

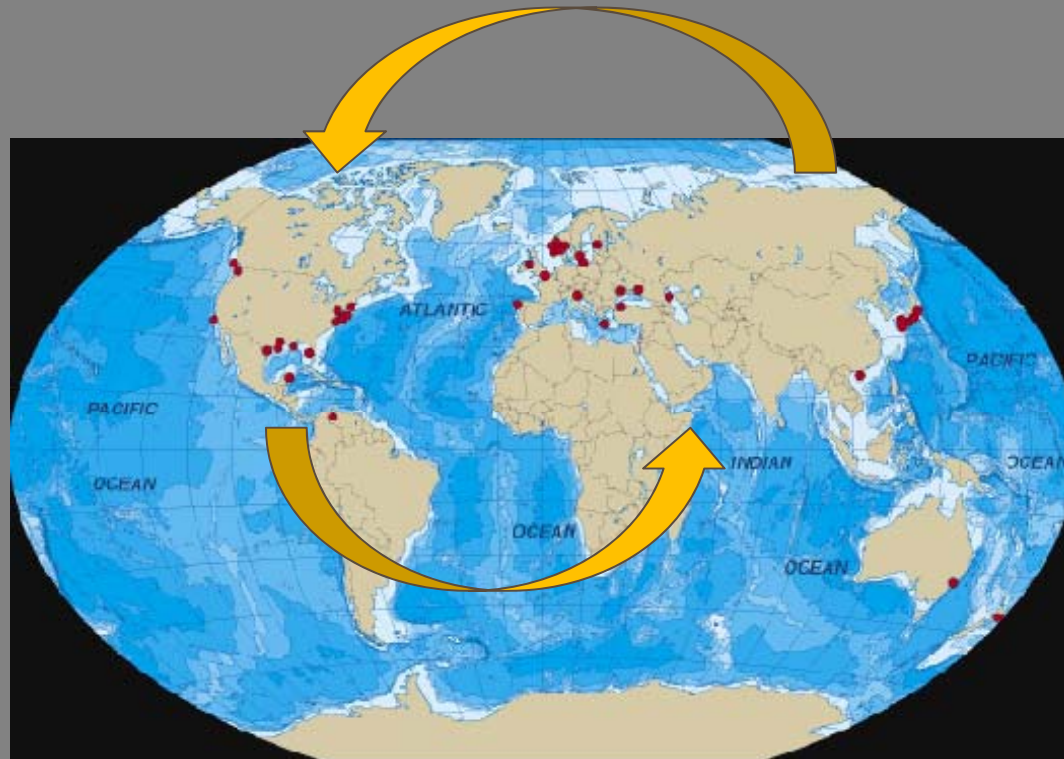


# The prospects of ICT4D research

**Dr Ahmed Imran**  
UNSW Canberra

*IDC, Auckland, 3 Dec, 2012*

*Brain drain...*



*Need reverse engineering...*

## Why ICT4D research?



- is 'relevant' to the LDCs (Walsham & Sahay, 2006)
- is a strategic tool for poverty alleviation (World bank, 2005)
- Has 'broadest potential impact' where majority **75%** of our earth population live (MISQ, vol 31)
- Niche area for research (less than **2%** IS research has been published in top journals)
- Growing field – **39%** growth rate from 1999 to 2008 (Heeks, 2010)

## Who are the ICT4D researchers?



- The seasoned researchers - willing to expand their horizon of research or dig into niche areas.
- Novice researchers driven by passion or a cause from developing countries

# Challenges of ICT4D research

- Lack of robust theories - existing theories mostly developed and tested in developed country context
- ICT initiatives have been unsuccessful because they have failed to address underlying contextual issues (Heeks 2003)
- Little effort on interventions to give a theoretical foundations
- Difficult to keep pace with technological change
- Unique circumstances- complex socio economic structure
- Language



Existing theories

LDC Context

unique

*Not one size fits all*



# ICT4D initiatives

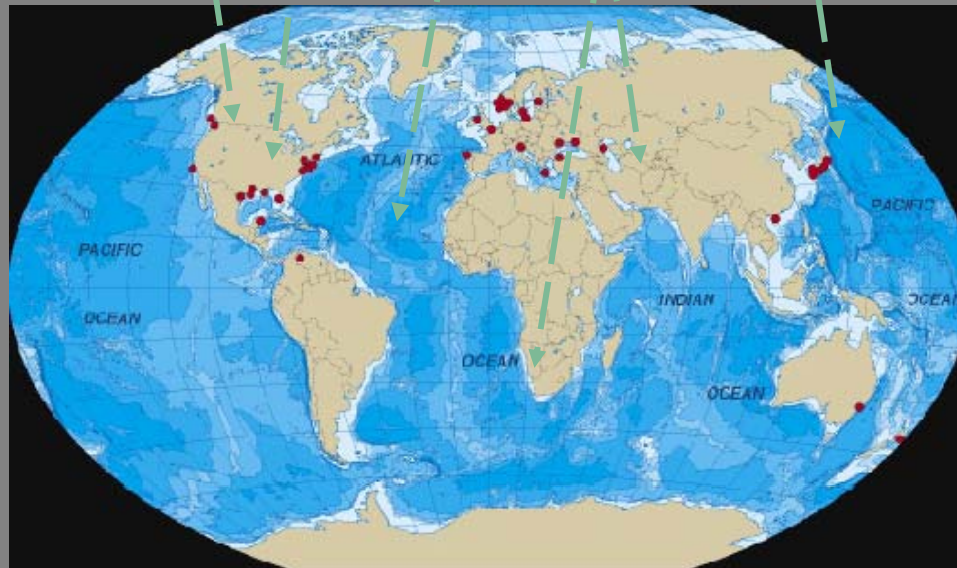
World Bank

EU

ADB

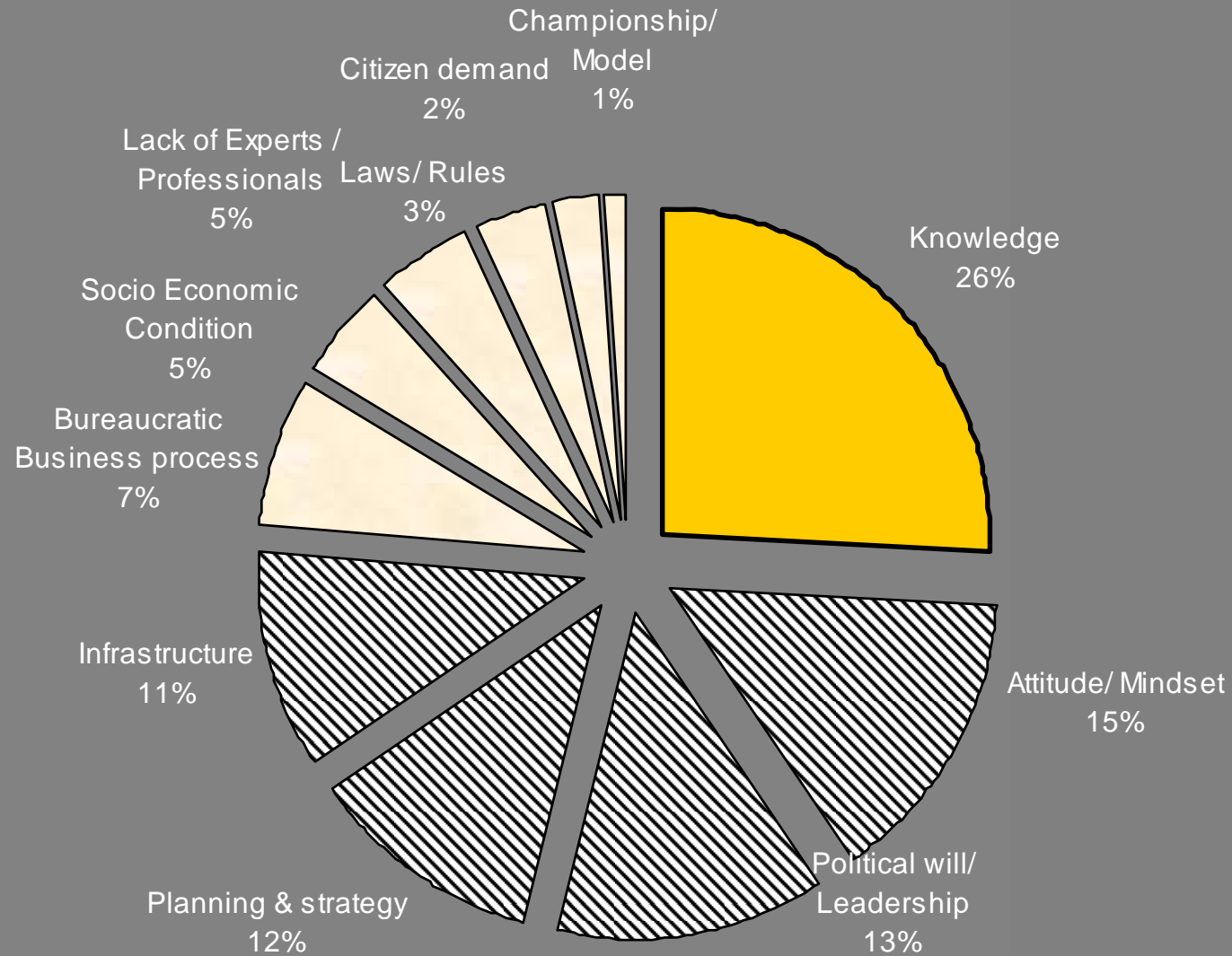
G8

UN

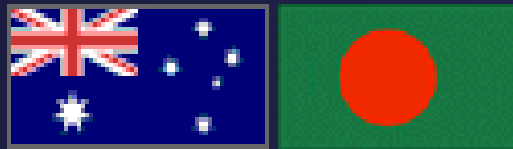


“random rocks being thrown into a pool rather than building cairns of knowledge.” (Heeks and Bailur, 2007 p. 256)

# Bangladesh Case Study Result (Imran & Gregor,2010)



# eGovernment Capacity Building through knowledge transfer in Bangladesh (2008-2012)



## AusAID Public Sector Linkages Program (PSLP)



More about the project at [www.ictforidc.com/pslp/](http://www.ictforidc.com/pslp/)





**- Why empowering and educating decision makers/ managers are so important in LDCs ?**



## First phase (2008) – Ice breaking

- eGov Strategic Pathways for Bangladesh
- ICT management Handbook
- Awareness program

## The Second Phase (2010-2012)

---

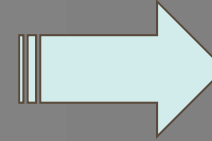
- Built on previous activity, following long term strategy
- Institutionalize the knowledge through effective curriculum and training
- Targeting all officers of Bangladesh
- Ensuring the sustainability and continuity of the developmental effort
- Far reaching benefit

# Some lessons learnt



- Identify a 'Sweet Spot' (Gregor, Imran & Turner, 2010)
- Act on the Sweet Spot directly
- Gain in-depth understanding of the needs and nature of the LDC
- Tailor the intervention to suit the LDC
- Local knowledge is mandatory
- The need for a committed team with complementary skills
- Encourage sustainability by matching local custom

## The way forward- ICT4D research



- Study burning real life issues, bring in practices
- Exploit the opportunities by technological development, e.g., cloud
- Break the existing notion/ go outside the square
- Change the publishing culture
- Increase diligence and rigor in research
- Change the current research impact assessment

*Thank you*

**[www.ictforldc.com](http://www.ictforldc.com)**