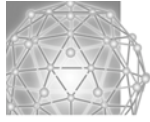
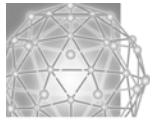


Figure 6. Trends Observed in the Worldviews of Participants<sup>64</sup>



## Conclusion

Previous and current development theories and practices have provided us with enough tools to address the broad and pressing issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What is needed now is an integration of the various paradigms and practices into a post-disciplinary approach able to understand and respond to the complexity of today's world. The Integral approach offers such a framework in which we can address the true breadth and depth of international development. By using quadrants, lines, and levels, more tools become available for working with the multi-faceted dimensions of development issues. As practitioners are better able to navigate the intricate interior and exterior realities of humans and their surroundings, international development projects become more effective over the long term.



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### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> With the term “practitioners,” I refer to those individuals engaged in the practice of international development in civil society organizations, the private sector, donor agencies, grassroots groups, and so on.

<sup>2</sup> Some of these NGOs include: Centro Bartolome de las Casas in El Salvador; Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka; Instituto de Accion para el Progreso in Peru; Drishti Centre for Integral Action in Canada; and the Caribbean Institute for Sustainable Development and Human Rights in Suriname, to name just a few.

<sup>3</sup> Stay tuned to the Integral International Development Center at Integral Institute.

<sup>4</sup> The Integral approach can be used within one discipline, between disciplines, or beyond discrete disciplines. Thus, it can be used within a single discipline (e.g., Integral Law), in an interdisciplinary way (e.g., Integral Sustainability, which includes economics, politics, psychology, culture, etc.), or in a transdisciplinary manner (i.e., the framework can be used beyond any particular discipline or set of disciplines, to understand or address any specific issue at hand). This is why, technically, the Integral approach is “post-disciplinary.”

<sup>5</sup> Each era of development has both its positive and negative impacts in the “dialectic of progress.” The positive contributions of conventional and alternative approaches are brought together in an Integral approach to international development.

<sup>6</sup> The three facets describe how an Integral approach addresses the multiple dimensions of development issues. Integral Theory integrates objective, subjective, and intersubjective ways of knowing. The three domains correspond with the Upper and Lower Right (behaviors and systems, respectively), the Lower Left (culture), and the Upper Left (experience).

<sup>7</sup> Hargens, “Integral development: Taking the middle path towards gross national happiness,” 2002

<sup>8</sup> See the work of Paul van Schiak (consultant with UNICEF) and Silos, “The politics of consciousness,” 2000.

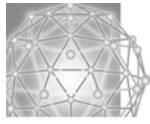
<sup>9</sup> With some groups in Latin America, the evolution of consciousness is often a starting place for development work (Gutierrez, *A theology of liberation: History, politics, and salvation*, 1973, pp. 81-100). In that region of the world, the commonly used verb *conscientizar* refers to “raising consciousness” or “a dynamic action of awakening” (Gutierrez, *A theology of liberation: History, politics, and salvation*, 1973, p. 113) and is a precursor to community organizing, social justice, and environmental conservation. This not only involves raising awareness of a particular issue, such as the oppression of landowners or the effects of deforestation, but is also intended to legitimize local ways of knowing and empower and enable local people to realize their potential as human beings. In Nigeria, social change agents often refer to “enlightening” people on a subject, which seems to refer to both fostering both education on, and motivation for addressing, the subject at hand.

<sup>10</sup> Hargens, “Integral development: Taking the middle path towards gross national happiness,” 2002

<sup>11</sup> I do not cover all of Integral Theory in this article and recommend the reader to Ken Wilber’s extensive and groundbreaking work on this topic: Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution*, 1995; *A brief history of everything*, 1996; *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> For a longer description of this work, see Hochachka, *Developing sustainability, developing the self: An integral approach to international and community development*, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Generally, the quadrants develop in sync with others (i.e., LL corresponds with LR, UL corresponds with UR; e.g., agrarian systems tends to have mythic cultures), but this is not a rigid determinate as there are many occasions in which artifacts (from the Right-Hand quadrants) can be used by anyone. For example, Wilber explains how the Lower-Right modes of communication are “artifacts” that can be used by any level of culture in the Lower Left (personal communication, 2005). Therefore, on the one hand, this can help to uplift collective morals and values (e.g., fax machines played a key role in stopping the Iron Curtain, because information flow could not be stopped as easily as in prior eras). Yet, on the other hand, this can be problematic, if not horrifying, when a person (or a group of people) with premodern morals and values gets their hands on modern technology (e.g., Nazi Germany employed modern technology in horrifying ways in concentration camps). However, precisely because these artifacts are available to anyone, a higher mode of communication can start to eat away at lower modes of consciousness; in other words, the very means of communication can provide access to higher modes of consciousness that one cannot get from lower modes (the internet being an obvious example).



<sup>14</sup> Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution*, p. 143

<sup>15</sup> For more on quadrants in international development, see Hochachka, "An introduction to integral international development," 2007.

<sup>16</sup> See Brown, "Theory and practice of integral sustainable development part 1: Quadrants and the practitioner," 2006. Note that the choice and application of all tools in all quadrants should be informed by the interior and exterior developmental levels of stakeholders and the developmental level of the human and natural systems in which they operate.

<sup>17</sup> Previous empirical research on developmental lines is discussed by Wilber, *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, pp. 28-32, and compiled and depicted on pp. 203-208, 212.

<sup>18</sup> Wilber, *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, pp. 20-21

<sup>19</sup> For example, regardless of how important practitioners *say* that participation is, in *practice*, they rarely create opportunities for the local population to share in the collective vision or evaluation of development programs (Valderrama, "Empowerment of people in poverty and civil society participation in international cooperation," 2004, p. 153).

<sup>20</sup> Reason & Torbert, "The action turn: Toward a transformational social science," 2001

<sup>21</sup> See Kegan, *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*, 1994, and *The evolving self: Problem and process in human development*, 1982; Piaget, *The essential Piaget*, 1966; Loevinger, *Ego development: Conceptions and theories*, 1976; Torbert, *The power of balance: Transforming self, society and scientific inquiry*, 1991; Beck & Cowen, *Spiral dynamics: Mastering values, leadership and change*, 1996; Roemishcher, "The never-ending upward quest: The practical and spiritual wisdom of spiral dynamics," 2002; Gebser, *The ever-present origin*, 1949/1985.

<sup>22</sup> See Wilber, *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, pp. 42-44, 206-208, which are a compilation of previous empirical research on psychological development. Also see Wilber, "An approach to integral psychology," 1999, on Western approaches to the evolution of consciousness and social theory.

<sup>23</sup> Wilber, *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, p. 44

<sup>24</sup> Beck & Cowan, *Spiral dynamics: Mastering values, leadership and change*, 1996

<sup>25</sup> Loevinger, *Ego development: Conceptions and theories*, 1976; Cook-Greuter, "AQ as a scanning and mapping device," 2006

<sup>26</sup> Kegan, *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*, 1994

<sup>27</sup> Some critics of Integral Theory suggest that these stage conceptions are inherently Eurocentric, marginalizing, and sexist. However, much of the research that Integral Theory draws upon has been conducted cross-culturally, with both males and females. Throughout the 1990s, these criticisms were investigated and were proven unfounded. Wilber (*Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, pp. 40-41) writes:

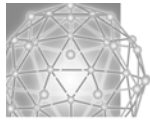
It should be remembered that virtually all of these stage conceptions—from Abraham Maslow to Jane Loevinger to Robert Kegan to Clare Graves—are based on extensive amounts of research and data. They are not simply conceptual ideas and pet theories, but are grounded at every point in a considerable amount of carefully checked evidence. Many of the stage theorists ... (Piaget, Loevinger, Maslow, and Graves) have had their models checked in First, Second and Third World countries.

However, these stage conceptions point to *deep structures* not surface structures; while the former have thus far been proven to be present in humans between and within cultures and both sexes, the latter change with culture, context, and gender.

<sup>28</sup> This movement is not necessarily linear and should not be reified. As Wilber ("An approach to integral psychology," 1999, p. 111) explains, "These are not rigid levels, but fluid and flowing waves, with much overlap and interweaving, resulting in a meshwork or dynamic spiral of consciousness unfolding.... There is nothing linear about overall development!"

<sup>29</sup> Wilber, *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, pp. 38-44

<sup>30</sup> As Maureen Silos ("The politics of consciousness," 2002) explains from her development work in Suriname, each stage conception and corresponding worldview has both positive aspects and shadow aspects. She explains how the



positive aspect of magical thinking (egocentric) is its sense of interconnectedness of humans to the earth. Its shadow side is the fear (and thus separation) of the environment and of other people. The positive aspect of mythic thinking (ethnocentric) is a strong sense of connection with a wider community, a less self-centered and more compassionate perspective, and a sense of group identity. The shadow expression of this worldview is the ethnocentrism that tends to come with it. Positive aspects of an ethnocentric worldview—namely, group identities and care for others—can be embedded in a larger sense of self with a rational worldview. Rationality (worldcentric) allows for reasonable criteria for justice, equality, inclusiveness, and respect, based on reason and critical self-reflection (not based on fear [magic/egocentric] or on the dictates of tradition [mythic/ethnocentric]). The shadow side of rationality is an extreme reliance on facts and reason, to the exclusion of other ways of knowing (i.e., pre- and transrational). Eventually, a rational worldview becomes incomplete, and the next emergent worldview includes a more encompassing cognition (vision-logic) and worldview (integral).

<sup>31</sup> Wilber, *A brief history of everything*, 1996, p. 183

<sup>32</sup> “Each level of development has a different worldview, with different perceptions, modes of space and time, and moral motivations” (Wilber, *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, pp. 22-23).

<sup>33</sup> Theorists have called these waves or stages of cultural evolution. See Habermas, *Communication and the evolution of society*, 1979; Gebser, *The ever-present origin*, 1949/1985; Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution*, 1995, and *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000. Wilber (personal communication, 2005) describes these levels as archaic, magical, mythic, rational, pluralistic, holistic-integral, transpersonal, pantheistic, and nondual.

<sup>34</sup> Based on Kohlberg’s cross-cultural studies on moral development, Gilligan’s studies on female moral development, and Wilber’s worldviews/waves of existence. Research by others (such as Torbert in business and Graves in values) report a similar pattern of unfolding. Research has also found further stages (post-postconventional or Kosmocentric).

<sup>35</sup> Esbjörn-Hargens, “Integral ecology: The what, who and how of environmental phenomena,” 2005

<sup>36</sup> Brown, “Theory and practice of integral sustainable development part 1: Quadrants and the practitioner,” 2006

<sup>37</sup> DeKay, “Beyond the ecological design flatland: Integral architecture and human development,” 2004

<sup>38</sup> Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution*, 1995; *A brief history of everything*, 1996; *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000. There are several gradations of each of level, and therefore this is quite a general and unspecific tool for identifying an average center of gravity of the group.

<sup>39</sup> Hochachka, *Developing sustainability, developing the self: An integral approach to community and international development*, 2005

<sup>40</sup> Their approach includes UL mental health and other psycho-social tools, including compassionate listening, body work, rituals; and appreciative inquiry, to address trauma and low self-worth; LL non-denominational rituals, cooperative games, and group dialogue; LR/UR barter systems in local economies.

<sup>41</sup> Maslow, quoted in May & Rogers, *American politics and humanistic psychology*, 1984, p. 100

<sup>42</sup> Although a third party cannot activate and sustain such a process, conditions can be created that have more potential to give rise to transformation.

<sup>43</sup> Kegan, *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*, 1994; Beck & Cowan, *Spiral dynamics: Mastering values, leadership and change*, 1996

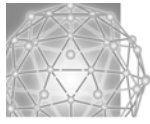
<sup>44</sup> Please note that these expressions of various worldviews are *surface structures*, which will differ in different contexts and cultures, and thus should be treated not as universals but as culturally-bound phenomena. As one becomes more familiar with deep structures and surface structures, it becomes easier to identify healthy and unhealthy expressions and to work with them.

<sup>45</sup> Wilber, personal communication, 2005

<sup>46</sup> Brown, “Theory and practice of integral sustainable development part 1: Quadrants and the practitioner,” 2006

<sup>47</sup> See [http://www.spiraldynamics.org/pdf\\_resources/SDMC.pdf](http://www.spiraldynamics.org/pdf_resources/SDMC.pdf), p. 6

<sup>48</sup> There are ample examples in which community leaders do not effectively communicate nor create positive impacts for local people. See Agrawal, “‘Community’ and natural resource conservation,” 2000.



<sup>49</sup> Other theorists have mapped more specific guidelines for translating concepts of sustainability and ecology (see Brown, "Theory and practice of integral sustainable development part 1: Quadrants and the practitioner," 2006; Esbjörn-Hargens, "Integral ecology: The what, who and how of environmental phenomena," 2005).

<sup>50</sup> Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution*, 1995, p. 525

<sup>51</sup> Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution*, 1995, p. 541

<sup>52</sup> Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution*, 1995, pp. 541-542

<sup>53</sup> Wilber, *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, p. 523

<sup>54</sup> Wilber, *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000, p. 523

<sup>55</sup> Kotter & Cohen, *The heart of change: Real-life stories of how people change their organizations*, 2002, pp. 1-12

<sup>56</sup> Taylor, "Analyzing research on transformative learning theory," 2000, pp. 298-301

<sup>57</sup> Schugurensky, "Transformative learning and transformative politics: The pedagogical dimension of participatory democracy and social action," 2002, p. 70

<sup>58</sup> See [http://www.foundation.novartis.com/sarvodaya\\_movement.htm](http://www.foundation.novartis.com/sarvodaya_movement.htm)

<sup>59</sup> From O'Sullivan, Morrell & O'Connor (*Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning: Essays on theory and praxis*, 2002):

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structure of class, race, and gender; our body-awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy.

Horton et al. (*Evaluating capacity development: Experiences from research and development organizations around the world*, 2003) describes action research as:

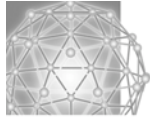
A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview, which is currently still emerging. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

<sup>60</sup> Wilber, "An approach to integral psychology," 1999, p. 121

<sup>61</sup> This is especially the case when working with developmental levels. Psychologists, philosophers, and mystics across the world have described and documented this spectrum of consciousness over centuries, dividing it arbitrarily into "levels" (the number of these levels depends on how much detail is included, much like dividing a kilometer into meters, centimeters, millimeters, etc.). Most developmentalists realize that these are not discrete levels at all but rather probabilities or potentials that weave and mesh into one another. (The term "wave" is more accurate than "level" as it conveys the inherent fluidity of the process.) The complexity of levels (or waves) is astounding, and, in my view, to work with them is to engage in something sacred. These levels are unfolding and overlapping dimensions of ourselves and others; practitioners who only understand this cognitively risk misusing their understanding of levels to pigeonhole or label people. Sufficient care and compassion to work with levels comes with a wider, deeper worldview, thus again pointing to the need for an Integral Life Practice for practitioners or anyone else intending to use an Integral approach.

<sup>62</sup> Which included, among others, Concepción Yesenia Juarez, Rafael Vela Nuila, Sofía Baires, Rosibel Acosta Cantón, and Hamish Millar.

<sup>63</sup> For example, at first the women's focus group discussed how their primary objective was to help themselves and their own families, and their ideas for economic development extended only as far as 3-4 individuals (egocentric). Through the dialogues, however, common needs and aspirations of the women became apparent—they began to see that others shared their own family's struggles, and that beyond their differences common needs existed (sociocentric). As a result, they sought a more inclusive and far-reaching initiative, seeking "a community economic

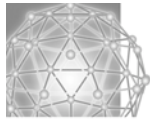


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development (CED) initiative that includes as many women as possible,” a project that transcended but included individual needs. Towards the end of the project, the women expressed their concern about environmental deterioration: that their children may not experience nature as they have (sociocentric) and how they wanted to reforest and protect the mangrove forest around their lagoon that creates habitat for birds and fish (worldcentric). All these are meaningful indicators of shifts in awareness towards a more worldcentric perception of local issues.

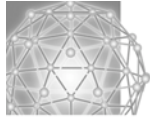
<sup>64</sup> Data was collected from focus groups with women and fisherfolk using a similar methodology as described by Jordan, “Constructions of ‘development’ in local third world communities: Outline of a research strategy,” 1998. This data describes *general* trends in the participants (including myself) over time throughout the project. Some participants interacted and spoke with egocentric perspectives throughout the project, while others were operating with a worldcentric perspective to begin with. The figure is purposefully designed in concentric circles and not from left to right, as this process is dynamic and non-linear, in which previous stages are encompassed and integrated as they are transcended. I have also illustrated here how the categories used may align with similar developmental approaches such as *ecological selves* (Esbjörn-Hargens, “Integral ecology: The what, who and how of environmental phenomena,” 2005); *vMemes* (Beck & Cowan, *Spiral dynamics: Mastering values, leadership and change*, 1996); and *orders of consciousness* (Kegan, *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*, 1994).



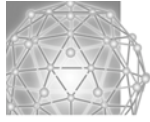


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