Knowledge management at the African Capacity Building Foundation

Interview with Phineas Kadenge

Who is the KS champion in the organisation?
Currently, the champion is the Manager, Knowledge Management and Programme
Support Department.

Who is the primary contact for KS? Other key contacts?
The primary contact is Dr. Gene Ogiogio, Manager, Knowledge Management and
Program Support Department: g.ogiogio@acbf-pact.org
Others include: Ms. Rutendo Kambarami: r.kambarami@acbf-pact.org

What is the initiative called?
The initiative is called Knowledge Management for Capacity Building and
Development Management.

Where is the KS initiative located in the organisation?
The KS initiative is located in the Knowledge Management and Programme Support
Department (KMPSD).

In what year did the organisation's KS initiative begin?
2000.

Is there a Web site for the KS initiative?
http://www.acbf-pact.org/knowledge/KnowledgeRelated.asp
Other sites that support the initiative are: www.acbf-pact.org/tapnets
www.acbf-pact.org/apif2004/index.asp
www.acbf-pact.org/efnet

How many staff work directly on KS?
Nine staff.

How are resources allocated to or through the KS initiative?
Through the Foundation's Strategic Medium Term Plan and Annual Budget.

What are the primary tools or KS approaches in use? Personalisation? Codification?
The primary tools are six continental and global knowledge networks/CoPs called
Technical Advisory Panels and Networks (TAP-NETs); the African Policy Institutes
Forum; Country-Level Knowledge Networks; Best Practice Studies; Senior
Policymakers and Development Managers' Knowledge Sharing Programme; Lessons
Notes; Operations and Thematic Research; and Publications Series.

What tools or approaches are planned?
e-discussion forum; CoP for Regional Economic Communities; Economic and
Financial Policymakers' Network.

What physical spaces exist or have been created to support KS within ACBF?
The Library and Information Centre, Information and Communications Technology
Platform, and the Outreach and Communications Unit.

*Does the initiative have an external focus? i.e., is there an attempt to apply KS to the
organisation's development projects?*
The initiative also has an external focus. The Foundation's projects and programmes
as well as partner institutions benefit from and share knowledge on frameworks,
techniques and tools in policy research and analysis, as well as skills, practices and
experiences relating to:

- Implementation of capacity-building programmes
- Support to government and other stakeholders through policy research,
  specialized training and work attachment programmes
- Establishment and strengthening of country-level knowledge networks for
  dissemination of policy research findings
- Strategies in institutional sustainability

*What are the key sources of inspiration that guided your KS strategy? Who are your
influences?*
Knowledge management benchmarking missions have been conducted at most
admired knowledge institutions. Our influences are African policymakers and
development management institutions.

What led to the development of ACBF's KS Strategy?
It was inspired by the Executive Secretary, Dr. Soumana Sako. The development was
led by the present Manager, KMPSD, Dr. Gene Ogiogio. The knowledge management
system was designed as part of a change management process to enable the
Foundation to provide strategic inputs in Africa's development process beyond
project-based interventions.

*Does the KS strategy have links to other strategic initiatives within the organisation?
If so, please describe.*
The Knowledge Management and Programme Support Department draws inputs from
its own units; the ACBF core competence and knowledge management teams, who
are essentially operations staff; ACBF partner institutions; as well as the Foundation's
conferences, workshops and seminars. It feeds back best practices into operational
programmes.

*Is there a process in place to measure the impacts on the organisation? What are your
indicators of success?*
The performance of the knowledge management system is monitored continuously for
improvement. The indicators of success include: appropriateness, functionality and
continuing relevance of the design of the knowledge management system; the
relevance, quality, effectiveness and utility of the inputs into the system; effectiveness
of the infrastructural platform on which the system is based; ease of access by users to

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the Foundation's knowledge sites; and quality and utility of the knowledge generated and shared by the system, especially, in terms of currency, relevance, and extent of use by beneficiaries.

What are the biggest obstacles you have encountered?
Some of the biggest obstacles encountered include the need to build a strong organisational cultural and incentives system within the Foundation that will effectively encourage staff participation in knowledge sharing and the need for adequate funding and staffing.

General description of the KS initiative
Over the period of the Strategic Medium Term Plan, 2002 – 2006, the Foundation is striving to emerge as a knowledge-based organisation guided by a knowledge management strategy whose main objective is to generate, collate and share explicit and tacit knowledge in capacity building and substantive development issues within the remit of ACBF's core competencies.

Describe the changes within ACBF that the KS initiative will help bring about?
The KS initiative will help bring about improvement in operational quality, strengthen knowledge of best practices in capacity-building processes, and contribute to the design and implementation of development policies and programs that work. It will also enhance openness to learning.

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