

## Infopreneurs® in service of rural enterprise and economic development: Addressing the critical challenges of scalability and sustainability in support of service extension in developing (rural) economies

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### Abstract

The authors wish to continue sharing a 'view from the practice' in the continued creation and growth of an 'ecosystem' of social (information-focused) entrepreneurs – Infopreneurs® – in rural South African contexts. The paper will share the last two years' work of ongoing research in a Living Lab fashion to understand and address the two critical challenges of *scalability* and *sustainability* in the utilisation of technology (primarily Information and Communication Technologies – ICTs) as enablers of a service extension network in under-serviced rural environments. It will provide an insight into the practical experience gained from work done in *institutionalising support* and *mentoring mechanisms* for community-level (village) change and service agents, i.e. Infopreneurs®. It will provide some lessons learned on the *enhanced sustainability* of the Infopreneurs® network through the '*deepening*' of the *service offering* of the network, i.e. *scope enhancement*, leading to a more extensive value proposition. The objective is to present the results to date as a basis for utilisation by both private and public sector to utilise *alternative, social enterprise mechanisms* to deliver on social capital and services needed by communities at the so-called Bottom-of-the-Pyramid (BoP). The paper covers mainly social change aspects of our ICT4D work. It reports on our efforts to utilise a range of *social development approaches* to ensure the 'uptake' and viability of the utilisation of ICTs to enhance economic and enterprise development at BoP. We also report on our efforts to plan for and monitor *ongoing behavioural changes* (in the area of entrepreneurial thinking and doing) by these young rural Infopreneurs®.

### 1 Introduction

Our work over the last 16 years in the neglected rural contexts of a developing economy has led us to the development and validation of Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) deployment models that seems to go extensively beyond the 'creative capitalism' view of Bill Gates [3] as well as beyond some of the 'integrating perspectives' needed for 'ICT4D 2.0' of Richard Heeks [2] – at least as expressed in their quoted articles. While we are firm proponents of the idea of 'development through enterprise', we have lately been exposed in our Living Lab setting to some of the questions raised by the work of people like Heinz Kimmerle – raising issues such as the 'equality of cultures' and the suggestion that we drop the concept of 'development' and replace it with 'dynamic equilibrium'[1]. Having established a working network system consisting of enterprises, people, tools and packaged processes, we are now faced with the challenges of understanding some of the success and translating it into a scalable solution for rural (non-urban) contexts of developing economies.

The focus of our current work as ICT4D researchers and developers has therefore lately shifted even more extensively from: (1) *researching, developing and deploying technology* tools and applications to: (2) *validating and understanding* an ICT-enabled, sustainable *network of enterprises*. This network is meant

to deliver on some of the (economic) development and trade outcomes required in the Southern African context, i.e. a network of *social enterprises* we call Infopreneurs<sup>®</sup>.

The two years (2008–2010) that we report on in this paper have mainly been shaped by our grappling with the mostly social and economic challenges of the scalability and sustainability of the Infopreneur<sup>®</sup> network. Detailed questions and issues receiving our attention (and our interpretation of them) are:

- Scalability:
  - The ‘how to’ of ownership/custodianship **transfer** (*behavioural change*: self drive, pro-active mindsets) with the retention of *mutual influence* between various spheres and entities in the network
  - The challenges of people and skills **sourcing**
  - Tools and process (technical and business) **packaging and maintenance**
  - **Incubating** support/mentoring/coaching.
- Sustainability:
  - ‘Deepening’ the **value proposition** through *enhanced integration* (scope vs. scale: “A Luta continua!”)
  - Achieving ongoing behavioural changes through **embedding of change agents** simultaneously in communities and enterprise network
  - Forging a new, **sustainable but dynamic equilibrium** – both **within the ecosystem** (network) and **between the network and context** where the network (as an intervention) is deployed.

## 2 Scope of existing work

### 2.1 From technologists to social enterprise developers

Our even further changing emphasis is still an effort to *validate the ‘irrigation system’* enterprise network that can address *both the service gap* between developmental government entities – public sector - and under-served communities and *the trade gap* between so-called 2nd economy, emerging enterprises and formal, 1st economy enterprises – private sector [4] (see Figure 1). Our expertise over the 16 years has been shaped by the following broad groupings of activities (with an indication of the last two years at the end):

**Table 1: Research and Development (R&D) activities and related outcomes**

Activities	Dates	Outcomes
Obtaining an understanding of SMME development practice and processes in a developing economy (SA).	1994-1998 (5 years)	Highlighting the importance of the <b>mediator /champion</b> in a developing community context.
Deploying a national network of public, self-help, touch-screen kiosks in a franchise model in high pedestrian traffic environments.	1995–1996 (2 years)	Highlighting the importance of <b>allocating resources</b> (tools, skills) to all <b>tasks</b> in the ‘information economy’.
Developing and deploying software systems in community-level development facilities (SMME development and multi-purpose community centres).	1999–2004 (5 years)	Highlighting <b>implementation challenges</b> in the technology <b>adoption and ownership</b> spheres.
Developing robust implementation models for sustained (development) service delivery in developing economies.	2004–2008 (4 years)	Highlighting the importance of solid <b>business development</b> approaches in the ICT4D arena.
Validation of a small-scale network (Vhembe district) in a Living Lab fashion.	2008–2010 (2 years)	Challenged to deal with issues of <b>scalability and ‘sustainability’</b> of the intervention.

The context and elements of our current work and model are depicted in the Figures below. This shows:

- Embedding ‘change agents’ – Community Infopreneurs<sup>®</sup> – in rural agriculture and mining-based (labour export) developing communities (see Figure 2) to support the creation and export of

information and knowledge-based ‘assets’ – as well as tangible products – in these communities while acting as locally embedded, supported ‘change managers’ within these contexts (see Figure 1).

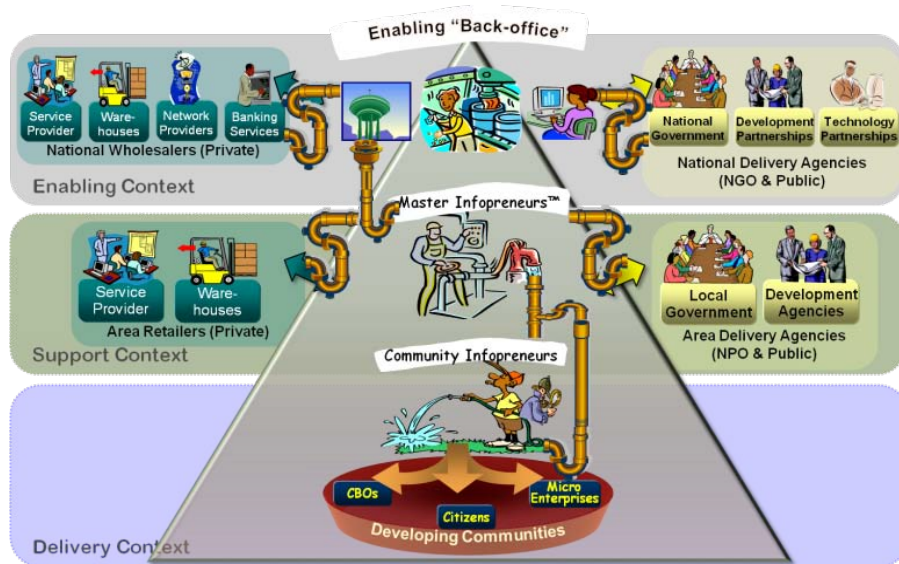


Figure 1: ‘Irrigation’ enterprise network solution

- Infopreneurs® acting as ‘information highway’ bridge builders to initially assist these rural communities to ‘leapfrog’ the industrial society but eventually enabling ‘intelligence-based’ niche production and export (see Figure 2).
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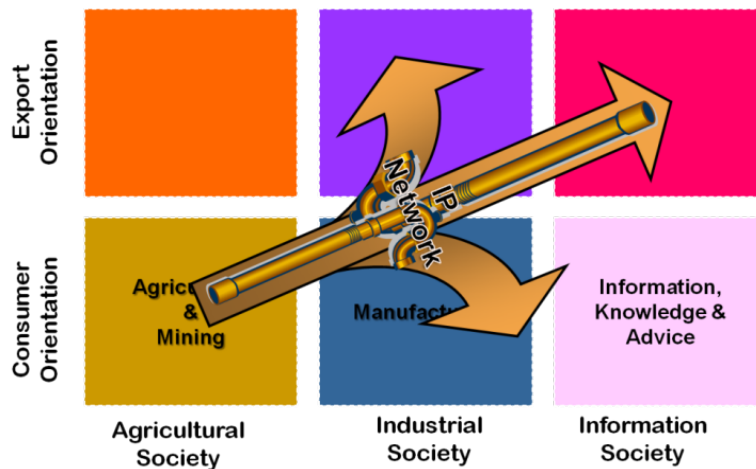
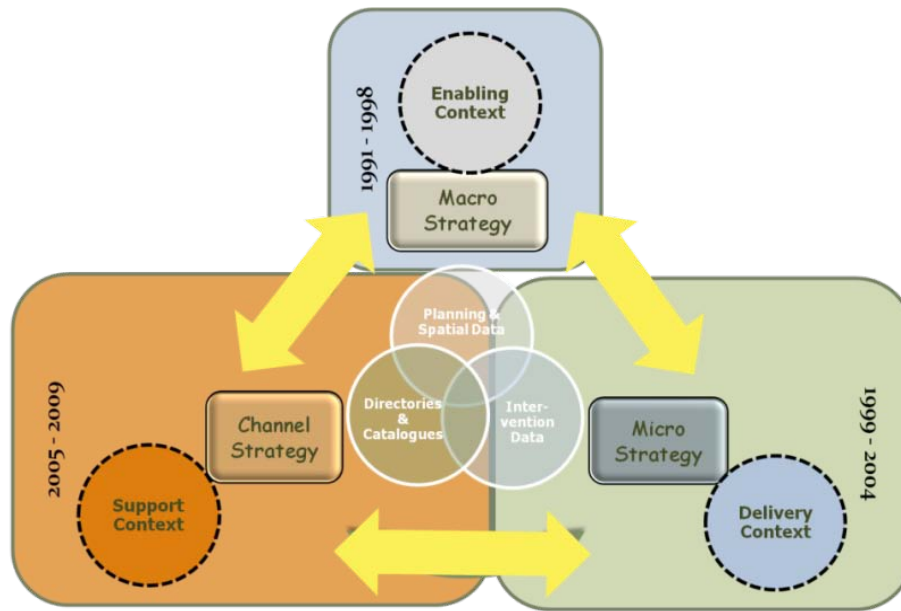


Figure 2: ‘Irrigation’ network as a ‘leapfrogging’ solution

- Infopreneur® network as an ecosystem in a dynamic, sustainable equilibrium. Sharing a common asset – spatialised intervention and resource intelligence – ‘intelligence’ because of *human element of the system* (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Dynamic, sustainable network equilibrium**

## 2.2 Exploring business models for long-term sustainability in a rural Living Lab

A reasonable amount of our time and effort has been spent in exploration for an appropriate institutional/business model to assist us in overcoming some of the legacy of rural neglect leading to (specifically) entrepreneurial skills shortages and reactive mindsets. The model was needed to simultaneously satisfy the need to build on the strong ‘collectiveness’ of rural communities as well as to allow and encourage individual proactive effort.

We have been contemplating the pro’s, con’s and challenges of a conventional franchising model as there has been a strong need for a ‘packaged’ business model that would overcome some of the barriers to entry for young rural entrepreneurs. Some elements of conventional franchise models that have discouraged us are:

- The flow of revenues/royalties between various layers in the network and the resulting financial controls needed for that.
- The very limited revenue streams at the so-called Bottom-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) discourage the sharing of those limited funds with the rest of the network.
- A very prescriptive/restrictive ‘back-office’ will also stifle the innovativeness and dynamics that we would like to see within the Master and Community Infopreneur<sup>®</sup> contexts.

We are therefore adopting (and adapting) a social franchising model that provides for all the support and mutual collaboration mechanisms without profits (or revenues) having to be shared among the various spheres of the network.

The importance of an ‘internal equilibrium’ that ensures equality among the enabling, support and delivery contexts (see Figure 3) has also surfaced over the last few of months. We are putting organisational principles and practices in place that should enhance the ‘ability to influence’ in a ‘flat’ network structure. A lot of emphasis is also placed on situational leadership and we are using the Theory of Constraint (ToR) approach as a tool for designing organisational practices that support this ‘flow of influence’ through the network.

Table 2 gives a summary of some basic organisational principles and practices that have been developed and adopted by all entities in the network.

**Table 2: Infopreneur<sup>®</sup> network organisational principles and practices**

Principles	Practice
<b>Ubuntu business (the network is 'it')</b>	<b>Network acts collectively in all activities (design and implement business processes to be spread over the network)(every activity aims to create and enhance inter-dependency)</b>
Returns on the basis of value addition	<b>'Sweat' to be rewarded justly</b> (with due consideration of the 'place' of optimal value addition)
Local is 'lekker' (and ultimate)	An Infopreneur is a 'local' and the network always <b>engages with end-users through the 'local' Infopreneur</b> (i.e. the network member nearest to the client 'serves' the client)
Social entrepreneurship at all levels	All Infopreneurs' activities to include a clear, balanced consideration for <b>both the entrepreneurial and developmental objectives</b>
Development through enterprise	Primary focus of network's members' activities is to <b>create and sustain development momentum through (community level) enterprise creation and support</b>
<b>No channel, no implementation</b>	<b>No Master Infopreneurs means no Community Infopreneurs</b>
Aware and aligned but not owned	The network plays in the <b>middle ground between private and public sector and aligns itself with both without being owned</b> by any of them
Effective inquiry	The network will use <b>new ways of documenting and sharing knowledge and will be open to new perspectives that will link learning to action</b> - for impact and further learning - no learning for its own sake. It includes ongoing organisational reflection to determine how the network itself is learning, how it is applying its learning and how it is becoming more effective as a result.
ICT follows culture	Our ICT strategy will be responsive to the needs of especially rural communities - it's not about technology, it's about <b>tools that enable people to capture, share and build knowledge</b> .
Primacy of communities	The <b>development agenda of the community becomes the Service Delivery Enterprise's focus</b> through the eyes of the Infopreneurs.

### 3 Research approach

#### 3.1 Action research vs. Living Labs

We have come to the conclusion that (even 'good') action research may still provide a researcher with the ability to remain as an observer from his/her 'ivory tower' – even if it takes place outside the Lab in the real world context.

The advantage of a proper Living Lab approach is that it **embeds both researcher and real world user in the same 'ecosystem'** and forces a trade-off in terms of maturity (technical) and risk reduction over the whole innovation value chain by 'pushing' some of the increased risk associated with massification/commercialisation back into the exploration, development and industrialisation phases. We are confident that the massification outcomes of our current approach will prove the appropriateness of the Living Lab approach to finding sustainable ICT4D deployment options.

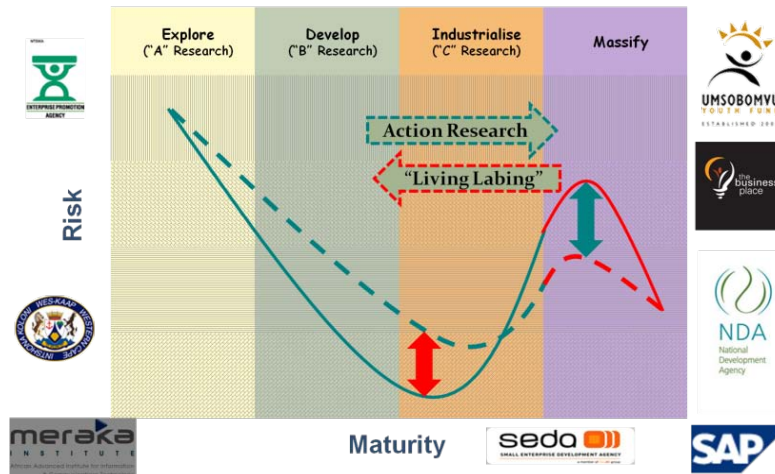


Figure 4: Risk and maturity trade-offs

## 4 Findings and discussion

### 4.1 Enhancing the sustainability of the Infopreneur® network

Experience to date has taught us that the Ubuntu principle ('I am because of others') affects the core of the systemic sustainability of the Infopreneur network in the African context. The value of the whole network has proven to be far greater than the sum of its individual parts. The CSIR's 'enabling back office' (see Figure 1) enables both the Master Infopreneur® and community Infopreneurs®. The Master Infopreneur® supports the community Infopreneur® in a direct, day-to-day fashion. The Makhado community Infopreneurs® organised themselves into a co-operative legal entity that is directly contracted and supported by the Master Infopreneur® and further enabled by the CSIR 'back office'.

### 4.2 Practical example of rural entrepreneurs becoming community Infopreneurs®

We have been working in the Makhado Municipal area for the past year. During this time, we recruited and established a Master Infopreneur® and five Infopreneurs®. The Infopreneurs® and the Master Infopreneur® are locals from the communities and area they are working in. This has proven to be a crucial element of the success to date. No additional (artificial) 'learning' or 'culturisation' is needed to connect them to key people, organisations or culture.

A typical rural 'community' has electricity, some water, gravel streets, a few shops, many spaza shops (very small general retail stores), schools, a few crèches, a traditional authority, a clinic, many churches and maybe a hardware shop. The bigger shops are mostly owned by Indian traders. Cattle, goats and chickens are to be seen everywhere, here and there also donkeys and pigs. Most households have a few buildings of brick and mortar with conventional roofs, as well as a few traditional huts with thatched roofs. Most houses have an outside pit latrine, are fenced and have a vegetable garden with at least a patch of maize. Bi-weekly village meetings are led by the headman. Three of our five Infopreneurs® come from such villages, while two come from bigger, more 'modern' communities. Three Infopreneurs® had small businesses, one was a political organiser and one was a volunteer at a crèche.

From the CSIR's 'back office' side we had to ensure ongoing alignment with the grassroots level work, and every member of the network has been equipped with ICT tools and skills to do their work. Infopreneurs® attended various planning and training sessions during which the necessary social entrepreneurial and additional life skills were instilled.

### 4.3 Infopreneurs® at work

Their first task was to do a survey of all enterprises (formal and informal) in our area (Makhado). The Infopreneurs initially needed a lot of guidance and handholding, but they gradually became more

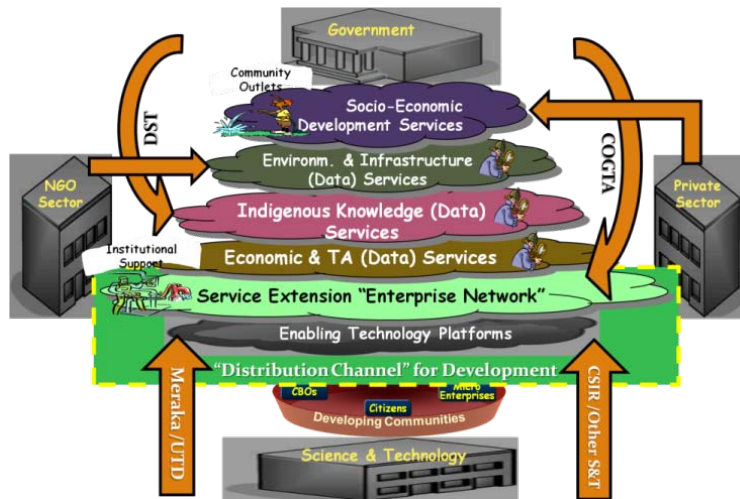
independent. Within a year, they became confident surveyors, engaging communities and traditional authorities and looking for business opportunities.

We now have more than 3 500 spatialised (pinpoint positions) records of enterprises in the Makhado municipal area. This recent and continuously updated data is being sold to the local and district municipality to support local economic development (LED) work and integrated development plans (IDPs) of the various spheres of government. The district municipality has now budgeted for Infopreneurs® to be deployed in the other three local municipalities for the coming financial year (2010/11). Based on this 'data and intelligence asset', and with small changes in focus (and a manageable amount of training/skills development), we will be able to do the following in the communities that we are working in:

- Deliver information on government/public sector activities to grassroots level.
- Be intelligent sensors of sensitive issues at community level.
- Organise meetings at traditional leader and community level.
- Identify needs and facilitate training/skills development at the BoP.
- Provide information about and to SMMEs.
- Survey the status and use of ecosystems and services.
- Distribute information/services from NGOs to the intended beneficiaries.
- Channel information/needs from communities/individuals to NGOs.
- Facilitate research meetings/Living Lab interventions.
- Provide promotional services to SMMEs.
- Validate data sets.
- Gather crime intelligence.
- Facilitate any information-based services or needs at grassroots level.
- Let community voices/needs be heard.
- Develop village tourism.
- Facilitate the placing of volunteers.
- Organise collaborative procurement for SMMEs.
- Sell mobile banking products.

Even after the Vhembe District Municipality had indicated a real commitment to procure reliable data services from the Infopreneur® network, we realised that a 'deepening' of the value proposition of the Infopreneur® network through the 'layering' of a range of data collection and socio-economic extension services on the **same cost infrastructure** – see Figure 5 – would substantially enhance financial sustainability in all spheres of the network. We have therefore been actively practicing our learning to date, i.e. to 'replace scale with scope' in rural, developing contexts [8]. We have further been encouraged by our realisation that this approach is aligned with 'resource productivity' as promoted by Hawken, and Lovins in their publication *Natural Capitalism: Creating the next Industrial Revolution* with specific application to the **human resources** in our network (see especially Chapter 14: Human Capitalism [9]). At its simplest, increasing resource productivity means obtaining the same amount of utility or use from a product or **process** while using/wasting less material and energy.

This rapidly expanding, densely woven network of intelligence then becomes perfectly positioned to negotiate a more sustainable, dynamic equilibrium in the global village as it enables the dynamic shifting of emphasis and focus – internally as well as externally – to respond to new needs and opportunities.



**Figure 5: Enhancing the network value proposition**

The Makhado Infopreneur® network has, since the above realisation, been contracted to do an Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) survey for the Department of Science and Technology (DST). They are gaining amazing insights into the activities and value of the indigenous knowledge holders in ‘ordinary’ rural communities. The Infopreneurs® now aim to promote many of the products and services from these knowledge holders/communities to other communities and to more mainstream shops for export and village tourism activities. This IKS survey also required a new approach and skills: they needed to become attentive listeners, skilled videographers and good writers. This contract also enabled us to get first-hand experience of the effect (and requirements) of a ‘deepening’ of the service offering of the network. We were forced to become more efficient and respond much faster to (ad hoc) skilling interventions and to use local (in-town) skills development agents.

Because of our continued community presence and an extensive basis of trust that has been developed over the year, we continue to uncover a lot more needs in these communities. Examples are:

- A group in one area asked us to facilitate training for home-based care workers.
- Another community asked us to help them to create a business plan for their take-over of a farm they received as land claimants.
- Traditional leaders want us to convey their wishes and fears to the local municipality.
- In all communities we received numerous enquiries and applications for learnerships and skills development programmes.
- Banking needs: the Infopreneurs® are already registered as M-Pesa agents – a mobile money service from Vodacom to be launched in September 2010.
- To qualify to tender for government contracts, we facilitate BBBEE verification for small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs).
- SMMEs want us to facilitate collaborative procurement from wholesalers and manufacturers.
- Municipal need for reliable data: the Vhembe District Municipality has contracted with us the roll-out of Infopreneurs® in three additional local municipalities.
- The need to survey physical infrastructure such as schools, soccer fields, bore holes, etc.
- The University of Venda’s Rural Development Department is interested in our data on SMMEs.
- The Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) wants ‘a-view-from-the-ground’ information about tribal authorities and the areas under the jurisdiction of these traditional leaders.
- We included market research in our questionnaires about the top ten brands in SA.
- Small farmers want us to find markets for their produce.



#### 4.4 Looking forward

All these needs and opportunities came about with only five Infopreneurs® and a Master Infopreneur® in one local municipality in one year. Imagine covering about 262 municipalities in South Africa – and this small rural network becomes THE NETWORK to negotiate a more sustainable, dynamic equilibrium in the global village.

This NETWORK could generate thousands of requests, goods and services that will be able to sustain it. Focusing on scope rather than scale means that an Infopreneur® should become a jack of all trades. This implies intensive training in many fields. The core will always be enterprise knowledge adapted to various types of enterprises.

Basic knowledge of ICT tools, business and surveys enabled the Makhado Infopreneurs® to do two surveys in a year and to establish a contract for three other local municipalities. They will now be further mentored and coached to function independently as a co-operative business using the base of potential customers they surveyed – a truly bottom-up approach to rural development! All of this is being packaged in a micro-franchise/social franchise model that makes the scaling up of the network much easier.

#### 5 Managing the network towards a sustainable, dynamic equilibrium

The CSIR's ultimate objective is to have a positive effect on the economy, society and environment, improving the quality of life of all our people. The CSIR's mandate therefore dictates that impact assessment forms a central part of the organisation's planning. The CSIR Impact Assessment Strategic Framework [6] proposes developing and implementing an impact assessment system that incorporates aspects of the full innovation value chain dealing with the elements of input, process, output, outcomes and impact.

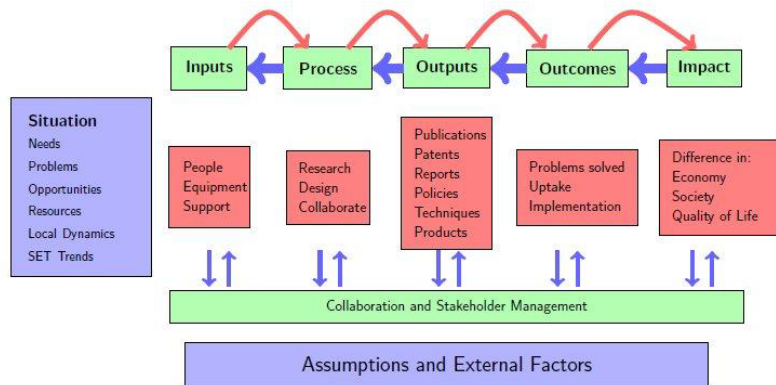


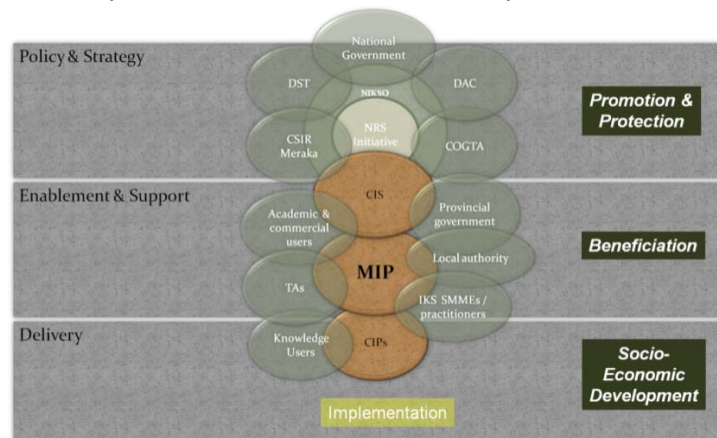
Figure 5: CSIR Impact Assessment Logic Model

In keeping with the CSIR's focus on impact, progress in the initiative is structured according to a monitoring and evaluation *chain of influence* from planning, to activity, to output, to outcome, to impact. The Outcome Mapping framework was introduced at the start of the current phase of our work, first to deal with the 'visioning' of the National Recordal System (NRS) project and what it really hopes to achieve. In the process, it became clear that distinctions need to be made between what can be achieved at the outset, in a year or two and later. Particular attention was paid to the roadmap and the destination of how the initiative hopes to change the face of rural development through ICT-enabled service delivery and how lives will be changed. The focus therefore lay beyond planning, activity and outputs to deal with the key issues of outcomes and impact.

Smutylo [7] outlines the Outcome Mapping approach of viewing **outcomes** as **behavioural change**." In developing Outcome Mapping, IDRC's Evaluation Unit has attempted to re-interpret the concept of results

as it relates to development initiatives. We focus on one important, yet neglected, kind of result which we call (in the language of the logical framework) outcomes. We see outcomes as desired changes that indicate progress towards large-scale development goals. These are goals towards which a project can contribute and which depend on the contributions of other actors and may be influenced by unexpected and/or uncontrollable factors.”

In the Infopreneur<sup>®</sup> network initiative, progress towards behavioural change outcomes depends on the relationships established between the main role players involving the CSIR enabling ‘back office’ (CIS), Master Infopreneurs (MIPs) and community Infopreneurs (CIPs), the three operational spheres they represent and how these relationships are extended to the primary clients of the network. To map the relationship structure, different perspectives had to be used to set behavioural change goals (Outcome Challenges) for each of the stakeholders (Boundary Partners): those individuals, groups and organisations with whom the network interacts directly and with whom the network anticipates opportunities for influence. Outcome Challenges were underpinned by ladders of progression describing steps of change (Progress Markers) from the current situation (Expect to see) to later (Like to see) to the end (Love to see). Strategies to influence changes in behaviour were linked to each of the key Progress Markers. The relationships between actors, spheres of influence and broad responsibilities are depicted in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Boundary Partner value chain**

In our efforts to utilise a range of social development approaches to ensure the ‘uptake’ and viability of the ICTs to enhance economic and enterprise development at the BoP, the Outcome Mapping approach revealed that MIPs were expected to “Root, promote and establish themselves as the lead delivery entities to discover, catalogue and use local information for socio-economic development.” The CIPs in turn were responsible to “become sustainable, confident, innovative, reliable, self-sufficient and well-liked small enterprises.” IP network customers had to “become champions of the IP network and the concept of enterprise for development.”

Outcome Challenges are underpinned by purposeful strategies, including showing understanding, actively engaging, providing support, pursuing opportunities, creating institutional frameworks and establishing local communities of practice. All participants are responsible for a core set of activities in their sphere of influence and receive ongoing coaching and mentoring to create the space to expand actions into new areas, generate new ideas, test these and turn them into new initiatives. Ongoing technical, process and business support is the key to encourage participants to take control of the process, and empower themselves through ownership of new ideas and new products. The evidence for this progress can be seen in behavioural change and the gradual strengthening of community ownership of the initiative.

## 6 Conclusions

The monitoring of intentions and influence and the **observed changes in behaviour** along a ladder of progression forms the basis for exploring the evaluation issues of tracking the growth of a sustainable ecosystem of social (information) entrepreneurs and users. It provides us with a mechanism to see how the transferring of ownership of parts of the ecosystem to local social entrepreneurs (or MIPs) is progressing; whether there is a 'deepening' of the service offering; if the potential for scope enhancement is being exploited; and if the creating of a more extensive value proposition is possible.

We continue using the Martin & Osberg approach to define social entrepreneurship as having the following three components:

“(1) identifying a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium that causes the exclusion, marginalisation, or suffering of a segment of humanity that lacks the financial means or political clout to achieve any transformative benefit on its own;

(2) identifying an opportunity in this unjust equilibrium, developing a social value proposition, and bringing to bear inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude, thereby challenging the stable state's hegemony; and

(3) forging a new, stable **but dynamic and adaptive** (authors' addition) equilibrium that releases trapped potential or alleviates the suffering of the targeted group, and through imitation and the creation of a stable ecosystem around the new equilibrium ensuring a better future for the targeted group and even society at large.” [5].

It is our contention (at this point in time, at least) that the 'new equilibrium' can only be 'stable' and sustainable (in the long term) if it stays **dynamic and adaptive** at the same time – responding to influences within the network as well as between the network and its clients at all levels. The importance of visualising and managing the **dynamic and adaptive equilibrium** has been highlighted through our very recent work (see Figure 7). We have furthermore found the OM approach particularly suited to the main issues of tracking the changing behaviours (and mindsets) of the network members and its clients over time, defining success in terms of transfer of ownership of the socio-economic development potential of the network and ultimately evaluating the growth in confidence of a new generation of ICT-enabled social entrepreneurs.

It is our further contention that confining the equilibrium to the infrastructure and physical assets plays a zero sum game where goods and even processes are transferred to new owners, but no value is added and no lives are changed, perpetuating the unjust equilibrium caused by many other development projects. The equilibrium will remain dynamic and adaptive as long as attention is focused on the **people** partners, their relationships and the capacity that is being built in the true Living Lab fashion that our NETWORK advocates.

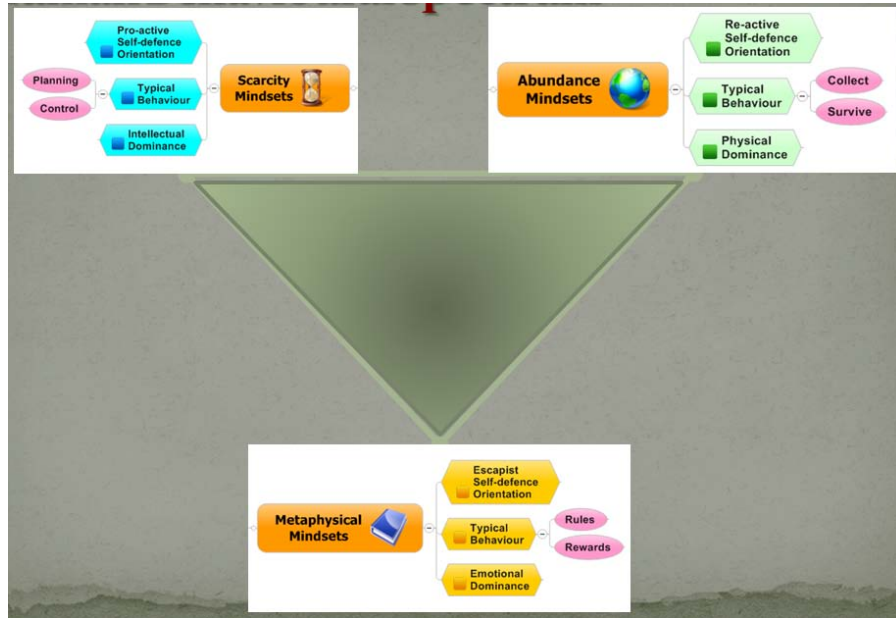


Figure 7: Dynamic equilibrium macro context

### Acknowledgment

We would like to acknowledge the patience and support of our colleagues in both the Meraka Institute and the broader CSIR while we have been travelling along a 'rural path' where the science and technology outcomes are not always clear and predictable.

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**Johann (Rensie) van Rensburg** is a Senior Project Manager at the CSIR Meraka Institute and has been active in the ICT for Development arena for 16 years now. He has contributed the introductory material as well as overviews of the work done to date and the broad role of Master Infopreneurs® (as social

entrepreneurs), as 'pumping stations' for the establishment and growth of localised community Infopreneur® networks in rural communities.

**Braam Cronje** is the Master Infopreneur® in the Vhembe District of Limpopo where he has been in business for the past 20 years. He has contributed towards the recruitment and establishment of Infopreneurs® in the Makhado Local Municipality for the past year. For the past 12 years, he has been deploying and managing phone shops all over the Vhembe district and has come to know the area and indigenous cultures very well. He has contributed to the experience to date of the Infopreneur® network in Vhembe.

**Uys du Buisson** runs a consulting company focusing on ICT4D and economic development strategies for the CSIR and government initiatives. His focus in the past few years has been on the integration of monitoring and evaluation frameworks into project implementation actions, with a particular emphasis on the Outcome Mapping methodology – his specific contribution to this paper as well.