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More than a drop in the ocean; how can good examples of remote services be replicated?

We all know examples of remote services that work well. But all too often they remain isolated cases. The main factor behind their success may have been successful individuals in key positions. Perhaps a particular set of circumstances came together at the right place and time. Or maybe the role of government staff or local residents was critical.

Services are critical to economic development in remote settlements. Businesses are service providers and themselves rely on good services to be effective. Using insights gained from the research of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre and lessons from other countries, this paper will explore the key ingredients in improving remote services and consider how greater replication of good practice can be achieved. In particular, the paper will focus on the challenge of moving from person-dependent to system-dependent practice and the potential impact of replicated service models on economic development.

Biographies

Steve Fisher has been working in international development for the last fifteen years, specialising in community development, appropriate technology, small enterprise, conflict resolution and, more recently, community mental health. He is leader of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre project on improving desert services, for which the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) is lead agency.

Fay Rola-Rubzen is Associate Professor at Curtin University of Technology and the core project leader of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre's Desert Biz™ Project. She leads a team of researchers looking at factors that influence success of businesses in desert regions of Australia. Fay is a development economist and lectures in economics and policy, econometrics and mathematical programming. She has a strong background in economic modelling and extensive experience in international development, rural and regional development, capacity building, community development and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).