

Boyes, B., S.J.R. Cummings, F. Tesfaye Habtemariam and G. Kemboi. 2023.
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Knowledge Management for Development Journal 17(1/2). 11-41.

'We have a dream': proposing decolonization of knowledge as a sixth generation of knowledge management for sustainable development

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This first paper in the *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* Special Issue 'Uncomfortable truths in international development: approaches to the decolonization of knowledge from development practice, policy and research' presents a conceptual framework for a proposed new sixth generation of knowledge management for sustainable development (KM4SD). We are using the term 'sustainable development' rather than just 'development' usually used in the definition of the field of knowledge management for development (KM4D) to reflect the importance of development which is sustainable in terms of people and planet. As reflected in the title of the Special Issue, we consider that the identifying concept of the new sixth generation of KM4SD is the 'decolonization of knowledge.' To fulfil our aim of presenting a conceptual framework for the proposed new sixth generation of KM4SD, we first discuss the research history and notable aspects of the generations of KM4SD. Next, we document the research-informed collaborative and co-creative social processes that have led to the development of the proposed sixth generation of KM4SD. Finally, we introduce a conceptual framework describing what we consider to be the defining features of the sixth generation of KM4SD.

Keywords: decolonization; decolonization of knowledge; sustainable development; epistemic justice; partnerships; communities of practice

Introduction

On 9 May 2023, the Knowledge Management for Development (KM4Dev) community of practice launched the Special Issue of the *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* titled 'Uncomfortable truths in international development: approaches to the decolonization of knowledge from development practice, policy and research.' This first paper in the Special Issue presents a conceptual framework for a proposed new sixth generation of knowledge management for sustainable development (KM4SD). We are using the term 'sustainable

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development' rather than just 'development' usually used in the definition of the field of knowledge management for development (KM4D) to reflect the importance of development which is sustainable in terms of people and planet. As reflected in the title of the Special Issue, we consider that the identifying concept of the new sixth generation of KM4SD is the 'decolonization of knowledge.'

The proposed sixth generation of KM4SD follows on from the fifth generation of knowledge management for development first proposed ten years ago (Cummings, Regeer, Ho, & Zweekhorst, 2013). The identifying concept of the fifth generation of KM4D was then delineated as cross-domain knowledge integration and knowledge co-creation in recognition of KM4D's close affinity to transdisciplinary approaches. In turn, the fifth generation followed four earlier generations (Cummings et al., 2013; Ferguson & Cummings, 2008). The first generation was ICT-based, with the identifying concept of 'Knowledge as a commodity.' The second generation was organization-based, with the identifying concept of 'Knowledge as an asset within organizations.' The third generation was knowledge sharing-based, with the identifying concept of 'Knowledge sharing between organizations.' The fourth generation was practice-based, with the identifying concept of 'Knowledge processes embedded in organizational processes.'

To fulfil our aim of presenting a conceptual framework for the proposed new sixth generation of KM4SD, we first discuss the research history and notable aspects of the generations of KM4SD. Next, we document the research-informed collaborative and co-creative social processes that have led to the development of the proposed sixth generation of KM4SD. Finally, we introduce a conceptual framework describing what we consider to be the defining features of the sixth generation of KM4SD. In this paper, the 'we' are the authors, but also recognizes the contribution of the wider KM4Dev community and the authors that we cite in our thinking.

Generations of knowledge management for sustainable development

The first paragraph of the United Nations (UN) Agenda for Development states that:

Development is one of the main priorities of the United Nations. Development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. (United Nations General Assembly, 1997, pp. 1-2)

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In the time since the establishment of the UN in 1945, the UN system has launched seven decades of international development (Koehler, 2015). Early development cooperation activities in the 1950s were followed by four international development decades, two poverty eradication decades, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative during 2000-2015, and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030 covering the 2015-2030 period (United Nations, 2015).

The importance of knowledge and the discipline of knowledge management (KM) in advancing this international development agenda has been recognised since the late 1990s, when the concept of 'knowledge management for development', or KM4D, had its genesis. As Ferguson and Cummings (2008) discuss in their detailed exploration of the roots and evolution of KM4D, KM is considered to have been introduced to the development sector by the World Bank. The World Bank launched its knowledge management strategy in October 1996, and then soon after, published the pioneering *World Development Report 1998/1999: Knowledge for Development* (World Bank, 1998). In the time since, many UN agencies, aid agencies and organisations, and other development-related organisations have established KM programs. Other explorations also recognize the importance of Bellanet, a project of the International Development Research Centre, Canada, and its allies in this process (Cummings, 2007). Assisting these programs, the Knowledge Management for Development (KM4Dev) community was founded in 2001 as a global community of practice of primarily international development practitioners interested in KM and knowledge sharing theory, practice, and related matters. KM4Dev's activities include face-to-face and online meetings and forums, and it currently has two online community platforms: a website¹ with 6,022 members (as at 4 May 2023) and an email discussion group² with 1,168 members (as at 4 May 2023). As Ferreira reported in 2009 (p. 105):

KM4Dev has become a global network of development agents who share the idea that knowledge can contribute to the development of poor countries and groups in a disadvantaged situation. KM4Dev is already playing the role of a cognitive bridge for development agents worldwide, and the demand of methodologies and tools of development agents have shaped the flow of knowledge among the members of the net. KM4Dev plays that role with a high level of efficiency, providing reliable answers to development agents on a daily basis, almost in real time, and at very low cost.

Informing the flow of reliable answers to development practitioners is the open access peer-reviewed *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*³, in which this paper is

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published. The journal was founded in 2004 by KM4Dev's Sarah Cummings, one of the authors of this paper, and colleagues.

Table 1: Five generations of KM4D

1: ICT-based	2: Organization-based	3: Knowledge sharing-based	4: Practice-based	5: Development knowledge system/ecology
Identifying concepts				
Knowledge as a commodity	Knowledge as an asset within organizations	Knowledge sharing between organizations	Knowledge processes embedded in organizational processes	Cross-domain knowledge integration and knowledge co-creation
Features				
ICTs Databases Portals Clearinghouses	KM audits KM scans Explicit and tacit knowledge	Peer assist Case studies 'Best practices' Inter-organization communities of practice	Role of social media People-centric Practice-based	Multiple knowledges Multi-stakeholder processes Global public good and knowledge commons Emphasis on local knowledge Emergence and complexity

Source: Cummings et al., 2018

Research published in the *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* includes a notable paper that conceptualized four generations of KM4D since its emergence and proposed a new fifth generation informed by learnings from the field of transdisciplinary research (Cummings et al., 2013). In a widely viewed follow-on paper, Cummings, Kiwanuka, Gillman, and Regeer (2018)⁴ revisit and update the five generations framework (Table 1) in the context of both knowledge brokering and the launch of the 15-year SDGs and Agenda 2030 (United Nations, 2015) initiative. In this paper, they argued that knowledge brokering fosters connections between people to facilitate knowledge sharing and transfer,

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and has a crucial role in international development because it can act as a cognitive bridge between many different types of knowledge.

Table 2: A framework for systemic KM4D

Practice-based		Societal
Identifying concepts		
a) Knowledge processes embedded in intra-organizational processes	b) Knowledge processes embedded in inter-organizational processes	Cross-domain knowledge integration and knowledge co-creation Knowledge ecology/knowledge ecosystems
Features		
Practice-based Funding constraints Tools: ICTs, KM audits, KM scans, best practices, case studies, peer assist	Role of social media Inter-organization communities of practice Tools: ICTs, best practices, case studies, peer assist Funding constraints	Multiple knowledges Multi-stakeholder processes, including new stakeholders such as citizens and the private sector Global public good and knowledge commons Emphasis on local knowledge Emergence and complexity
Universal frameworks		
SDGs and potentially the KDGs		

Source: Cummings et al., 2018.

From their analysis, Cummings et al. (2018) reached the conclusion that there needed to be a new systemic conceptualization of KM4D which is based on both practice-based and societal KM4D. Their proposed framework for systemic KM4D (Table 2) brought together co-existing fourth and fifth generation KM4D in recognition of the universal framework of the SDGs which are relevant at the level of organizations and society. This approach is also reflected in the *Agenda Knowledge for Development* (Brandner & Cummings, 2018), which embraces all three aspects of practice-based and societal KM4D in its 14 knowledge development goals. The *Agenda Knowledge for Development* aims to complement the SDGs from the perspective of knowledge. Given the extent to which the SDGs and the knowledge to support them are now embedded in the proposed framework for systemic KM4D, we

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contend that it is time to stop referring to knowledge management for development (KM4D), and to start referring to knowledge management for sustainable development (KM4SD). We have reflected this contention in the designation of the sixth generation.

Methodology

This is a conceptual paper in which we aim to develop a new conceptual framework of KM4SD. A conceptual framework (or model) 'describes an entity and identifies issues that should be considered in its study ... and explain[s] how it works by disclosing antecedents, outcomes, and contingencies related to the focal construct' (Jaakkola, 2020, p. 24). As such, the development of the conceptual framework for a proposed new sixth generation of KM4SD has not involved the conduct of empirical research or a typical literature review. Rather, the conceptual model has been developed through collaborative and co-creative social processes driven by the KM4Dev community with these processes being assisted by an emerging but still very small body of research in regard to the decolonization of knowledge in the context of sustainable development. Informed by the methodology used in Cummings, Dhewa, Kemboi, and Young's (2023) paper on epistemic justice, the approach we have taken can be described as methodological bricolage which involves 'combining of analytic moves for the purpose of solving a problem or problems tailored to one's own research project' (Pratt, Sonenshein, & Feldman, 2022, p. 211). It represents methodological bricolage because we have combined key characteristics of bricolage, such as making do, using what is available, and combining resources for new purposes (Baker & Nelson, 2005).

The research-informed collaborative and co-creative social processes that have developed the conceptual framework for a proposed new sixth generation of KM4SD had their genesis in the latter part of 2019. At that time, the topic and issue of decolonization began to be raised in the KM4Dev discussion group, and the need for the decolonization of knowledge and KM was also independently put forward in the online KM publication *RealKM Magazine*. Initially, messages posted in the KM4Dev discussion by group members alerted to both a growing academic focus on the decolonization of research and increasing interest in decolonization among the members of international development communities. Two of the messages were posted by Sarah Cummings, *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* founder, current leader of KM4Dev's management team, and one of its key advocates for the decolonization of knowledge. In response to these posts, 'decolonizing academia' was included in an October 2019 list of potential topics for a series of structured discussions in the KM4Dev discussion group.

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Then, in December 2019, KM4Dev member Bruce Boyes posted a link to the newly published *RealKM Magazine* article titled 'New initiatives begin decolonising research, libraries, and knowledge systems. But what about decolonising KM?' (Boyes, 2019a) into the KM4Dev discussion group. This article was a 'call to action' to the mainstream, non-development focused KM community, highlighting how the decolonization of knowledge was gathering momentum in other fields, but not yet KM. The article ended with the contention that 'the KM community needs to play a more active role in progressing the decolonization of KM' (Boyes, 2019, para. 21). Cummings, Munthali, and Shapland (2022, pp. 65-66) reinforce the importance of action-oriented approaches to decolonization in a recent book chapter, where they state that 'we aspire to make an important contribution to the overall decolonisation process by emphasising the importance of action, suggesting how scholars of development studies can "walk the walk" on the decolonisation of knowledge.'

The December 2019 'But what about decolonising KM?' call to action article followed on from an August 2018 *RealKM Magazine* article titled 'How do we fix the world's very unequal knowledge – and knowledge management – map?' (Boyes, 2018). This earlier article highlighted the significant bias in the global research base, with a large proportion of scientific research papers produced in the Global North, particularly Europe and North America. The article also reported the findings of a bibliometric review of KM research published between 1974 and 2017, which found that the geographic biases evident in the global research base are also present in KM research (Wang, Zhu, Song, Hou, & Zhang, 2018). The study found that two-thirds of the reviewed KM research papers were produced in the USA, the UK, and Europe. If the other major Global North societies of Canada and Australia are added, the proportion rises to three-quarters. By stark comparison, there are very few KM research papers from much of Africa, South America, Central America, the Middle East, Central Asia, South-East Asia, and Russia.

As a result of the *RealKM Magazine* articles, Gladys Kemboi, another of KM4Dev's key decolonization advocates and co-author of this paper, invited their author, *RealKM Magazine* Editor and Lead Writer Bruce Boyes, to participate in Knowledge Café 7. This was the first of four Cafés directly relevant to the sixth generation of KM4SD (see Table 3 for an overview). Held in June 2020, this Café was part of a series leading up to KM4Dev's 20th anniversary celebrations. Importantly, as well as discussing the decolonization of knowledge, KM4Dev Knowledge Café 7 laid the foundations for a collaborative research and practice partnership between KM4Dev and the RealKM Cooperative Limited. This partnership has significantly advanced the decolonization of knowledge and KM (as well as progressing other KM issues), culminating in this paper and the Special Issue in which it is published. Both KM4Dev and RealKM look forward to the continuation of this highly valuable cooperation

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into the future, and hope that it could serve as a model for other KM communities and networks.

The second of the four KM4Dev Knowledge Cafés on the topic of the decolonization of knowledge was KM4Dev Knowledge Café 10, which was held in November 2020 and had the title 'Uncomfortable truths in development.' A significant event in the development of the proposed new sixth generation of KM4SD, this Knowledge Café was inspired by an extensive 'uncomfortable truths' discussion in the KM4Dev discussion group. This discussion had in turn been triggered by Ann Hendrix-Jenkins (2020a) posting her confronting article 'What's killing us in international NGOs?' to the group. As another of KM4Dev's key decolonization advocates, Hendrix-Jenkins strongly criticised what she saw as international development's 'supremacy culture as a product of colonialism, capitalism and geopolitics.' She argued that:

The dark side of international development needs to be dismantled, and then transformed by developing different systems that are humane and restorative. To do so we have to face up to our own responsibilities, call out wrongdoing when we see it, and foster a new generation of [international non-governmental organizations] of which we can be proud. (para. 20)

As well as facilitating thought-provoking presentations and discussions, the 'Uncomfortable truths in development' Knowledge Café stimulated the writing of a series of equally thought-provoking blog posts by Cummings, Hendrix-Jenkins, and other KM4Dev members who are also key advocates for the decolonization of knowledge. These blog posts, in order of publication, are: 'Coloniality and wilful hermeneutic ignorance' (Cummings, 2020), 'Sham of dignity and equality in development' by Kishoor Pradhan (2020), 'Committed development workers: you are not alone' (Hendrix-Jenkins, 2020b), 'We can do better' by Stacey Young (2021), 'Energizing pathways for decolonizing knowledge in the Global South' by Charles Dhewa (2021), and 'Towards a feminist knowledge management' by Srividya Harish (2021).

The third and fourth of the four KM4Dev Knowledge Cafés on the topic of the decolonization of knowledge, KM4Dev Knowledge Cafés 15 and 16, were held in April and May 2021. Both of these KM4Dev Knowledge Cafés had the title 'Decolonization of knowledge, an action plan for KM4Dev,' with the two events being held to accommodate different time zones. Knowledge Café 15 covered time zones in the Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and Knowledge Café 16 covered time zones in Asia, Australia, and the Middle East. As input to Knowledge Café 16, Bruce Boyes prepared a four-point document titled

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'What can KM4Dev and RealKM do to assist the decolonization of knowledge and KM?' (Boyes, 2021a).

Table 3: KM4Dev knowledge cafes relevant to the sixth generation⁵

KM4Dev knowledge cafes			
Date	No.	Theme	Speakers/participants
June 2020	7	Decolonization of knowledge	Bruce Boyes, Charles Dhewa
November 2020	10	Uncomfortable truths in development	Ann Hendrix-Jenkins, Kishor Pradhan, Stacey Young, Sarah Cummings
April 2021	15	Decolonization of knowledge: an action plan	KM4Dev members in Africa, Europe, and the Americas
May 2021	16	Decolonization of knowledge: an action plan	KM4Dev members in Asia, Australia, and the Middle East
June 2022	24	Different Thinking in Knowledge Management	Bruce Boyes
July 2022	25	From knowledge injustice to knowledge justice: the role of KM4Dev	Sarah Cummings, Gladys Kemboi, Jacob Loefeldahl, Rocio Sanz

The ideas developed and issues debated in KM4Dev Knowledge Cafés 10, 15, and 16 and the blog posts inspired by Knowledge Café 10 have informed the features of the sixth generation of KM4SD. For example, epistemic justice (Boyes, 2021; Cummings, 2020; Harish, 2021; Pradhan, 2020) (Knowledge Cafés 10 and 16), indigenous and local knowledge (Dhewa, 2021, Young, 2021), and diversity in KM approaches (Boyes, 2021a) (Knowledge Café 16). Further KM4Dev Knowledge Cafés in the time since have also focused on specific features of the sixth generation. For example, Knowledge Café 24 had the title 'Different Thinking in Knowledge Management' and addressed respect and inclusion for different KM approaches, and Knowledge Café 25 had the title 'From knowledge injustice to knowledge justice: the role of KM4Dev' and addressed epistemic justice. Coinciding with KM4Dev Knowledge Cafés 15 and 16, KM4Dev also established a new research group. Given the importance and prominence of the decolonization of knowledge, this topic readily became a priority focus for the research group. In collaboration with the *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* editors and other interested people, the research group subsequently prepared and circulated the call for papers for this Special Issue in March 2022.

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Additionally, a Wageningen University and Research (WUR) Knowledge, Technology and Innovation Group (KTI) PhD candidate cohort emerged from the research group. This PhD cohort has a substantive focus on the decolonization of knowledge, so research being undertaken by the cohort is supporting knowledge generation in regard to the features of the sixth generation of KM4SD. Examples include this paper, and the recently published paper on epistemic justice (Cummings et al., 2023).

The conceptual framework for the sixth generation: decolonization of knowledge

The five generations of KM4D framework, originally proposed by Cummings et al. (2013) and updated by Cummings et al. (2018) has now been further updated to six generations of KM4SD (Table 4).

The new sixth generation of KM4SD is characterized by the increasing awareness of the need to decolonize knowledge. Decolonization of knowledge focuses on dismantling fundamental inequities of the knowledge system in which coloniality and past colonization interact with neo-liberal economics to exclude knowledge and knowledge holders from multiple peripheries. These peripheries have geographical and social categories: the Global South; First Nations, indigenous, 'racialized' and local communities; Eastern Europe; women; and youth. In this discussion, coloniality refers to 'long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations' (Torres, 2007, p. 243).

The rising movement to decolonize knowledge parallels a growing call from within the development sector for a shift in power toward local communities. For example, Hodgson (2019) reports that local communities, disenfranchised by top-down approaches to development aid, are now driving a quiet revolution to achieve greater recognition of their knowledge, noting that international non-government organisations (INGOs) need to support this trend. The decolonization of knowledge also builds on the intellectual legacy of critics of colonialism (see, for example, Busia, 1960; Freire, 1996; Mafeje, 1978; Nkrumah, 1961; p'Bitek, 1997; Said, 1979). The term 'decolonization of knowledge' refers to a group of processes and actions that intentionally dismantle these entrenched, unequal patterns of knowledge creation and use (Cummings et al., 2022) and is full of 'complexities, tensions, and paradoxes' (de Oliveira Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew, & Hunt, 2015, p. 22).

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 Special Issue on ‘Uncomfortable truths in international development: approaches to the decolonization of
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Knowledge Management for Development Journal 17(1/2). 11-41.

Table 4: Six generations of KM4SD

1: ICT-based	2: Organization-based	3: Knowledge sharing-based	4: Practice-based	5: Development knowledge system/ecology	6. Decolonization of knowledge
Identifying concepts					
Knowledge as a commodity	Knowledge as an asset within organizations	Knowledge sharing between organizations or	Knowledge processes embedded in organizational processes	Cross-domain knowledge integration and knowledge co-creation	‘We have a dream’ - common aspirations for a fairer development knowledge system/ecology
Features					
ICTs Databases Portals Clearinghouses	KM audits KM scans Explicit and tacit knowledge	Peer assist Case studies ‘Best practices’ Inter-organization communities of practice	Role of social media People-centric Practice-based	Multiple knowledges Multi-stakeholder processes Global public good and knowledge commons Emphasis on local knowledge Emergence and complexity	Epistemic justice Anti-racism Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) Diversity in KM approaches New knowledge partnerships New knowledge practices

Source: Authors, adapted from Cummings et al., 2018.

In the context of sustainable development, Trisos, Auerbach, and Katti (2021) suggest five decolonization shifts in ecological science, relevant to any field of knowledge:

- Decolonising minds: We must be open to forms of understanding that do not stem only from western scientific practices and from the English language.

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- Understanding histories: Systems of colonial and ongoing trauma continue to shape experiences, so we need to understand the histories of the places, people, environment and knowledge systems that shape a given field (see for example Boyes, 2019b).
- Access to knowledge: We need to commit to equitable access to knowledge infrastructure such as journals, servers, and conferences.
- Recognising expertise: The Global North has made experts in its own image—largely white, largely male—so we need to vastly expand the idea of expertise.
- Inclusive teams: We need inclusion and diversity in almost any field and process, with biases constantly deconstructed and recognition of intersectional prejudices. Inclusion needs to go beyond surface-level diversity.

Many academics are engaging with the emerging decolonial agenda (see, for example, Bumpus, 2020; Demeter, 2020; Doharty, Madriaga, & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021; Dussell, 2020; Hermida and Meschini, 2017, Istratii and Lewis, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019; Pailey, 2020; Patel, 2020; Vince, 2019). As a consequence, there is a growing number of initiatives which are aiming to match actions to words, including Convivial Thinking,⁶ EU COST Action Decolonising Development: Research, Teaching and Practice,⁷ Decolonising Research Development in Higher Education,⁸ Decolonial Subversions,⁹ *RealKM Magazine* on decolonising knowledge and KM,¹⁰ Working Group Epistemologías del Sur of the Social Sciences Latin American Council (CLACSO), The Decolonial Critique,¹¹ Decolonising Library and Information Services (LIS),¹² an initiative of one of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of the UK-based CILIP, as well as the KM4Dev community.

The identifying concept of the new sixth generation of KM4SD is 'We have a dream', recognizing the collective dream of the authors, the KM4Dev community and others for more just knowledge practices. This has been inspired by Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call in his celebrated 'I Have a Dream' speech for all people to be recognised as being created equal (King, 1963). Adopting 'We have a dream' as the slogan of the sixth generation also reflects the fact that this new generation was formally proposed and launched at the Dr Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Library, Washington DC, on 9 May 2023. This recognition of a collective dream is at the heart of the decolonization of knowledge. Using a non-academic term in an academic context is also a demonstration of 'walking the walk' in regard to embracing different ways of knowing which is a fundamental aspect of the decolonization of knowledge. The sixth generation of KM4SD has six highly interrelated features which we will discuss below. These comprise epistemic justice, anti-racism, a renewed recognition of the fundamental importance of indigenous and local knowledge (ILK), as well as the need for diversity in KM approaches, new types of knowledge partnerships and new knowledge practices. These insights into the sixth generation will be further developed in the future.

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Figure 1: The sixth generation

Epistemic justice: fair patterns of knowledge creation and use

We seek a new perspective on knowledge-related or epistemic justice which can help us in our efforts to counteract injustices in international development, as put forward by Cummings et al. (2023). Building on research in other fields of academia and practice, a holistic, action-oriented framework of epistemic justice, namely fair treatment in knowledge-related and communicative practices, has been proposed for sustainable development and beyond.

The new framework of epistemic justice is focused on ‘positive’ justice to avoid resistance and to inform effective action. The framework is divided into three main types of justice: individual/collective, structural, and systemic. Individual/collective justice concentrates on testimonial justice which requires giving equal credibility to testimony without identity prejudice on the hearer’s part. It involves deep listening and giving credibility to all. Primarily applicable at the level of organizations and networks, structural epistemic justice has three main components: hermeneutical justice, epistemic network justice, and epistemic justice of the interpretive burden. Hermeneutical justice requires the development of new cognitive tools and terminologies that facilitate access to knowledge by socially disadvantaged groups. Epistemic network justice involves access to helpful epistemic peers and other actors at the boundary of networks, providing access to social capital. This is particularly relevant to KM4Dev and other decolonial networks mentioned above. Epistemic justice of the interpretative burden requires the interpretive burden to be shared across

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epistemic actors, rather than being placed unfairly on marginalized groups as has been described by Doharty et al. (2021) in efforts to decolonize the university as an institution. Systemic epistemic justice comprises linguistic epistemic justice, decolonization of knowledge, and curricula justice. The authors explain that the framework of epistemic justice provides a way forward to address epistemic injustice at different levels, from individual to systemic. Changes in development practice will be most feasible at the individual/collective and structural levels, while systemic change will be more challenging because it requires changes to entire systems.

Increasing epistemic justice will lead to fairer patterns of knowledge production and use, supporting the global community's ability to deal with 'wicked' problems, such as climate change (Cummings et al., 2023). This will involve engaging knowledge and knowledge holders from the Global South; First Nations, indigenous, 'racialized' and local communities; Eastern Europe; women; and youth. To achieve this, Roh, Inefuku, and Drabinski (2020) advise us that the way forward needs to include addressing the fundamental power imbalance issues of race, gender, national origin, and language. A number of authors have started to put forward strategies and actions aimed at addressing these imbalances, including Medie and Kang (2018); Kamenopoulou (2020); Mormina and Istratii (2021); Trisos et al. (2021), Amano et al. (2021); Ramírez-Castañeda (2020); and Burke, Díaz-Reviriego, Lam, and Hanspach (2023). In regard to access to knowledge, Trisos et al. (2021) ask that we reject 'parachute' science, where researchers from the Global North go into Global South communities to carry out studies without meaningful local participation. But they alert that participation alone is not enough: existing power balances must be addressed, and Global South communities supported to be able to lead programs of data collection and analysis, and hold data in Global South repositories. Ricca, Abraham, Waiswa, Culbertson, and Hodgins (2023) illustrate the largely successful efforts by the editorial team of a global health journal to increase the number of papers from authors from the Global South.

Women continue to experience epistemic injustice in many ways. Women's stories and voices are not heard throughout history leading, for example, to the novel 'The silence of the girls' by Pat Barker which revisits the Homeric myth of Achilles from the perspective of Briseis, an enslaved woman. Women continue to be seen as less credible and less trustworthy than men in many spheres, such as the workplace, in health care and in entrepreneurship. For example, 'gender-based credibility discounting' means that women's testimony of sexual harassment in the workplace is frequently not believed (Epstein & Goodman, 2019), while delivery of reproductive health care services for women in Somalia is impeded by a failure to believe women's intention to receive care (Narruhn & Clark, 2020). In another example, the dominant discourse in international development on entrepreneurship fails to take into

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account the perspectives of women or the risks they face in becoming entrepreneurs in Ethiopia (Cummings & Lopez, 2023). Despite these examples of epistemic injustice, some initiatives are doing better in their efforts to listen to women's voices. The Women Respond initiative of the international NGO, CARE, has focused on listening to women's own experiences with the COVID pandemic (Yihun, Janoch, & Sriram, 2023). In another example from CARE, Dangol et al. (2023) have developed a self-administered KM tool with women in Nepal. This tool aims to increase women's access to and utilization of health services and information, encouraging them to take action.

Such is the importance of gender in sustainable development that it has a goal all of its own, SDG 5: 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' (United Nations, 2015). The United Nations (2020) itself argues that women are being constrained in being able to equitably share their knowledge as a result of the time poverty they experience due to an excess of paid work and unpaid care and domestic work. This means that addressing gender inequities must be a priority in the decolonization of knowledge. In KM, gender is seen as an important aspect of both recognising expertise and the establishment of inclusive teams (Trisos et al., 2021). One way in which the KM community can 'walk the walk' in this regard is by recognising the value to KM4SD of the work of 'Mother of Modern Management' Mary Parker Follett in the same way as it celebrates the KM contributions of 'Father of Modern Management' Peter Drucker. This is particularly the case as the key concepts she advocated align directly with the features of the fifth and sixth generations on KM4SD (Boyes, 2021b). Another is to recognize the importance of women's testimonies in development. However, it is important to recognize that epistemic injustice is intersectional in which, for example, gender, ableism, geographical location, language, class, age, and race interact. To illustrate this point, young people are also an important part of inclusive teams. With this in mind, KM4Dev is facilitating the establishment of a Youth Leadership Forum and mentoring of young people. Two KM4Dev Knowledge Cafés have been convened to inaugurate the Forum, and a Project Charter¹³ has been prepared.

Although aware of intersectionality, we do not plan to use it as a device to distract from anti-racism because 'superficial intersectional discourse runs the risk of sidelining racism and refocusing Whiteness by, for example, focusing discussions on gender and poverty' (Jannack, 2020, p. 240).

Anti-racism

We seek anti-racism, which is 'a process of actively identifying and opposing racism' (Cherry, 2023, para. 1). There is currently a notable concern and active dialogue within the international development sector regarding the potential ways in which racism and White

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supremacy culture, including the influences of colonialism, coloniality (and its association with modernity), and racial dynamics (both systemic and interpersonal), may subtly manifest as underlying issues in the sector's culture, systems, processes, and narratives (Lartey, 2023). In response, we need to challenge policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions at individual, institutional, and structural levels. This is particularly important in international development—and to efforts to decolonize knowledge—because of the strong links between racism and colonialism (Mignolo, 2017). Anti-racism initiatives in development organizations are in their infancy but analysis shows that racism is present, that anti-racism actions are needed, and that racism has implications for KM. We would like to highlight two approaches for anti-racism in international development: countering racism in the governance of organizations, and in narratives and stories. More approaches to anti-racism will be appearing in coming years but these represent a useful starting point.

Governance of international organizations

Jannack (2020) has undertaken a Foucauldian critical discourse analysis of racism in the World Bank, arguing that the governance structure, initial staff and contemporary hiring practices, and unequal voting practices reflect a racist social structure and, in particular, the marginalization of Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) within the World Bank. According to Jannack (2020), the World Bank uses six discursive mechanisms to maintain the World Bank as a White institutional space:

- Merging race into a broader diversity frame including gender and poverty;
- Centring the state in measures of diversity;
- Claiming neutrality and objectivity through meritocracy;
- Silencing the discussion of racism by refusing to publish internal studies of racism;
- Relying on individual anti-racism measures, ignoring the historical and systematic perspectives; and
- Reducing anti-racism to a voluntary status.

The approach taken by the World Bank appears to be founded on 'a static understanding of racism as being sad but natural, static and permanent' (Jannack, 2020, p. 30) while implying that racism has been formally erased from the knowledge system. To counteract racism, Jannack proposes the development of external control mechanisms for international organizations so that they are no longer legally exempt from national laws. She also argues that future research should include qualitative research with BIPOC staff.

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Table 5: Dimensions of racism in development narratives

Dimension of racism	Definition
Colour-blindness	Silence on and blindness to race, racism, and racial difference.
White Gaze	Sets Whiteness, Europe, and the West as the standard of the modern world, that 'others' are compared against and found lacking, inferior and wanting.
Saviourism	A belief that White people can save Black people and people of colour, in particular women and children (from poverty, climate change and other development challenges).
Eurocentrism	Imposition of European/Western thought and leadership as the universal norm to benefit all.
Neutrality	Discusses development, partnerships (and relationships) as if they are politically, socially, economically neutral.
Exclusion	Exclusion and erasure of the multiple ways Black and Indigenous people and people of colour protect the environment, create jobs, and improved health care, etc.

Source: Lartey, 2023.

Narratives and stories in international development

Racist narratives frequently underpin storytelling in international development, inadvertently shaping the worldviews of organizations and individuals involved in the field (Lartey, 2023). To explore these issues at the behest of staff, the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), UK, undertook a participatory exercise to examine racist frames (see Table 5) in a sample of their publications. Based on a sample of different types of documents, colour-blindness was found to be widespread, while other forms of racism were also evident.

Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK)

We seek the increased use of indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) and respect for indigeneity in KM4SD. Drawing on earlier research (Gadgil, Berkes, & Folke, 1993), Wheeler and Root-Bernstein acknowledge different definitions of ILK, but advise that:

Despite the diversity within Indigenous and local knowledge systems among peoples and cultures, there are some common characteristics such as that knowledge emerges from a close association with the land, is passed down through generations and often integrates culture, practice and beliefs (2020, p. 1635)

ILK is making a significant contribution to the management of natural landscapes (Brondízio et al., 2021), and also contributes to disaster preparedness and resilience. For example, indigenous knowledge of tsunami risk embedded in Smong communities successfully warned people of the 2004 tsunami on the island of Simeulue, Indonesia (Rahman, Sakurai, & Munadi, 2017). However, ILK has so far only made a small contribution to research in regard

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to the major sustainability transformations needed to cope with urgent social and environmental challenges, despite having considerable potential in this regard (Lam et al., 2020). Fernández-Llamazares et al. (2021, p. 144) also warn that 'Globalization, government policies, capitalism, colonialism, and other rapid social-ecological changes threaten the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their environments, thereby challenging the continuity and dynamism of Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK).' McAllister, Hikuroa, and Macinnis-Ng (2023) further note that just using or considering ILK is not enough. It is essential that such work engages with indigenous peoples and that engagement is respectful.

Related to indigenous knowledge, 'indigeneity' involves recentring indigenous concepts in the dominant discourse to reduce hermeneutic injustice, illustrated by Dhewa and Cummings (2023) paper linking communities of practice and Ubuntu. Steeves (2020, para. 1) advises that this term came into use in the 1990s as many colonized communities began to fight back against cultural losses under colonial regimes, stating that 'Indigeneity is woven through diverse experiences and histories and is often described as a pan-political identity in a postcolonial time.'

Diversity in KM approaches

We seek respect for, and consideration of, diversity in KM approaches. Aligned with the geographic biases in KM research (Wang et al., 2018), what is known as KM originated in a relatively small part of the world with generally uniform culture and values. While much of the rest of the world may not have practiced KM as such, it has been successfully managing knowledge for a very long time and has potentially learnt much in the process. Given this, it would be very wrong to assume that what is known as KM constitutes all there is to know about managing knowledge or has even found the best ways of doing it.

As an example, Ferguson and Cummings (2008) report that KM4D initiatives have been criticised for being internally focused. As Boyes (2019c) documents, this criticism can also be levelled at mainstream, non-development focused KM, with major companies including Boeing and Toyota having KM programs that are internally focused to the neglect of vital external knowledge, with disastrous consequences. However, as Boyes (2020) advises, there are examples from the Global South that are achieving much more effective external knowledge engagement. These include the multi-stakeholder engagement approaches of Chinese company Xiaomi (Ortiz, Ren, Li, and Zhang, 2019).

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Knowledge partnerships

We seek robust and dynamic knowledge partnerships based on meaningful and collaborative connections. Many development sectors in Global South and North countries have already made significant progress in forging new and more equal knowledge partnerships, transforming previously unequal relationships with Western donors into authentic partnerships involving sustainable trust and shared ownership in leadership and decision-making (Nossum & Halvorsen, 2017).

Communities of practice are an important tool for facilitating successful knowledge partnerships. This approach involves individuals with shared expertise and a common purpose coming together to foster knowledge sharing, learning, and change (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). These communities complement existing organizational structures, and can operate at a wide range of scales from local to global. By leveraging the collective wisdom and passion of their members, communities of practice have been proven effective in improving performance and solving problems in various sectors. Additionally, communities of practice can also function as safe spaces (see, for example, Damjanovic & Ward, 2023) or as third spaces for cultural interaction between peers (Bhabha, 1990). Our own community of practice, KM4Dev is an outstanding and ground-breaking example of such a community, building and sustaining knowledge partnerships and productive personal and professional relationships in a virtual space with limited face-to-face interaction over two decades. KM4Dev won the CILIP 2021 KM Excellence Award in recognition of its contribution to international development and KM. Other communities of practice, such as the Movement for Community-led Development (MCLD) also demonstrate the transformative, decolonization value of communities of practice (Djohossou, Bulbul, & Hendrix-Jenkins, 2023a, 2023b).

New knowledge practices

New types of knowledge practices are needed which support the decolonization of knowledge. First, we consider that the design and implementation of programs and strategies that are evidence-based will support decolonization of knowledge, harnessing the power of data and knowledge to make better decisions and provide stronger support for both people and the planet. As Boccock and Collinson state in their book on the Multi-Donor Learning Partnership (MDLP):

For too long, international development programmes have been designed based on what we have done before or have done elsewhere. This is because without robust and useful data and evidence, relying on what we have done before is the closest we can get to demonstrating relevant experience. (2022, p. 67)

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However, development agencies are increasingly strengthening intentional, systematic, ethical, and resourced approaches to evidence capture, curation, and application (Bocock & Collinson, 2022). In doing so, they are increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes. The integration of data and science-driven methodologies ensures that decision-making and actions are rooted in evidence and analysis. It recognizes that data and science permeates all aspects of work, and that responsible harnessing of this information is crucial for addressing global challenges (United Nations, n.d.).

Second, we consider that new types of knowledge practice will support community-led social and behaviour change strategies, in recognition of the fact that achieving the SDGs requires not only changes in policies and systems but also changes in people's attitudes, behaviours, and practices. According to UNICEF (n.d.), social and behavioural change refers to instilling positive and protective practices, which involve transforming societies to be more inclusive, equitable, and peaceful. Integrated with the knowledge partnerships, community-led social and behaviour change focuses on 'combining scientific and community knowledge to co-design solutions to development and humanitarian challenges' UNICEF (n.d., p. 1).

Third, decolonization of knowledge will require a greater emphasis on facilitation techniques. Facilitation is defined as providing assistance in helping individuals engage in their optimal thinking and practice by encouraging full participation, fostering mutual understanding, and nurturing a sense of shared responsibility, and is a key skill in the management of knowledge (Kaner, Lind, Toldi, Fisk, & Berger, 2007). It is also a key practice of knowledge managers (White & Lamoureux, 2015). As Djohossou et al. argue based on their exchanges with the global Movement for Community-led Development (MCLD):

Facilitators are leaders of transformation, enabling a series of shifts: from mindset growth to a shared vision to action to producing impact, and back again. Facilitators are not teachers or trainers, but co-learners and sometimes neutral third parties who focus on the process so that communities and their partners can focus on the content. Leadership through facilitating rich dialogue is essential. (2023b, p. 115)

They also emphasize that facilitators need to engage in continuous learning and decolonize their own attitudes (Djohossou et al., 2023b). With this emphasis on facilitation, we also imply a challenge to members of the KM4Dev community and the Liberating Structures¹⁴ community to consider their facilitation methods and techniques in the context of the decolonization of knowledge.

Boyes, B., S.J.R. Cummings, F. Tesfaye Habtemariam and G. Kemboi. 2023.
 ‘We have a dream’: proposing decolonization of knowledge as a sixth
 generation of knowledge management for sustainable development.
 Special Issue on ‘Uncomfortable truths in international development: approaches to the decolonization of
 knowledge from development practice, policy and research.’
Knowledge Management for Development Journal 17(1/2). 11-41.

Table 6: A revised framework for systemic KM4SD

Practice-based		Societal	
Identifying concepts			
a) Knowledge processes embedded in intra-organizational processes	b) Knowledge processes embedded in inter-organizational processes	Cross-domain knowledge integration and knowledge co-creation Knowledge ecology/ knowledge ecosystems	Decolonization of knowledge ‘We have a dream’
Features			
Practice-based Funding constraints Tools: ICTs, KM audits, KM scans, best practices, case studies, peer assist	Role of social media Inter-organization communities of practice Tools: ICTs, best practices, case studies, peer assist Funding constraints New knowledge partnerships New knowledge practices	Multiple knowledges Multi-stakeholder processes, including new stakeholders Global public good and knowledge commons Emphasis on local knowledge Emergence and complexity	Epistemic justice Anti-racism Indigenous and local knowledge Diversity in KM approaches
Universal frameworks			
SDGs and potentially the KDGs			

Source: Authors, adapted from Cummings et al., 2018.

The six features of the sixth generation of KM4SD are brought together in Table 6, which updates the earlier systemic conceptualization of KM4D (Table 2) (Cummings et al. 2018). Four of the six features of the sixth generation are added to the features of the fourth and fifth generations of KM4D to create an enhanced societal KM4SD. The remaining two features of the sixth generation are added to the features of previous generations of KM4D to create an enhanced practice-based KM4SD.

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Conclusion

We—both the authors and the wider KM4Dev community—'have a dream': our common aspirations for a fairer development knowledge system/ecology. These aspirations are embodied in our proposal for a sixth generation of knowledge management for sustainable development (KM4SD) characterized by the increasing awareness of the need to decolonize knowledge. Adopting 'We have a dream' as the slogan of the sixth generation also reflects that this new generation was formally proposed and launched at the Dr Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Library, Washington DC, on 9 May 2023. The sixth generation of KM4SD follows on from the five earlier identified generations of knowledge management for development (KM4D). Moving to use the term 'sustainable development' rather than just 'development' reflects the importance of development which is sustainable in terms of people and planet, in the context of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The decolonization of knowledge focuses on dismantling fundamental inequities of the knowledge system in which coloniality and past colonization interact with neo-liberal economics to exclude knowledge and knowledge holders from the peripheries of society. The sixth generation of KM4SD has six highly interrelated features: epistemic justice, anti-racism, indigenous and local knowledge (ILK), diversity in KM approaches, new knowledge partnerships, and new knowledge practices. We invite you to join us in further developing the sixth generation of KM4SD and its features, in doing so making the dream a reality.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge that this paper is founded on discussions and reflections with many members of the KM4Dev community. Based on previous deliberations within the team of authors, Bruce Boyes did the primary drafting of the article with equal inputs at a later stage by the other authors. For this reason, the other authors are equal second authors. Sarah Cummings' contribution was supported by the Netherlands Research Council (NWO) SSH Open Competition XS Grant: From philosophy to action and back again: addressing epistemic justice (No. 406.XS.01.054).

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¹ <http://www.km4dev.org/>

² <https://dgroups.io/g/km4dev>

³ <https://km4djournal.org/>

⁴ The paper has been downloaded 6401 times (as at 6 May 2023)

⁵ Videos of most of these online knowledge cafes can be viewed on KM4Dev's YouTube channel
<https://www.youtube.com/@KnoManFordevKM4devAdmin/featured>

⁶ <https://www.convivialthinking.org/>

⁷ <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA19129/>

⁸ <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=DECOLONIALHE>

⁹ <http://decolonialsubversions.org/>

¹⁰ <https://realkm.com/decolonising-km/>

¹¹ <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=THE-DECOLONIAL-CRITIQUE>

¹² <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=LIS-DECOLONISE>

¹³ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EEzxLjh8hHZd2c54QZijLSxgj6xDkf8oUnCj_ht6KmU/edit

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