

Editorial: Knowledge sharing and knowledge management in Latin America and the Caribbean (Part II)

This double Special Issue of the 'Knowledge Management for Development Journal' focuses on knowledge sharing and knowledge management in Latin America and the Caribbean. The double issue comprises Part I, the December 2007 issue, plus Part II published in April 2008. Together, these two parts of the double issue provide a showcase for recent approaches, case studies, practices, tools, concepts and methodologies applied in development.

Knowledge management has relevance worldwide to productive, organizational and social processes in development. Much discussion and action in this field has arisen in different parts of the world, often originating in Northern-based organizations and developed countries. However, there has been little systematic discussion of how these approaches are being applied in development practices in Latin America and the Caribbean. Many different approaches have been tested, introduced, scaled-up and out, but have not necessarily been well documented.

There are specific knowledge management practices in existence in Latin America and the Caribbean which have never been classified directly as such. For example, indigenous knowledge practices, the action research approach, and Paulo Freire's approach to popular education all have relevance to knowledge management, within and outside the region. Hence, this issue of the Journal contributes to sharing and disseminating of the knowledge sharing and knowledge management concepts, tools, practices and approaches based on fieldwork in the region.

Given the fact that much of Latin America and the Caribbean is Spanish and Portuguese speaking, we were initially concerned there would not be enough contributions in English for what is essentially an English language journal. However, we were pleasantly surprised by the numerous submissions. This double issue has a total of 10 articles and 4 case studies. Most of these submissions are in English although some contributions are in Spanish with an English abstract.

Part II of the Special Issue comprises 7 articles, two of which have been written in Spanish and are published with English abstracts.

Articles

The first article, 'Knowledge management and communication to address information access and power asymmetries for resource-poor producers in value chains,' by Reinhild Bode, Paola

Andrea Victoria and Dora P. Arévalo Valencia, examines three value chains (coffee, silk and jaggery) in Colombia and Ecuador. It established that information and knowledge problems act as barriers for sustaining market relations and improving competitiveness.

The second article, 'Challenges and key success factors to integrating learning and change in monitoring and evaluation of development projects: case study of an urban agriculture project in eastern Cuba,' by Bertha Camacho Tuckermann, addresses the challenges and key success factors of integrating learning and change in monitoring and evaluation of development projects. A learning process was launched among project team members from which key success factors were identified. Resistance was addressed through dialogue, reflection and action which led also to the empowerment of the team as a whole.

Next, 'Gestión del conocimiento: aportes para una discusión Latinoamericana (*Knowledge management: a discussion in Latin America*)' by Kemly Camacho Jiménez develops a conceptual discussion on knowledge management, based on the experience of Sulá Batsu and Bellanet in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past 4 years.

In 'Who pays for water? A case study of action learning in the islands of the Caribbean,' Sarah McIntosh, Nicole Leotaud and Duncan Macqueen consider how action learning contributed to knowledge sharing about economic instruments for watershed management and their potential to contribute to improved rural livelihoods. It examines the value of the partnership between a Southern and a Northern non-governmental organisation (respectively the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute and the International Institute for Environment and Development) and compares the Caribbean process with those in the other project countries.

The fifth article, 'Arando en el desierto: poner el conocimiento del transporte rural en la agenda de desarrollo Latinoamericano (*Cultivating the desert: putting knowledge of rural transport on the agenda of Latin American development*)' by Ana Bravo describes the creation and consolidation process followed by the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development in Latin America (IFRTD).

The sixth article 'Forming a community of practice to strengthen the capacities of learning and knowledge sharing centres in Latin America and the Caribbean: a Dgroup case study' has been written by Andrea Carvajal, Odilia Mayorga, and Boru Douthwaite. A facilitation team was working to create and facilitate a community of practice among 14 learning and knowledge sharing centres in Latin America and the Caribbean. Factors such as connectivity, experience in using virtual tools, personal interests, influence of gender on participation, and decision making play key roles in determining the success of a community of practice.

Finally, in 'Developing a regional knowledge centre on HIV/AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean: a knowledge audit,' Javier Hourcade Bellocq, Taline Haytayan and Bertha Camacho Tuckermann describe the knowledge audit undertaken by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Latin America and the Caribbean. The regional programme has focused on supporting horizontal and South-South collaborations based on the premise that there exists a high level of technical ability in the region. In addition to the expertise of many people in civil society, there also exists a considerable accumulation of knowledge of HIV expressed in manuals, tools, virtual databases and in the experiences of the organizations and networks working on the theme.

What have we learnt?

As a group of Guest Editors, what have we learnt from publishing this Special Issue? Firstly, if we can take the submissions that we have received and published as examples of knowledge management with a Latin American and Caribbean flavour, it is probably fair to say that there does not appear to be one mainstream approach to knowledge management for development in the region: there are many diverse traditions, influenced by what is happening outside the region but informed by more home-grown approaches. This is by no means surprising as it probably reflects the situation in other regions, but still remains an interesting conclusion.

Secondly, we received a large number of submissions which were not relevant to the journal in the sense that they were neither knowledge management, often having too much of an information technology (IT) approach, and not focused on 'development.' Development in this specific context relates to such topics as aid to developing countries, international cooperation and poverty alleviation, often with a focus on health, agriculture, education, gender empowerment and policy issues. As a result of the number of papers without a development focus, we have reached the conclusion that future 'Calls for Papers' will place greater emphasis on the specific *development* component to make this clearer to potential authors.

Finally, two of the papers in this issue were written in and are being published in Spanish. This Special Issue placed a particular emphasis on including contributions which were in languages other than English. Although this search did lead to the inclusion of two very interesting papers, it did create a number of logistical problems and it has been also difficult to guarantee a totally consistent editorial process.

Margarita Salas, Kemly Camacho, Simone Staiger-Rivas and Camilo Villa, with Julie Ferguson and Sarah Cummings
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