

Preface

The book was conceived as a project of the International Cooperation Research Cluster (ICRC), established in early 2012 at Curtin University. The cluster formation was a University initiative to bring together researchers, practitioners and post-graduate students from various disciplines working in similar fields, with the objective of building each other's capacity by investigating community development and cooperation projects from a research perspective.

Synergies were established following an exercise of mapping individual cluster members' research strengths, the nature of their work and the location of these works globally. Community-centric projects based in different disciplines and in various international contexts emerged as common ground for further exploration by the ICRC cluster members.

Questions for exploration were:

- How do researchers and professionals from different disciplinary perspectives working on community-based projects of different nature and scales and at different locations in the developing and developed world, engage with their own communities of practice and the communities under study?
- What are the effects of these engagements for both practitioners and local community members? Is capacity built in any form for the participants?
- If so, what are the models and methodologies of these engagements? What are the methods employed in these interactions with community?

An idea of a book dealing with the above questions was formed and *M² Models and Methodologies for Community Engagement* was born. The book unfolded as an act of co-production and co-creation, where academics, researchers, practitioners, graphic artists and editors were involved in an active process of threading together the myriad voices (personal and collective) and vignettes of perspectives.

Traditionally, a contributed book is structured as a series of stand-alone chapters on a targeted subject, bookended by a contextualizing introduction and a concluding chapter by the editor(s). Typically, the contributed chapters are a result of selected conference papers on a theme, or a call for interest, or an invitation to experts in the field to write on a targeted subject set out by the publisher/editor(s). Authors most often have no direct contact with each other, and therefore do not impact on

the development of the others. The evolution of this book was quite different, with authors contributing from the beginning towards setting the direction for the book. Writing workshops were organized and brainstorming sessions between the authors, followed by editorial sessions, demonstrate a shared creativity, a collective efficacy. Parts II and III evolved out of the workshops sessions once Part I of the Book was developed. For us, this book, an object of co-creation, helped us in opening up to new perspectives, embracing novel ways of moving forward and building on each others' works. The process aided us on a path less travelled and brought the book contributors together as an active, engaging, non-placed global community.

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