

# ICT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN COFIMVABA

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[CREDIT: ANTONIO ERASMUS]

*A visual storytelling reflection on challenges, strengths  
and opportunities for building local capabilities*


# ABOUT THIS **BOOKLET**

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“ We have solutions. ”  
“ Listen to our voices. ”

These were the key messages from the community members who participated in our initial stakeholder workshop in Cofimvaba in April 2018. They emphasised that people in Cofimvaba have solutions for solving some of the complex development challenges they face. What they need: spaces and platforms for their voices to be heard and taken seriously. This requires universities, researchers and government to do things differently.

We listened and we made a serious attempt to do the research differently.



[CREDIT: ANTONIO ERASMUS]

In January 2019, we worked with a group of people in Cofimvaba to tell their own stories about life and work in the rural town. Through photography and storytelling, the group reflected on the impact of 'ICT for development' (ICT4D) initiatives in their town. They produced photo-stories highlighting improvements and new opportunities linked directly and indirectly to ICT4D initiatives. The stories also bring attention to challenges, and a disconnect between development interventions and people's needs.

The purpose of this booklet is to share the Cofimvaba group's photo-stories, with the group and with a wider audience within and beyond the geographical boundaries of the rural town.

*These stories are personal. They matter.*



# THE PHOTO-STORYTELLERS

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ASAVELA **NOMNGANGA**  
"ASA"

Asa was born and raised by a single mother in Cofimvaba. She is the third-born of four sisters. Asa recently graduated and plans to continue with school so she can better her town.



MPUMZI **MQOMBOTI**  
"MPURA"

Mpura is from Hange Location, Tsomo, and works for the Department of Education at Mvuso Junior Secondary School, Deckert's Hill, Cofimvaba.



BUSIWE **DWABAYO**

Busiwe is an educator at Mvuzo Junior Secondary School. She is from Ngqeleni and now stays in Cofimvaba.



## CHUMA **TYULUBA**

Chuma is a student at Isikhoba Nombewu Technical Senior Secondary School. She is from Eskhobeni Location, and also grew up in Cofimvaba, where she was raised by a single mother. She is a Christian, and enjoys being indoors at home.



## VUYISILE **DYANTYI**

Vuyisile is a director of a technology company, and a branch manager and a facilitator for A+ and N+ courses at Silulo Technology. Vuyisile is a father of four.



## VUYISEKA **LITSHETE**

Vuyiseka is a Learner Support Agent at Mvuzo Junior Secondary School. She is from Qamata in Cofimvaba, and studied Information Technology at EastCape Midlands College.

## MAGWA **CHULAYO**

Magwa is from Eskhobeni, a village in Cofimvaba. He serves as Deputy Secretary on a committee under Chief Zwelethu.





TEMBEKAZI R.  
**NOMNGANGA** "KAZI"

Tembekazi was born-and-bred in Cofimvaba. She is a teacher at Mvuzo Junior Secondary School where she heads the language department. She is a hard-working, dedicated and committed person. Tembekazi is passionate about kids, and likes sharing. She is a change-driver.



ZAMUXOLO MCDONALD  
**VAZI**

Zamuxolo is an educator at Cofimvaba Secondary School. Born and raised in Uitenhage, Eastern Cape, he studied Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry at NMU. He is enthusiastic about the ICT world and community development activities. Zamuxolo is a father of two kids – a boy and a girl.



SIYABULELA **NCAPAYI**  
"Inzalwane Yaku Cofimvaba"  
(A Descendant of Cofimvaba)



SANDISIWE **STOFILE**

A university graduate in the field of Biotechnology, Sandisiwe was born and raised in Cofimvaba in Isikhoba Location. He works as a mentor in the War on Leaks programme at Chris Hani District, and desires to see “my Cofimvaba” develop to a better place.



NOBENGUNI **NTSHUNTSHA**  
(ENKOSI) “NGUNIE”

Nobengeni is a sister, mother and aunt. She grew up in Cofimvaba and wants to see change in her hometown. She wants to bring change for her people.

THANDEKA **BUKULA** “SIPHOSETHU”

Thandeka is a Master’s student with an interest in research for social development. She was born and raised in Cofimvaba, and currently studies in Johannesburg.



# MAKING THE PHOTO-STORIES

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**V**          OICING  
**O**          UR  
**I**          NDIVIDUAL  
AND  
**C**          OLLECTIVE  
**E**          XPERIENCES  
THROUGH  
**P**          HOTOGRAPHS

GUIDING QUESTION:

*If you want to  
grow livelihoods  
in ICTs in  
Cofimvaba, how  
do ICT4D  
initiatives  
help you?*

# HELP, HEALTH, HAPPEN



## INDAWO YAM

*(My Place)*

Chuma Tyuluba

Uninzi lwabantu lulahla nje inkunkuma apha. Abanye ikwayindawo yangasese yozikhulula.

*Most people are just dumping rubbish here. Others relieve themselves here.*



## **UBUHLE PHANTSI KOBUMDAKA** (*Beauty Beneath the Dirt*)

Asa

Indawo yokulahla inkuknuma kufutshane nedolophu, Abantu kufuneka baqonde ukuba babulala ubuhle bedolophu yethu ngokungcolisa.

*A dump site in the making. People need to realise that they are killing the beauty of our town by littering.*





## INKONZO EZINGEZIYO EBANTWINI

*(Services that do not come to the Community)*

Vuyiseka Litshete

Le yindlu yangasese kwisikolo samabanga aphantsi esetyenziswa ngamantombazana. Ayikhuselekanga ukusetyenziswa ngabantwana, ibangela imiba yezempilo kwaye abantwana banokwenzakala.

*This is a toilet at a primary school that is used by girls. It is unsafe for use by the kids, causes health issues and the kids could get hurt.*



## UKUPHILA OKUNGAKHUSELEKANGA

*(Unsafe Living)*

Mpumzi Mqomboti (Mpura)

Isixhobo sombane esithatha indawo yangasese. Abantu bayachama naphi na kuba akukho izindlu zangasese zasimahla zoluntu, kwaye ke kusasazeka iintsholongwane.

*An electric transformer that replaces a toilet. People are urinating anywhere because there are no free public toilets, and thus spreading germs.*



**AMANZI NOCOCEKO LOLUNTU LONKE,  
KUZOKUPHUCULA ISIDIMA SABANTU**  
*(Water and Sanitation for all to Improve Privacy)*  
Mpumzi Mqomboti (Mpura)

Izindlu zangasese zibukeka elihlobo ezikolweni zethu. Asikhuselekanga futhi akho mfihlo.

*This is the current state of the toilets at our school. No privacy. They are not safe to use.*

# ICT ENABLING RURAL DEVELOPMENT



## **UMDLA WOKUFUNDA** (*Hunger to Learn*) Busiwe Dwabayo

Abafundi ngoku banethuba elingcono ngoba bafundiswa ngekhomputha besekumabanga aphantsi. Kethina singabanye siye eDyunivesithi ngaphandle kolwazi lwe khomputha, siye sanobunzima obukhulu ezifundweni.

*Learners now have an advantage to be taught through tablets.  
For us who went to university without knowing computers, we have a tough time.*





**THATHA UXANDUVA** *(Take Responsibility)*  
V.I. Dyantyi

Umnxeba wonxibelelwano owonakalisiweyo, kunye nebhokisi yamandla ka-Eskom. Akukho xanduva oluvela kubanikezeli beenkonzo. Uluntu alunamigca yeefowuni ezisebenzayo kunye ne-intanethi.

*Damaged Telecommunication unit, with a live Eskom power box exposed. No responsibility from the service providers. Communities have no working telephone lines and no internet.*



**AMAZIKO OLWAZI ANGCONO, UKUPHUCULWA KWECOFIMVABA**  
*(Better Information Centers, Betterment of Cofimvaba)*  
Sandisiwe Stofile

Eli liziko lolwazi eCofimvaba. Uluntu luxhomekeke kwikhefi ze-intanethi ezincinci ezibizayo.

*This is an information centre in Cofimvaba.  
The community depends on such small and costly internet cafés.*



**IIDESIKA EZINGENANTO, IINGQONDO EZINGENANTO**  
*(Empty Desks, Empty Minds)*  
Siyabulela Ncapayi

Indawo enokuthi isetyenziselwe ukukhawulelana neemfuno zoluntu, endaweni yoko ikhangeleka kwaye ivakalelwa ngathi ayinanto.

*A place that could be utilised to meet the needs of the community,  
instead it looks and feels hollow.*





**IZIXHOBO ZE-ICT EZINGASETYENZISWAYO** (*Unused ICT Resources*)  
Busiwe Dwabayo

Kukho izixhobo zobuxhakaxhaka ezingasetyenziswayo ezinokunceda uluntu lwethu.  
Nangona kunjalo, azisetyenziswa.

*There are resources that are white elephants and these resources could help our communities. However, they are unused.*

**INDAWO  
ELUNGILEYO, IXESHA  
ELINGALUNGANGA**

*(Right Place,  
Wrong Time)*

Tandeka Bukula

Oku kubonisa isimo sengqondo se-archaic ngokubhekisele kwezinye iinkonzo ezibalulekileyo.

Uninzi lwezikolo eziphakamileyo kule ndawo zineeklassi kude kube ngu-4pm. Abafundi abanakulisebenzisa eli ziko.

*This shows the archaic attitude towards some essential services. Most high schools in the area have classes until 4pm. Students cannot utilize this facility/resource.*



## IZIXHOBO EZINGASETYENZISWA KAKUHLE

*(Under-utilised  
Resources)*

Siyabulela Ncapayi

Iziko lokufunda eliphantsi kukarhulumente. Le ndawo isebenza njengendawo ye-intanethi eluntwini, kodwa ayifane isetyenziswe.

*A learning center driven by government intervention.*

*This place acts as an internet café for the community, but it is rarely used.*



## UHAMBO OLUDE

*(Long Walk)*

Ngunie

Umntwana omncinci uwela indlela exakekileyo xa esiya esikolweni. Yonke into ikude noluntu. Abantu bahamba imigama emide ukuya ekliniki, ezikolweni nakwesona sibhedlele sikufutshane.

*A young child crossing a busy road to walk to school. Everything is far from the community. People walk long distances to the clinic, schools and to the nearest hospital.*





# COLLABORATE, COMMIT, COMPOSE



## **INGOZI**

*(Danger Close)*

V.I. Dyantyi

Intambo zombane, nezonzibebelwano zifakwe kwindawo enye. Ababoneleli beenkonzo benza umsebenzi ongekho sezingeni elifanelekileyo.

*Communication and power lines are installed on the same pole. Service providers cut corners when providing a service.*



## **ULWAKHIWO LWEZIBONELELO**

*(Infrastructure Deformed)*

V.I. Dyantyi

Ukucwangciswa alukho semgangathweni xa kuzewa indlela. Urhulumente ubeka ezinye iiprojekthi ngaphezulu kwezinye.

*Poor town planning when it comes to road construction. Government prioritises some projects over others.*

**INQANABA LETHU LEETEKSI  
LAPHENDUKELA KWIVENKILE YENTSIMBI**  
*(Our Taxi Rank turned to a Welding Shop)*  
Chuma Tyuluba

Isakhiwo sendawo yoshishino lwe Taxi, sakhwiwe ngaphadle kokubonisana noluntu. Abantu bayala ukuyisebenzisa kuba ikude, kwaye bahamba umgama omde ufikelelela kwivenkile saze dolophini. Ngoku isetyenziswa njengevenkile yentsimbi.

*A taxi rank that was built without consulting the community. People refused to use it as a taxi rank because it is far from the shop. People would need to walk a distance with groceries to get to that taxi rank. Now it is used as a welding shop.*



**IZIGIDI ZICHITHIWE**  
*(Millions Spent)*  
Tembakazi Nomnganga

Esi sakhiwo sasilungiselelwe amashishini amancinci athengisa ezitalatweni, kodwa akunjalo asisetyenziswa. Khange kubekho cwangciso lufanelekileyo, izitali zakhiwe kude nedolophu kwindawo ezifihlakeleyo, ezingenabathengi.

*An abandoned building that was built for hawkers who still operate in the streets in town. There was no proper planning. Stalls are built in a quiet area that is far from the town.*



# CONCLUSION

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Cofimvaba faces major socio-economic challenges.

A positive trend over the past few years has been increasing attention and interventions from universities, science councils and government experimenting with the transformative potential of ICT for rural development (ICT4D).

The photo-stories point to important opportunities. The value and significance placed on schooling and education can bring positive opportunities. The 'hunger to learn' creates a positive environment for future collaborative endeavours to build local social and economic capabilities.

The photo-stories also point to the need to intervene in better ways. First, a project-based approach to socio-economic development is limited because it does not allow for the building of local capabilities in a sustainable way. Second, the design of interventions should be more strongly informed by the needs and wants of people in the communities of Cofimvaba. Third, community members are also responsible for ensuring the success of ICT4D interventions, for effectively managing resources provided and building trust in dealing with each other and other stakeholders.



**IMFUNDO NOLWAHLUKWANO NOLUNTU** (*Education and Community Gap*)  
Zamoxolo M. Vazi

Abantwana bahamba imigama emide ukusuka esikolweni ukuya ekhaya.  
Akukho mntu ubonakala enenkathalo ngokhuseleko lwabo.

*Children walk long distances from school to home.  
No one seems to care about their safety.*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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The photo-stories show the importance of understanding the communities' needs, and developing and implementing solutions collaboratively, with people in the community, with local government, with local business and other key local actors.

The Cofimvaba group conveyed one recommendation to government – local, provincial and national -, universities and science councils implementing ICT4D initiatives: Create a space to dialogue what is being brought from outside with solutions and capabilities available within Cofimvaba. Interventions should start with engaging traditional leaders and existing social structures. Engage or set up local community committees as partners in the research from the start. This will allow for the collaborative identification of problems and the co-creation of solutions.





**UMFANEKISO** (*The View*)  
Tandeka Bukula

Umfanekiso weCofimvaba usuka encotsheni yentaba. Asizikhathaleli izinto ezisingqongileyo kwaye siyixabisa into engakumbi xa ivela ngaphandle.

*A picture of Cofimvaba from the top of a mountain.  
We disregard things around us and appreciate something more  
when it comes from outside.*

# ABOUT THE RESEARCH

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## *Why focus on ICT4D in Cofimvaba?*

Cell phones, tablet technology, the Internet, wireless networks, and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) are seen as critical technologies that universities, science councils, community-based organisations, NGOs and the public sector generally can support to promote inclusive development in rural villages such as Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape. A particular focus has been in schools, to provide young people with the digital tools required in the economy, for example.

A challenge is that few ICT initiatives aimed at addressing development needs (ICT4D) in the Eastern Cape have contributed to building local business. As a result, people in the local communities, even those who are beneficiaries of ICT4D initiatives, have few options to turn to when digital devices breakdown, for support with regular maintenance, and for skills training to support future planning and as the need arises.

An important question is, how can we promote ICT4D in a way that is more likely to contribute to building local capabilities?

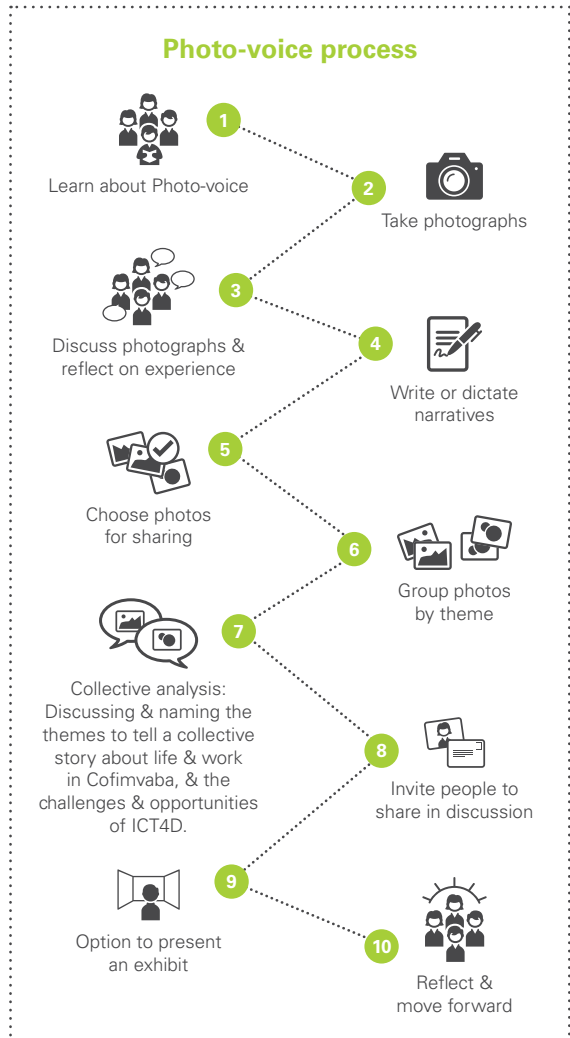
## *Why focus on local capabilities?*

From the start of the research, we decided to go beyond exploring what exists, to try to build a picture of possibilities for engagement with more long-term benefit to the rural town.

## How were the Photo-voice workshop participants selected?

A group of 13 people were selected to be involved in the Photo-voice workshop, which was held over five days in January 2019. These people were selected because they had something to 'say' and insights to contribute to the research question. They had access to a smart phone with a camera function. And they were willing to commit to attending the five days of the workshop.

The group included teachers, university students, a manager at a local ICT business, a traditional leader and community leaders. Language was a challenge and the group was encouraged to converse in the language that they were most comfortable speaking.



Source: Adapted from Lorenz (2005)  
(<http://www.lslorenz.com/currentphotovprojects.htm#photovpath>)







# RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION TEAM

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Project leader and oversight



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Project leader, overall design and oversight



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