

# Approaches to Building a Smart Community



# Approaches to Building a Smart Community:

*An Exploration through the  
Concept of the Digital Village*

Edited by

Jackie Phahlamohlaka

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	xii
List of Figures.....	xiii
Foreword .....	xiv
Preface .....	xvi
Acknowledgements .....	xviii
Contributors.....	xxix
Chapter 1 .....	1
The Narrative of a New Seidet	
Vusi Ndala	
1. The genesis .....	1
2. The essence and strategic rationale of the turnaround plan.....	4
Key pillar 1: organization development .....	6
Key pillar 2: streamlining of development programs and creating new ones .....	8
Key pillar 3: financial sustainability.....	11
3. Incubating the implementation of the turnaround plan .....	12
4. The beginning of the renewal journey and the envisaged future.....	13
5. The approach on building a smart community through regeneration.....	16
Chapter 2 .....	19
Why A Smart Community?	
Linda Malinga, Jackie Phahlamohlaka	
1. Introduction.....	19
2.Smart city.....	19
3. The ontology of a smart community .....	21
Smart .....	21
Community.....	22
Smart community .....	22

4. Seidet and community development .....	23
Support and enhance education system.....	24
Skills development and entrepreneurial training.....	25
Developed ICT infrastructure and facilities .....	26
5. Seidet as a champion of smart communities .....	27
6. Future technologies and smart communities .....	28
7. Global events and opportunities.....	30
8. Concluding remarks.....	31
References.....	32
 Chapter 3.1 .....	 34
A Research-Anchored e-Entrepreneurship Empowerment Approach to Building a Smart Community	
Jackie Phahlamohlaka, Carina De Villiers	
1. Introduction.....	34
2. Related work and literature .....	35
Research-anchored development of community .....	35
Defining e-entrepreneurship empowerment.....	37
3. Some examples of building smart communities .....	39
Example 1: The USA workshop example .....	39
Example 2: The Canadian example.....	41
Example 3: The Esri frameworks for building smart communities .....	41
Example 4: What does it take to build a smart community? .....	42
Example 5: Thusong Service Centres in South Africa .....	43
4. The digital village concept and related ICT interventions .....	44
5. The e-entrepreneurship empowerment approach to building a smart community.....	47
6. Concluding discussion .....	50
References.....	50
 Chapter 3.2 .....	 53
A Microtasking Approach for Building Smart Communities in Digital Villages	
Jabu Mtsweni, Florah Sewela Modiba	
1. Introduction.....	53
2. Defining a smart community.....	54
Defining a digital village.....	56
3. Contextualizing a smart community .....	56
Benefits of smart communities.....	58

4. Building a smart community .....	58
Infrastructure and connectivity .....	59
Empowerment (socially and financially) .....	61
Awareness and collaboration .....	62
Education .....	63
Community engagement and participation .....	64
5. Innovative approaches for building smart communities .....	64
Hackathons .....	65
Crowdsourcing .....	66
Living labs .....	66
6. A microtasking approach for building a smart community in a digital village .....	67
Requirements for a profile-aware microtasking approach .....	68
Benefits of microtasking approach in smart communities .....	70
7. Conclusion .....	72
References .....	72
Chapter 3.3 .....	75
Digital Ecosystems	
Willem H. le Roux	
1. Acknowledgments .....	75
2. Introduction .....	75
3. What is a smart community? .....	76
4. Digital villages .....	79
How do digital ecosystems relate to digital villages? .....	80
5. Brief overview of ecosystems .....	81
An analogy to biological ecosystems .....	81
Ecosystem examples .....	82
6. So what? .....	83
7. Ecosystem concerns .....	84
8. Considering military command and control as digital ecosystems .....	84
9. Military ecosystems .....	85
10. Command and control systems .....	86
C2 activities .....	86
C2 elements .....	86
C2 approaches .....	88
Military operations other than war and C2 .....	88
11. Defining command and control as an ecosystem .....	89
Minimum requirements for a C2 ecosystem .....	89

12. Ecosystem perspectives .....	89
C2 definition.....	90
The nature of C2.....	90
C2 capability .....	91
Operations .....	91
Capability life cycle .....	91
Architecture.....	92
Organizational behavior .....	92
Information and knowledge management .....	92
Interoperability, integration, and composability.....	93
Services .....	93
13. So what?.....	94
Conclusion on C2 as an ecosystem .....	95
Recommendations in relation to C2 as an ecosystem.....	95
14. Considering environmental asset protection as a digital ecosystem .....	96
Standalone versus connected systems, and internal and external linkages.....	97
Capabilities and life cycle .....	98
Architectural frameworks, standards.....	98
Stakeholders, owners, and users.....	98
15. Infrastructure flexibility .....	99
Open architectures and modularity.....	100
Open data standards .....	100
Open interfaces.....	101
Open source-closed community model .....	101
16. Common interfaces and gateways.....	101
Collaboration.....	102
Situation awareness and real-time information .....	102
17. Conclusion .....	102
References.....	103
 Chapter 4.1 .....	108
Smart Infrastructure as the Basis for a Smart Community	
Kgolagano Lefifi, Karabo Mokaba	
1. Introduction.....	108
2. An architectural intervention .....	111
3. Aspirations of Seidet.....	112
4. Program.....	112
5. The building design—guidelines and principles.....	113
6. The building—inspiration .....	114



7. The building—shaping the site .....	114
8. The building—Seidet Head Office .....	116
9. Conclusion .....	118
Chapter 4.2 .....	119
Building a Cyber Smart Community	
Zama I. Dlamini, Jackie Phahlamohlaka	
1. Introduction.....	119
2. Cyber smart community.....	120
Approach example: cybersecurity awareness training initiative ...	122
The significance of cyber smart communities .....	122
3. Cyber smart community role players .....	123
Community.....	124
Community stakeholders.....	124
Local entrepreneurs .....	125
Government.....	125
Industry .....	126
Academia.....	127
4. The cyber smart community building approaches .....	127
The proactive planning approach .....	128
Identifying smart community requirements .....	128
Setting cyber smart community priorities .....	129
Research, development and innovation (RDI) .....	130
Approach example: BB4All and village operators initiatives .....	131
Community empowerment from a socioeconomic perspective...	132
Approach example: E-entrepreneurship training and e-Skills program.....	133
Approach example: Fostering application development initiative .....	134
The education and continuous development approach .....	134
Approach example: Cybersecurity awareness training initiative...	135
5. Cyber smart community challenges .....	135
Addressing the challenges .....	136
6. Summary remarks .....	137
References.....	139

Chapter 4.3 .....	143
Cybersecurity Awareness and Education: A Necessary Parameter for Smart Communities	
Noluxolo Gcaza	
1. Introduction.....	143
2. Smart communities .....	144
The smart community concept .....	145
The smart community elements .....	146
ICTs in a smart community .....	147
3. Cybersecurity in smart communities.....	147
Data privacy .....	148
Data security.....	149
Cybersecurity awareness and education .....	150
4. Discussion.....	151
5. Conclusion .....	152
References.....	152
Chapter 5.1 .....	156
The Real ICT Need For Entrepreneurs: ICT Adoption in the Fight for Inclusivity	
Adriana Aletta Steyn	
1. Introduction.....	156
Some important reading ... ..	158
2. Defining an entrepreneur .....	159
3. Classification of entrepreneurs.....	159
Setting the scene.....	160
The real ICT need and experience.....	164
4. Conclusion .....	166
References.....	167
Chapter 5.2 .....	175
An Approach to Securing a Smart Community	
Lebogang Mohubedu	
1. Introduction.....	175
Smart users .....	176
Smart infrastructure and ICT.....	176
Smart applications .....	176
Smart governance .....	177

2. Smart community center implementation layers.....	177
Access layer .....	178
Routing layer .....	178
Management layer .....	178
3. The Botswana use case .....	178
4. Secure smart community approach .....	182
5. TRIO solution .....	182
6. Awareness.....	184
Security roles.....	185
7. Identifying threats and vulnerabilities.....	186
8. INI scanner.....	186
9. Testing and monitoring .....	187
10. Concluding discussion .....	188
References.....	189

# LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.2.1: High-level requirements for a profile-aware microtasking approach.....	69
Table 3.3.1: Smart city initiatives.....	78
Table 5.1.1: Adoption barriers (Steyn, 2018) .....	162

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1: One of the consultative workshops and brainstorming sessions with stakeholders held at Gijima Lab, University of Pretoria, June 2014 .....	3
Figure 1-2: Seidet Board Members at the Annual General Meeting held at Insingizi Lodge, Montana, Pretoria in October 2013 .....	6
Figure 2.1: Seidet Community Centre laboratory .....	27
Figure 3.1.1: Entrepreneurs from the Seidet environment (Department of Communications, e-Skills Institute, March 2012) .....	38
Figure 3.1.2: The village operators (VOs) of the <i>Broadband for All</i> wireless mesh project during cybersecurity awareness training, 2011 .....	45
Figure 3.1.3: The CSET ICT4D Flagship, CSIR and Siyabuswa Community representatives (Unisa College of Science, Engineering and Technology, 2017) .....	46
Figure 3.2.1: Smart community .....	57
Figure 3.2.2: Microtasking approach for smart communities .....	68
Figure 4.1.1: Global perspective of the Seidet development .....	109
Figure 4.1.2: Site in its current form.....	115
Figure 4.1.3: Sun shading elements referred to as brise soleil.....	116
Figure 4.1.4: Representation of robust materials .....	117
Figure 4.2.1: Cyber smart community role players .....	124
Figure 5.2.1: Smart center implementation layer .....	177
Figure 5.2.2: Botswana Virtual Marketplace Trading Portal.....	179
Figure 5.2.3: An example of a possible transaction flow .....	182
Figure 5.2.4: Web application workflow .....	184
Figure 5.2.5: PHP.ini file modification .....	187

## FOREWORD

In 2008, the book titled *Community-driven Projects: Reflections on a Success Story: A Case Study of Science Education and Information Technology in South Africa* edited by Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka was released. The book captures the birth and activities of a community-based voluntary education improvement and development organization that originated from the Siyabuswa community in Mpumalanga. The organization is called the Siyabuswa Educational Improvement and Development Trust (SEIDET).

This book, *Approaches to Building a Smart Community: An Exploration Through the Digital Village Concept*, which captures the renewal journey, is long overdue, and appropriately is also edited by Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka.

I met Dr. Phahlamohlaka when I was doing my PhD in 1995 at the University of Pretoria. Jackie opened the door to the Seidet community for me, and participated in one of the research case studies in my PhD. Jackie later became a valued colleague in the Department of Informatics at the University of Pretoria. Regular visits to Seidet established a strong mutually beneficial relationship between the Department of Informatics and Seidet.

From the first chapter where the narrative for a new Seidet is given by Vusi Ndala, it is clear that Jackie thought carefully about the story that this book needs to tell. All the chapters are grounded in research and provide excellent guidelines and examples on building a smart community. The reason for building a smart community is explained by Linda Malinga and Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka. The thoughts and research that led to the new Seidet are clearly articulated in Part 3 by the authors: Dr. Jabu Mtsweni, Dr. Flora Modiba, Herman le Roux, and Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka. Focusing on infrastructure and cybersecurity issues, Karabo Mokaba, Sydney Lefifi, Zama Dlamini, Dr. Noxy Ncgaba, and Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka produce a valuable contribution to the development of a smart community that is often overlooked. In Part 5, perspectives from the ICT for Development (ICT4D) field are incorporated by Dr. Riana Steyn and Lebogang Mohubedu.

*Approaches to Building a Smart Community: An Exploration Through the Digital Village Concept* is a valuable scholarly resource for researchers, communities, municipalities, ICT professionals, and anybody interested in the journey to build a smart community. The book is edited by Dr. Jackie

Phahlamohlaka, a leader and scholar in the field with years of experience. Reading this book is a journey of discovery—enjoy the journey!

Prof. Carina De Villiers  
Head of the Department of Informatics  
Chairperson of School of Information Technology  
University of Pretoria

## PREFACE

The concept of a smart city has attracted global interest; literature abounds and several cities around the world are already classified as smart cities. The same cannot be said about smart communities; yet societies in both developed and developing nations, even in large cities, are made of identifiable communities requiring efficient delivery of services.

With efficiency being central to the concept of “smart” and the quality of lives of people in these identifiable communities dependent on efficient delivery of goods and services, one wonders why this is the case. Why is there a stronger drive to build smart cities (places) compared to that of building smart communities (people within places)? What could be done to synergize these so that the building of smart communities could receive equal global attention? These are some of the key questions addressed in this book.

The approaches in this book on how a smart community could be built are shared by experienced researchers and practitioners based on their personal involvement in various communities over extended periods of time. The contributors to the book have been selected based on their years of personal involvement in community work linked to their areas of research interest, as well as the research interests of the institutions they work for.

Contributions are from South African universities, more than two and a half decades of community ICT work in the Seidet environment as well as from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in South Africa. The aim is to draw focus to the building of smart communities through the sharing of unique propositions informed by years of academic work, direct involvement in community development through ICT use, as well as architectural and engineering type experimental development.

We expect that some communities around the globe will find an approach proposed in this book which is attractive enough to them to try out for themselves; by so doing, they will find something that positively contributes to the quality of life of people in those communities.

The book has been subdivided into five parts and ten chapters. Part 1 is composed of one chapter, which gives the premise and context of the book. The narrative of a new Seidet is outlined by its current CEO Mr. Vusi Ndala. Over the years, the Seidet Community Education Centre in Siyabuswa has been used to experiment with various concepts related to ICT and



socioeconomic development. Plans to transform the community center into a smart community center are at an advanced stage. This part and chapter describes the internal transformation processes within Seidet which served as the greatest motivation for writing this book.

In Part 2, which also has one chapter, the significance of the transformation of Seidet Community Education Centre to a smart community center and the rationale for broadly pursuing the building of a smart community is presented by Linda Malinga and Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka. This is followed by Part 3 which has three chapters: three approaches for building smart communities. These approaches are a research-anchored, e-entrepreneurship empowerment approach by Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka and Prof. Carina De Villiers (Chapter 3.1); the microtasking approach by Dr. Jabu Mtsweni and Dr. Flora Modiba (Chapter 3.2); and the digital ecosystems by Herman le Roux.

Part 4 addresses issues related to infrastructure and cybersecurity. Chapter 4.1 details smart infrastructure as the basis for building a smart community. Sydney Lefifi and Karabo Mokaba from LEMEG Architects, share their architectural journey as well as some results of their work as they collaborated with Seidet to produce the design as well as the look and feel of the Seidet Smart Community Center and the envisaged Seidet Digital Village. Zama Dlamini and Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka advise on how to build a cyber smart community in Chapter 4.2, followed by an argument for a cybersecurity awareness and education as a necessary parameter for smart communities presented by Dr. Noxy Gcaza in Chapter 4.3

The last part gives smart community perspectives from ICT4D. In Chapter 5.1, Dr. Riana Steyn shares her experiences about the real ICT need for entrepreneurs as they fight for inclusivity in ICT adoption and use. Lebogang Mohubedu concludes the book in Chapter 5.2 by presenting an approach to securing a smart community.

Jackie Phahlamohlaka, Editor

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The approaches to building a smart community contained in this book are based on years of personal experiences and involvement of the authors. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Further acknowledgment goes to the Siyabuswa Educational Improvement and Development Trust (SEIDET) and the University of Pretoria whose collaboration over more than two decades shed valuable insights used in this book.

Research collaboration with Seidet over the years also came from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) whose researchers have contributed several chapters to this book. Their contribution is appreciated and acknowledged.

Lastly, this book project started during a sabbatical of the Editor approved by the CSIR in September 2017. Since then, support for the project by the CSIR has taken various forms, including gratefully acknowledged financial contribution for language editing and proofreading costs.

Jackie Phahlamohlaka  
Editor

## CONTRIBUTORS



**Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka (Editor)** hails from Ga-Phaahla Village in Siyabuswa, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. He completed his MSc in Computational and Applied Mathematics at Dalhousie University in Canada and a PhD in Information Technology from the University of Pretoria. He is currently a Chief Researcher at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). He is the founder of Seidet and the Chairman of its Board of Directors. He completed the Executive National Security Program (ENSP) at the South African National Defence College in 2007. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Information Technology Professionals of South Africa (IITPSA). He is a member of the South African National Committee for the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) and he represents South Africa in Technical Committee 9 (TC9) of IFIP. His research interests are in ICT and Socioeconomic Development, Web-based Group Support Systems, Broadband access, and National Security.



**Innocentia Zama Dlamini** is leading the Information Systems and Technology (IST) department at the Moses Kotane Institute in Durban, South Africa. She is responsible for the IT Infrastructure, technology, IT operations, and Information Security assets. Ms Dlamini has worked as a Researcher and Engineer in the areas of Information Security and Digital Forensics for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research for eleven years. Ms. Dlamini studied for both her undergraduate and honors qualifications in Computer Science from University of Zululand, South Africa, between 2004 and 2007. From her work experience, she grew passion for Information Security and security of the Critical Information Infrastructure. In the future, she intends to pursue her studies in Contemporary Diplomacy in Internet Governance and Cyber Security, focusing in developing countries.



**Dr. Jabu Mtsweni** is a Head of the Cyber and Information Security Centre at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Research Fellow at University of South Africa, and Board Member at Directorate of Information Warfare in the Department of Defence. Dr. Mtsweni has been involved in leading, supporting, and implementing large and complex cybersecurity projects locally and internationally, including projects in large

state-owned enterprises (in South Africa and Africa), government departments, and the military. His research interests and technical expertise are in digital security, digital transformation, cybersecurity, and cybercrimes. He regularly speaks at various local and international conferences on cybersecurity issues. He has over 17 years of academic and industry experience working with different local, regional, and international industries and partners on various ICT projects. He has published over 70 peer-reviewed conference and journal articles with a number of collaborators.



**Dr. Florah Sewela Modiba** is a development professional in Nelson Mandela University where she facilitates learning, coordinating postgraduate academic programs, as well as supervision of postgraduate students. She is passionate about improving the socioeconomic conditions of South Africa using research to explore innovative ways, especially information and communication technologies, to address social challenges. Her research interest are in the small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and informal businesses sectors' impact in development and on how they influence the township and rural economies; development issues and opportunities; gender and development; as well as sustainable community livelihoods and rural development. She has over 12 years' experience in academic and corporate institutions. She has worked in research and development projects in the areas of health, education, SMMEs, and innovative mobile applications for small and large enterprises.



**Herman Le Roux** has been with the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research since April 1998 and is at present the Research Group Leader: Command and Control Systems in the Defence and Security Cluster. He is involved in command and control technology as applied to whole-of-government initiatives, including defense, safety and security, disaster management, and the protection of infrastructure and natural assets. Interests include information fusion, artificial intelligence, interoperability, modeling and simulation, and software engineering. Le Roux completed a Masters Degree in Computer Engineering at the University of Pretoria in 1999 with a focus on pattern recognition. He has also presented papers at various international conferences, published in local and international journals, and authored two book chapters.



**Lebogang Mohubedu** (previously Phahlamohlaka) is an information systems professional and a computer security enthusiast with over three years of experience in the ICT sector. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Computer Systems in June 2014 from Heriot Watt University. She was awarded a scholarship in 2014 by the Japan International Cooperation Agency to pursue her Master of Science at the Kobe Institute of Computing in Kobe, Japan. She completed her Masters in Information

Systems Security in September 2017. Before this, she volunteered at Seidet as part of the e-entrepreneurship program for marginalized entrepreneurs, assisting and conducting lectures in e-skills training. She became a Deputy Director in IT Document Management at the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture in Johannesburg, South Africa. Currently, she is looking into pursuing her PhD in Information Systems Security and also working and investing in her IT consultancy firm (Anzen).



**Sydney Lefifi** celebrates and embraces matters of beauty and coordinates all design responsibilities within the LEMEG Group. He studied architecture at the Tshwane University of Technology, specializing in design and attained his Master's Degree in the same field. In 2010 he received a diploma at the Marmomacc Stone Academy in Italy. In 2008 Sydney became a partner in LEMEG and shared design and management responsibilities. He has since matured into the partnership and helped to transform the practice into a major player in the industry. In 2011, having served two years on the management committee of the Limpopo Institute for Architecture, Sydney was elected President of the same institute and accomplished a successful two-year term. During the two years, the institute implemented a new brand and emphasized the development of youth by way of outreach programs aimed at schools.



**Dr. Adriana A. (Riana) Steyn** has been with the University of Pretoria (UP) for the last eleven years after she returned to academia from industry. She is currently a full-time senior lecturer in the Department of Informatics. Throughout the years, Riana has engaged numerous students by presenting both undergraduate and postgraduate modules. She has published various articles based on her teaching as well as entrepreneurial research experiences over the last few years. Her research focuses mainly on technology in education within the business analysis and design space, and how she can engage students more effectively while still delivering good quality content. Her different approach to teaching was born from the entrepreneurial research she is also passionate about. Here she developed a framework for SMEs to engage more effectively with technology as well as developing an “e-Skills for Entrepreneurs” course which focuses on effective technology engagement to create sustainable businesses. She won the International Association of Information Systems Award for Innovation in Teaching in 2018, and the UP Teaching Excellence Laureate in 2019.



**Karabo Mokaba** is a professional architect and registered with the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP). He was born in Johannesburg, Soweto. As an undergraduate at the University of Johannesburg, Karabo received numerous awards of excellence including the South African Institute of Steel Construction (SAISC) Prize for



Excellent Work based on steel construction and concrete, and the Cement Institute Award for Joint Best Fourth-Year Student in Construction and Detailing. In 2011, Karabo was awarded a National Research Foundation scholarship and graduated with a masters in architectural technology (professional) degree in March 2013. His thesis, titled *I2=Intermodal Interchange Information Exchange*, received the Corobik Architectural Student of the Year Award for the best use of masonry detailing. Karabo has worked for various firms where character growth is complemented by a strong emphasis and appreciation for design and detailing. He is highly enthusiastic about the design of systems.



**Vusi Ndala** is an accomplished and results-driven entrepreneur with expertise in strategic management, business turnarounds, revenue management, performance optimization, finance, sales and marketing, business and market development, risk management, and project management. He is an MBA graduate in global business and sustainability and holds a diploma in strategic management from the Maastricht School of Management in the Netherlands. He also holds a master's degree in philosophy specializing in labor relations management, obtained from the University of Pretoria. He founded Mzilakatha Strategic Management Services (renamed Ndalzen Group) headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2009 specializing in strategic management advisory and consulting. For over twenty-five years, he has dedicated a substantial amount of personal time to community service and development through various NGOs and professional organizations. He was and is still honored and privileged to be holding significant leadership roles in these organizations. He is an achiever of note. He has been awarded several accolades for meritorious service from both professional and community organizations. Chief among others are the Black Management Forum

(BMF) Gauteng Manager of the Year in 2006, Employee of the Year for two consecutive years in 2002 and 2003 from the Sowetan/Hollard Achievers Club, the UCSC International Scholarship Award, the Nuffic Scholarship Award, and the NRF Scholarship Award.



**Carina de Villiers** is a full professor and Head of the Department of Informatics at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. She obtained a BSc in computer science and mathematics, a higher education diploma, a diploma in tertiary education, an MEd (didactics) cum laude, an honors degree in computer science and a PhD in informatics). She is a member of several international bodies and serves on a number of editorial and advisory boards for journals, including IT and Development, and Information Systems Research. She has held a National Research Foundation rating as an established IS researcher since 2000.



**Linda Malinga** is a senior telecommunications engineer at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under the Integrated Capability Management research group, focusing on telecommunications, command and control, and intelligence systems. He joined the CSIR in 2008 as a researcher in the Mathematical and Computational Modeling Research Group where he was involved in modeling and simulation; and data communication systems. Linda has authored and co-authored several international conference papers and book chapters in various fields

including modeling and simulation; crowd control modeling; next generation networks; and ICTs in society. Prior to joining the CSIR, he enjoyed software engineering, home automation, and network development projects in the private sector. He holds a bachelor of science degree in Electrical and Information Engineering from the University of the Witwatersrand (2005, South Africa); an bachelor of engineering honors degree in Electronic from the University of Pretoria (2016, South Africa); and a master of engineering degree in Technology and Innovation Management from the University of Pretoria (2021, South Africa).



**Dr. Noluxolo Gcaza** is passionate about making cybersecurity accessible to different contexts. Her research interests include cyber security governance, cybersecurity awareness, and education. Currently she is a Research Group Leader at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). She serves on the Advisory Board of the Center for Research in Information and CyberSecurity (CRICS) at Nelson Mandela University. Dr. Gcaza also served as a Board Member in SaveTnet, a non-profit organization that focused on fostering a culture of cyber security in a community setting through spreading cyber security awareness. She contributes in the South African Bureau of Standards standardization process as a committee member of the Information Security Technical Committee.



# CHAPTER 1

## THE NARRATIVE OF A NEW SEIDET

### VUSI NDALA

#### **1. The genesis**

With its humble beginnings in the town of Siyabuswa, Mpumalanga province in February 1992, Siyabuswa Educational Improvement and Development Trust celebrated its twentieth anniversary in February 2012. The twenty years of existence were celebrated as they marked remarkable milestones for a voluntary community development organization that became synonymous with excellence in education improvement. One of the key milestones achieved was the launch of a book in 2008 which chronicled the history of the organization, its challenges, and tumultuous journey. In the course of its community development service, additional programs and activities were initiated to support the primary service offerings. This book, the second to chronicle the evolution of the organization, narrates the second phase of the organization in its existence beyond the first twenty years.

Better known as SEIDET, an acronym drawn from its full registered name, the organization strove for the betterment and improvement of education for children in Siyabuswa and surrounding areas with particular focus on science and mathematics. The mission was pursued following the observation of poor education in these subjects. The celebration of the two decades of its existence was relevant and proved to have had a substantial impact in the education of many families. It was therefore looking back at the history and the journey traveled, fitting to celebrate.

The twenty-year journey was not without hardships and encounters that put the resilience of the founding leaders and subsequent leadership to the test. At the pinnacle of its twentieth anniversary, the organization faced various challenges that largely stem from lack of funding amid the volunteering spirit of the community members. Seidet's two decades of existence were characterized by an organizational structure that was staffed with volunteers both at board and operational levels. Its operations and

programs were and are still funded by minimal learner fees and sporadically by donors and sponsors. Occasionally, board members would contribute individually to the funding of the programs and operations.

While the impact of the organization in the community was considerable in the first decade or so of its existence, the second decade saw overwhelming challenges that rendered the highly voluntary nature of the organization unable to pursue its mandate and achieve the intended objectives. The changing socioeconomic trends and South Africa's triple challenge of poverty, unemployment, and inequality exacerbated the challenges faced by the organization. The changing nature and refocus of the private sector on working with non-government and non-profit entities added to the complexity and challenges of organizations such as SEIDET. It was therefore untenable to continue with the current organizational and operational structure, which for some time proved to be unsustainable and posed threats to its existence.

It was August 8, 2012 when I received an email from Dr. Jackie Phahlamohlaka, then Deputy Chairman of the Board of Seidet. I read the email from my apartment in the fashionable and stylish city of Milan in Italy on the verge of completing my MBA studies and planning to return home two months later, following a year of academic excursion in the European country. The essence of the email was to invite me to and inform me about the twentieth anniversary celebrations that were scheduled to take place on the day and evening of October 6, 2012 with the first leg in Siyabuswa and the second leg at the CSIR Convention Center in Pretoria. The celebrations were finally held in April 2013 due to earlier postponement. His email was very short and to the point:

Dear Vusi, I trust you are doing well. I learned you are out of the country, but if you were around, I would like you to address the audience during the celebration. Wherever you are, and whatever your circumstances, an occasion like this cannot happen without you knowing. You have played a crucial role in its history.

I felt honored and was humbled by the gesture, and felt I could not have asked for a better warm welcome back home. I humbly accepted the invitation and started preparing for my speech, a task that was not a new feat as I have had opportunities to prepare for such occasions in my roles in various community and professional organizations in South Africa. Notwithstanding this, I was anxious as the outcome was unknown and to think that I was considered among many volunteers in the twenty-year history of the organization was overwhelming.