

Editorial

In this second issue of 2010, the first article is ‘Exploring the effectiveness of development research with a monitoring and learning approach’ by Claudia Michel, Eva Maria Heim, Karl Herweg and Thomas Breu, all based at the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, hosted by the University of Bern and funded jointly by the National Science Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The article reports on a study of the links between research, policy and practice, drawing on the experiences of an international research network of Swiss, African, Asian and Latin American institutions.

The NCCR North-South conducts trans-disciplinary research which aims to encourage collaboration between academic and non-academic partners in order to link science and practice. This study assesses, on the one hand, the factors that contribute to links between researchers and non-academic partners and, on the other hand, identifies the delivery of concrete products for society resulting from these links. A number of methods for data collection were used, including Outcome Mapping. The article concludes that research outcomes do not only depend on the researchers’ knowledge and engagement, but largely on the willingness of the partners. Early identification of partners and objectives was found to be important but, simultaneously, researchers need to flexibly adapt their plans in the course of time. Significant changes most often depend on a set of favourable circumstances, such as a beneficial policy opportunity or a strong alliance between various actors.

The second article, ‘Multiple knowledges, multiple languages: are the limits of my language the limits of my world?’ by Valerie A. Brown, considers that reconciliation of multiple *knowledges* involved in international development depends on all participants hearing the multiple languages of the people involved. The article argues against the proposition that the limits of a language mean the limits of the speaker’s world, quoting research findings that suggested that collective management of complex issues requires: individual commitment to the collective task; a community of practice that respects different pathways to the same goal; enhanced capacity to manage change; and re-orientation of organisations to include integrative structures. Several lessons from this discussion are relevant to international development agencies, their clients and their client’s communities. This leads to the conclusion that there is a need to respect and protect each community’s own endogenous language. Community members need the skills to be able to contribute to a collective language without endangering their own. All participants need to take remedial action to re-balance the differentials in power among the languages of the decision-making interests: individual, community, specialised, organisational and holistic.

Next, Mike Powell and Sarah Cummings discuss ‘Progress to date of the IKM Emergent Research Programme: synthesis, understandings and lessons learned.’ The Information and Knowledge Management Emergent Research Programme, known as IKM Emergent, is based on an international network of hybrid practitioners-cum-researchers, challenging current practice of information and knowledge management in the development sector

through its focus on multiple knowledges. Indeed, this thinking on multiple knowledges is very much influenced by the approach to multiple knowledges developed by Valerie A. Brown, author of the previous paper, and by the thinking of other members of the IKM Emergent network. This article reflects on what has been attempted in the programme to date and how that can shape the rest of the programme which will run until 2011. It identifies emergent connections between the various programme activities and considers how these might be presented as coherent and actionable messages to the development sector.

Community Notes

The Community Note 'A Knowledge Share Fair and a KM4Dev meeting in Colombia, May 2010: involving people in a rich environment of dialogue on agriculture and knowledge management in Latin America and the Caribbean' by Simone Staiger-Rivas, Gauri Salokhe, John Smith, Tania Jordan, and Viviana Palmieri, describes two international events hosted by the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) during May 2010. These are the Knowledge Share Fair for Latin America and the Caribbean, funded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and a regional meeting of the Knowledge Management for Development (KM4Dev) community. The Fair was attended by 200 professionals from more than 70 organisations and 18 countries, and showcased more than 40 experiences related to knowledge management in agriculture, development and food security. The affiliated KM4Dev meeting resulted in a strong endorsement of the existing regional (and Spanish-speaking) network on knowledge management for development called SIWA.

In 'Communities and networks in support of knowledge sharing. Part 2', 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 FAO. In this second of two parts, Nancy White looks at creation and support of communities and networks. In the first part (White 2010), she considered how communities and networks are used to share knowledge, learn and connect.

The third and final Community Note 'Dialogue of the Four Musketeers. Peer review of "Knowledge management for development communities: balancing in the thin divide between tacit and codified knowledge" by Alfonso Acuna' was compiled by Sarah Cummings. In 2007, while a Master's student of Science and Technology Studies at the University of Amsterdam, Alfonso Acuna wrote a thesis on this subject. At the beginning of 2010, Alfonso Acuna was asked to adapt this thesis as an article for this journal, subject to peer review. This peer review took the form of an online dialogue from 24 January–4 February 2010 between a small group of volunteers from the KM4Dev community. The Community Note provides a summary of the peer review which was used as the basis for revision the article which was published in the previous issue of the journal (Acuna 2010).

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

References

- Acuna, A., 2010. Knowledge management for development communities: balancing in the thin divide between tacit and codified knowledge. *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*, 6 (1), 4–20.
- White, N., 2010. Communities and networks in support of knowledge sharing. Part 1. *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*, 6 (1), 91–102.