

Re-imagining AMED 2020: To Be or Not To Be?

The inquiry continues ...

A workshop facilitated by Tony Page



Context

This is an outline and summary of a seminal moment in the ongoing co-inquiry into AMED's future. It was ably facilitated by Tony Page following this year's AGM on 27th April 2018 at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre, The Old Courthouse London SE11. Tony drew all the poster illustrations by hand in advance of our conversations

Afterwards, Tony sent us the following notes, prefaced by this summary:

'You'll find the most exciting ideas you came up with clustered under four main headings at the end:

1. Funding
2. Reaching out – conversations
3. Reaching out – alliances
4. Writing.'

To help leverage these re-imagining conversations, we are now adding this record to the Autumn/Winter 2017 edition of *e-O&P*, creating them as a stand-alone document to circulate as widely as possible, and inviting participants and others to respond in the space we've created in [this Forum](#). Please help to shape and determine in what shape and form AMED will exist in 2020 and beyond.

Participants

Bob MacKenzie, David McAra, Linda Williams, Ned Seabrook, Chris Rogers, Heather Day, Donal Carroll, Jafar Akhavan Moosavi (IFAL), Tony Page (Facilitator)

Apologies

Shelagh Doonan, Roger Niven, Roger Noon, Irene MacWilliam, Rob Warwick, Julie Allan, David Shepherd.

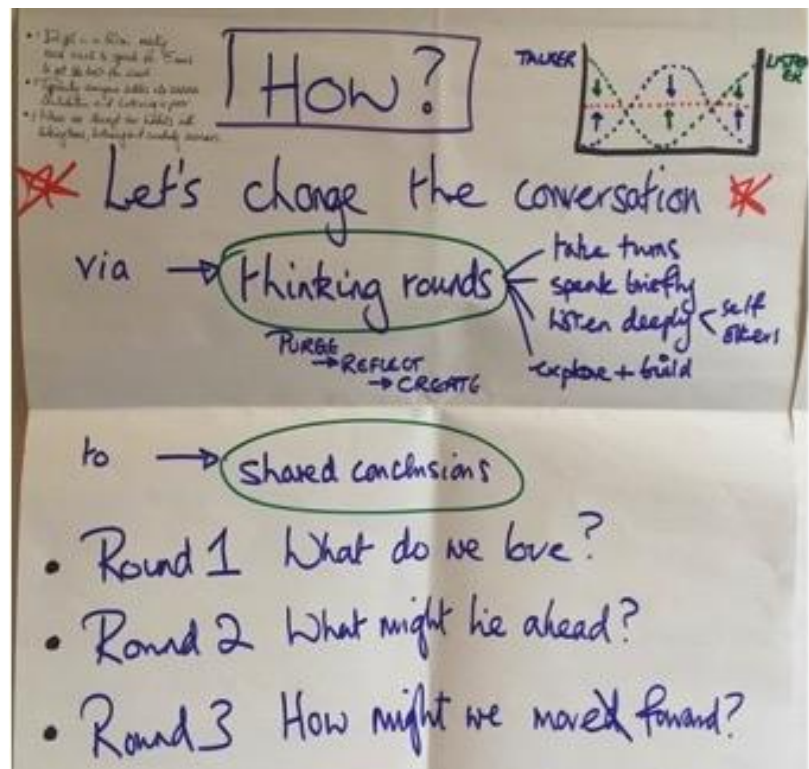
Process

At the start, Tony outlined the following process that might help us to frame our conversations most purposefully (see image 1).



[Image 1: overall framework of our co-inquiry]

Broadly, the rest of our discussion adopted this pattern:



[image 2: the method we adopted for our conversations]

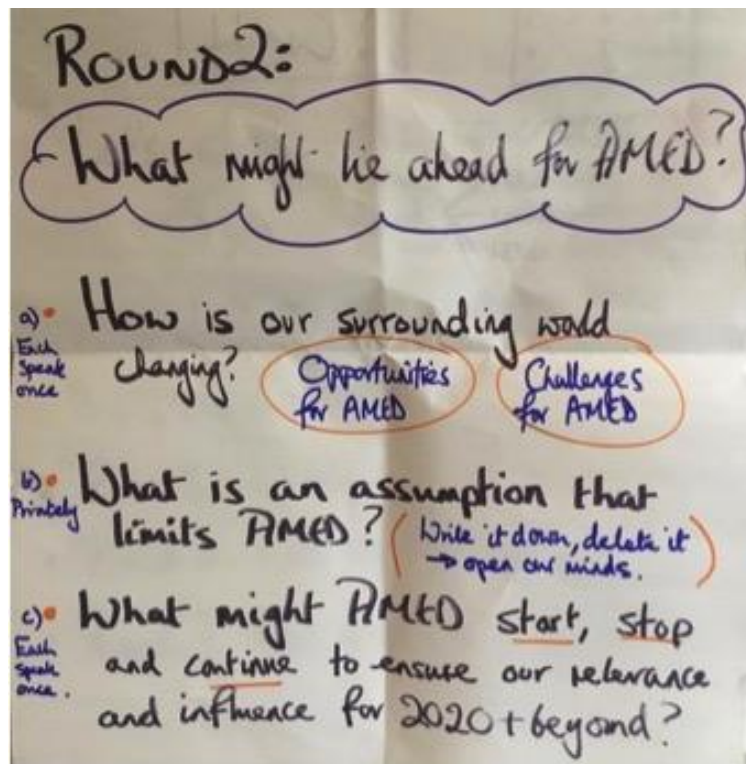
Round 1: What do we love?

- Diversity of thinking evidenced in e-O&P articles and conversations.
- Dealing with individuals who show honesty rather than corporate line. Refreshing and down to earth.
- Energetic conversations, quality of listening. What do you do is an after-thought. Potential for emergent change.
- Similarity with IFAL – to be explored further. The world needs our faith in young people – space for everyone, energy, enthusiasm, commitment.
- International element. It's open. Diverse. The opportunity for sharing – finding synergy between members and projects. Bringing energy to a system.
- AMED as personified by Bob's enthusiasm to make it work. I enjoy the meetings I go to causing me to reflect on my own practice.
- The absence of judgement. You can express yourself as you wish.
- I used to love the LinkedIn conversations. Where have they gone?
- How people relate in 'The AMED Way'. It's an ethos. It fills a space.
- The absence of self-promotion – people do not sell to each other, except through their enthusiasm.
- AMED's potential – to come at the issues in different ways. Willingness to take the blinkers off and look for a new beginning.
- AMED as a kind of home between assignments: a place to reflect and learn and rise to a new level of practice.

Round 2: What lies ahead? Opportunities. Challenges. Assumptions. Start, stop and continue.

Challenges

- Revenue streams. EBSCO centralised subscriptions, sucked up all the AMED memberships and revenue streams.
- How to secure greater engagement across many platforms.
- Technical: all the answers we need are in our phones, making an organisation like AMED seem unnecessary.
- Social media caught AMED napping.
- Managers are learning more on the job and less interested in best practice.
- The allure of Question Time and a dominant discourse that is dispiriting, mechanistic, binary and adversarial.



[image 3: future search]

Opportunities

- Technical: the answers in our phones are false, and there's a loss of context.
- Small third sector organisations are more aligned to our thinking and less compartmentalised than the big corporates.
- To explain what AMED stands for: in what sense of management, education and developer.
- The ever-rising efforts towards equality.
- The social and environmental agendas.
- The lack of a good descriptive understanding of how an organisation works.
- Do we know what a majority of AMED members think e.g. about organisations as social constructions?
- To share our social goals, not simply our professional aspirations
- Opportunity 1: Today human beings are not much changed than 2000 years ago. How do we know where to go when we don't know what that place is? To be comfortable with not knowing in a world where people want answers.
- Opportunity 2: To do thing slow and deliberately instead of fast. To find a different way of thinking that is expansive.
- To set out what AMED is really about. To reach out to people who might join and give them a sense of belonging.
- To provide a belonging space for entrepreneurs, 'solo-preneurs'.

- An opportunity for re-interpretation through fresh thinking and action learning. Through different processes for managing relationships in a VUCA world. Making this relevant in a BREXIT world where we don't know what's ahead of us. Through a different membership model – perhaps pay as you go and donations rather than annual fee?

Question: what's at the core of AMED and what's incidental?

What might AMED start?

- I'd love to campaign to business school round the country and reach out so they know AMED is here.
- Be confident that AMED thinking does gel with the next generation: find a way to talk and listen to young people.
- Engage with the paying members to find out who they are and what keeps them paying.
- Engage with the wider supporters and LinkedIn groups: what keeps them signed up, what do they value?
- Start these wider conversations to re-invigorate AMED.
- Engage with the nine overseas members to find out the potential of this new demographic
- Facilitate a group of lone entrepreneurs (to give them a "home").
- Challenge the thinking of business schools to take complexity seriously.
- To embrace inter-generational relationships – finding common ground instead of putting them in opposition.
- Look to encourage and co-create the social solutions in other projects e.g. housing.

What might AMED stop?

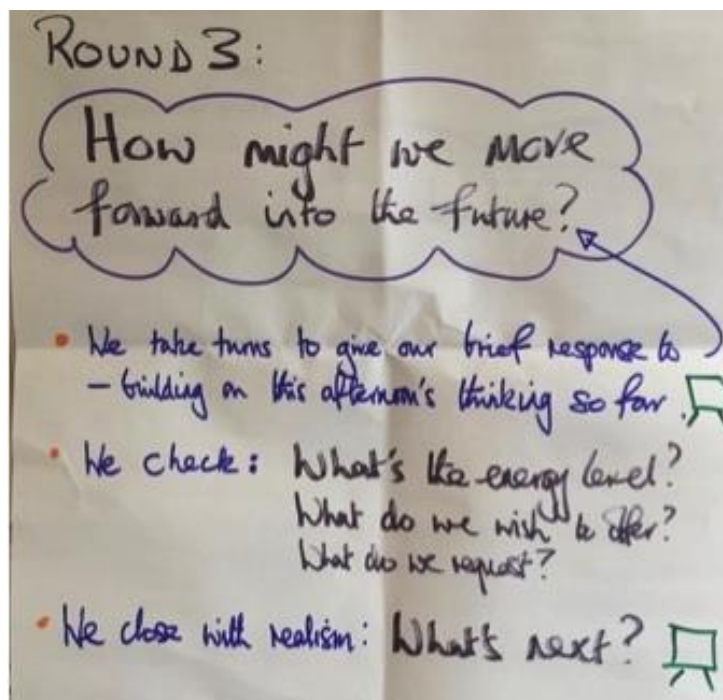
- Assuming something we love about AMED will get broken if we re-shape ourselves to meet the needs of a future generation.
- Stop allowing AMED to weigh more heavily towards the older end.
- Stop ghetto-ising the young ones.

What might AMED continue?

- "Engage in the present and the future emerges". When people are anxious about the future they sometimes disengage with the present. AMED can continue showing how to feel alive in the present, not letting anxiety about the future become overwhelming.
- A new eO&P edition edited by the young ones.

Round 3: What single idea are you most excited about for AMED?

▪



[image 4: future moves?]

Funding

- A different approach to funding, perhaps crowd-funding and other experiments to re-shape our membership. With funds in the bank we can re-shape existing rules, talk to networkers to get them to opt in.
- Do something positive with the £20k surplus (but still cover the insurance).

Reaching out - conversations

- Cross-generational conversations to challenge the dominant discourse and promote other ways of seeing.
- Chose which organisations to tap into (AMED membership and supporters, Business Schools, Open University etc) with diverse renewal and re-engagement conversations by age, gender, inter-cultural and inter-generational.
- Reach out to the missing group of loner entrepreneurs.
- Re-explain and re-interpret the AMED name and relevance.

Reaching out - alliances

- Talk to colleagues at IFAL – propose to them we continue a close relationship with AMED.
- Take further and more deliberate steps towards linking with other organisations.

Writing

- Explore the future of writing and editing in AMED in our broader changing context -> through our annual writing event in Brighton and involving the younger generation.
- A Risk and Rise strand – including myth busting and re-invention, asking the dangerous questions through writing articles, blogs, news we can use, short videos, podcasts, new media. Not ‘academic’. Encourage writers to do short stuff using social media and the resources of the AMED and other websites.

What next?

We'd welcome your contribution of energy and commitment to ensure AMED's continued relevance beyond 2020. So please spread the word, and feel free to contribute to the Forum that we've created [here](#) specially to harvest and harness your energy, ideas and commitment in service of AMED's values.