

Practical Ethical Reflections on the Information Society

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Outline of presentation

Information is
a driver of change

Technology drives
access to
information

Practical
implications



Aid is not enough



- aid works if conditions are right
- same conditions for private investment, eg
 - accountable Government
 - effective institutions
 - market economy
- need **drivers of change** in place

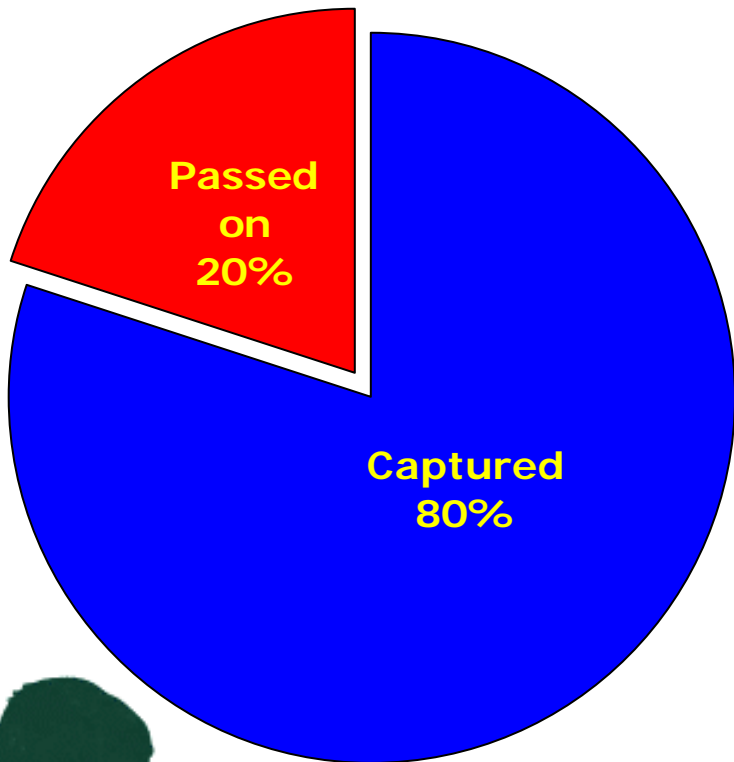


Information is a driver of change

- incentives for good government
- improving livelihoods
- public technology



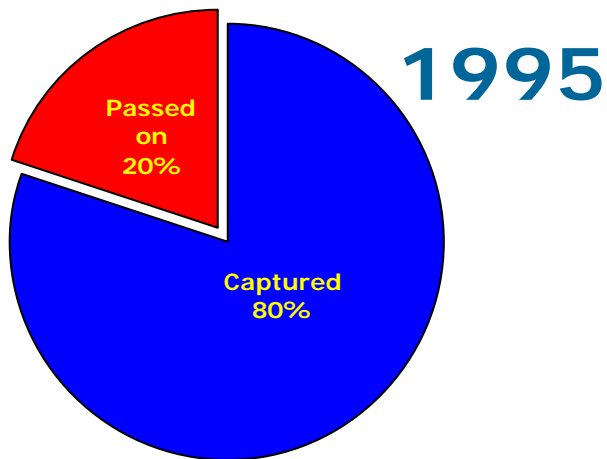
Information & accountable government



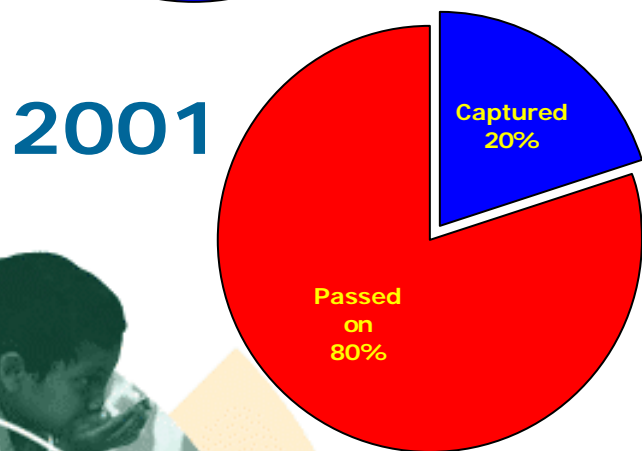
- Uganda 1995
- 20% of public spending on education
- 80% not reaching schools
- Government launched information campaign



Information & accountable government



- Uganda 2001
- 80% reaching schools
- 75% because of media



Information is a driver of change

- **incentives for good government**
- improving livelihoods
- public technology

Access to information can make governments more responsive to the needs of poor people, reduce corruption, and improve delivery of public services



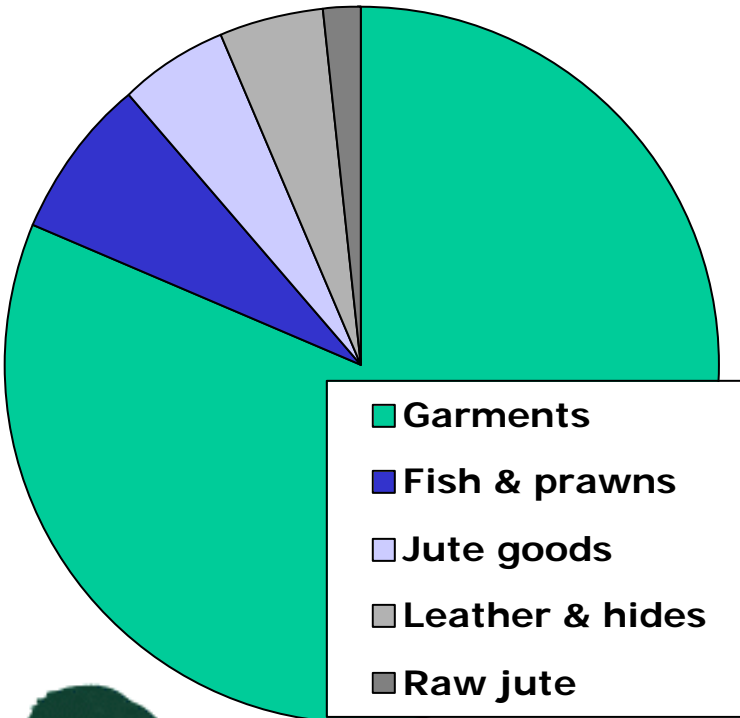
Information & livelihoods



- Noorul Quader
- 1979 agreement with Daewoo
- 130 Desh workers went to Daewoo plant in Kusan, Korea for training
- 8% royalties & sales commissions.
- 2.3 million shirts exported in 1987
- Desh now employs 760 staff
- selling US\$ 9.6 million a year



Bangladesh garment exports



- of 130 Daewoo-trained staff...
- ... 115 set up their own firms
- now > 700 locally-owned companies
- earning US\$ 3.6 billion
- Bangladesh's biggest export



Information is a driver of change

- incentives for good government
- **improving livelihoods**
- public technology

Information enables the poor to earn a living. The economic benefits of knowledge spread within the community.



Knowledge that saves lives



Jonas Salk
Inventor of Polio Vaccine

Q: "Who owns the patent on this vaccine?"

A: "Well, the people I would say. There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?"

Jonas Salk, 1955

Public health technology

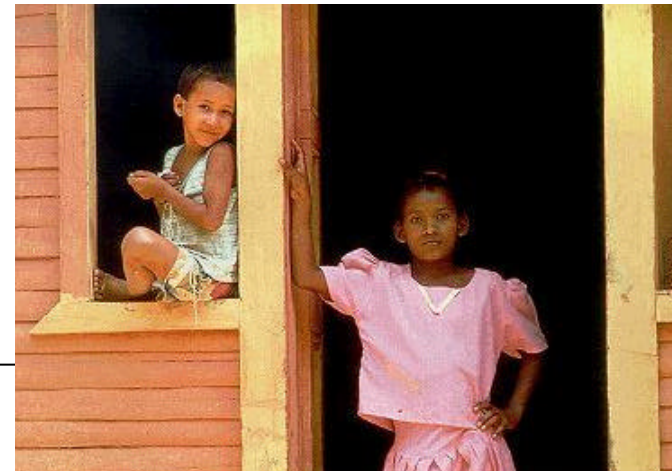
- 13 million people die each year of curable diseases
- including 3 million children of diarrhoea
- .. and 3 million of pertussis, polio, diphtheria
- ½ million children a year blinded by Vit A deficiency
- anti-malaria bed nets: \$10-20 per life



Driver

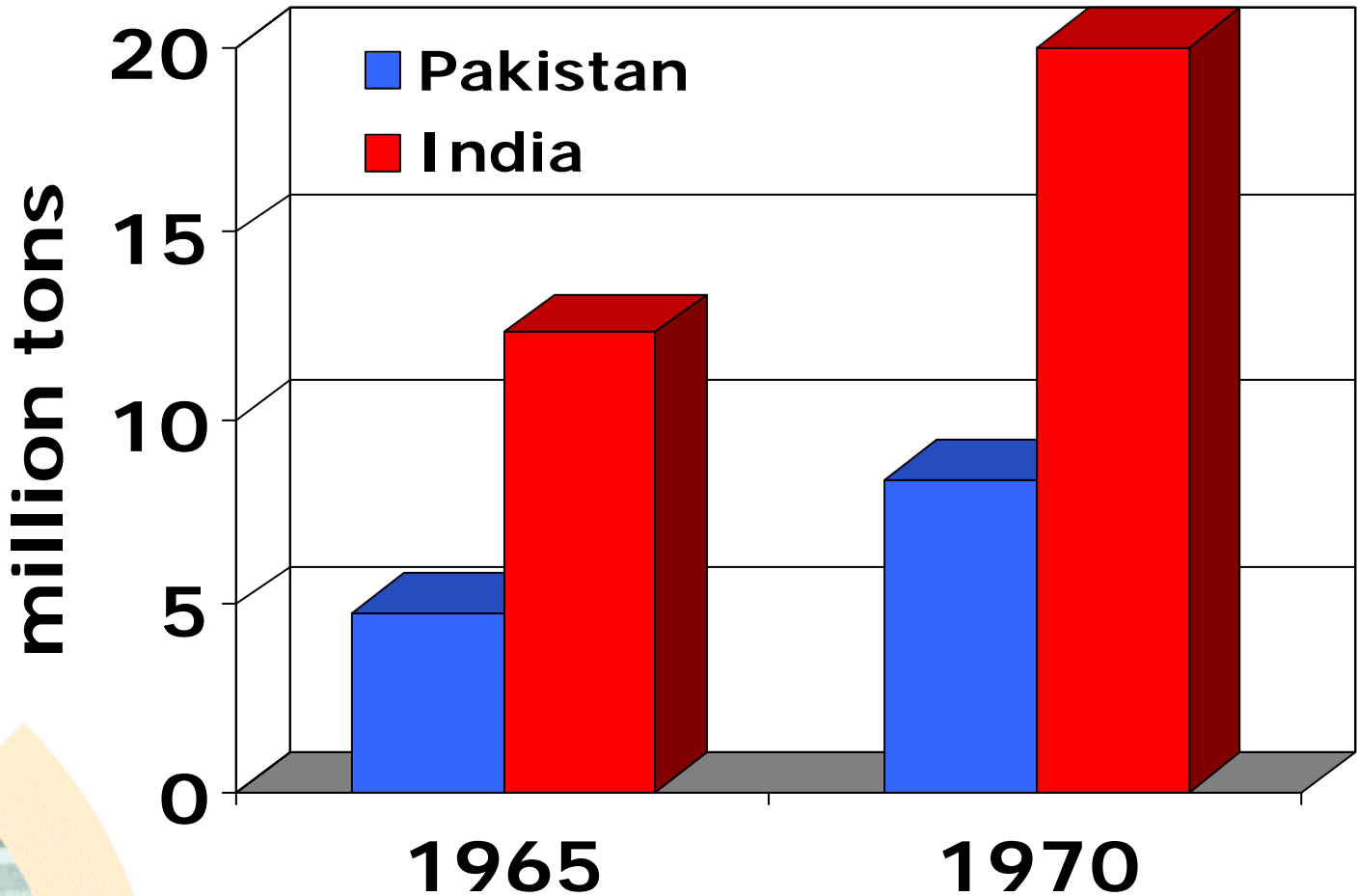
Tech

Practical



The green revolution

Grain production



Information is a driver of change

- incentives for good government
- improving livelihoods
- **public technology**

Access to society's
knowledge is a key
determinant of human
development.

Driver

Tech

Practical



Are we nearly there?

Information is
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Driver

Tech

Practical



Role of new technology



- **communication becoming ubiquitous**
 - more mobile phones in developing countries than fixed lines in the whole world
 - often cheaper than the alternatives (Umtata in Eastern Cape)
- **mixture of new & old technology**
 - weather forecasts in Senegal from internet, relayed over speakers
 - downloading radio content from the internet (OneWorld)
 - Open Knowledge Network kiosks



New technology in practice



- **better Government**
 - mobile phones in Ghana election
 - eSeva centres in Andhra Pradesh
- **improved livelihoods**
 - Bangladesh rice farmer gets market prices via Grameen village phone
 - weather forecasts
 - off-shoring of services
- **public technology**
 - eye tests in Pondicherry
 - public health campaigns
 - academic journals online



Are we nearly there?

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**Practical
implications**



Driver

Tech

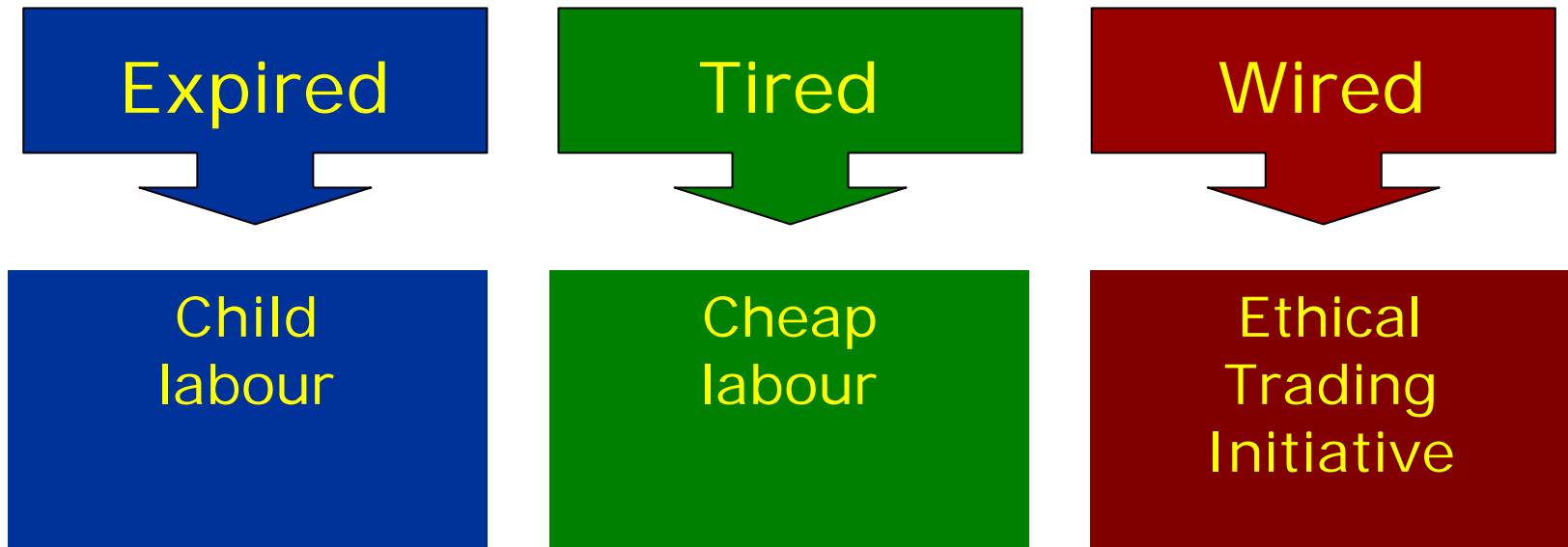
Practical



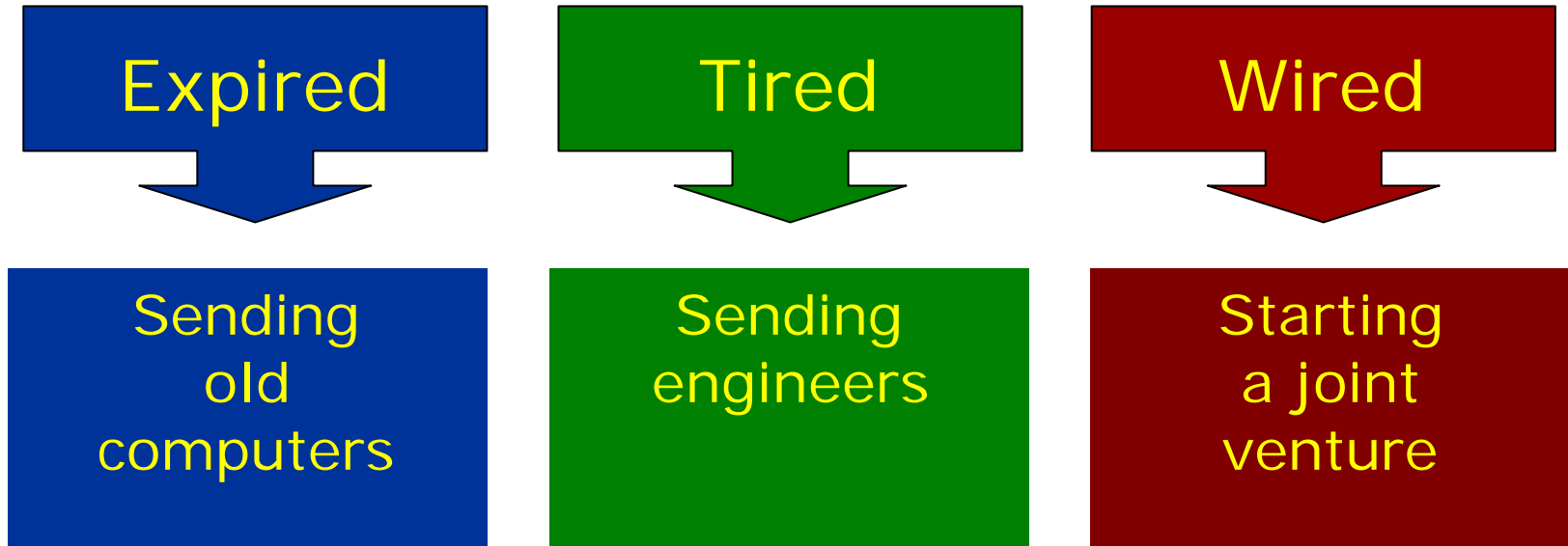
Get involved because ...



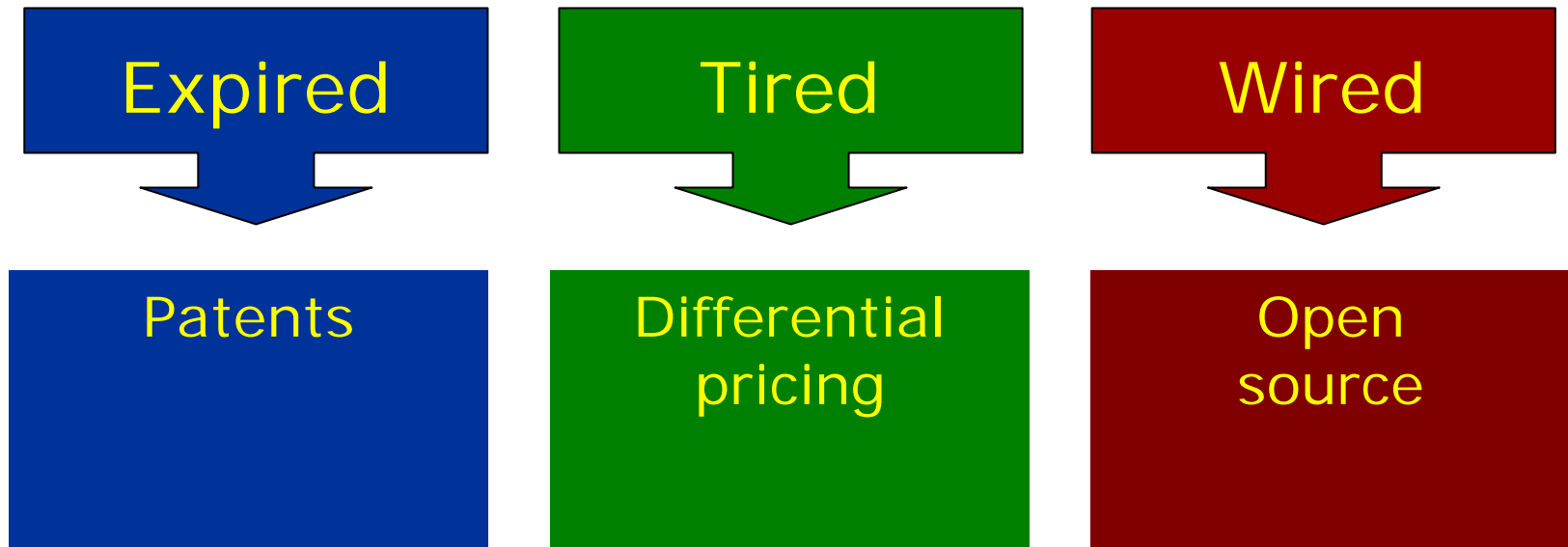
Working in developing countries



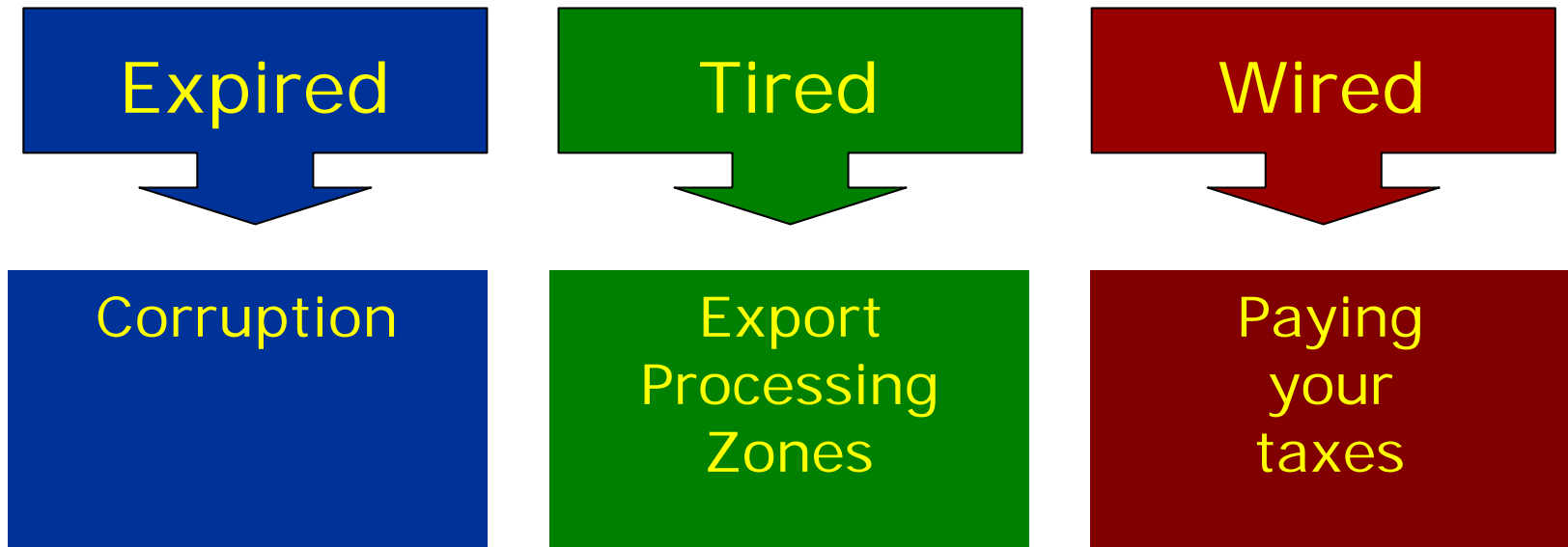
Sharing your technology



Intellectual property



Relationships with Government



Being wired ...

Expired

Tired

Wired

Charity
 Child labour
 Old computers
 Patents
 Corruption

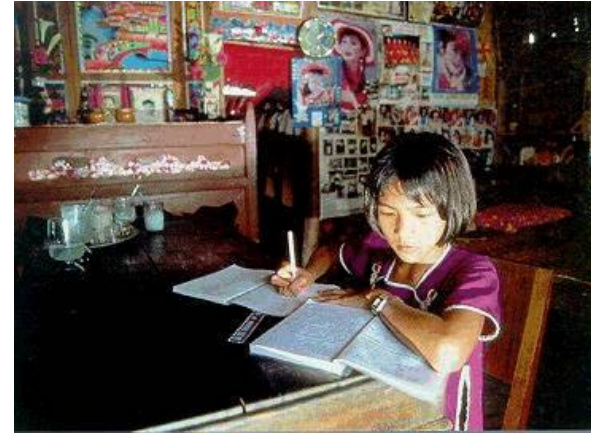
Corp Social Resp.
 Cheap labour
 Loaned engineers
 Differential pricing
 Tax free zones

Building markets
 Ethical Trading
 Joint ventures
 Open Source
 Paying taxes



Conclusion

- information is a driver of change
- new technology is accelerating change
- do not pity the poor: admire them
- share knowledge, build markets
- help make the world a better place



"He who receives an idea from me, receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me."

Thomas Jefferson, 1813

