**New year’s message from INAT President**

I have waited in writing this message for the release of our first INAT book. *Appropriate Technology Manifesto Shifting the Forces of Production to Empower People and Protect the Planet* is now available from Africa World Press - <https://africaworldpressbooks.com/science-technology/>.

What do we mean by ‘shifting the forces of production to empower people and protect the planet’? INAT has consistently defined appropriate technology (AT) as technology that empowers the people and communities most in need. AT must also be environmentally and economically sustainable. Labour is the most significant part of the forces of production. By empowering people, we give them a chance to play a bigger role in the future. When marginalised people and communities are enabled to make change, they will fight hard for equality. Technology, techniques and the skills of workers are also important parts of the forces of production. Communities provided with the technology and skills to meet basic service needs, like clean water, sewage disposal, electricity and transportation, are able to live a more comfortable life. With basic needs met, these communities and their citizens are positioned to demand a more equitable arrangement in production and distribution of all goods and services.

It is important to understand the dialectic in the economic-social reality of human engagement. These forces of production form a dynamic tension with the relations of production.

One relation of production is how workers relate to the means of production, the equipment, machines and facilities they must use every day they work. Do they own and control the equipment and/or machines? How safe is the work environment? Is the interaction with the means of production rewarding or alienating? Appropriate technology implies that the machines, tools, equipment and facilities are safe and conducive to a meaningful work experience.

Another relationship of production to consider is how people relate to each other as they engage in work. The organised production and distribution of goods and services is only possible in human societies. How people relate to each other during production, distribution of services and goods, as well as reproduction is essential to maintaining order. When people do not control the means of production, they are subject to being forced to work in unsafe and unpleasant environments. An oppressive relationship exist where a few people overseeing daily work coerce the majority of those working to endure a hostile and often perilous experience. This control over workers is designed to maximise profits to a handful of wealthy individuals. Profits are also placed above taking care of the environment and assuring resource sustainability. This is reflected in negative technology choices. The relationship among people should increase concern over the welfare of the planet. A shift toward more appropriate technology is the only way to mitigate climate change and assure ecological balance.

The third relation of production addresses the distribution of the profits from the work experience. In most work environments, the means of production are not owned by the workers. Private enterprises are owned by one or more individual capitalists or collectively owned through publicly traded stock. Stock issuing companies may have millions of owners, most with a fraction of a percent of the totals shares. However, it is the capitalists that own large portions of the stock and control the company and therefore the means of production. With gains in appropriate technology, workers have more control of the means of production and are positioned to demand more of the profits. With more of the profits, they can push for more appropriate technology and techniques that will further their empowerment. This is the shift in the forces of production that can eventually lead to full equality.

The *Appropriate Technology Manifesto* (ATM) provides guidelines on how to engage different stakeholders in advancing this much needed technology shift. The ATM categorises stakeholders in groups: 1) educational institutions; 2) government structures; 3) international agencies; 4) non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), and community organisations; 5) the private sector; and 6) engaged citizens. Each group has different interests and must be approached in particular ways to elicit support for the appropriate technology agenda.

**We make our strongest appeal to the engaged citizen. You the reader can make a difference. If you are a member of INAT become more active. If you are new to INAT please join us in this struggle for humanity. Please check out our *Appropriate Technology Manifesto* for ways you can make a difference**