SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Truth About Disruptive Development

The West shouldn't create solutions to problems we don't understand using fashionable mobile technologies.

SHARE   COMMENT   PRINT   ORDER REPRINTS

By Ken Banks | Jan. 16, 2013

Ten years ago, I was preparing for my first contribution to mobile technology—the result of two years of work that would lead to the development of a conservation service called wildlive!, and which would mark the release of one of the earliest reports on the application of mobile technology in conservation and development. A lot has happened since then. There's been an explosive interest and

Mobile users in developing countries are increasingly using apps and services developed in-country. (Photo by Ken Banks)

excitement—and, yes, hype—in mobile, and a sense that the technology can be the savior of, well, everything.

Back in 2003, you'd be able to fit everyone working in mobile for development (m4d) into a small cafe. Today you'd need at least a football stadium. m4d—and its big brother, ICT4D (information communication technologies for development)—have become big business. Although I didn't need more proof of mobile's supreme status in development, last month I

2. The same projects surface over and over again as proof that mobile works.

3. Mobile is still largely seen as a solution, not a tool.

4. It's up to the developed world to get mobile working for the poor.

5. The top-down mindset is alive and well.

Suffice to say, all of these conclusions troubled me as I sat on the train home.

I've been thinking for some time about the future of m4d, and how far we've come over the past decade. I've written frequently about the opportunities mobile technology offers the development community and my fears that we may end up missing a golden opportunity. I've long been a champion of platforms and of understanding how we might build tools for people to take and deploy on their own terms. Yes, we should provide local entrepreneurs and grassroots nonprofits with tools—and where appropriate and requested, expertise—but we shouldn't develop solutions to problems we don't understand. We shouldn't take ownership of a problem that isn't ours, and we certainly shouldn't build "solutions" from thousands of miles away and then jump on a plane in search of a home for them.

But this is still, on the whole, what seems to be happening. And this, I'm beginning to believe, is rapidly becoming ICT4D's inconvenient truth.

A fulfilled future for ICT4D (of which m4d is an increasingly dominant part) is not the one I see playing out today. Its future is not in the hands of Western corporations or international NGOs meeting in high profile gatherings, and it's not in American and European education establishments that busily train computer scientists and business graduates to fix the problems of "others."

The whole development agenda is shifting. I predict we will see a major disconnect between what "we" think needs to be done, and what those closest to the problems think needs to be done. Call it disruptive development, if you like. As I told the *UK Guardian* in a December 2012 interview, "The rise of homegrown solutions to development problems will be most crucial in future. That means African software developers increasingly designing and developing solutions to African problems, many of which have previously been tackled by outsiders. This, I think, will be the biggest change in how development is 'done.'"

I'm not the only person saying this. Many working at the intersection of African development and technology have been making the same argument for some time. The real change, and the big difference, is that this transition is *finally* happening. ICT4D is changing, and the balance of power is changing with it.

FrontlineSMS, a free, open source software I developed that has been used by developing world NGOs to distribute and collect information via text messages, is, I believe, part of this story. It started with field research in South Africa and the idea that users should be empowered to develop solutions to their own problems, if they so wish. There are many reasons why FrontlineSMS continues to work. One primary one is the decision of the new management team to shift software development to Nairobi, allowing us to tap into a rich vein of local developer and user talent. But fundamentally, FrontlineSMS's platform continues to resonate with innovators, entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and problem owners across the developing world because it allows them to problem solve locally and effectively.

This local context is becoming increasingly powerful—as university students across Africa graduate with computer science and business management degrees; as innovation hubs spring up across the continent meeting a demand for places to meet, work, and network with like-minded problem solvers and entrepreneurs; and as investors launch funds that show they're starting to take young African tech startups seriously.

This activity hasn't escaped big business. Google, IBM, Microsoft, Nokia, Hewlett Packard, and Samsung have been opening offices across the continent, snapping up much of the talent in the process (ironically often at the expense—and despair—of local NGOs). But while technology businesses take note and develop local capacity that enables them to develop more appropriate local solutions, the broader development "community" seems trapped in an older mindset of technology transfer.

Technology transfer, of course, is big business—there's no shortage of donor money out there for projects that seek to implement the latest and greatest proven Western innovations in a development context, and there are tens of thousands of jobs that keep the whole machine running. A lot has to change if the development community is to face these new realities, yet it's looking more likely that the destiny of the discipline lies in the hands of the very people it originally set out to help.

So, if the future of ICT4D is not university students, NGOs, or business graduates devising solutions in labs and hubs thousands of miles away from their intended users, what is it?

Here is my prediction: Development is at a watershed moment, powered by accessible and affordable liberating technologies and an emerging army of determined, local talent. This local talent is gradually acquiring the skills, resources, and support it needs to take back ownership of many of its problems—problems of which it never took original ownership because those skills and resources were not available. Well, now they are.

The ICT4D community—educational establishments, donors, and technologists, among them—need to collectively recognize that it needs to adjust to this new reality, and work with technologists, entrepreneurs, and grassroots nonprofits across the developing world to accelerate what has become an inevitable shift. Or it can continue along its present path, and become increasingly irrelevant. "Innovate or die" doesn't just apply to the technologies plied by the ICT4D community. It applies to the ICT4D community itself.

Ken Banks (@kiwanja), founder of kiwanja.net and FrontlineSMS, devotes himself to the application of mobile technology for positive social and environmental change in the developing world. He has worked at the intersection of technology, anthropology, conservation, and development for the past 20 years and, during that time, has lived and worked across the African continent. He is a PopTech Fellow, a Tech Awards Laureate, an Ashoka Fellow, and a National Geographic Emerging Explorer, and has been internationally recognized for his technology-based work. His latest project, Means of Exchange, helps reconnect communities with local business, local resources, and each other.

Tags

Africa, Conference, International Development, Mobile Technology, Open Source, Social Entrepreneurship

COMMENTS

BY Daryl Edwards

ON January 17, 2013 03:54 PM

Loved the article, and your argument makes a lot of sense. In a prior life I did a lot of international for-profit engineering work and the same principles applied: the problem owner knows the problem best and a push-based design process usually led to creation of the wrong "solution". It was always more efficient to involve the customer / problem-owner from from the start.

So all that said, given all the interest and resources from the west, what do you think the ideal role is? What should developed-world developers interested in international development be doing?

BY J. Seamus ("Jim") Boylson

ON January 17, 2013 07:55 PM

As a half-century experienced practitioner, of basic Community Economic Development as well as specialized Applied Appropriate Technology, I can also "amen" this most basic thesis in referenced article.

It would seem that this approach is SO self-evident, others might be inclined to respond: "Well, DUH!; what else is new". But as CED & related Human/Physical Development practitioners can tell you (ad nauseaum), even the most sophisticated of our national & international humanitarian aid/assistance providers are constantly violating - or, at least ignoring - this very fundamental & practical concept.

And this is NOT "old news": Just in the past few years, UN & independent field studies results are pointing this out, with alarming stats to back up these findings. E.g., in '08 a joint WHO-UNICEF field study found that some 40% of the "treated/assumed 'potable' water" sitting in vessels on dining tables & in offices to be "seriously re-infected"; another field study released in 2010 found that nearly 1/2 of all the many new community water treatment/dispensing stations were being abandoned - often within a short time after going into service - because their basic designs made them un-sustainable by their recipients; a more recent study of India's annual produce harvest found it was totally losing 40% due solely to early spoilage. The resulting waste - of both material & human resources (i.e., just imagine, for a moment, the number of hungry/malnourished people that 40% of fresh produce, especially in a largely vegetarian diet society, could be serving!) is mind boggling. And the arrogance of assumed "know all" from experience, when alternative approaches are even suggested, is a pretty good indication that this articles basic premise may NOT be all that apparent, after all.

Involvement of problem-facing recipients - on a total & from the outset integrated basis - brings a whole new dimension of "practical" judgement & wisdom to problem solving.

Indigenous peoples don't have to have formal education to know what's best for them; living as close as they do to their "Mother Earth" brings forth a lot of just plain good sense wisdom & practicality that even those with many degrees/much experience can learn from!

BY Ben Best

ON January 17, 2013 08:56 PM

While I agree with a majority of the article it was funny to hear the author lamenting the irony of the private sector snapping up talent from the NGO sector. NGOs have been "snapping up" talent from the government for years due to higher salaries subsidized by development dollars. Good for them to get a taste of their own medicine as NGOs are not a sustainable employment or force for development. That said governments are getting left further behind which is a real issue to address for long term development, not the loss of talent from the false employment market that is the development sector.

BY Joop Rubens

ON January 17, 2013 08:59 PM

Thanks for this article. I worked on ICT4d over 10 years ago now, in many African countries. Although I strongly believe in participatory development and struggled with our approach, I was forced to admit a few times that we managed to bring useful and functional Internet learning centers (as they used to be called) to rural schools. The costs however, were huge and those funds would have been much better spent if the local ownership of these schools had been appropriately respected and valued. I used to argue that "our projects" would never lead to real change unless they were led and initiated by the people, but more so, unless Africa developed its own hardware and software. Thanks again for your work and article.

BY Dan Driscoll

ON January 17, 2013 09:51 PM

As a founder of an online start-up based out of Fez, Morocco, I couldn't agree with this article more. The shift from outsiders to local programming talent is sorely needed to not only create sustainable solutions in the international development sphere but to also drive local, profitable businesses that fulfill the needs of a developing country's average citizen. However, while the rising tide is exciting to witness, I still think the vast majority of the developing

world is still behind such a watershed moment.

In Morocco for example, programmers are rare, and finding talent with adequate skills is even more rare (more so than developed countries, obviously). When programming talent is found in Morocco, the programmer, while bright, is likely to have outdated skills. There are many reasons for this. Common causes can be the result of poor CS education or the frequent fact that a programmer often lacks the personal/family contacts in firms that hire.

In such situations, a Moroccan programmer cannot easily turn to freelance to build skills because access to trusted payment solutions that open up rich opportunities such as Odesk or Elance remain almost impossible. With no stable job, no chance to freelance, the programmer turns to a traditional office job—if they can find one. Meanwhile, their skills deteriorate further making it that much harder to get back in the market later in their career.

As a result, even if an agency wanted to source local talent the local market may not have the skills required for the task at hand. Sadly, they are more than likely left with no choice but to turn elsewhere to find the talent they need. This isn't exclusive to Morocco; I have experienced and witnessed similar situations in other countries as well, such as Ghana, and know this challenge afflicts many others.

If a truly watershed moment is to truly be celebrated, much more needs to be done to encourage the growth and development of local programming talent. After struggling to find local programming talent in Morocco for my social enterprise Anou, I decided to found MarocHack. MarocHack is a Moroccan-based web development team that hires unemployed and underemployed youth developers and designers and provides them with coaching, training, and most importantly, access to real-world clients and projects so they can build their design and programming skills. Once they demonstrate a level of competency in a range of skills, we support them to open their own independent businesses on leading freelance sites. With skills and money in their pocket, MarocHack programmers gain the creative bandwidth and freedom to build the solutions that their communities truly need.

Micro level solutions like MarocHack are not the only solution. On a macro level, governments should encourage the access and growth of payment systems like Paypal and others so freelancing opportunities can grow. Only if more steps like these are taken will we be able to fully accelerate the inevitable shift that Ken so clearly describes.

Dan Driscoll
CEO/Founder of Anou

BY Amy Watson

ON January 17, 2013 11:06 PM

As someone who has spent 10 months working in a low income private school in Hyderabad, India, and observing the multitude of external development practitioners presenting mobile 'solution' technologies to the school, I too, could not agree more with the words of this article.

It is true that the inability to deliver high quality education to the poor in India is rooted (at least in part) in the fact that teachers are poorly trained and education curriculums poorly developed, and that there is POTENTIAL to fill this gap with M4D and ICT4D. However, my experience is that the designers of these solutions have not taken the time and energy to really understand how the day-to-day events in schools and the cultural and social aspects of a very stratified society have a dramatic effect on the success (or failure) of these technology programmes.

There seems to be an assumption that as long as 1) there is basic infrastructure in a school and teachers who can be used as facilitators, and 2) the product in question is good quality, there will be no reason why school students will not learn better. Unfortunately this is simply not the case for a multitude of reasons.

Here are some I have observed:

- The fact that many schools have extensive power cuts each day means devices are often without charge and cannot function, so classes which use these devices happen only sporadically.
- "Smart classes" (as they are known in India) are built without a clear idea of whether they are going to replace the entire school curriculum, or simply supplement it. Anyone who has visited an Indian school will have noticed the

enormous syllabus textbooks each teacher is required to work through in order to prepare students for the frequent 'unit tests'. Many schools have little more than half hour breaks in the day and run virtually back to back lessons from 8 in the morning until 5 in the afternoon (extra tuitions to follow), six days per week. It is very unclear when exactly these techno classes are supposed to fit in to the school day.

- Mobile devices are often considered too 'precious and expensive' to be put in the hands of children (and sometimes even teachers) and so may remain locked in the school management cupboard at all time for protection, sometimes even in the family home of the school leaders.

- There is almost always inadequate training with teachers on how to use equipment. Training (if it even happens) is often conducted in English, rather than the teachers first language, and in a pride oriented culture, no teachers will ever admit to not understanding what they are told.

- Teachers in these communities are unlikely to have had much previous experience using any kinds of technology. The fact that children often pick up how to use the technology devices faster than the teachers is demeaning and demotivating.

- Schools often buy into these technologies as advertment to parents rather than a genuine desire to want to utilise them in the school itself. Other than on school open days and exhibitions devices remain switched off and gathering dust.

I do believe there is space for mobile and ICT techonology solutions to support developing education in low income communities, but it will be when, and only when, they are designed, developed and implemented with: 1) a genuine understanding of local community culture, context of school infrastructure and teacher abilities, 2) provision of extensive and appropriate training, technical support and 'check ups', and finally 3) a recognition of the fact that one size doesn't fit all.

Amy Watson
Field Coordinator, IDEX Fellowship in Social Enterprise
Bangalore India

BY kiwanja

ON January 18, 2013 02:15 AM

Thanks for your comments, everyone. In response:

@Daryl - I think there are enough problems in the 'developed' world to be solved, so perhaps a little more of the attention should be focused on problems in our own back yard. Other areas where we might be able to start a shift would be to outsource some of our idea development to teams in the developing world (so, for example, if someone still insists on building an app for Africa when they're based in America, that they use African software developers to write it).

@Jim - I agree that is really is so obvious that people might think that. One of the really frustrating things I've found over the years is that ICT4D always says the right things - at conferences we hear "put the user first", "local empowerment", "appropriate technology" and so on, yet when you look at what they actually DO - at their PROCESS - it's almost always the entire opposite. Many people *think* it's being done appropriately because that's what we constantly hear.

@Ben - Very good point. I only gave a passing mention about this - it's a much deeper conversation. The problem relates to local NGOs as much as international ones, and if local NGOs (i.e. locally established and run) struggle to find good staff then that's obviously going to be detrimental to their own social change work.

@Joop - As more and more local companies and organisations see the need for these kinds of centres and services, more and more will begin to provide them. There are almost always business opportunities with Internet Cafe's (and the like), and it's a win-win if local companies get in on the act. Of course, Internet Cafe's have a poor track record in many developing countries, likely often to do with the challenges you raise.

@Dan - Really good to hear about your work in Morocco. This is precisely the kind of activity that's needed. I agree it's not an even playing field, and some countries are ahead of others. Why some manage to leap forward technologically

(both in hardware, software and human resources terms) while others remain stagnant is a big subject. A good friend wrote this recently, which you may find of interest:

http://whiteafrican.com/2012/11/29/community-connectedness-as-a-competitive-advantage/

@Amy - Thanks for your insight here. I couldn't agree more with what you say. Thanks for sharing those experiences in India.

BY Dan Driscoll

ON January 18, 2013 05:15 PM

Hi Ken,

Thanks for taking the time to respond to all of our comments. I thought the blog entry was fascinating—thank you for sharing it with me. Keep up the amazing work.

Dan

BY kiwanja

ON January 19, 2013 03:11 AM

@Dan - Thanks. You, too!

BY Ben Best

ON January 19, 2013 06:53 AM

@Ken - thanks for the response! And totally agreed, I was definitely focusing too much on the 'bidding on development projects to make money' class of NGOs over the 'committed to social change' NGOs which are the tiny minority where I live. We definitely need to develop better language to separate these two types of organizations!

BY Joel Selanikio

ON January 28, 2013 05:55 AM

As always, an excellent observation by Ken. FrontlineSMS was an inspiration for us at DataDyne as we were developing our Magpi mobile data collection system (www.magpi.com, formerly EpiSurveyor) because FrontlineSMS allows the people on the ground—who understand what's happening much better than we do, or what anyone in Geneva or London does—to implement their own solutions.

Magpi does the same for mobile data collection, allowing anyone to implement mobile data collection systems very quickly with no need for big budgets or external tech consultants.

What is not really addressed in this article is that most rich-country organizations providing top-down technology "assistance" do so for a reason: they make a lot of money doing it. They have a huge financial incentive to travel to countries and "implement solutions"—they get paid less (or nothing) if they sit at home in the US or Europe.

Contrast that with Schmidt's own Google products like Gmail and Google Maps: freely available, require no consultants or installation. Why are they set up that way? Because Google doesn't make it's money from "boots on the ground" consulting.

Until we begin to openly DISCUSS the financial incentives and other vested interests that drive the situation, we cannot begin to go far enough in changing it.

BY kiwanja

ON January 28, 2013 07:16 PM

@Joel - Thanks for posting your comment, and congratulations on all of the work you do at DataDyne. I very briefly touched on the "big business" of technology transfer and the thousands of jobs it supports, but you're quite right to dig

into it further. What is slowly happening in ICT4D is typical in development more broadly - the perpetuation of a system and process that creates and continues dependency. There really is little need for it any more. The ICT4D community does have to ask itself some serious questions. I just wonder if those working within it will.

BY TJLeach

ON January 29, 2013 06:45 AM

Empathy! That is what is required to truly make ICT4D be disruptive. ICT4D is a tool in the right hands can make a difference. The technology provider has to have empathy to develop tools that serve the population. I've worked in IT for over 20 years and I've seen plenty of over engineering and just plane bad solutions and what I've learned or maybe it's a part of my nature is to truly put your customer needs first and not what you think would be best. Secondly a vision is required that will drive the tool provider too fixated on change. It can happen!! Call me an optimist. 🅰🄰

BY Janet Gunter

ON January 30, 2013 09:26 AM

Some of my favorite ICT projects in this space have come up exactly as Ken describes. And they all struggle to varying degrees to find appropriate investment/partnerships. Like everywhere else, business models for this kind of innovation take time to refine. So I applaud Ken's call to donors, technologists and educational institutions to help create the space for these initiatives to thrive, or simply step out of the way.

But just because an initiative arises geographically closer to "the problem" does not mean it will avoid the top-down traps. Yesterday's ICT4D meetup in London was criticized (I think somewhat unfairly but space for criticism is very important) for featuring "white", "colonial" and "top down" approaches. While some power imbalances are more glaring, and perhaps more troubling due to histories - and recent histories!, they exist in many forms, everywhere. And a local ICT community (often elite) can exhibit some of the same empathy gaps and lack of awareness of power imbalances that these globally "top down" projects do. I'm not saying always, but they can.

Critical consciousness needs to be supported at every level. And not just focused on social/economic dynamics, but also a critical consciousness about resources, transparency and regulatory frameworks that determine how we communicate. (But obviously this is not in everybody's interest…)

BY kiwanja

ON January 30, 2013 12:08 PM

@TJ - Empathy is certainly an important element. There's certainly a lot more in it than just the technology - how it is developed, approached and implemented are crucial, as is the motivation behind it being developed in the first place. Knowing your customer is certainly a key element, but the problem is many people in ICT4D don't.

@Janet - Thanks for your tweets and for taking the time to post your thoughts. I agree with pretty-much all that you say, and agree that just because a solution is developed 'closer to the problem' doesn't mean it still won't be top-down. There are ethical aspects just as much as technical ones in this debate, and things will take time to change. The problem, as Joel says in his comment, many people are making pretty good livings off the way things are now. Change won't be easy, and accepting change even less so.

BY Niti Bhan

ON January 30, 2013 12:23 PM

After a quick Twitter interaction, I find myself having agreed to write a caveat to this post.

So I'll start by taking a step back to ask myself what aspects of his proposed points make me hesitate with a second thought before whole heartedly supporting the whole concept, unargued?

My immersion in the so called "prepaid economy" or the prevalent purchasing patterns in the informal economy's lower income demographic, over the past 5 years, helps me to see some holes in Banks' theory.

What international ICT4D mega million bucks type of initiatives do is in fact a very expensive and elaborate song and dance show around your little developer community, screaming to be heard over the babelfish noise of the global internetworked web of humanity.

That offers a kick start that is not only much needed but about all that is really needed. The problem becomes when increased competition from more experienced entrepreneurs start arriving as expats funded by these socially patient backers.

The other aspect that bothers me is that Banks' title should be rewritten as The Truth About Disruptive Development in the Digital Village, thus taking into consideration the key constraint and differentiator that this situation may only apply to ICT and not, say for example, agriculture.

So what is the compromise outcome that well meaning global development funding and independent, indigenous innovators can arrive at?

Open lavish offices locally and share a taste of the global mainstream professional culture with up and comers across selected developing nations. It went a long way in changing corporate India's attitude towards women professionals. I saw it in 1990 at OMC Computers Ltd and then the dramatic difference at Hewlett Packard India in 1996.

This conversation really needs to be taken up further by more people sharing their personal experiences with the table.

BY Scott Smith

ON February 1, 2013 06:52 AM

Ken, I think you are heading in the right direction when you point to needs closer to home. I fear there is a certain appeal among the rush of those newer to social innovation to doing development work in lower income markets that doesn't seem to attach to development of local communities. The unfortunate irony is that, while the ICT4D boom has been going on in the global south, large parts of the northern hemisphere have seen an abject lack of investment and attention to problems at home, just as large segments of the population are falling into need.

However, it isn't wholly about a question of the direction of flow (eg North to South, bottom-up) but how to set up platforms and opportunities that allow for a freer flow of ideas to wherever needed, then appropriate funding mechanisms that can support at a local scale.

Some great ideas were put forward in IFTF's recent Connected CItizens forecasting exercise. I'd urge a look. http://blog.connected-citizens.org/ . No region or situation was specified, but stacks of great ideas came out of this work that could be applicable in a wide range of locations and situations. Hopefully we can find ways to make local area redevelopment as sexy as spending a few months abroad. ICT4Redev.

BY kiwanja

ON February 2, 2013 12:00 AM

@Niti - Thanks, as always, for sharing your unique insight and for challenging some of my assumptions (and title) through your comment and your own post:

http://www.nitibhan.com/2013/01/the-truth-about-disruptive-development.html

I agree that all the "song and dance" can give things a kick start, and certainly the constant focus in the 'West' of fixing problems of the 'South' has put the topic of ICT4D on the agenda for many people who may not have previously engaged with it, and brought with it a wider awareness and interest in 'development'. I also agree and wish, like you, that this conversation was heard more often, and people in the ICT4D community shared their thoughts and opinions a little more. Nobody can have failed to notice we're at the start of a shift. Not talking about what is happening makes little sense.

@Scott - I'm really glad you raised this - something I did very briefly in response to @Daryl a little earlier. Clearly we need a balance of people fixing what's broken around them, as well as trying to help fix 'exotic' problems further away. I absolutely agree that a sharing of ideas is extremely helpful here - after all, a solution to a problem in one place may

also be a solution to the same (or similar) problem in another.

BY James BonTempo

ON March 10, 2013 09:32 AM

Ken,

I imagine this was a bit easier to write given you seem to have effectively and successfully transitioned largely out of your work in ICT4D 🄰 🄽 For those of us who still support ourselves and our families working in this field, but agree that the "end game" is complete local ownership, what should we be doing? Should we be looking for new jobs, too? Or is there still, and will there continue to be, a role for us ICT4D-ers in the "West"?

James

P.S. While FrontlineSMS has moved the office to Nairobi, and the team now includes several local hires, it's still not locally owned. But perhaps the grand vision is to transition the organization to local ownership over the next few years.

P.P.S. Of course, you know I'm a big fan of yours & FrontlineSMS—the tool and the team 🄰 🄽

BY kiwanja

ON March 12, 2013 08:41 AM

@James - Thanks for taking the time to read the post and comment, James! You raise an interesting point, and a sticky one at that. What we should always be looking at, of course, is what's best for the end users/recipients and that may well be fewer and fewer Western ICT4D consultants, experts and projects and more projects initiated by local organisations and developers in-country. There will likely remain a need for "Western" assistance but right now the balance is extremely skewed.

Regarding what else we could be doing, there are plenty of problems (including health ones!) in the US and Europe, so ICT4D experts could always divert their attention to those, no? And regarding FrontlineSMS, I agree that it will always be "from the outside" despite a transfer of location, and the hiring of more local staff. I think it will be difficult for projects which started when the need was very much there for outside help to change. What the article is really arguing that we need to put a gradual stop now, because it makes sense to. In the past there was a need, and FrontlineSMS was developed well ahead of the curve.

LEAVE A COMMENT

COMMENT