

Agricultural research for development – supporting people's aspirations

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2021



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Grain Legumes and
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Common development rational

- Agriculture is the key driver for rural development as all rural households engage in farming:

“Most of the world’s extreme poor live here and it is on these 90 million hectares of mixed farming systems of the semi-arid and sub-humid drylands where over 300 million poor and malnourished both reside and depend on GLDC crops” GLDC, page 1

- Development agencies assume that agriculture can support / drive rural development as it affects almost all rural residents



Small farmers argued to be the solution

- Development agencies see farmers as critical actors to deliver on development:
 - Poverty – as they tend to be the poor and could produce more to earn higher incomes
 - Food security – as they produce most of the food
 - Climate change – as food production causes significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions, water withdrawals, forest conversion
 - Land degradation – intensive land-use causes degradation
- Tree based farming as potential solution
- Yet the poverty goal might be in jeopardy under current (market) conditions

“

World's richest 1% cause double CO2 emissions of poorest 50%, says Oxfam.

-- The Guardian 2021

”

“

There are numerous cases where well-meaning food policy initiatives such as ensuring low food prices for urban consumers caused perverse outcomes where farmers adopt environmentally damaging practices like high chemical input use or expansion into forest lands (Qureshi et al., 2015; Horton, 2017).

-- Mausch et al. 2020

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Mausch, K., Hall, A. and Hambloch, C. (2020) Colliding paradigms and trade-offs: Agri-food systems and value chain interventions, Global Food Security, 26(C), 100439.

Gassner, A., Harris, D., Mausch, K., Terheggen, A., Lopes, C., Finlayson, R.F. and Dobie, P. (2019), Poverty eradication and food security through agriculture in Africa: rethinking objectives and entry points, Outlook on Agriculture, 48(4), pp. 309-315.



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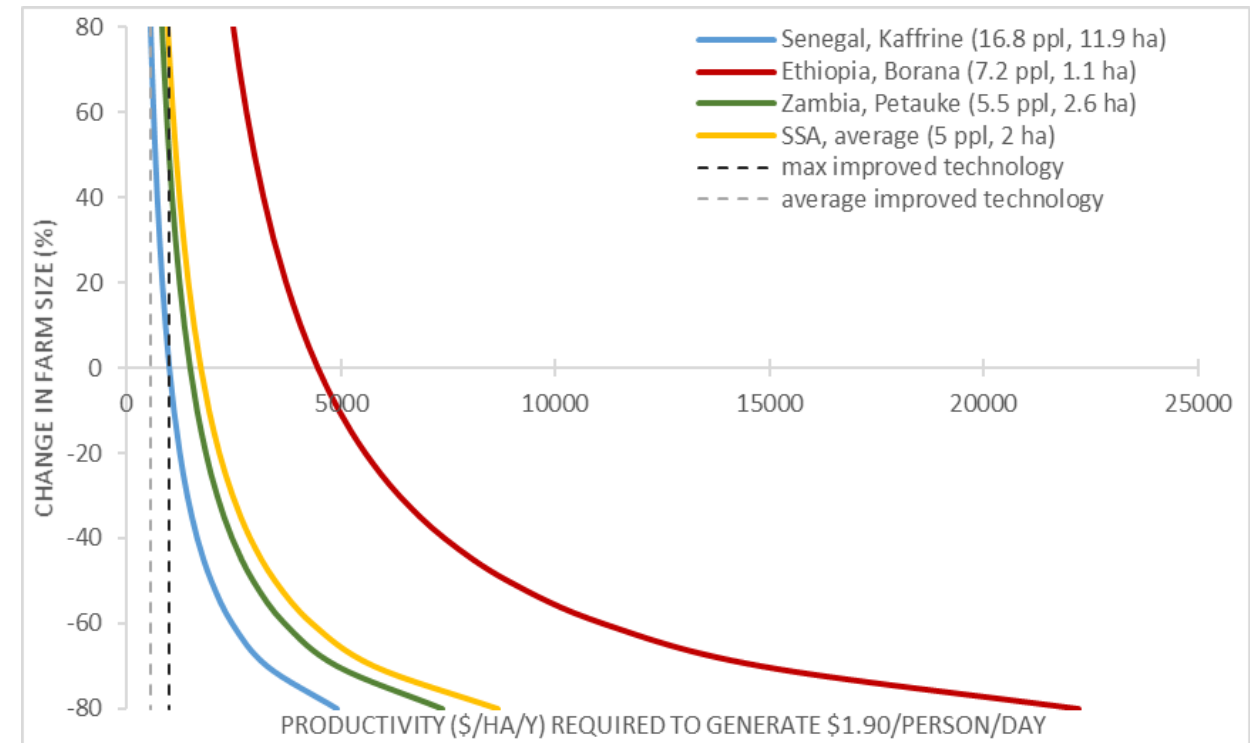
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The other big argument

- Increasing trends of urbanization
 - Increasing number and importance of off-farm employment
 - Land fragmentation
 - Agriculture does not have enough potential for poverty reduction
- Urban industry/service is the key for development



Adapted from Harris and Orr 2014

African smallholder farming

- Globally around 80% of farms comprise less than 2 ha
- Most of the food crops in SSA are produced by approximately 33 million smallholding farms
- Typically have many income streams as they can make a living otherwise

	Total sample (n=624)	Full-time farmer (n=165)	Mixed income (n=201)	Farm worker (n=66)	Non-Farm (n=192)
Farm income share (%)	49.0	88.4	53.2	36.0	15.3
Crop sales (%)	17.4	37.6	15.8	12.0	3.7
Value own consumption (%)	19.7	27.9	24.2	17.6	8.6
Livestock income (%)	11.9	23.0	13.3	6.3	3.0
Off-farm income (%)	51.0	11.6	46.8	64.0	84.7
Farm wage labour (%)	8.7	4.8	2.7	57.0	1.7
Non-farm wage labour (%)	25.0	3.3	22.3	2.8	54.0
Self-employment / trade (%)	8.8	1.0	10.2	1.8	16.5
Transfers (%)	8.5	2.5	11.6	2.4	12.5

	Total sample (n=624)	Full-time farmer (n=165)	Mixed income (n=201)	Farm worker (n=66)	Non-Farm (n=192)
Total sample - clusters (%)	100	26.4	32.2	10.6	30.8
Self-described Farmer (%)	74.0	88.5	75.6	66.7	62.5



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Rural – Urban linkages as levers for rural development

Trade opportunities

- Growing demand for food from urban areas
- Higher incomes could lead to higher prices
- ✓ *Opportunities and threats need to be managed to avoid negative consequences (Mausch et al. 2020 for a food-based view)*

Rural - Urban migration

- Necessity (push) vs opportunity (pull) based migration
- Loss of labor force in rural areas
- Land consolidation opportunity
- Urban investments in rural areas
- Feminization of rural areas
 - Men often migrate to find work and leave women in charge of the rural farms
- ✓ *Different entry points for different people (e.g., Gassner et al. 2019 for rural areas)*

Precarious urban employments

- Land as a safety net
- Frustration / tension
- ✓ Governance and policies to manage the transition

“

There are numerous cases where well-meaning food policy initiatives such as ensuring low food prices for urban consumers caused perverse outcomes where farmers adopt environmentally damaging practices like high chemical input use or expansion into forest lands (Qureshi et al., 2015; Horton, 2017).

-- Mausch et al. 2020

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Undoubtedly, investments onto the agricultural sector are important and necessary but the chances of making these investments work for farming households depend on the understanding of their livelihoods' structures and the links between the agricultural and other sectors as well as rural and urban areas.

-- Gassner et al. 2019

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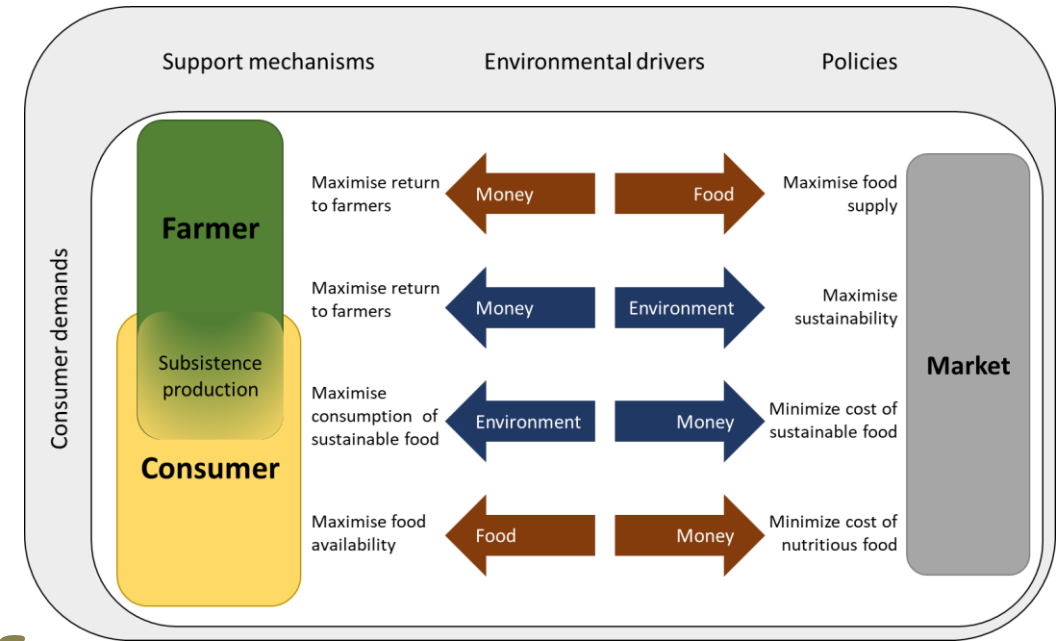


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Trade - tensions in goals

Supporting value chains* to link rural and urban residents and create win-win outcomes?

- Value chain interventions are too narrow to achieve societal goals
- There are inherent trade-offs in food, income, and environmental targets
- Agri-food system perspectives for theories of change could offer solutions
- Open discussions of trade-offs would provide the basis for systemic change
- A societal debate is needed to establish principles for prioritizing goals



“

Two critical trade-offs emerge for some domains of nutrition-sensitive value chain interventions. Firstly, interventions focusing on the (urban) market pathway can counter the ‘No Poverty’ target as price decreases of nutritious foods translate into lower farm incomes. This also undermines farming households' ability to purchase nutritious food items and may just shift malnutrition from urban to rural areas.

-- Mausch et al. 2020

”

*A value chain describes all activities and involved people, companies or institutions that are involved in producing a product and delivering that product to the consumer



Mausch, K., Hall, A. and Hambloch, C. (2020) Colliding paradigms and trade-offs: Agri-food systems and value chain interventions, Global Food Security, 26(C), 100439.
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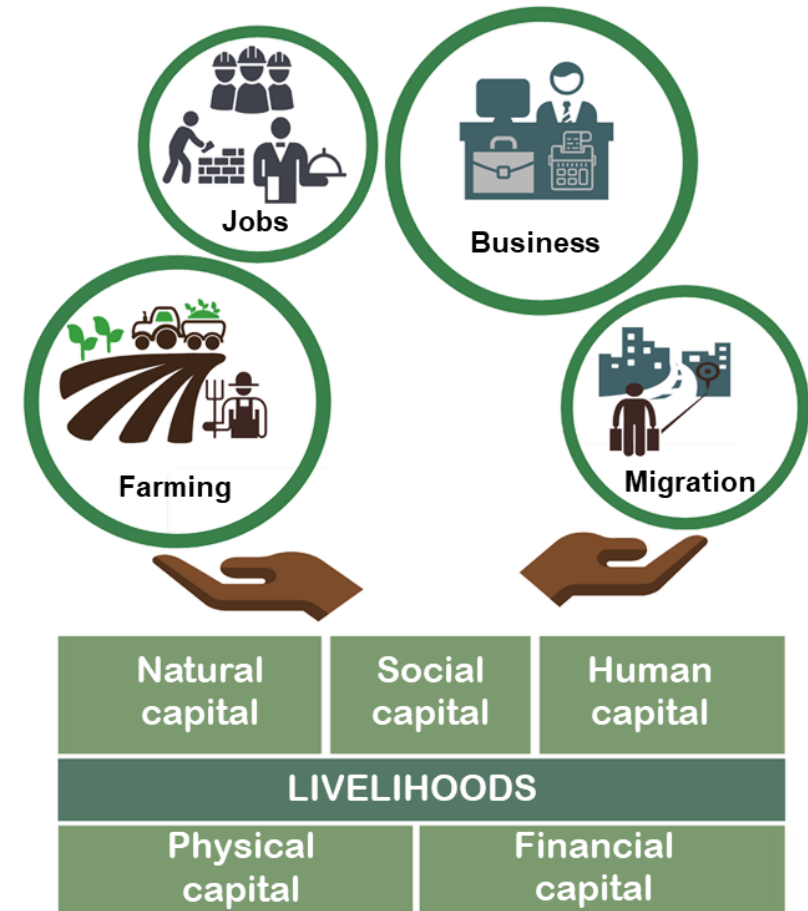
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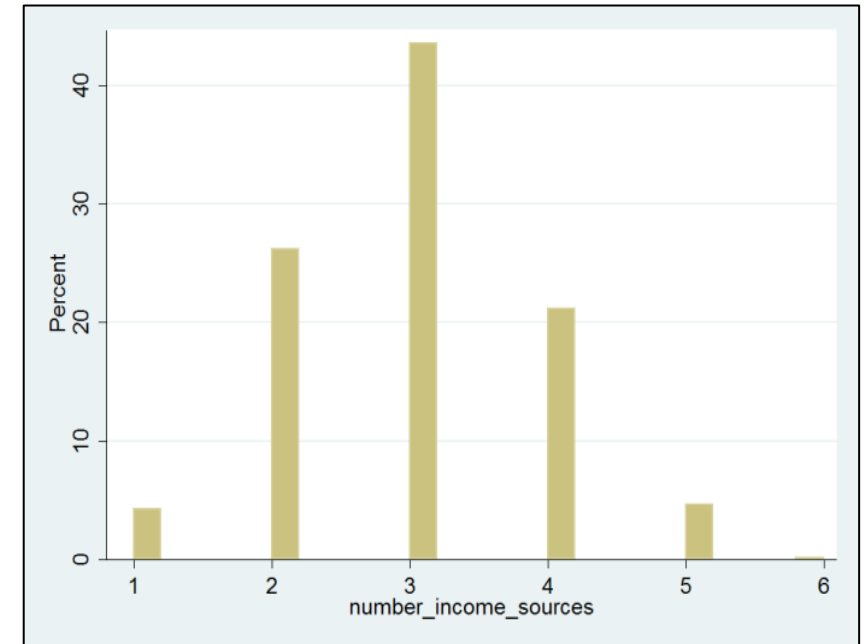
Juggling income streams

- Income diversification is the norm
- On-farm
 - multiple crops
 - livestock
 - Livestock
- Increasingly off-farm
 - Small jobs
 - Migration
 - businesses
- People likely think differently about farming in general
- Even more for one particular part of their farming
- The way we approach farmers has to account for this



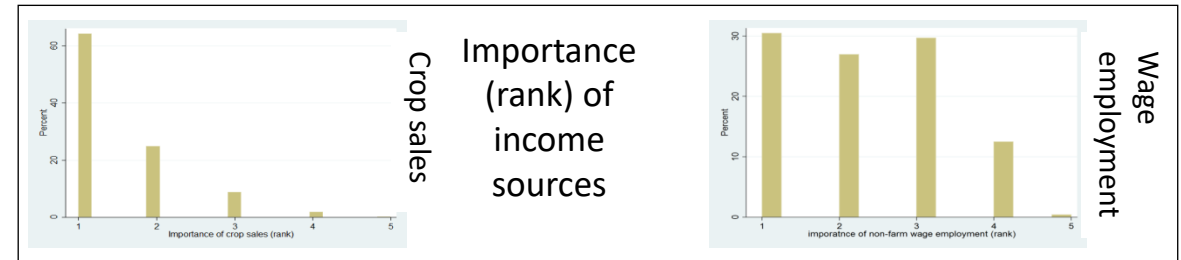
The basic issue

- Diversity within the group of smallholder farmers
- Contribution and influence of increasingly diverse income portfolios
- Basic needs are likely to be satisfied to some extent by non-cropping sources
- This has implications for the attributes that farmers value in agricultural technologies and more generally for how they approach their own farming activities
- Understanding these drivers for household technology demand is key for us to remain useful and relevant



Some intuitive questions

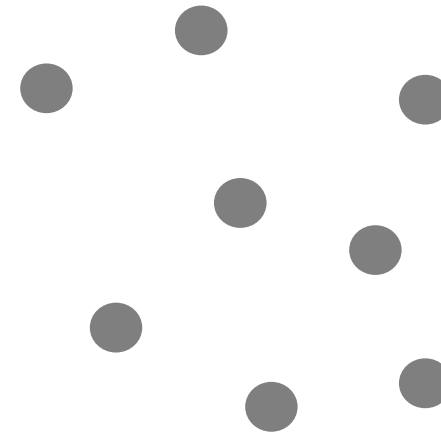
- Perception on importance of various income sources vary to a great extent
- Crop sales are the most important income source (by rank), however non-farm wage employment does play a major role in households' livelihoods
- Aspirations* are largely towards farming rather than moving out of farming



*Aspirations as envisioned future livelihood strategies and their associated income components.
A common basic definition of aspirations is “desired futures”

Aspirations the better predictor?

- Both development rationales are trying to predict likely futures from the status-quo / past trajectories i.e.:
 - Agriculture as the driver because it is important now
 - Urbanization assumed to continue
- Both do not take the underlying household level drivers into account
- Both obviously simplified and a combinations will be required
- Especially under the bigger constraints of
 - Enough food / nutrition for all
 - Allow everyone to earn enough money



Within a complex system, retrospectively looking backwards and 'connecting the dots,' often with a causal relationship, is intrinsically problematic (Snowden, 2005)

Overcoming tensions - Aspirations as entry point

- Rural livelihood aspirations and support options
 - Regional differences in framing?
 - Youth future?
 - Gender roles?
 - Extension approaches?



Imagine you have a friend who has moved from the rural area to a house next to you. Food is important to him/her. What will you tell him/her about food?

- Urban consumers food environment and food choice motives
 - Towards resilient linkages
 - Linking urban SDG 2 with rural SDG 1
 - Sustainable diverse urban diets + resilient farming

Understanding urban choices and their implications for rural areas

Supporting low-income areas with healthy diets (Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe)

- Development of strategies for increasing healthy food uptake
- App to broker rural - urban relations
- Amplify dietary behavior change using social media

“...I want to be a known supplier of poultry to big hotels in Makueni county and also Nairobi...”



Dietary behaviour change video for urban areas, Kenya

“Food in Nairobi has a lot of chemicals you find that when you go to buy vegetables in the market you will get vegetables which have white substances which I call chemicals especially tomatoes and green pepper.”



Aspirations as potential levers for (rural) change

- Aspirations are shaped by norms, values, material conditions - engaging with aspirations is a route into understanding the drivers that matter to people
- Challenging target group assumptions
 - Assumption: everyone farms → are interested
 - 42% receptive for optimization
 - 23% for innovation
- Re-defining success
 - Externally defined goals are biased
 - We need theories of the world and how it changes to take into account the complexity of life
- Opportunities to aspire
 - Awareness gap for opportunities limit aspirations
- New approaches to targeting
 - Aspirations to scope entry points
 - Utilize self-selection across a range of options

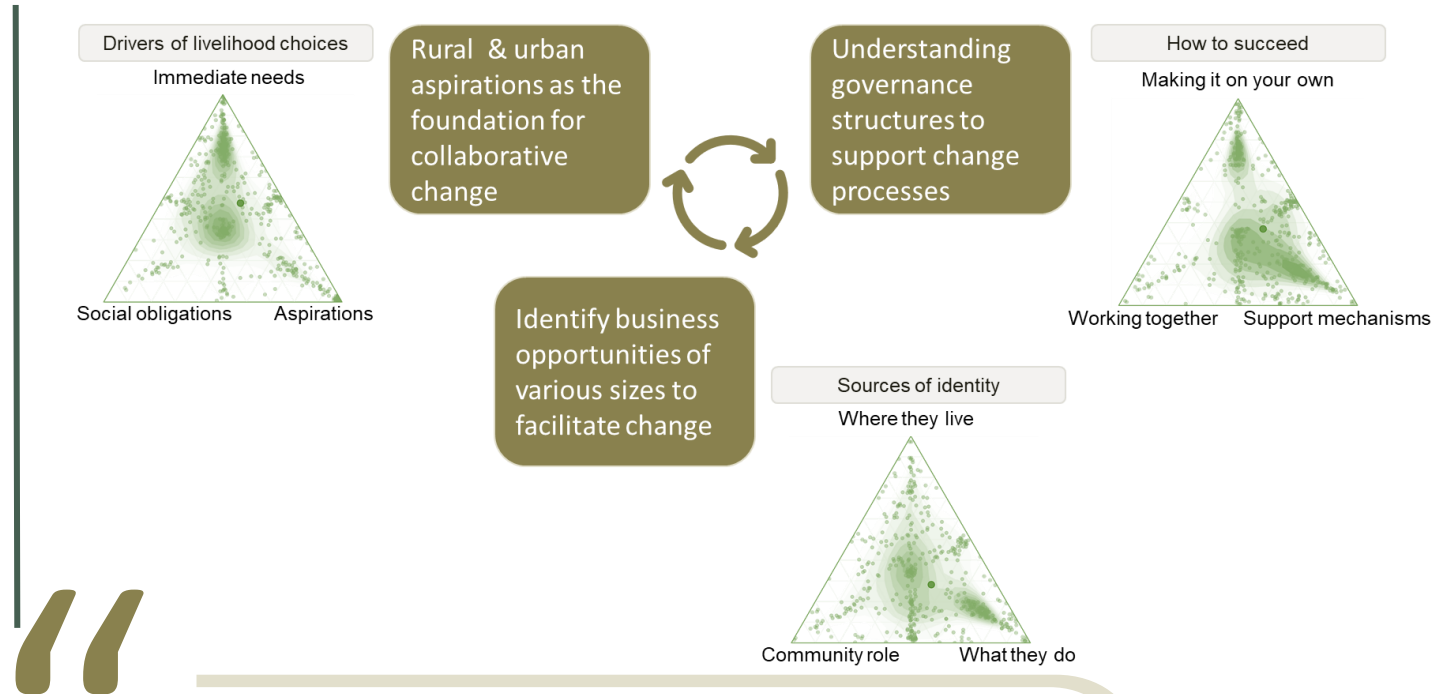


“Aspirations are diagnostic as they embed a critique of the present and point to issues or areas of opportunity that can be explored

-- Bennike et al., 2020

An aspirations-based research agenda in the rural –urban

- Household strategies vs individual aspirations sources of tension?
 - Youth / Gender
- Poverty trap through small aspiration window?
 - Role model availability determining ambitions
 - Implication of 'permanent crisis' mode?
- Framing success and actions?
 - Role models
 - Parental success as framing
- Standardize method!
 - Sensemaker offers opportunities, but other options might be better suited for wider application

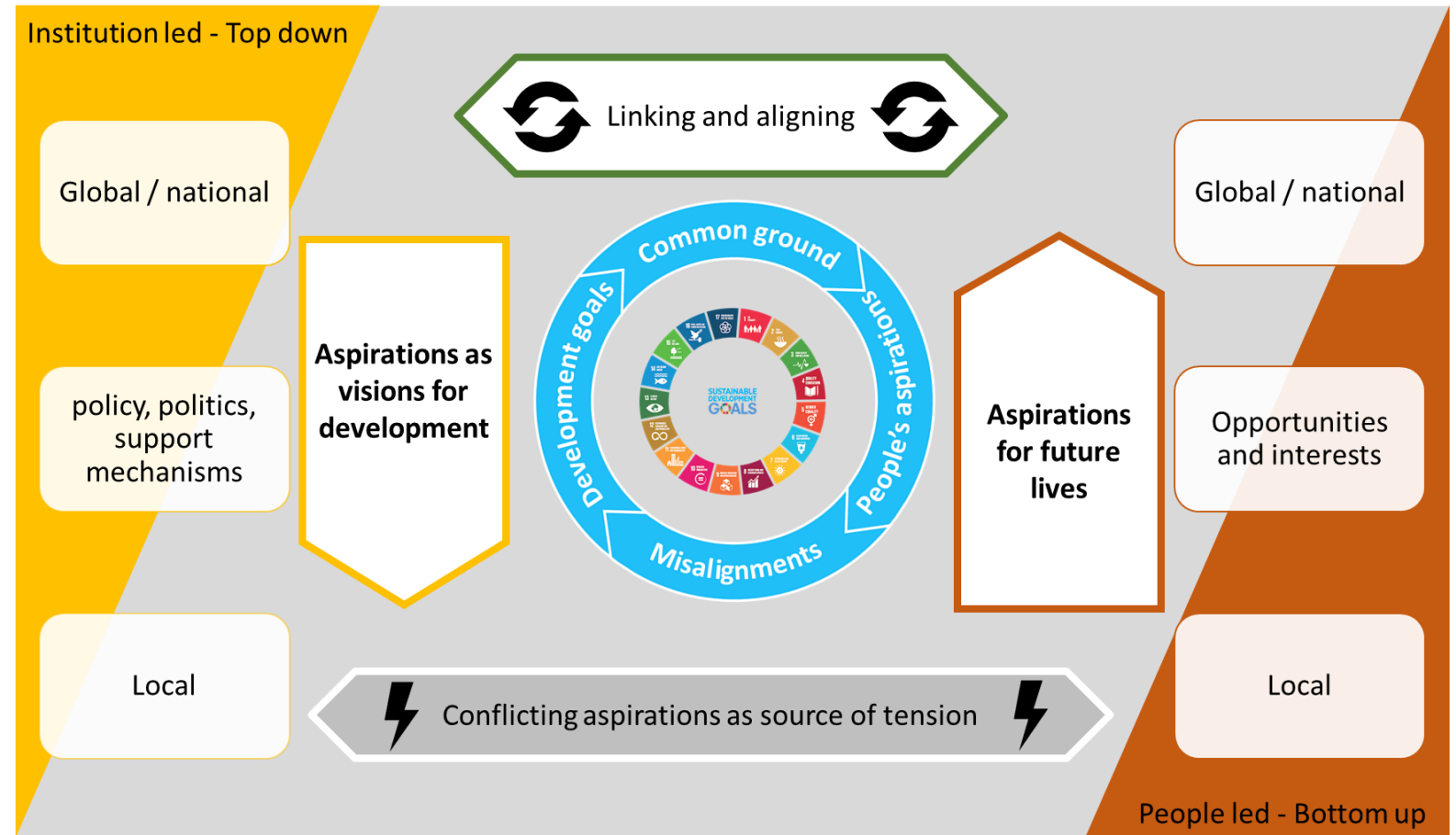


“ ... we are pulled by the future in numerous affective ways – by hope and great expectations, through anticipation or fantastical speculation, or by acts of faith or believing in fate. We constantly prepare the groundwork for the future through thoughts and desires that leap ahead of the possible, plausible, and potential of the present. **Our future-oriented actions shape our relationships in the present and how we choose to selectively archive our past.**”

-- Bryant and Knight, 2019

Yet, we still need to manage different expectations

- Who should set the goals of development? Development bodies/government? Local people?
- How might we negotiate between different development goals (both locally and national / international)
- Who should have the power to make decisions between conflicting interests? Local people? National Governments? The UN? Why?
- Are there global goals people can not or should not compromise on? For example if locally 'gender equality' is not a goal, should development activities ignore gender inequality?
- Who do you think the 'aid industry' works for? Itself? Or poor people? How do we ensure that development actors work for poor people?



Thank you

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