

EDITORIAL

The first issue of 2010 includes 5 articles and two community notes. Although the subjects of the contributions are diverse, the majority are looking at networks. Three of the articles use automated analysis tools, such as the scientometric toolkit and tools of the *digital native*, to reveal patterns in knowledge creation and network development.

Articles

The first article ‘Knowledge management for development communities: balancing in the thin divide between tacit and codified knowledge’ by Alfonso Acuna represents one of the first efforts to use the tools of scientometrics to consider communications from the development sector. Scientometrics is the science of measuring and analysing science. In practice, scientometrics is often done using bibliometrics which involves measurement of the impact of scientific publications.

Alfonso Acuna takes the example of the *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*, this journal, as a case to illustrate the role of knowledge in development. He chose to study this journal because it is a concrete effort of the Knowledge Management for Development (KM4Dev)¹ community to codify and reify its knowledge; journals are a recognized way of exchanging knowledge; it is interesting to consider how a community, whose emphasis is on context-based knowledge deals with this in a more universal medium; and the journal can be studied from the perspective of scientometrics in terms of authors’ backgrounds, affiliations, full text analysis and citations. The research was originally undertaken as a Masters’ thesis at the University of Amsterdam.

Alfonso Acuna sees the journal as the proxy for the KM4Dev community and looks at how the dichotomies in the community (practitioner/academic, North/South and tacit/codified) are illustrated by the journal. He argues that the diversity of reification that the KM4Dev community produces is not yet visible.

The paper has been subject of a new sort of peer review process – a virtual discussion between three reviewers and the author - which took place over three weeks in the first months of 2010 and which will be published in the next issue of the journal as ‘The musketeers’ dialogue.’

Next, Iftikhar Hussain, Juliet Willetts, Naomi Carrard and Farooq Khan consider ‘Knowledge networks and capacity building in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.’ This article reports on research of networks which used an online survey to collect data on their functions, experiences and effectiveness. Several country-level networks were identified in the Southeast Asia region and a regional network in the Pacific. These networks were engaged in advocacy, sector coordination, knowledge sharing and capacity building, with varying priority depending on the network or region. The article argues that these networks are playing an important and effective role in the sector, particularly to test new approaches, influence policy and suggest innovative norms. The crucial challenge remains to see national authorities recognise the legitimacy

of these networks and mandate them for the functions they seem to perform better than national actors.

The third article is ‘Digital activism in the Middle East: mapping issue networks in Egypt, Iran, Syria and Tunisia’ by Fieke Jansen. In her research, Fieke Jansen uses what she calls two ‘natively digital’ research tools, namely *issue crawler* and *issue harvester*. Using these tools, she argues that digital activism networks form around issues and that there is an inherent conflict in the formation of networks in repressive environments. Although networks enable the negotiation of power and decrease isolation, they also make the actors traceable and visible to the oppressor. In Iran, activist networks balance the activist nature of their online activities with the vulnerability of these networks in a repressive environment. Syria has intellectual issue networks. Egypt has relatively open and strong issue networks with highly connected, multi-actor, local networks. In Tunisia, local digital activists challenge repression by making links with the very active Diaspora.

This article is part of a larger research study conducted for the Advanced Master in International Development Studies at the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, for which Fieke Jansen won the thesis prize in 2009/2010.

Next, Tara M. Sullivan, Saori Ohkubo, Ward Rinehart and J. Douglas Storey have written ‘From research to policy and practice: a logic model to measure the impact of knowledge management for health programs’. To date, few monitoring and evaluation guidelines exist for knowledge management products and services. One initiative undertaken by the Health Information and Publications Network (HIPNet), a network of health technical assistance organizations, led to the development of the ‘Guide to monitoring and evaluating health information products and services’, published in 2007. The guide provides an approach to measuring the function and outcomes of health information programs, suggesting indicators and a logic model linking inputs, processes, and outputs to multiple levels of outcomes. It is concluded that using a logic model such as this can be used to systematically measure discrete program components, test links between them, and advance an understanding of how to produce knowledge management programs that facilitate the application of evidence to health care practice.

The final article by Iina Hellsten and Sarah Cummings ‘Using semantics to reveal knowledge divides in Dutch development cooperation: the case of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)’ again uses scientometrics tools – this time semantic maps – to analyse differences in communications between the domains of research, policy and the media in The Netherlands as they relate to the MDGs. This was a preliminary study which reveals that the semantic maps method can provide fruitful insights into three separate knowledge domains involved in the debate around MDGs.

Community notes

During July-August 2009, a lively discussion took place on the mailing list of the Knowledge Management for Development (KM4Dev) community on the 2008 evaluation of knowledge management and institutional learning at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This is described and reviewed by Manuel Flury in ‘Changing organisational culture – an overwhelming challenge?’

In ‘Communities and networks in support of knowledge sharing’, Nancy White reviews the stories and examples of real communities and networks that were provided by fellow members of the KM4Dev community. These were also used in the Information Management Resource Kit (IMARK) module on knowledge sharing from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). In this first of two parts, Nancy White looks at how communities and

networks are used to share knowledge, learn and connect. In the second part to be published in September, she will be looking at creation and support.

Editorial team

This year sees some changes to the Editorial Board. New members of the Board for 2010 comprise Paul Hendriks, Hassan Kaya, Laurens Klerkx and Stephen Mutula. Steve Song and Katherine Morrow are both stepping down from active participation so we would like to thank them for their contributions over the years. Katherine will remain on the Board in an honorary role as she was one of the group members who started the journal in 2005.

Last but not least, Ewen Le Borgne of IRC has also kindly agreed to become a Senior Editor. We look forward to working with him.

Sarah Cummings, Ivan Kulis, Ewen Le Borgne and Lucie Lamoureux

Note

1. www.km4dev.org