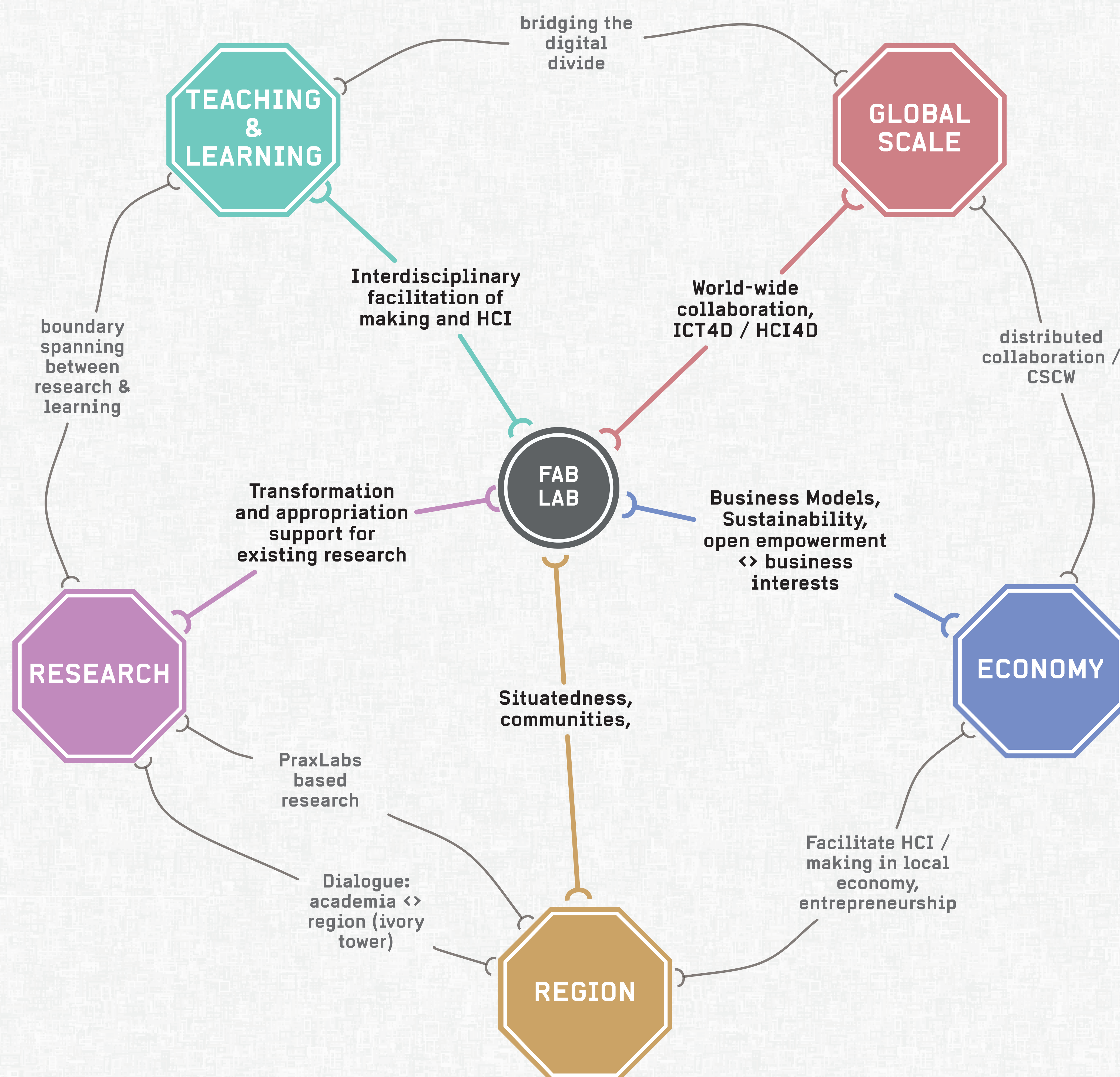


ON A HCI MOTIVATED PERSPECTIVE FOR ESTABLISHING AND POSITIONING A FAB LAB



INTRO

Making and Digital Fabrication in Fab Labs mark a paradigm shift in the design & production of artifacts towards the end-user. HCI offers a potent way of establishing, positioning and researching those trends through practice-, context- and end-user-focused tradition. Based on first ethnographic work, we offer a tentative model for this purpose.

TEACHING & LEARNING

A Fab Lab offers established educational benefits as a constructionist learning environment, facilitating ways to extend traditional CSCL and ways to achieve digital literacy. A HCI motivated perspective also views and treats the lab similar to a boundary object, spanning different academic as well as non-academic communities (of practice).

RESEARCH

Besides research on or explicitly planned for and in the lab, Fab Labs and making can enrich and transform a wide variety of academic research projects. We understand Fab Labs similar to novel ICT systems, offering appropriation support and, in a way, EUD-inspired tailorability of the lab resources & community to research projects.

REGION

Situatedness is a pillar of HCI which helps a Fab Lab to form and integrate with local communities, culture and practices, potentially disrupting the „ivory tower“ perception of academia. Reaching out into the region with real-world, in the wild work (PraxLabs) will help understand and shape future, more domestic making and digital fabrication.

GLOBAL SCALE

Fab Labs are inherently global and digital fabrication will break up boundaries between the digital and physical. HCI tradition and expertise can help facilitate the associated distributed collaborative work. A HCI based way of thinking can also help in ICT4D to alleviate the digital divide, e.g. by making digital fabrication more accessible.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

Economic sustainability and business models in the tension field between openness and traditional economy are the main weak point of the Fab Lab movement for now. HCI, especially CSCW has a long tradition balancing leftist, empowerment ideals and economic / work requirements, making it a strong perspective to further this area.