The Raison d'etre of Doing Development Research

The aim of Doing Development Research is to provide a comprehensive introduction to the process of undertaking research in the multi-and interdisciplinary field of development studies. This volume seeks, therefore, to provide the bases for a thorough initial training for anyone aiming to carry out research in, or on, developing countries. In this context, the geographical category 'developing countries' is to be interpreted in the broadest of fashions. This geographical signpost might more properly be referred to as 'overseas', referring to cases where somebody is researching in an area, region or culture other than the one in which they grew up, or with which they are now familiar. But we do not preclude doing development work in, or on, one's own country, following the premise that development is change in either positive or negative terms, and thereby occurs in all localities and regions to a greater or lesser extent Having ...

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Doing Fieldwork in Developing Countries: Planning and Logistics

The value of fieldwork in Third World countries Selecting a fieldwork location Developing overseas contacts Finding a research assistant and/or interpreter Being aware of local customs and protocol Evaluating what you and the host community will get from the field research Action-based fieldwork Power and the control of knowledge in field-based research Thirty years ago, as an impressionable doctoral student, I left the UK on my first aeroplane flight to spend a year doing fieldwork in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Although I had studied a good range of geography and development courses, both as an undergraduate and postgraduate, I had received absolutely no training in 'doing fieldwork in developing countries'. I recollect that my pre-trip

reading on fieldwork methodology consisted mainly of poring through manuals on conducting farm surveys and formulating and administering questionnaires. In those days (the early 1970s), there was an over-obsession with collecting mountains of quantitative data ...

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Ethical Practices in Doing Development Research

What do we mean by 'ethics'? Informed consent Funding and funders Power Change Contexts and their importance Doing research: 'before, during and after' Deviations from the 'ideal'! This chapter is in two main sections, the first looks at what is meant by 'ethics' in development research, the practices of 'doing ethical research', and is further divided into subsections. The second section is shorter and more personal and shows how textbook-derived research plans and ambitions can go awry, how research 'on the ground' is a much finer-grained complex of quick thinking and responsiveness and, in some cases, the abandoning of the rules. A good and ethical researcher (the distinction is made in the earlier part of the paper) has to be readily responsive to any situation that might come up. What do we mean by 'ethics' in the writing — and doing — of development research? Why is it important to ...

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Working in Different Cultures: Issues of Race, Ethnicity and Identity

Power gradients Shifting and negotiating identities Preliminary visits Language Before going to the field Communication in the field Advisory tool kit Race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, marital status and other non-demographic characteristics, including one's worldview, often define the position and identity of the researcher in relation to the researched community. These factors can influence the quality and character of development research, particularly because so much of this work occurs in the 'developing world' and is undertaken by non-members of the researched communities (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003). One of the main criticisms of 'outsider'

research is its tendency to produce knowledge or interpret societies from a position or location of power and privilege, and in most cases without sufficient input from the local people. This criticism is part of an old debate about the advantages and/or disadvantages of 'insider' or 'outsider' status (see Agar, 1980; Grafanaki, 1996). However, we believe this ...

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Women, Men and Fieldwork: Gender Relations and Power Structures

Gender issues Power structures Ethical issues Field methods Participatory fieldwork In order to construct a broader more totalizing science we need to cross frontiers of policy, culture, personality and academic discipline and approach our work in the field with open minds. This is especially difficult when we are working in environments different from those which are familiar to us, and even when the fieldworker is a national of the country being studied they are usually separated from the local population by education, class, and appearance. These differences create unequal power relations between researcher and researched which must be recognized and compensated for in various ways. In this chapter I consider this problem of power relations in the field, especially in relation to gender, and discuss various methods of dealing with this situation. I look first at the type of knowledge we are trying to learn about and understand, and the ...

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Working with Children in Development

Lorraine van Blerk

Theoretical considerations Children-centred research: a participatory process Methodological choices and challenges Disseminating research: for and with children Children represent over 40 per cent of the world's population, with 90 per cent of those aged under 18 located throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America (Ansell, 2005). This means an increasing volume of development studies research, which seeks to explore issues of social relevance, must focus on, or at least include, children. However, until recently this important group has largely been

ignored in development research agendas (Scheyvens et al., 2003). Despite this, there has been some exceptional work with children in a development context, and this has helped to stimulate interest and create a platform for academic and student researchers to consider issues relevant to children's lives. This chapter will therefore explore why it is necessary to research with children both from theoretical and practical perspectives. In particular, the chapter will focus ...

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Collecting Sensitive and Contentious Information

A definition of sensitive and contentious information Cultural differences and their influence on the data collection process The role and position of the researcher in the data collection process Data sources and the significance of critical analysis Some practical considerations before attempting to collect sensitive and contentious information As part of the research process, and in particular while undertaking fieldwork, a researcher will probably ponder how to ask the most important questions. According to Pratt and Loizos (1992), these questions often go unasked because the researcher does not know how to tackle the topic, which may be too sensitive or highly contentious. This chapter is written to help the researcher think through the what, why, how, who, when and where of collecting sensitive and contentious information. For example, what is this information and why is it sensitive and contentious? How does one access such information sensibly, if indeed one should? ...

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Dealing with Conflicts and Emergency Situations

How can development research be made conflict-sensitive? Understanding conflict situations and economies Developing a human security agenda for conflict zones The coping strategy approach Ethics for development research and work in conflict and emergency situations The post-Cold War world continues to experience a multitude of conflicts. These 'new' conflicts — a

misleading label, as most have either been ongoing or are rooted in events that precede the collapse of the Cold War system — are often labelled intrastate wars. This, too, is misleading, for while many of the conflicts begin locally, they increasingly spread nationally and regionally, thus multiplying their direct and secondary effects and exposing the limitations of national governments and the international community in mitigating or resolving them (see Mychajlyszyn and Shaw, 2005; Shaw, 2003). Yet despite the prevalence and endurance of these complex conflicts and emergencies, almost no one has recognized and confronted the myriad issues that ...

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Working with Partners: Government Ministries

Governments, ministries and their working The role of researcher in working with government ministries The significance of research for governments Uptake of research and issues Lessons from experience Those who have worked with governments and politicians have two conflicting points of view. One view is that decision-makers hate to be well informed as it makes the process of arriving at decisions more complicated and difficult. The second view is that government would like to take well-informed decisions and is ready to allocate resources for these well-informed decisions to reduce the risk of failure. Whatever the reality, the fact is that working with government is complex. This chapter is written for researchers who will be working on research projects linked with the policies and practices of government departments. This type of research is often done for the benefit of the government and may be funded by a range of organizations. This ...

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Working with Partners: NGOs and CBOs

Claire Mercer

Researching NGOs Theory and research questions Methods, ethics and politics Advantages of working with NGOs Problems of working with NGOs Doing non-NGO research A practical

guide to working with NGOs Across the South, the growth of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) accelerated in the 1980s, propelling them to the forefront of development praxis. According to the World Bank, the number of international NGOs increased from 6,000 in 1990 to 26,000 in 1999 ( ), and 12 per cent of foreign aid to developing countries was channelled through large and small NGOs in 1994. By 1996, the total amount was US $7 billion worldwide (Chege, 1999;World Bank, n.d.). The significant increase in research and teaching about NGOs and development which followed inspired many students of development (myself included) to investigate non-governmental activity for their own research projects. Much of the interest in nongovernmental activity has been driven by disillusionment with the large-scale, top-down ...

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Doing Development Research 'at Home'

Tim Unwin

· · Ethical aspects of doing development research 'at home' · · Practical benefits of researching 'development' 'at home' · · Examples of research on 'development' that can be done 'at home' · · Development policy · · Working with civil society organizations · · Images of 'development' · · Historical constructions of 'development' · · ICT-based research The enthusiasm of undergraduate and postgraduate students for many development studies courses frequently encourages them to think about 'doing' their dissertations on aspects of 'development'. This is particularly so when they have also had the opportunity to participate in a field course overseas, or have come to learn at first hand about the problems of development and some of the issues that poor people face on a daily basis. However, the costs of travelling overseas and undertaking a sustained period of research in a foreign country can make such students reluctant to ...

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Quantitative, Qualitative or Participatory? Which Method, for What and When?

· ·Quantitative, qualitative or participatory research methods? · · Different approaches and tools · · Which method for what? Relevance, reliability and ethics · · Which method when? Integrated research process Research methods are conventionally divided into quantitative, qualitative and

participatory research methods, each with differing underlying approaches, tools and techniques. 1 Faced with the glowing claims of proponents and often strident critiques and counter-claims of opponents, one would be forgiven for thinking that they belong to 'different worlds'. Traditional disciplinary divides are, however, becoming increasingly breached. Moreover, new tools and new solutions to the shortcomings of old tools are continually being developed. This chapter focuses on how the different methods can be integrated into a coherent research process which builds on the relative strengths and weaknesses of each. Underlying the discussion are assumptions about the main criteria for choosing between methods: the relevance of the information to the questions ...

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Field Surveys and Inventories

David Barker

· · An introduction to field mapping · · An introduction to field inventories · · Urban surveys in small market towns · · Farm plot maps and land degradation indices · · Hazard maps and damage assessment This chapter focuses on the use of field surveys and inventories in development research. It shows just how versatile such data are in the study of development-oriented topics. First of all, basic ideas and concepts are reviewed, before looking at examples drawn from three important research contexts, namely, the urban milieu and small market towns, farming and land management, and the impact of natural disasters. A field survey often involves field mapping — the process of compiling a map while working in the field. Data collection is in situ , and the data are depicted in map form. The format may be a sketch map of land use, or a map of ...

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Interviewing

Katie Willis

· · Types of interview · · Why do interviews? · · Recruiting interviewees · · Where and when to interview · · Asking questions · · Recording · · Accuracy Many forms of development research include an interview of some kind. For some researchers, interviews are the main channel of information-gathering, while for others, interviews are used as a starting point or background to support other forms of data collection. In this chapter, I will outline some of the main types of interview and what issues you should consider before embarking on interviews. While the concept of an 'interview' often implies something rather formal, in reality 'interviews' can range from a rather unstructured conversational style to a much more rigid question-and-answer format. There is no one right way to conduct interviews. Rather, as with all research, you need to think about the research topic, the person you are interviewing ...

Focus Groups

Sally Lloyd-Evans

· · Definitions of focus group methodology in the context of development-related research · · The strengths and limitations of using focus groups · · Focus groups as a tool for understanding collective action in the field · · 'Doing' focus groups as part of a multi-method development project · · The logistics of using focus groups in 'doing development' – how to plan, recruit and conduct focus groups · · Basic checklists for using focus groups Qualitative research encompasses a family of approaches, methods and techniques for understanding and documenting attitudes, behaviours and the 'meanings of people's worlds' (Brockington and Sullivan, 2003: 57; see also Bloor et al., 2001). A prime research tool of this family of approaches is the 'focus group' and it has a well-established history of application in the field of development, particularly in seeking to understand community dynamics and viewpoints (Laws et al., 2003; Morgan, ...

Your Questions Answered? Conducting Questionnaire Surveys

· · Conducting questionnaire surveys is rewarding if carefully planned and executed · · There are three principal types of questionnaire, which differ in terms of the extent to which the responses sought are to be restricted or open-ended · · It is important to know what you want to find out, from whom and why, at the outset, so that the questionnaire can be designed accordingly · · Your knowledge of the population to be sampled, and hence choice of sampling strategy, is as important to the task of obtaining a representative set of responses as the actual questionnaire itself · · Different types of questionnaire, or of questions on a single questionnaire, lend themselves to different forms of analysis · · As with other fieldwork techniques, ethical issues need to be considered in advance, during and after implementation One of the oldest and most widely used social research ...

Lost in Translation? The Use of Interpreters in Fieldwork

· · Research into other cultures involves a process of translation through from data collection to analysis and dissemination · · Social researchers should aim for a working knowledge of the local language · · There are situations where this is impractical or impossible (e.g. short-term research or settings with multiple languages) · · Local assistants can double up as translators and ethnographic informants · · Translators make their own judgements about how and what they translate – the terms on which this is done need to be negotiated · · Choosing a translator requires attention to the social dynamics between researcher, interpreter and respondents All research culminates in multiple modes of translation as the researcher not only has to make sense

of the social group or phenomenon under study but then to communicate this understanding by reframing it conceptually and analytically for an academic audience. Translation is more than ...

Ethnography and Participant Observation

· · What is ethnography? · · Ethnography and development studies · · Ethnography and the development practitioner · · The distinctive contribution of ethnographic methods Ethnographic research methods attempt to study social life as it unfolds in the practices of day-to-day life. These methods avoid as much as possible artificial research situations. Artificiality is obvious in some instances, particularly in the highly controlled experimental method, but it is found also in other methods. For example, the interview situation in surveys using highly controlled questions is a social construction. In participatory rural appraisal (PRA), meetings are set up specifically to ask questions that people may never ask spontaneously. From the ethnographic point of view, the ideal is not to be noticed as an observer and to be accepted as a normal member of social life, as this results in minimal disturbance. Such participant observation is, however, an ideal that is ..

Participatory Methods and Approaches: Tackling the Two Tyrannies

· · Tyranny of the quantitative · · Participatory research · · Tyranny of participation · · A rights-based alternative Development research entails a confrontation between the powerful and the powerless, a relationship fraught with possibilities of misunderstanding and exploitation. This is because the research focus is always a vulnerable, powerless group, compared to which researchers and development agencies are especially powerful. This chapter examines so-called 'participatory methods' for collecting data, and aims to provide a practical guide to research action. We do this by clarifying certain misconceptions, which we call the 'two tyrannies', referring to the original Greek meaning of 'power seized without legitimate cause' to describe two dominant, but not necessarily scientifically valid, tendencies in development research. The first of these tyrannies is the common misconception that there is an unmistakable distinction between 'quantitative methods' and 'qualitative methods', combined with the fallacy that the former consist solely of ...

action. We do this by clarifying certain misconceptions, which we call the 'two tyrannies', referring to the original Greek meaning of 'power seized without legitimate cause' to describe two dominant, but not necessarily scientifically valid, tendencies in development research. The first of these tyrannies is the common misconception that there is an unmistakable distinction between 'quantitative methods' and 'qualitative methods', combined with the fallacy that the former consist solely of ...

Diaries and Case Studies

JoAnn McGregor

· · The importance of case study research involving a portfolio of methods · · Solicited diaries as an interactive, potentially empowering research tool · · Pros and cons of commissioning diaries · · Practical and ethical considerations · · Examples of the use of solicited diaries in development research · · Audio, video and photographic diaries In development research, some of the information required may be politically sensitive, highly personal, mundane or, for other reasons, may not be easy to access using conventional methods, such as formal interviews and questionnaires. Furthermore, it may involve issues that people are not happy to discuss in public fora, such as focus groups or workshops convened for participatory action research. This chapter looks at the potential utility of solicited diaries as a means of accessing such information, and considers contexts where the method has been used in development research. It discusses the advantages

Literature Reviews and Bibliographic Searches

When you're looking through the literature, what are you searching for? Where and how do you find appropriate sources? How do you analyse the literature once you have found it? How should the literature review be written up? How does the literature review link up with the rest of your project? For many students embarking on development research, the literature review may at first sight seem to be 'the dull bit' and quite a daunting task. Early on in the research process, it seems to get in the way of more pressing practical issues (booking your flight to Honduras, learning which venomous snakes you're likely to come across in Kenya, etc.), and later on sifting through other people's research may seem far less important than writing up your own findings. Although this is understandable, the literature review is far more central to the whole research process than many students initially

Using Indigenous Local Knowledge and Literature

The types of indigenous local knowledge and literature commonly available Accessing indigenous local knowledge and literature The importance of using indigenous local knowledge and literature Limitations of using indigenous local knowledge and literature Consultation of local and indigenous literature, and engagement with local knowledge more generally, is integral to conducting research in the Global South. While this may sound like stating the obvious, it is surprising how often local circumstances and information generated by local people have been ignored when carrying out development-oriented research. Yet, using indigenous knowledge and information is practically, ethically and theoretically important. Practically, it is essential to listen to the voices of those linked with a research project, whether it is the participants themselves or local people's views on them or a given situation. This relates more broadly with the spirit of ethical participation of research subjects in any project, encouraging real and responsible engagement wit

Using Images, Films and Photography

Photography and field research Using film and video Crafts-based images in community development Most development researchers are by now familiar with the idea of development as a discourse. Most are well versed in the importance of interrogating words and pictures within development discourses and their material effects. In this chapter, I am less concerned with deconstructing images and representations as partial, often simplified and distorted, but rather, I want to explore how images are used in processes of development. I want to demonstrate that there is a wealth of graphical material related to 'doing' development — including photography, video and other images — that begs consideration, and to encourage researchers to contemplate the possibilities that these methods might open up. In contemporary development, photographs are used in a variety of different ways. Photo-essays have been used by NGOs to record successes in community development. One example of this is the

Using Archives

Michael Jennings

What is an archive? What can archives tell the researcher? What questions should the archive be asked by the researcher? How does one use the archive? What are the challenges and ethical dilemmas of using the archive? The archive is mostly thought of as the natural territory of the historian: dusty documents in old files, closed to public access for years. What use, one might ask, can the archive have for the type of research that is focused on the present or dedicated to informing future policy debates? There is an understandable tendency in undertaking development research to stress the human element. However, archive sources are an important, and all too often neglected, source of useful information about development processes and practice, the evolution of and shifts in policy formulation, debates amongst development practitioners and analysts, and so on. Archives can provide what a reliance on contemporary-focused documents and other .

Remote Sensing, GIS and Ground Truthing

Geographic Information Systems and geographic information science – GIS Remote sensing data: passive and active sensor platforms and imagery Imagery date processing: georegistration, atmospheric correction and topographic normalization Analysis and integration of remote sensing/GIS data Monitoring, mapping, classifying and analysing when doing development research The emergence of GIS as both a disciplinary practice and a socially embedded technology represents an important change in the way in which the geographical is being conceptualized, represented, and materialized in the built environment As both a system of information processing and for the creation and manipulation of spatial images, and as a technology which is diffusing rapidly through the apparatuses of the state and the organs of business, GIS requires a critical theory reflecting sustained interrogation of the ways in which the use of technology and its products reconfigure broader patterns of cultural, economic, or political relations, and how, in so doing, they contribute .

The Importance of Census and Other Secondary Data in Development Studies

Why census and other secondary data are important in development studies The changing context of census taking and analysis Problems in working with census material in developing countries The strengths and weaknesses of different secondary data sources Using secondary data to highlight some key concerns about global population issues National census statistics and other secondary data sources are vital to evaluating development progress and making comparisons over time and between countries. These secondary data sources are also useful to development studies researchers wishing to provide a context for their own in-depth field studies and have been used by some to make wider generalizations from the results of small-scale questionnaire surveys and focused interview research. Secondary data (defined as information that has been collected by someone else) can also be useful in making an initial exploration of potential relationships in the development arena that can later be examined in more detail .

Using the World Wide Web for Development Research

The problems and potential of using the web in development research The web as a medium of research The web as the object of research The web as a source of information Cautions and caveats The World Wide Web developed with extraordinary rapidity at the end of the twentieth century, and is now unparalleled in terms of the speed with which an enormous variety of information can be accessed from a multitude of sites. The web is a rich, dynamic and exciting resource for any researcher, but it can have particular attractions for Northern-based students who are working on development issues, where geographical distances and travel costs can be prohibitive compared to study within the domestic context. Here it is not just a helpful or even

essential tool when used in conjunction with fieldwork abroad, it can also allow researchers to do 'development research' even if they are, for one ...

Data from International Agencies

Jonathan Rigg

Identifying and categorizing international agencies Assessing data 'quality' Gathering statistics by international agencies Tracing data flows Sources of data from international agencies Case study of Lao PDR Conventionally, international organizations are divided into three categories: intergovernmental organizations (IGOs); international non-governmental (non-profit making) organizations (INGOs); and multinational enterprises (MNCs/TNCs). However, according to the job at hand, it may be useful to categorize international organizations in other ways: according to their regional remit (Asia, Africa, Latin America, etc.); their object (refugees, agricultural development, intellectual property, etc.); or their structure (autonomous, semi-autonomous, dependent, etc.). The Yearbook of International Organizations lists 5,900 intergovernmental organizations and 38,000 non-governmental organizations (Table 29.1). For the purpose of this discussion, international agencies are seen to fall into the category of IGOs. While important both in themselves and as sources of data, INGOs and MNCs/TNCs are not considered here. There are three key categories of international (intergovernmental) organization: Most .

Book

Writing an Effective Research Report or Dissertation

Writing for an audience, so who are they? Telling a story: the importance of clear writing and structure Presenting numerical data Presenting qualitative data The title of this chapter might be considered somewhat odd given that writing reports in development studies should not be any different from writing research reports in any subject. Indeed, it is probably a safe bet to predict that readers of this book will tend to leave this chapter to last. In part because report writing is the end of a process, but a second, and I suspect more important, reason is that report writing is seen as the hard, boring and tedious bit of the research. Yet you must always remember that no matter how good the research process, it counts for nothing unless your results are communicated to others. That is how I am interpreting the term 'effective' — the production of a document

How is Research Communicated Professionally?

Reaching out beyond academia Working out your message and knowing your audience Writing for a wider audience Using your own, the mass and the specialist media It is easy to think that once you have completed writing up your research project into a final dissertation or perhaps even a journal article, that the long process of research design, data collection, analysis and writing is complete. But this is often wrong. You most likely got into researching development through a desire not just to examine the world, but also to change it. And unless you have privileged access to the odd president, the head of a multinational company or of an international financial organization, your best chance to see your painstaking research contribute to social change is to get its message out via the mass media. Outside academia, most people do not have much time to read. They get most of .