

CALL FOR PAPERS

**CFIA & EADI Workshop
26/27 November 2015, at ISS/EUR, The Hague, The Netherlands**

When Can Frugal Innovations Become Inclusive Innovations?

The potential of innovation to bring about inclusive forms of economic growth and development has been much acclaimed recently (See: OECD 2015). While innovations can help address poverty challenges, formal science and technology rarely directly address the needs of the poor and often in fact increase inequality – at least ‘initially’ (Heeks, Foster and Nugroho 2014; Santiago 2014; Chataway, Hanlin and Kaplinsky 2014). Innovation in developing countries therefore needs a different approach to bring about inclusive results, but what kind of an approach should that be? (Kaplinsky 2011). Inclusive innovation might be defined as ‘the development and implementation of new ideas which aspire to create opportunities that enhance social and economic wellbeing for disenfranchised members of society’ (George, McGahan and Prabhu 2012: 663). Others argue that inclusive innovation should go further, incorporating developing actors in the production, distribution and marketing systems on an equal footing (Heeks, Foster and Nugroho 2014; Papaioannou 2014). But how can inclusive innovation be achieved? Is this best done through commercial business initiatives, by means of the informal sector or through NGO and government initiatives? (George, McGahan and Prabhu 2012; Cozzens and Sutz 2014). ‘Inclusive business’ might generate a ‘win-win’ situation, creating profits and social benefits, but it might equally produce a new frontier of exploitative capitalism (Blowfield and Dolan 2014; Dolan and Roll 2013). The informal sector, although it has been much praised for its inclusive potential, predominantly generates innovations which struggle to reach scale (Meagher and Lindell 2014). This is mostly due to the economic and social constraints facing the informal sector. Frugal innovation might be able to contribute to inclusive development if it addresses and reduces or even removes these constraints. Another way to deal with scaling up local innovative potential is by encouraging local entrepreneurship in polycentric innovation networks. Polycentric innovation links actors from different backgrounds, sectors and geographical origins, to combine their

unique talents and skills and so provide an alternative to top-down and bottom-up innovation initiatives (Radjou 2009). Adopting polycentric innovation strategies, frugal innovation, defined as the (re)design of products, services or systems to make them affordable for low-income customers without sacrificing user value, might provide an avenue towards more inclusive innovation (Pesa 2014). Due to recent technological advances, frugal innovation has produced a range of goods and services, such as affordable healthcare solutions, mobile money services and accessible consumer goods (Radjou and Prabhu 2014; Bhatti 2012). Can frugal innovation indeed contribute to more inclusive forms of development, and / or are different or complementary strategies needed?

The conceptual debate on inclusive innovation and development is relatively advanced. What is lacking, however, are empirical case studies of such innovation initiatives (Papaioannou 2014; Heeks, Foster and Nugroho 2014). What are their dynamics and what are their (un)intended results? This workshop aims to gather a number of in-depth empirical case studies of frugal and inclusive innovation initiatives in order to advance the conceptual debate on inclusive innovation and development. Case studies can come from Africa, Asia or Latin America, and / or can focus on polycentric initiatives involving for example Western, Chinese or Indian multinational companies. Also conceptual contributions are invited. Questions which could be addressed include (but are not limited to) the following:

- What are the developmental dynamics of frugal or inclusive innovation initiatives? How do they bring about inclusive results (or not)?
- What are the analytical links between frugal innovation, local economic development and inclusiveness?
- Which combinations of actors are involved in frugal or inclusive innovation initiatives and does this make a difference for their developmental potential or impacts?
- What kind of entrepreneurship is relevant to generate successful frugal and inclusive innovations in a polycentric network?
- Are there specific sectors or circumstances in which inclusive innovation is more likely to occur?

- Are there factors which limit the possibility of achieving inclusive results?
- Can frugal innovations contribute to reducing or removing economic and social constraints of local entrepreneurs?
 - How do frugal innovations affect consumers? Does the offering of cheap goods lead to an increase in consumer capabilities and does it include consumers into the value chain on more equitable terms?
 - Do knowledge institutions, NGOs or policymakers have a role to play in promoting the linkage between frugal innovation and inclusiveness? Can 'good policies' spur inclusive frugal innovations?
 - How can frugal or inclusive innovation be conceptualized? What is the role of technology?
 - To what extent is frugal or inclusive innovation a new phenomenon, with unique characteristics, and what can we learn from historical precedents?

This workshop is co-organized by the Centre for Frugal Innovation in Africa and the EADI working group 'Frugal Innovation and Development'. Next to empirical case studies and presentations, we would like to work towards synthesizing these cases to see how we can advance our understanding of frugal innovation and development. We seek contributions from different geographical regions and different disciplinary fields (from technical sciences to social sciences and humanities). Selected papers will be invited to be reworked for a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal (more detailed information on this will follow later).

Dates and Details

Deadline call for abstracts (500 words): 10 July 2015

Selected abstracts will be invited to contribute a full paper, communication can be expected on *15 July 2015*.

Deadline full papers (7,000 words): 6 November 2015

Conference dates: Thursday 26 November 2015 – Friday 27 November 2015 at the Institute for Social Studies in the Hague, the Netherlands.

For questions and more information, please contact Tom Harmsen: harmsen@iss.nl

Selected Literature References

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- Chataway, Joanna, Rebecca Hanlin and Raphael Kaplinsky. (2014). "Inclusive Innovation: An Architecture for Policy Development." *Innovation and Development* 4 (1): 33-54.
- Cozzens, Susan and Judith Sutz. (2014). "Innovation in Informal Settings: Reflections and Proposals for a Research Agenda." *Innovation and Development* 4 (1): 5-31.
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- Radjou, Navi. (2009). "Polycentric Innovation: The New Global Innovation Agenda for MNCs." *Harvard Business Review*.
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