

Call for Papers

Track 09. Global Sourcing and Development

Track chairs/associate editors

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Overview of the research area

The focus of this track proposal is at the intersection of global sourcing and development. Global sourcing is the act through which work is contracted or delegated to an external or internal entity that could be physically located anywhere. It encompasses various outsourcing arrangements such as offshore outsourcing, captive offshoring, nearshoring and onshoring (Oshri et. al, 2015). Since the first software contracts were outsourced offshore to India in the late 1970s, global outsourcing practice has enlarged in scale, geographical spread and range of service offerings. We have witnessed spectacular growth in the scale of global sourcing culminating in 2014 with a market size of USD 104.6 billion (source: statista.com). Meeting the demand are the global outsourcing providers, geographically spread in clusters around the world. Today, many new entrant nations challenge India's previously undisputed leadership as the leading provider of outsourced services. A plethora of outsourcing clusters are located in "new entrant" developed and developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America/Caribbean.

During the 1990s, the lessons from India's spectacular growth in Information Technology Outsourcing (ITO), later Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and resultant contribution to GDP convinced many including the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) that the development of an outsourcing industry offered a route to socio economic development. India's ITO and BPO sectors today contributes 9.5% to GDP and employs 3.5million people (Nasscom 2015). The contribution of an outsourcing sector to development has continued to be of interest to academics and policymakers alike. Taking the example of Kenya, Graham and Mann (2013) describe the hopes of policymakers and entrepreneurs in Kenya of developing an outsourcing sector facilitated by new fibre optic broadband linkages into the global outsourcing marketplace with the dream of offering employment to marginalised people thus lifting them out of poverty. The ability for computing and telecommunications to take digitised work seemingly almost anywhere with sufficient computing, bandwidth and skills to offer employment to marginalised people in developing and developed countries has been enveloped into the term Impact Sourcing. Impact sourcing is an emerging phenomenon that aims to transform people's lives, families, and communities through meaningful employment in digitally enabled services (Carmel et al. 2013). The Rockefeller Foundation has been the leading global institution promoting impact sourcing through its Digital Jobs Africa Initiative, supporting key reports by The Monitor Group in 2011, Avasant and Accenture in 2012 and Everest in 2014. In addition to the Rockefeller Foundation, a number of organizations like the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals (IAOP 2009) and National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) foundation support impact sourcing. A recent report by the Everest Group (2014) claims that the impact sourcing market is growing faster than the overall BPO market and currently employs around 240,000 people globally with India, Philippines and South Africa contributing close to 90% of this workforce. Microwork in the so called "human cloud" offers potential for freelancers to seamlessly bid and work on IT enabled projects (Gino and Staats 2012). Schemes in Malaysia for example are focussed on the poverty alleviation potential of ODesk and Upwork. However, there have been challenges to the "rosy picture" of global sourcing as development. For example Sandeep and Ravishankar (2015) point out that impact sourcing centres are not universally welcomed by the supposed recipients and must be painstakingly negotiated. Taking the example of Amazon mechanical Turk, Bergvall-Kåreborn and Howcroft (2014) present a dystopian view of the downside of human cloud type arrangements eg. the commodification of labour, dehumanising nature of the work and sidestepping labour regulations.

We encourage submissions that draw on a range of epistemological positions and critical approaches to improve conceptual understanding of global sourcing in processes of growth and development. In line with the conference theme of promoting social harmony through ICT, we welcome empirical and theoretical papers that consider the societal impacts of global IT-BPO sourcing. We also encourage papers that address the



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significant challenges that remain in achieving higher levels of inclusiveness and social transformation through global sourcing. Some of the indicative themes of interest for this track are listed below although these are just examples and we welcome other topics.

- Human cloud
- Global sourcing of software and services
- Global sourcing & tech clusters; E-entrepreneurship, tech start-ups
- Challenges of scaling impact sourcing ventures
- Role of governments in promoting impact sourcing
- Emerging impact sourcing destinations
- Digital divide and impact sourcing
- Critical perspectives on the social returns of global sourcing
- Global sourcing and migration of labour
- Social impacts of near-shoring
- Global sourcing and power asymmetries
- Global sourcing environmental sustainability

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Important dates

Paper submission:	November 15, 2016
Acceptance notification:	January 31, 2017
Resubmission:	February 28, 2017
Conference:	May 22-24, 2017

Conference co-chairs

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