

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

**REPORT TO:
INANDA NTUZUMA KWAMASHU (INK)
AREA-BASED MANAGEMENT (ABM)
AND URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAMME (URP)**



**Prepared by:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As government structures around the world are faced with a worldwide trend towards taking a more 'integrated' approach to governance and development, and policymakers realise the importance of multi-stakeholder, inter-sectoral collaboration, the 'Communities of Practice' (CoPs) approach to knowledge management and innovation is increasingly gaining momentum in the public sector worldwide. Through peer-to-peer collaborative activities, members of Communities of Practice come together willingly across sectoral and departmental divides to share information, build knowledge, develop expertise, and solve problems. The focus is on building members' capacity as well as that of their.

This report is based on a set of ten international case studies of Communities of Practice. The intention has been to explore this international experience and to draw out implications for the INK ABM/URP of Ethekewini Municipality as this agency potentially embarks on a Communities of Practice approach.

The report summarises the concept of Communities of Practice (CoPs), including the general dimensions of a CoP, its typical lifecycle, and how it differs from other organisational structures. It then draws on the ten case studies to extract guidelines in seven key areas.

The primary benefits of a CoP approach that have been revealed through this research include: problem-solving, innovation, making existing knowledge visible, building relationships, creating a holistic approach, development of new tools, localisation, personal and professional development, legitimisation, and policy impact.

The general guidelines extracted from the cases fall in seven areas: organisational context, initiating CoPs, membership, roles, tools and processes, practices, and resources. Special emphasis is placed on the need especially in the public sector for the sponsoring organisation to be committed to the CoP, to create an enabling environment for the CoP, and to have leading champions on board for the project. In addition, the report emphasises the need for skilled coordination and facilitation of meetings to ensure genuine dialogue and cutting-edge learning that keeps members motivated and energised by the activities.

The report concludes with a section on implications for INK ABM/URP. As the actual business planning for a CoP was outside of this study which was primarily focused on the cases, the report suggests a feasibility study process of interviewing potential members and assessing the organisational context, followed by a phase of committing and implementing the CoPs. Various possibilities are presented in terms of how CoPs could be defined, whether along the existing impact areas of INK ABM/URP or more openly around key questions held by practitioners. Choices are also presented in terms of involving stakeholders across the private and NGO sectors in addition to the public sector practitioners.

The report is accompanied by a brief handbook, and a compendium of readings on Communities of Practice.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

As government structures around the world are faced with a worldwide trend towards taking a more 'integrated' approach to governance and development, and policymakers realise the importance of multi-stakeholder, inter-sectoral collaboration, the approach of 'Communities of Practice' (CoPs) is increasingly gaining momentum in the public sector worldwide. Through this approach, learning networks are forming across sectors, departments, disciplines, and stakeholder groups for people to share experiences and ideas, build skills, solve problems, set standards, develop tools and create relationships, leading to more innovative, motivated, and effective organisations.

This report is based on a set of case studies of Communities of Practice in the public sector around the world, (including two which are hosted by non-governmental organisations in collaboration with government or relating to the public, urban domain). The intention with this study has been to explore this international experience to understand how CoPs create a sense of joint enterprise, how they create relationships of mutual engagement and interaction, what benefits they produce and what lessons they can offer.

The study specifically seeks to draw out implications for the Inanda-Ntuzuma-KwaMashu Area-Based Management/Urban Renewal Programme (INK ABM/URP) of Ethekwini Municipality. We will offer a number of strategies for creating, and cultivating CoPs and for documenting the knowledge they produce and integrating this knowledge into the work of the urban renewal programme overall.

1.1. ABOUT COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

According to Etienne Wenger, who coined the term Communities of Practice with Jean Lave in the late 1980's, Communities of Practice are simply "groups of people who share a passion for something they do, and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better." Through peer-to-peer collaborative activities, members of Communities of Practice come together willingly to share information, build knowledge, develop expertise, and solve problems. The focus is on building members' capacity as well as that of their organisations and is not primarily directed at delivering a product or service. The membership usually spans across organisational and sector-specific boundaries and relies on informal phenomena such as passion, relationships and shared experience, as opposed to formal job descriptions.

Communities of Practice are spreading and the technique is being applied beyond what anyone can keep track of, including the originators of the concept (Interview 1 with Etienne Wenger, May 2005). There is a wide field of experience to draw on throughout the world, and the knowledge base on how to create successful CoPs is expanding and deepening. In the corporate sector, CoPs are common within organisations in order to link up people from different departments who somehow share a practice. In the public sector, the CoPs may include members from different government departments and even from beyond government, including companies and non-governmental organisations to solve pressing problems.

William Snyder and Xavier Briggs in 2003 did an extensive study of Communities of Practice in the United States government system. They write,

“Communities of practice steward the knowledge assets of organizations and society. They operate as “social learning systems” where practitioners connect to solve problems, share ideas, set standards, build tools, and develop relationships with peers and stakeholders. These structures are considered informal because they cannot be mandated from the outside. An essential dimension of a community of practice is voluntary participation, because without this a member is less likely to seek or share knowledge; build trust and reciprocity with others; or apply the community’s knowledge in practice. Members’ willingness to learn and relate together is what drives value in communities. This is not to say external sponsors and stakeholders cannot guide or influence a community—in fact, they have important roles to play. But the nature of the sponsor relationship is qualitatively different from a traditional reporting relationship. It is more like a strategic alliance, in this case with an informal, knowledge-based structure.” (Snyder and Briggs, 2003)

1.1.1. Dimensions of a Community of Practice

Communities of Practice are usually defined by three basic dimensions, The Domain, the Community, and the Practice, described in the following diagram:

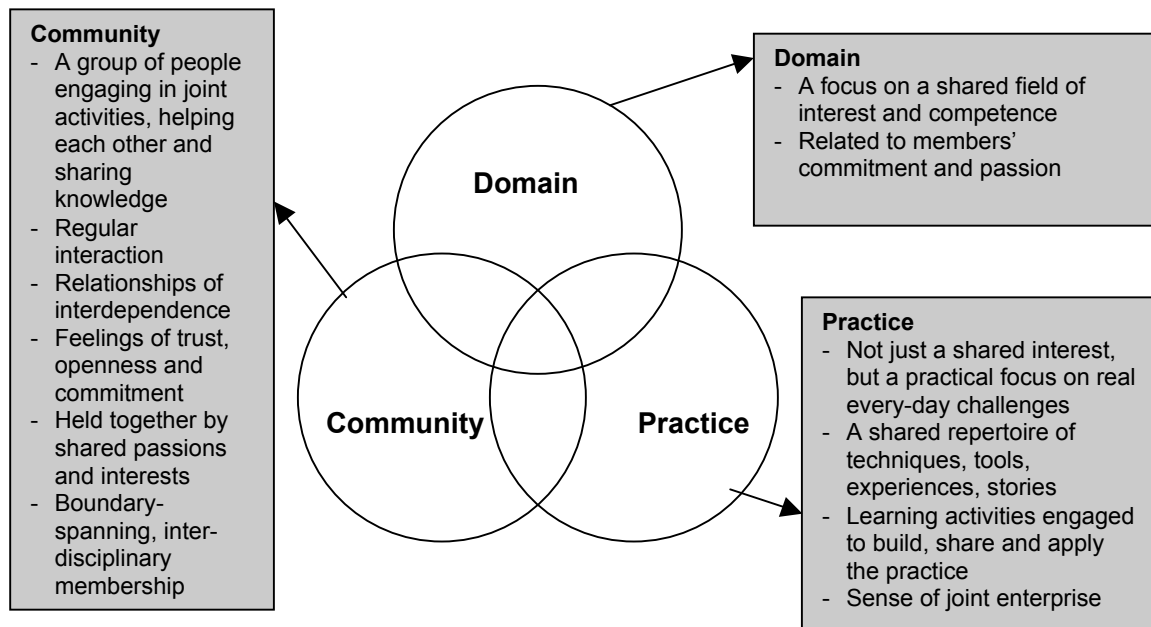


Figure 1. Dimensions of a Community of Practice

The effectiveness of a CoP depends on strength in all three dimensions.

One of the most important strengths of a Communities of Practice approach is that it recognises that the most useful knowledge is often not that which is easily documented. By coming together as a group of practitioners around a shared domain and building relationships of trust that enable open communication, members are able to access the ‘tacit’ and contextual knowledge which exists in people. They do not only learn what someone did to solve a problem, but they are able to ask *why* and *how* this person did

what they did. They are also able to put a new problem to the group and share the process of thinking through new solutions together. Thus, Communities of Practice enable knowledge to flow in response to ‘pull’ – when it is practically needed, as opposed to in response to ‘push’ – general knowledge which the institution or experts feel the practitioner ‘should know’.

1.1.2. Communities of Practice vs. other structures

In setting up a Community of Practice, it is important to consider whether this is the appropriate form to serve a certain need. This question will be covered more in the guidelines later in this report, but it is useful up front to get a quick sense of the distinction between CoPs and other groupings within an organisation. As will be apparent from the cases in this study, Communities of Practice can take many different forms and are subject to different interpretations, so they don’t always appear according to a strict, generic definition. For a simple overview to distinguish CoPs from other structures, Wenger offers the following table:

	What’s the purpose?	Who belongs?	What holds them together?	How long do they last?
Communities of Practice	To develop members’ capabilities; to build and exchange knowledge	Members select themselves based on expertise or passion for a topic.	Passion, commitment, and identification with the group’s expertise	As long as there is interest in maintaining the group
Formal work groups	To deliver a product or service	Members include everyone who reports to the group’s manager.	Job requirements and common goals	Until the next reorganization
Project teams	To accomplish a specified task	Members are assigned by senior management.	The project’s goals and milestones	Until the project has been completed
Informal networks	To collect and pass on information	Membership consists of friends and business acquaintances.	Mutual need and relationships	As long as people have a reason to connect

Table 1: CoPs compared to other types of structures

From Wenger, “Communities of Practice: The organisational frontier” in HBR, 2001

1.1.3. Lifecycle of a Community of Practice

Though the story of each Community of Practice is different, it is useful in trying to initiate and cultivate a CoP to see it as following a lifecycle. Drawing on various lifecycle descriptions (Wenger, Snyder and Briggs, McDermott) and considering specifically the situation of a public sector organisation, we have chosen to present the stages as follows:

1. Discovery: Identifying strategic issues to address – those that align with both strategic objectives and members' interests
2. Committing: Taking the conscious decision to move forward with a CoP
3. Creating an Enabling Environment: Making sure that the organisational context and support is available for the CoP
4. Coalescing: Convening members to develop an action-learning agenda and building their collective commitment to pursue it together
5. Maturing: Building on knowledge-sharing and co-consulting activities – toward collaborations on innovation and application projects; growing beyond the initial group
6. Stewarding: Establishing a prominent role in the field and taking stewardship for addressing leading-edge issues at scale
7. Winding down: Acknowledging when the CoP has served its purpose and needs to close; slowing down activities; preparing for closure
8. Dispersing and leaving a legacy: Beyond success, “what’s next”- institutionalization as a formal organization; letting the community dissolve once the issues lose salience; segmenting the community into sub-areas as issues become more differentiated.

Snyder and Briggs have listed the management tasks needed for different phases of a CoP lifecycle in their paper. (Snyder and Briggs, 2003)

1.1.4. The interface between the formal and the informal

As stated earlier, the term “Communities of Practice” was coined in the late 1980’s, and has proven extremely useful across sectors in these times. It is important to be aware, however, that CoPs are not a recent invention or a management “fad”. People have always come together in such learning communities – in fact, Wenger and Lave’s research partly involved researching traditional apprenticeship structures that pre-date modern institutions and organisations. As such, CoPs may also be more appropriate and similar to indigenous African knowledge systems than formal bureaucracies.

Communities of Practice have also existed informally within modern institutions and organisations for a long time alongside formal structures. Sometimes, however, these and similar informal structures of learning and knowledge-sharing function *in spite of* the formal structures as opposed to being supported by them. Part of the intention with consciously implementing a CoP strategy is to increase the quality of knowledge sharing and to find ways for formal and informal processes to support one another.

According to Snyder and Briggs, “While scale and functional specialization still offer important benefits, and while centralized coordination and enforcement of standards also have a role to play, the old structures are not enough. Many of our most urgent social

problems call for flexible arrangements, constant adaptation, and the savvy blending of expertise and credibility that requires crossing the boundaries of organizations and sectors.” (Snyder and Briggs, 2003)

Supporting communities of practice requires co-ordinators and sponsors to take an approach that leaves traditional planning and implementation behind. It combines an approach more like cultivation, consciously designing an enabling environment for CoPs to grow, learn, and thrive, without engineering too strictly what the CoP must do or achieve. Snyder calls this a “quasi-evolutionary” approach.

1.2. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

1.2.1. Motivation

As a global network of change agents, the Pioneers of Change network is itself a Community of Practice and many network members have been involved in co-ordinating Communities of Practice in their localities around the world. Our research approach for this work is grounded in an action-research style, through which we have engaged with the experiences of Pioneers of Change members from different countries in this area, and facilitated ongoing dialogue among the research team.

Our theoretical starting point has been with Etienne Wenger. Wenger has been a guide and mentor to us during this research through phone conversation, email exchanges, and a face-to-face meeting. In addition to reading Wenger’s work, we spent several weeks going through the additional literature and the many cases already available on the topic. We also joined an online CoP for CoP practitioners, called CPSquare to share with other practitioners around the world.

In line with the systemic approach of Pioneers of Change, we further studied documents from INK ABM/URP to understand the existing context of the programme. In the guidelines, we propose a number of suggestions for doing stakeholder interviews and some feasibility research in order to make sure that whatever strategy is applied is rooted in the real local needs.

1.2.2. Why case studies?

The systemic approach emphasises that it is impossible to copy a “best practice” directly, and that all prescriptions for complex social situations should be rooted in an understanding of the local context. The benefit of a case approach is that the context of each of these cases can be made explicit, and serve to add to the understanding of the methodology. The cases are thus intended to broaden the scope of possibilities visible to INK ABM/URP as opposed to offering directly replicable models.

Telling stories reveals tacit knowledge, and as such offers the reader access to the project illustrated at a deeper level. The case approach enables us to include relevant information beyond a questionnaire/ table format, or theory. Just as Communities of Practice are based on an understanding that knowledge lives in people to a much larger and richer extent than in databases, so the case approach allows us to capture different forms of knowledge – understanding the “what”, “why”, “who”, and “how”. In interviewing CoP facilitators for this research, we asked questions about the unspoken, unwritten

rules and practices, and the personal qualities required by CoP facilitators in order to get beyond the knowledge that is written explicitly in their documentation. In this way we access a more practical knowledge, which is more useful to INK ABM/URP in applying the lessons.

That said, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. Snyder and Briggs for their research interviewed 75 people for 3 cases in addition to written materials and artefacts. The scope for the current project is much narrower with only 1-2 people interviewed for each case in addition to a few associated documents. The scope is therefore not as extensive but the results will still open up possibilities for the INK strategy. Each case has a contact person associated with it in case more information is needed.

PART 2: CASE RESEARCH

2.1. ABOUT THE CASES

As stated earlier, this study is based on a review of ten international cases of Communities of Practice. The cases have been collected from different contributors within the Pioneers of Change network and each one reflects its own organisational and cultural context. We have standardised the format so as to enable analysis of the cases, but at the same time, we have allowed the cases to still display the diversity of approaches and voices reflecting the diversity of the CoPs they describe.

When reading the cases it is important to be aware that the generic model of a Community of Practice as described in the first section of this report is always adapted to specific needs and contexts. None of these cases should be seen as a “model CoP” and many of them diverge in various ways from the standard definition. They should be read as a collective picture to illustrate how the generic CoP idea becomes adjusted, adapted, and situated in specific contexts.

2.2. CASE SUMMARIES

This section offers a brief summary paragraph for each case study to provide context to the subsequent analysis. The full text of the cases is available in the appendix.

Case 1: Care for Youth

Care for Youth originated in a network for youth-based organisations within the De Lier municipality, Netherlands. The CoP identifies problems of the youth aged between 0 and 21. They can be of a social, physical or psychological nature. By combining the different points of view of various specialized organisations, problems can be detected early. The CoP is also able to advise the policy making body of the municipality if there are general issues that continue to emerge. The CoP exists in three layers:

- the inner circle who are present at all meetings for all issues
- the middle circle who consist of specialists who can be invited when needed but who still consider themselves part of the CoP
- the outer layer who come for very specific issues and are not part of the CoP

Relationships in the CoP are bound by a contract which all participants sign. No additional funds are allocated to the CoP since it falls within local government responsibility and all organisations are there because it is part of their work. The CoP has ensured that lines of communication are shorter, and problems are resolved quicker.

Case 2: WECAN! Food for Fife

Food for Fife (FfF) is a CoP that is connected with the Centre for Human Ecology (CHE) in Scotland. The purpose of the CoP is to catalyse community led local food projects across Scotland. FfF supports local ‘food champions’, contributes to regional and national policy and seeks to localize and connect food growing, distribution and recycling systems.

FfF participants are all activists and local people involved in the local food industry. They must live locally and be committed to the CoP for at least 1 year. After a year some people leave completely, but most stay involved in some way and move in and out as needed. Various issues have been key to its success:

- FfF emerged after 18 months of CHE's involvement with the community
- The co-coordinators are passionate but also able to inspire the passion in others
- The co-coordinators are supported by various partner organisations
- Enough time and energy is committed up front to build trust within the CoP and with supporting organisations

Case 3: Inter-Disciplinary Leadership Network

Continuing changes in IT and technical skills affect human resource management, thereby placing increasing demands on management of Gentofte Municipality in Denmark. The interdisciplinary leadership forum was set up in 2004 to address these challenges, and provide the opportunity for managers at all levels to meet at a forum that is confidential and provides learning and growth based on the experiences of the members.

Better leadership/management practices are encouraged and managers can develop themselves personally and professionally as a result of the support network. Membership is not optional and 360 employees in management positions from every field of local public government and service participate in this network.

The network is divided into small network groups of 7-8 participants. These groups are diverse in terms of professional make-up and demographics, and have a network consultant from within the organization assigned to them to encourage a reflective team.

Case 4: Preparing the Workforce

The Pilbara region, situated in the North West of Western Australia is inhabited by 40,000 inhabitants. Although rich in minerals, natural resources and cultural heritage, the region is affected by the legacy of disenfranchising indigenous people. Unemployment is high, and levels of education are low compared to non-indigenous people as a result of this legacy. The Indigenous Employment Policy was created by the Australian Government in 1999 to address the history of discriminating against employing indigenous people and the lack of educational opportunity. It serves to improve the employment circumstances and future prospects of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Pilbara Region is experiencing a labour shortage in the resource industry as a consequence of an economic boom, and resulting in employment opportunities. The "Preparing the Workforce" Community of Practice came about due to the high unemployment rate of indigenous people, the change of policy to improve their circumstances, and the need for labour in the resource industry. Membership is voluntary and participants were drawn from community groups, government agencies and local industry leaders. Most of the 20 participants are on a managerial level and in positions dealing with employment and community development.

The aims of the CoP were achieved through a collaborative approach of building relationships among members of the resource industry and the community with the view of assisting them with their current and future labour shortages and providing positive employment outcomes for Indigenous people.

Case 5: Public Involvement in Health Canada

In 1997, Health Canada staff members involved in “Public Involvement” (PI) came together in response to the government’s 1997 mandate to deepen its commitment to citizen engagement. The PI staff members came together initially to draw on the shared expertise of PI practitioners in drafting a policy statement, but this initiative soon evolved into a community of practice with wider and deeper impact.

Through their co-learning, the PI CoP created the Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision Making which remains in place as the standard for how to do the work.

Members joined voluntarily based on interest in the topic, not formal affiliation or mandate, resulting in “collegial rather than hierarchical” relationships. Processes used by the PI CoP to meet and learn include: monthly network meetings, informal channels of communication, shared learning activities, and a shared intranet space, as well as collaboration on tools/policy pieces. A bi-monthly speaker series opened to participants outside the CoP infused the community with “new thinking by bringing in outside perspectives as well as new faces.”

This CoP created a number of tools, policy contributions, learning opportunities, and a network of staff that was important for many who appreciated experiencing a community that was horizontal, safe, productive, and informal.

Case 6: Ayuda Urbana

This case describes a CoP within the World Bank that emerged out of the desire, in the late 90’s, to take knowledge management from simple collecting information to connecting the practitioners with knowledge to one another. The CoPs within the World Bank became known as Thematic Groups.

The Mayor of San Salvador, and urban specialists from the World Bank started conversations about inter-city capability. They recognized the value of connecting peers across borders to address problems and challenges that cities in the region all faced. A group of ten cities decided to participate in the initiative: Guatemala City, Havana, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San Jose, San Juan, San Salvador, Santo Domingo, and Tegucigalpa.

The objective of the project is to improve the quality of life of all city dwellers by improving municipal effectiveness and efficiency in each of the cities involved. The project brought mayors and their staff together to understand issues, analyse problems and apply both established and creative solutions to the delivery of an array of services.

The project has resulted in a self-sustaining learning system. It was developed to the point where the local partners were prepared to take over the responsibility for continuing the program.

Case 7: Communities that Care

Communities That Care (CtC) is a community-based early intervention and prevention programme which aims to tackle future social problems. The programme is based on an understanding of risk and protective factors to help communities develop an integrated approach to:

- the positive development of children and youth
- the prevention of problem behaviours, including substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and violence

The case described here, is based on the experience of the CtC programme in a neighbourhood in Rotterdam, named Het Oude Noorden (The Old North). This neighbourhood counts 18.000 very diverse inhabitants. Young, old, rich, poor, students, actors, artists, entrepreneurs and shop owners live in a small area in the north of the city of Rotterdam which is one of the largest cities in The Netherlands. Most of the people in this area are considered immigrants, meaning they or one of their parents have been born outside of The Netherlands.

The most important lesson is that making changes to service delivery or bringing in new practices and services within a geographical area needs to include people from all levels.

Case 8: Winsford Networked Learning Community

The case illustrates the work of a Networked Learning Community (NLC) of schools in the Winsford region, United Kingdom in exploring and realising the concept of Community Leadership. Through practices of collaborative learning and participatory processes the network establishes and nurtures links with local public and private partners developing social capital and improving quality of life through active dialogue and joint action among stakeholders.

The NLC involves 17 schools and demonstrates principles and practices of a Community of Practice in a network highlighting the “bridging” rather than “bonding” aspects of relationships, spreading and enhancing one vision across the broader community. The project is implemented in the framework of the Networked Learning Communities project within the remit of the National College for School Leadership, a centre for fostering the research and development of school leadership in the U.K.

Case 9: Udaipur as a Learning City

ULC is a network of people in Udaipur, India, who come together to develop visions and practices of self-reliance and freedom, to create positive re-generation from within, to appreciate the local strengths and capacities, to build caring and connected communities and to challenge unjust structures.

This network, which was launched in 2000 by the Shikshantar institute is a Community of Practice in a very broad sense and is based on a completely open invitation to people of various ages and backgrounds in Udaipur. They emphasise local wisdom, indigenous

language, and traditional festivals, supporting dialogues, community reflections, and workshops on a range of issues concerning the local people. They also run learning exchanges, as well as practical work activities around ecologically sustainable living.

Case 10: Santo Andre More Equal (SAMI)

This case covers the Integrated Programme for Social Inclusion in the municipality of Santo Andre in Sao Paulo state, Brazil. Although the Santo Andre More Equal (SAMI) programme is not a pure Community of Practice, it is inspired by the concept. The CoP approach is integrated into the relationship that the municipality has with its stakeholders from multiple sectors and the local people living in slum areas in Santo Andre.

SAMI was formed to combat social exclusion, through the intention of going beyond the sector approach of public administration. Actions in the municipality would be integrated for servicing families living in slum areas as a result of the process of urbanization. The first period of SAMI reached 3700 families (16% of the slum's population) and the following period an additional 2000 families.

2.3. SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCES

The scope of this particular project has been specifically to look at international experiences that might be relevant to the INK ABM/URP strategy in terms of establishing Communities of Practice. It is important to recognise though, that the concept of communities of practice and learning networks is not foreign in South Africa and various successful innovations are taking place domestically in this area, complementing the international trends. Further, in 2002, Etienne Wenger visited South Africa invited by the University of Pretoria for a Knowledge Management Symposium, attended by various South African organisations interested in implementing the approach.

As examples of South African practices comparable to Communities of Practice in or related to the public sector, we came across the EPWP X-Change (a learning network currently being set up by the Expanded Public Works Programme), the South African Cities Network, and others.

PART 3: CASE ANALYSIS AND GUIDELINES

3.1. BENEFITS AND IMPACT OF COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

According to Wenger's model presented earlier, the main purpose of CoPs is to develop member's capabilities and to build and exchange knowledge, rather than to deliver a product, accomplish a specific task, or to collect and pass on information. The learning purpose clearly must be central in a CoP, but they tend to also meet some of the other additional purposes. The ten cases revealed a number of direct and indirect benefits created by the CoPs:

- **Action-learning and problem-solving.** This is clearly the top benefit of CoPs. CoPs recognise that the most useful and practical knowledge is embedded in practitioners. Through the CoPs, people come together around an issue they care about, and take responsibility for their own learning. Knowledge is shared based on a "pull" force, applied to real-world cases and problems, rather than a "push" force of what experts, managers, or academics think people need to know. Best practices are shared in context of problems and questions to which they can offer an answer. In this way, CoPs enable increased access to information, methods, expertise, and resources. This benefit is apparent in all the cases, particularly strongly in Care for Youth, the Inter-Disciplinary Leadership Network, and Public Involvement in Health Canada.
- **Innovation.** Through the above-mentioned processes of problem-solving and making the whole system visible, new projects often spin off out of CoPs. This innovation is in large part a result of, and dependent on, the boundary-spanning nature of CoPs – the diversity of members, and the opportunity for them to meet people they would not otherwise engage with enables them to see things from a new perspective and to innovate solutions.
- **Surfacing the knowledge that exists internally.** Through the CoP meetings, members become aware of how much they actually know within their own organisation or community. At Health Canada, CoP members realised that they had more knowledge internally than the consultants they were hiring from the outside, and that the CoP was a chance to amplify what they were experiencing. This could have a motivating effect, raising confidence levels, and even saving the organisation some of the costs that would otherwise be spent on external consultants.
- **Building relationships.** By meeting as individuals, not just representatives of organisations or departments, CoP members are able to build strong relationships of trust with each other, and to develop practices of calling on each other both within and outside of the CoP meetings. This enables cooperation, making shorter the links between organisations and departments.
- **Integrated holistic approach.** In several cases, it became clear that this also enabled members to have an overview of the whole system which they had not had before. In the case of Preparing the Workforce, relationships between different parts of the system who have an interest in creating positive employment outcomes led to complementary benefits. In Food for Five, connecting people involved in food growing, food distribution, and recycling has

- helped to localise the food system, and in the Care for Youth case, meeting people who worked with different aspects of youth issues enabled members to see the young people more as a whole person and to solve problems that had been “lingering for years” more holistically and more quickly at the right point of access.
- **Development of new tools.** In multiple cases, the Communities of Practice developed toolkits and guidelines relevant to members of the CoP and more widely. The Health Canada toolkit for Public Involvement that was developed has since proved useful to various other government departments such as the forestry department as well as internationally, because of its strong, practical guidelines on public consultation and engagement. Through Preparing the Workforce, CoP members also developed a training programme that was more holistic.
 - **Localisation.** Several of the cases chosen for this research had a local focus. This was a deliberate decision due to the local focus of INK ABM/URP. In Food for Fife, the CoP enabled members to discover local solutions and to integrate the local economy, increasing self-reliance. They also worked with indigenous traditional practices of story-telling. Similarly, ULC focuses on local traditions and festivals, local language, and re-generation – by building relationships among local people, they are contributing to strengthening local culture, institutions, and self-reliance.
 - **Personal and professional development.** While the focus in CoPs is on professional development and capacity-building of practitioners, really successful CoPs manage, often indirectly, to also contribute to the personal development of their members. A participant in the Health Canada CoP said that it had made “a significant difference in people’s lives”.
 - **Support and legitimacy.** Participating in a CoP can enable members to gain influence and voice with various stakeholders. In the case of Food for Fife, the CoP also enabled members to gain legitimacy with local authorities.
 - **Policy advocacy.** While policy-making is generally not at the heart of the purpose of CoPs, the more they become centers of expertise and knowledge sharing in certain areas, the more new policy possibilities become clear and the more they can serve as effective consultants to policy-makers. In Health Canada, the CoP did make policy contributions, elevating the profile of the Public Involvement domain within the department. At a smaller scale, the Leadership Network in Gentofte Municipality also plays a role twice a year of offering valuable input to senior management.

3.2. LESSONS FOR DEVELOPING COPS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

As stated in the introduction, it is important to be aware that successful Communities of Practice are “cultivated” not managed or engineered. This, however, does not mean that they don’t require attention and effort from existing structures at the highest levels. Wenger and Snyder conducted an extensive research project on CoPs in government in 2003, where the main resulting argument was the “urgent need for executive

sponsorship". According to them, "this was a theme that pervaded all our conversations with community members. Practitioners unfailingly value the opportunity to learn and coordinate with peers, but they believe much greater results are possible with increased support from the hierarchy.... We need committed leadership to cultivate strong, vital communities of practice; and we need such communities to build and apply the capabilities required now to get results." (Wenger and Snyder, 2003)

The availability of such sponsorship is not obvious. According to Wenger, many CoP coordinators working in the public sector find that the CoPs are often under attack, and that it is difficult to justify resources being allocated to this work (Interview 1, May 2003). The practitioners engaging in the CoP experience feel the value, but the political environment is often unstable. The political will from leadership is an important starting point for initiating a Community of Practice.

There are few general guidelines for forming a CoP. It is very situation-specific which processes work or don't work. However, there are areas which any CoP initiator should consider. In this project, we have drawn the following seven areas of consideration from the case studies, readings, and interviews.

3.2.1. Organisational Context

According to Wenger, the importance of organisational context was underestimated in early experiments with CoPs and has become apparent as the increasing number of CoP projects build the body of experience and knowledge in this field (Interview 2, June 2005).

Most organisations are not designed for the CoP model, but are rather still based on an industrial model. Many organisations like INK ABM/URP are experimenting with more integrated/ matrix-style forms of organising and are in transition. We need to find new ways to balance formal and informal processes and new ways for them to co-exist, giving CoPs a voice in the organisation. The following points are variables to consider in creating an enabling environment for CoPs to succeed.

- **Sponsorship.** As stated above, it helps greatly for CoPs to be in relationship with and legitimised by a high-level official, who has the authority to legitimise and provide credibility to the community's efforts. The sponsorship role is different from the co-ordination role, which is more hands-on in facilitating the network. A relationship of support/encouragement that is not a reporting relationship is unusual for many high-level government officials. Sometimes the organisation and the sponsorship are too unstable for the CoP to have a sustained life. In situations where the sponsor is not certain of how long his/her tenure will be in his/her position, one possibility is to set a time frame on the CoP to manage expectations. In the SAMI case, mayor Celso Daniel has played the central role in the success of the project, but this initiative still faces challenges with old and new structures and cultures.
- **Recognition of time and effort.** Does the value of what people are doing in the CoP receive recognition from the institution? Does it count? It takes time to nurture CoPs and to participate in them. Is this time allocated within people's job descriptions? Is it included in their performance evaluations? In Australia, the Preparing the Workforce CoP received funding from a government fund, entitled

- “Reframing the Future”. Reframing the Future provides funding for 200 projects per year, half of which are CoPs, illustrating that the Australian government sees value in this approach, and appreciates that its employees invest time and effort in them.
- **Listening to the community.** Is the organisation willing to be affected by what happens in the CoP? The CoP members may have a unique picture of the whole system or interconnections which the traditional organisation cannot see in the same way. In the case of Health Canada, the CoP members were able to draw attention to the impact of public involvement early in the policy process. Especially in the maturity phase, the CoP may come up with new perspectives on policy and on the organisation. This can be frustrating if the organisation doesn't listen, and such lack of receptivity could potentially affect the life expectancy of the CoP. The management can acknowledge the value of the CoP by giving it energising tasks or problems to work on. (Wenger distinguishes between 'energising' and 'de-energising' tasks given from management to the CoP.) Meanwhile, getting too involved in political decisions can have a trade-off effect of detracting from the learning culture if the group gets too political.
 - **Expectations.** While the organisation should not be too strict in its expectations of the CoPs outcomes, it should be ambitious in terms of what the CoP can achieve. If the organisation has no expectations of the CoP, the life span may be shortened. According to Wenger, a recent study by Richard Mc Dermott showed that high expectations were a critical factor in enabling continuity in the CoPs. As with tasks, expectations can fall into two types: energising or de-energising, and the nature of the expectations can have an important effect on the success of the CoP.
 - **Alignment in impact measurement.** Although CoPs work with an openness to outcome, they do need to find ways of evaluating and assessing their own value creation. Sometimes there is a problem if they don't do evaluation, but the problem can also be that there just is a lack of alignment between the organisation's success criteria and the impact the CoP is measuring.

3.2.2. Initiating Communities of Practice

The initiation phase of a Community of Practice is a time of rapid and powerful learning. In accordance with the previous sections, a central aspect of getting started is about assessing the organisational context and creating the enabling environment for the community, but of course that is just the foundation on which a strategy needs to be defined for the CoP.

Identifying potential communities

Wenger emphasises that communities of practice “should not be created in a vacuum” (Wenger and Snyder, 2000). In many of the cases of this research project, the communities emerged out of previous groups. Sometimes the network already exists in a loose way and just needs to be identified and named as such, or the desire for a network exists.

In a number of cases, the CoPs here grew out of a more informal or less effective network or just a different structure. Food for Fife built on the success of an earlier ecological education and demonstration project. Preparing the Workforce grew out of the local employment strategy group which included NGOs, government, and business. Health Canada's Public Involvement CoP came from an initiative to draft a policy statement. In several cases, the CoP also emerged in response to a voiced policy need and a shift in context. This was the case for Preparing the Workforce and Health Canada. In the case of Gentofte Municipality, the CoP was initiated in response to leaders' expressed interest in sharing challenges, but was more of a vision from top management.

While this demand for the CoP was in place in these examples, almost all of the cases also had an individual with a vision behind them, someone who saw the need, and worked with passion and determination to forge partnerships and attract people and resources to the idea.

The need for a CoP

It is important to ask the question whether the need that is expressed is best served through a CoP or through another type of structure. This relates to the diagram in the introduction to this report about the difference between CoPs, teams, taskforces, and informal networks. It could also be that what is needed is rather a conference, a conflict resolution process, or a process or structural re-design.

CoPs should be considered in situations where the need involves ongoing and regular learning among people in a common field, developing capabilities, building and disseminating a new capability or approach, and attracting/retaining/developing talent. It is particularly useful when cross-cutting networking across strict organisation/department boundaries is needed.

In several cases, the initiators went through a feasibility study period, doing a stakeholder analysis to assess the need for the CoP. CHE did an 18-month listening process before starting Food for Fife. They train their CoP co-ordinators in how to listen for topics that require CoPs, and one of the key things they are listening for is "where is the passion?" ULC similarly was based on "years of dialogue with local people".

Forming the domain

One of the first steps is defining the community's domain in such a way that members feel a personal interest and connection with the focus of the community and will feel committed to being involved. In some of the CoPs the name of the community reflects that care has been taken in defining this domain in an attractive way as for example with "Care for Youth" in the Netherlands – this name says something about members' aspirations beyond their organisational affiliation. Defining the domain is an identity-forming process. (Wenger, Interview 2, June 2005)

It can also be challenging to define the boundaries of the domain – how broad or how specific should it be? In some cases a work team becomes the node of a CoP, involving others in the learning beyond the team. It is important though that the CoP involves people across departments and disciplines and isn't created in parallel to a

company department. The CoP needs to be cross-cutting and its domain needs to be relevant to people working across boundaries, who don't see each other every day.

It is important at the first session that the members gain a shared understanding of the domain as well as of what a Community of Practice is, and what this one hopes to achieve. In some cases, the core group worked together for a few months to develop trust and shared values before widening the membership.

3.2.3. Membership

The key aspect of membership which seems to be common across all CoPs is that there must be a *shared* passion and field of practice among members but there also must be diversity in order for learning to occur. This diversity comes from inviting in people representing different sectors, departments, stakeholder groups, as well as different ages, experiences, cultural groupings etc. It is desirable to get members representing as many different parts of the whole system into the community as possible.

While aiming for differences in terms of institutional representation, CoP coordinators often emphasise the importance of inviting people into the community as individuals, not as institutions. The Health Canada CoP experienced that some people would think they were not allowed to be members if someone else representing their institution or department was already participating, though this was not the case. Food for Five and CHE overall stated as a core characteristic of their CoPs that people were permitted to be themselves beyond their representation role, and Udaipur as a Learning City works only through individuals. The emphasis on the individual helps to ensure that the relationships built in the CoP are of a collegial/peer nature as opposed to hierarchical. It also ensures that participants are more honest and do not need to put forward or defend a certain organisational position.

There are various processes for members joining CoPs. In most cases, membership is self-selecting which is actually in accordance with Wenger's basic concept of CoPs. Some membership models are completely self-selecting where people do not even need to sign up (eg. ULC) while in most cases there is a registration process that at least entails registering on an email list (eg. Health Canada, Pilbara). In other cases, members may sign a contract (eg. Care for Youth) including a certain time commitment or, as in the case of Gentofo, be appointed to the CoP by their position. The case of mandatory participation is really on the borderline of what can be called a Community of Practice though, and some would even say this would fall outside of the definition of a CoP.

Virtually all CoPs have multiple tiers of participation. Several mentioned that there is a core group at the center of the CoP of people who participate continuously and have a strong passion for the domain. This core group could be defined formally or emerging informally. At a more peripheral level are people who have an interest in the topic but either don't have the same level of passion or are not able to invest the same amount of time and energy into the CoP as the core group. The periphery may also include "experts" or guests who get invited into meetings according to the specific topic at hand.

CoPs often experience a high rate of turnover especially among peripheral members, which can be a frustration for CoP coordinators because it takes time to manage. At Health Canada, however, this turnover was seen as an opportunity to keep the

community vibrant and alive. At Health Canada, as the CoP matured, more core members started to pay more attention to the peripheral ones.

3.2.4. Roles

There are different roles which are crucial to the success of a CoP in the public sector.

Member

The members themselves are of course at the heart of the CoP, and they are the ones who populate the community. The role of members is to share knowledge and experiences, participate, raise questions and concerns, and devise solutions - in short, to engage actively with the learning and the domain of the community. Members of the core group will generally be the most active and will also be thinking about the community overall and looking out for ways to enhance CoP effectiveness.

Coordinator/ facilitator

The community coordinator has an important role to play in energising the CoP, keeping up momentum and passion around the domain, brokering relationships and making connections, and facilitating the group's activities. According to Snyder and Briggs (2003), the "skill of a community coordinator can make or break a community's success." In our case studies, these skills also appear crucial, and most of them place a strong emphasis on what personal qualities are required from this person. These included an entrepreneurial/ can-do personality combined with being facilitative, good at listening, networking, making connections, local, passionate and infectious committed, inspiring confidence, and believing in themselves. They also need to have a cross-agency or cross-stakeholder understanding and relationships. Several cases mentioned that it is important to take the time required to recruit the right person to make sure the qualities are present.

It is also possible to separate out the coordinator role from the facilitator role if it is not possible to find one person with all these qualities. In this case the coordinator would most likely be from the sponsoring organisation, while the facilitator might be someone who is hired in because of their experience in dialogue and group dynamics. In this case, the co-ordinator and the facilitator would work together in maintaining an overview of the CoPs development and helping the CoP to think ahead.

The facilitation role is primarily to facilitate the group and resultant dynamics during face to face sessions.

The other co-ordination tasks include:

- Organising face-to-face meetings, teleconferences and other activities
- Recruiting new members, managing the membership directory, and communicating with members including informally between meetings
- Moderating email lists and managing website repository
- Supporting CoP projects such as trainings, building a website, etc.
- Being a bridge to other stakeholders, potential experts to invite in, sponsors and authorities / weaving relationships

Information Integrator

In addition to the coordinator/ facilitator, larger CoPs will usually have an “information integrator”, a secretary or knowledge manager – someone responsible for documenting learning and helping to store knowledge. Sometimes the coordinator/facilitator doubles as information integrator if the CoP project is not too extensive and if the person’s skills allow for them to fulfill these varied tasks.

The Information Integrator interfaces with other units of the organisation, ensures clarity and lack of duplication in the information disseminated, maintains information-sharing relationships, and coordinates information from CoP members to avoid duplication, redundancies or poor quality.

Sponsor

The sponsor role was mentioned earlier in the organisational context section. This is a high-status person in the organisation, who can help to provide legitimacy to the efforts of the CoP and to ensure that it does not become sacrificed to time pressures or minor political shifts. This person is not necessarily a member of the CoP and attending CoP meetings.

3.2.5. Tools and Processes

Communities of Practice are “cultivated”, not “managed”. This means that it isn’t possible with a CoP to just create a logical design and then implement it. CoPs tend to evolve and mature over time, and to develop in new surprising directions. In order to accommodate this nature of CoPs while still maximising their impact and benefit to the organisation, a number of tools and processes have proven effective. It is important that whatever selection of tools and processes are chosen that they complement each other.

Face-to-face meetings

All the case studies without exception emphasised that face-to-face meetings are *essential* for the success of the CoP. It is at the face-to-face meetings that the learning and networking happen, and without them people tend to lose motivation and drop out. Frequency of meetings varied from every 2 weeks to every 2 months.

Facilitation of face-to-face meetings

The most effective CoPs among the cases studied here worked with facilitators trained in specific dialogic facilitation methods, as in the Health Canada case. At CHE, CoP co-ordinators use a variety of facilitation methods rooted in popular education, process psychology, deep ecology, action research, and management learning. Some of the points that were mentioned as important characteristics of facilitation across the cases were: to develop a high-quality process, to hold members to a clear purpose, to use interactive methods combining large group and small group discussions, to allow issues to surface, and to learn to listen. In the case of Pilbara, it was also mentioned that the facilitators would always do a “check-out” after each session to hear how members found the session, how they were feeling at the end of it, and what actions were emerging from it.

A great deal of creativity is possible in designing these face-to-face meetings. In the cases of CHE and ULC, the facilitators have chosen to be inspired by indigenous cultures such as the ceilidh story-telling culture in Scotland and the traditional festivals in Udaipur.

Because people are often sceptical of new structures such as a Community of Practice, it is important to be very conscious of how the first meeting is designed and run. Ideally, members should be energised and excited leaving this first session. A set of facilitation tools is available in the next section.

Case work

One of the specific tools which proved useful in several of these CoPs was a type of “case clinic” approach. Here, members will bring a specific case they are struggling with to the meeting, and work with other members to solve it. In the Gentoft Leadership Network, the peers would work with a coaching method emphasising questions, based on the idea that the person owning the problem needs to be asked questions that can help them to come up with their own answers. The peer coaching sessions could take more than one hour per person. In contrast at Care for Youth, experts would sometimes be invited in accordance with the cases, and a maximum of 20 minutes would be allocated per case.

Getting external input

As stated above, experts can be invited in to help solve a case but they can also, as in the Health Canada case simply be invited in to infuse the network with new thinking. At Health Canada such input was invited in to every second meeting, while the other meetings were focused on the group’s internal work and learning.

Electronic communication

Just as all the CoP cases emphasised the importance of face-to-face meetings, most of the cases felt that electronic communication had proven less effective than expected. Even in the case of Health Canada which among these cases most likely had the most highly developed intranet technology and the most resources dedicated to it, they found this system to be much less effective than the face-to-face meetings. ULC is the other extreme – in that they don’t use any electronic communication whatsoever.

Most of the CoPs found e-mail lists very helpful for communication across members, and found that websites were helpful as a store of knowledge. Preparing the Workforce also used video- and teleconferencing to bring in members who were trying to collaborate at a distance. In general, it is extremely helpful to have these technologies available as an infrastructure to use if CoP members are computer-savvy, but the technology should not be relied upon as the primary tool of the CoP, especially when the CoP members are local to a specific area. Introducing new technology also needs to be complemented by strategies to create a culture of using the technology. The most important thing is that the technology makes it easy to contribute and to access the community’s knowledge.

Other tools and processes

The tools and processes listed here are only a small taste of the wide variety of ways that CoPs come together to enable capacity-building and knowledge sharing. Often much happens outside the formal meetings in informal interactions. CoP members can choose to create learning exchanges where they visit each other's departments or organisations. Subgroups may be created around specific topics or work areas, meeting outside and in addition to the overall CoP meetings.

3.2.6. Principles and Practices

As part of the case research we asked interviewees what are the explicit and tacit practices in the group. The principles and practices are often decided by the whole group as in the case of Food for Fife.

These practices essentially form the culture of the CoP. Several of the case co-ordinators mentioned specific tacit and explicit values that were important to them such as:

- People are present because they want to be. Diversity. Inventiveness. (HC)
- Inquiry. Truthfulness. Consistency (practicing the domain internally to be congruent across all the project's activities. (FfF)
- Dialogue. Shared leadership. (ULC)

Health Canada also mentioned that a practice/culture they shared was to respect existing organisational priorities, dynamics, and culture and to sometimes translate between the CoP and Health Canada overall and adapt language to make sense to the overall organisation.

Most CoPs have an agreement of confidentiality, and groups had various approaches to dealing with conflict either by working through it internally or by bringing in an external facilitator.

3.2.7. Resources

Cultivating a CoP requires diverse resources, but can be done at low cost. Often there is no compensation for members except for covering their costs of participation. This is partly because membership has to be self-selecting and willful. The Food for Fife case emphasised that they had struggled with the issue of becoming donor-dependent and led by donor agendas in shaping their priorities.

The key resource that influences the CoPs success is whether time is allocated for members to participate in it and most importantly for the coordination and documentation roles. Most of these cases have between 1 and 3 people either full-time or part-time dedicated to servicing the CoPs. In addition, of course costs for meetings and running the CoPs can accrue in accordance with available budgets.

In some cases when there is strong ownership behind it, the administrative system of the municipality or government structure is available to the CoP which is an important resource.

3.3. FACILITATION TOOLS

The cases in this research emphasised the importance of face-to-face meetings. For a Community of Practice to truly achieve the benefits listed earlier in terms of innovation and accessing the knowledge of its participants, it's important to be aware that there are many different styles of facilitating face-to-face meetings, and that CoP meetings are different from traditional conferences. If the group is brought together simply to listen to speakers and presentations, and not to genuinely engage in dialogue, the benefits of the CoP are not likely to be accessed.

It is possible to create monthly meetings of a few hours with 50 people or more where everyone leaves every meeting having engaged in conversation and shared their views. A number of dialogue methods, tools and processes are available and accessible for a facilitator to employ to make this happen.

A few examples include:

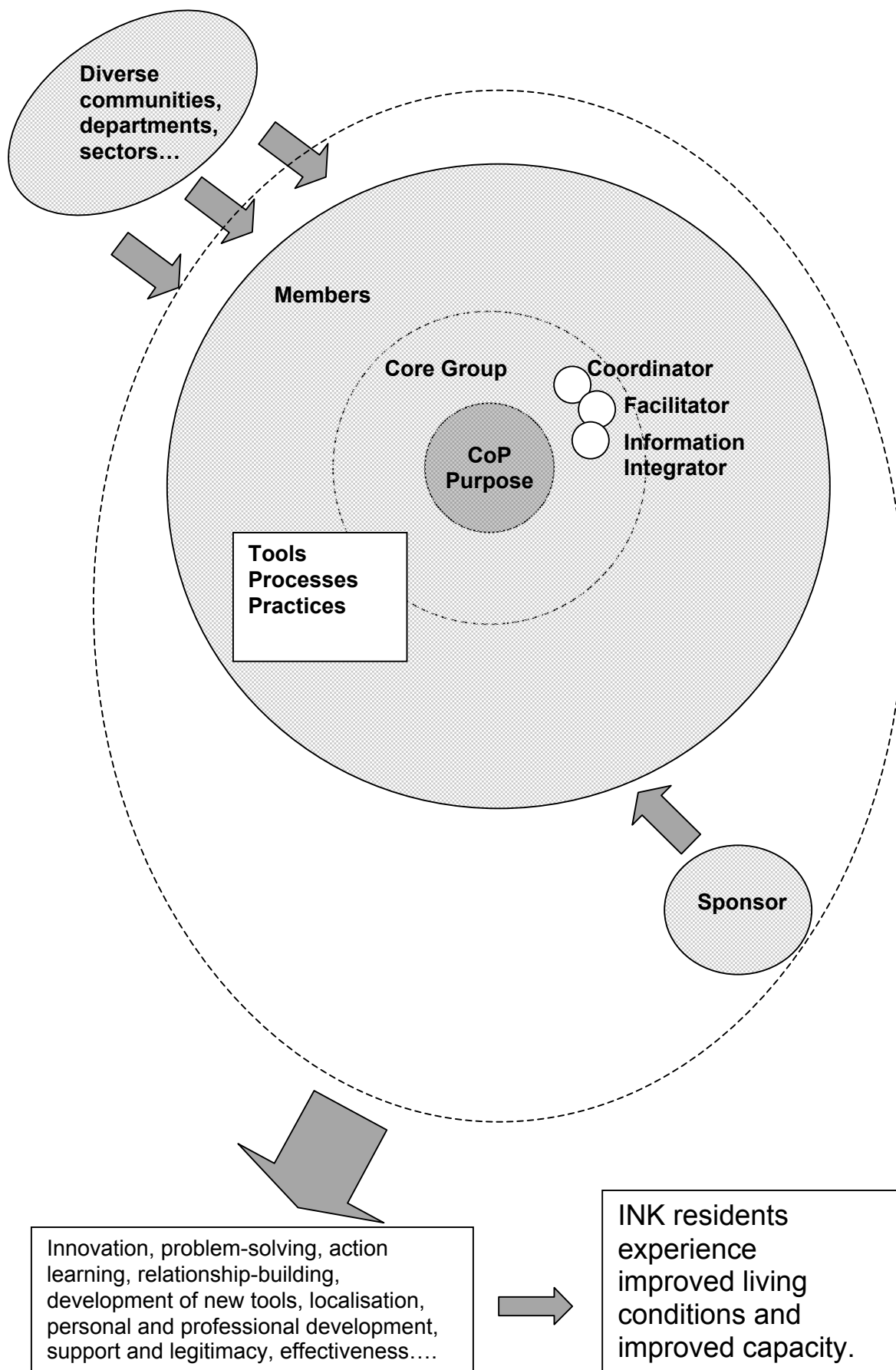
- **Check-ins and Check-outs.** It is always a good idea to begin a meeting by asking participants to answer a certain question such as, “what are you passionate about?”, “what are you bringing to this meeting?”, “why have you come here today?”, “why is this community of practice important to you?” If the group is too large for everyone to speak, participants can share their perspective with one or two others and then the facilitator can just take a few comments on behalf of the whole group. Similarly, a meeting should end with a question such as “what have you learned here today?” “what are you taking with you from this meeting?” or “what is one word that describes how you feel at the end of this meeting?” Check-ins and check-outs help to clarify participants intentionality with being involved in the CoP and make the learning of the whole group visible to everyone.
- **World Café.** “World Café” is a simple but innovative method whereby groups can access collective intelligence through small table conversations. Participants sit at small tables of 4-6, while discussing a first question. After 20-30 minutes they are invited to move to a new table, with one participant remaining behind as a “host” to share the conversation with a new group. Participants can either continue traveling to new tables or return to their original table and share what is going on at other tables. Through this process, patterns start to become apparent in the conversations, while everyone in the room is able to share what they know and what their questions are. At the end of a process, key insights are often captured in the large group to create a shared understanding of the discussion outcomes. For more information and facilitation tools, see www.theworldcafe.com.
- **Appreciative Inquiry.** The main idea behind Appreciative Inquiry is that, assuming that we grow in the direction of our inquiry, we need to be inquiring around what is working and what is positive in our organisations, at least as much as we analyse and dwell on that which isn't working. Appreciative Inquiry is often based on interviews with fellow participants or other stakeholders telling stories about highlights related to the issue or community at hand. For example, a CoP meeting could begin with participants interviewing each other for 20

minutes around what brings them hope for the INK community. Appreciative Inquiry tools are available from Pioneers of Change as well as at www.appreciative-inquiry.org.

- **Open Space Technology.** Open Space, like the world café, is based on researching how human beings naturally meet and learn from each other. Open Space specifically was inspired by observing interactions in traditional African rituals and marketplaces. In Open Space, a group of people create their own agenda for a meeting in a short period of time, around the questions that participants themselves bring. With the help of a facilitator, participants offer to host sessions in a specific place and time around topics they are “passionate about and willing to take responsibility for”. Many groups then meet in parallel to discuss and possibly resolve these issues, followed by a process of sharing across the sessions. Open Space provides for a lively and productive working meeting where everyone takes ownership of their agenda and their learning. For more information on Open Space Technology, see http://www.openspaceworld.com/brief_history.htm.
- **Learning Journeys.** A CoP facilitator may decide that it needs to create a better understanding of what is going on in its particular domain and to create a shared experience among its members. To do so, the group may decide to go on a “learning journey” in this case in the INK area together, to interview local stakeholders and residents or visit local projects in order to gain a deeper understanding of what the challenges and opportunities surrounding a particular topic may be. If resources allow such learning journeys could also take place to other ABM programmes or even internationally – this can be a powerful way of learning through immersion and creating strong relationships of learning and trust among participants.

3.4. SYNTHESIS

The following picture provides a quick overview of the above outcomes in terms of the different aspects of a Community of Practice in the public sector.



PART 4: IMPLICATIONS FOR INK ABM/URP

Many of the lessons described above in Part 3 apply to INK ABM/URP and we will not repeat all of them here. This section will focus on how INK ABM/URP could go about deciding on whether and how to initiate Communities of Practice, and what actions could be taken following such a decision. This section is built up around three phases:

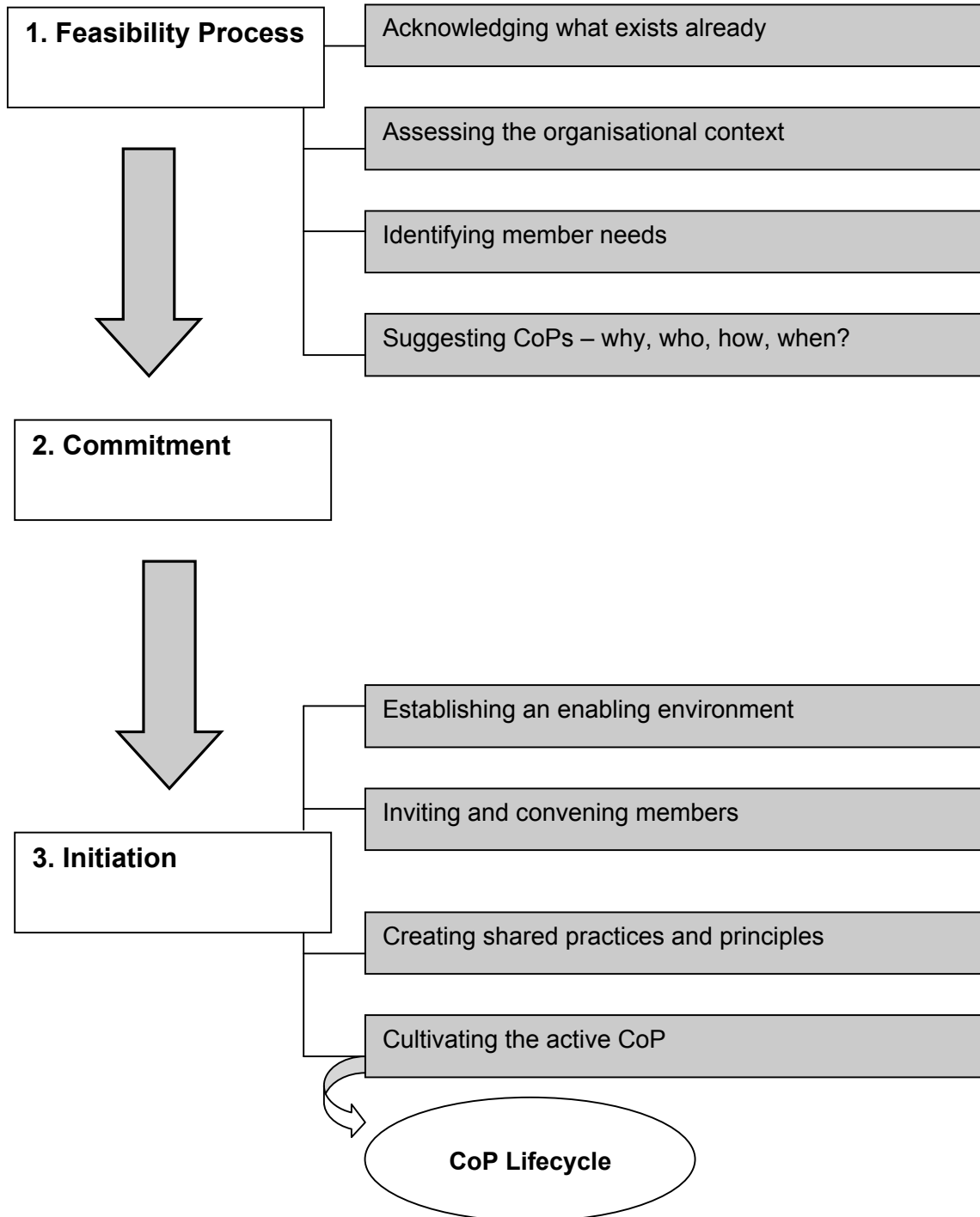


Figure 3. Implications for INK

This process may seem quite extensive, but while each phase is important and needs to be explicit, each phase can also be simple and need not take a long time. In fact, it is important when starting a CoP to use a light hand, take small steps and keep things simple. Some or all of the answers to the questions required to be answered before commitment may be available within the INK team itself. Since this feasibility research and the actual planning of CoPs for INK ABM/URP was outside of the scope of this study, this section focuses on questions and ideas for how INK could move forward with this process.

The first step would be to identify a point person in the INK ABM/URP team who is passionate about this idea, interested in taking it forward, and who can allocate some time to initiating the Community of Practice. This person would need to read this report thoroughly and we suggest s/he also read the compendium that has been compiled by Pioneers of Change with readings on Communities of Practice.

4.1. FEASIBILITY PROCESS

For INK ABM/URP to get started with Communities of Practice, it is important to first determine whether CoP's are needed, and whether it is the right structure to move forward with. The table in the introduction to this report may prove useful. One possibility is to conduct interviews with potential stakeholders to identify whether CoPs are needed and to assess whether the commitment and interest exists to sustain them.

4.1.1. Acknowledging what exists already

As described earlier, CoPs often grow out of existing structures. INK ABM/URP will need to look at the current formal structures that are already in place for knowledge-sharing and peer learning such as the Joint Government Technical Forum and the Stakeholders Forum, the activities of the ABM coordination, as well as the numerous informal knowledge-sharing activities that are going on. What purposes are these fora not serving which could be served by a CoP? Or, what purposes are they serving which might better be served by a CoP? How would a new CoP relate to these structures? It will also be important to assess the degree of alignment with existing priorities and broader government directions.

While this process of acknowledging what exists already is crucial, the following guidelines are based on an assumption that there is an interest from INK ABM/URP to launch Communities of Practice as a new structure.

4.1.2. Assessing the organisational context

Questions to be answered about the organisational context would include:

- How will INK ABM/URP provide facilitation support to the CoPs especially in the phase of establishment?
- Who could serve as a sponsor at high-level to provide credibility to, and champion, this initiative?
- What resources would be made available to this CoP?

- Is the organisation able to give priority to the CoP in terms of how members spend their time?
- Is the organisation willing to listen to ideas coming out of such a CoP?
- What aspects of the current organisational culture would the CoP need to be aligned with? What aspects of the organisational culture can serve to create an enabling environment for the CoPs?

4.1.3. Identifying member needs

Member needs could be assessed through surveys or interviews (or if the INK office feels clear on what these are, through internal conversation). Here, it will need to be determined who the prospective members would be, what their level of interest is in participating, what topics would be important to them, how they would be willing to engage, and what their level of knowledge and expertise is.

Sample questions for a survey could include:

- What are your 3 key information and learning needs in relation to your work with the INK area?
- Who do you most want to learn together with of other stakeholders of the INK area? I.e. with whom would you most want to develop rich learning relationships?
- What would you hope to gain from participating in a CoP?
- How much time would you be able to dedicate to a CoP and at what times of the week would you prefer to meet?
- What would keep you coming back to CoP events?
- Would you be interested in being a part of a small steering group to take a leadership role in designing the learning activities for the CoP?

4.1.4 Suggesting CoPs – Why, What, Who, How, When, and Where?

The answers to the above three topics (4.1.1. – 4.1.3.) should prove useful in preparing a business case for the establishment of one or more CoPs. These proposals would need to answer the “why, what, who, how, when, and where” for the suggested CoPs as well as the resource implications and staff commitment.

These CoPs could potentially be developed at different *levels*. One option is to create them among development workers/ public officials who are engaged with the INK area and share questions around how to implement integrated approaches, how to harness social capital, how to work across sectors, how to enable people to take ownership of their own development etc. Another option would be to create CoPs that engage local stakeholders across sectors as well as municipal staff, and a third could be to create CoPs on the ground in the INK communities among stakeholders. There could also be CoPs at two levels, both internally in the municipality and among local stakeholders in the INK area. It becomes much easier to facilitate CoPs if one is also participating in a CoP oneself internally (as was the case with the World Bank).

Different options seem to present themselves in terms of defining the *domain*:

- Developing CoPs around the four impact areas (Integrated Governance, Income Enhancement, Living Environment, and Infrastructure Investment)

- Developing CoPs around core questions or common problems held by practitioners and/or stakeholders across sectors
- Starting with a CoP simply around the theme of “Urban Renewal in INK” or a similar broad topic and inviting in practitioners across sectors
- Developing CoPs within the ABM structures

There may be others which the INK team can see, that we as consultants are not yet aware of.

If CoPs are developed around the impact areas (integrated governance, living environment, income enhancement, infrastructure investment) these can engage one or multiple levels of membership. It is important to be aware that there is a risk in developing the CoPs around the impact areas in that these are the groupings the practitioners are already used to meeting in. The INK team will need to consider what are the boundary-spanning possibilities in creating the CoPs. We would encourage the process to explore what are the core problems and questions practitioners need to explore with each other, and to assess whether the impact areas are the best domains to enable this learning.

4.2. COMMITMENT

Based on the suggested business case for the CoPs, the INK ABM/URP office as well as other relevant champions and sponsors will need to make a conscious and explicit commitment to go ahead with this strategy. This commitment is most importantly a willingness to support the effort in principle and to believe in its possibilities.

Secondly, it is also a resource commitment, including both financial resources and time. One possibility is to share the resource implications with the agencies from which members will be recruited and to get buy-in from these agencies as well.

4.3. IMPLEMENTATION

4.3.1. Establishing an enabling environment

Once ready to move forward, it is time to actually establish the enabling environment that will ensure ongoing support for the CoP. The section of this report on organizational context provides some important pointers on how to create this enabling environment. A key concern for INK may be that CoPs have a tendency to be dependent on a few visionaries and if there are fluctuations in the staff of the sponsoring organisation, the CoPs can be vulnerable when leadership changes. Given that many of the staff at INK are consultants, it will be important to pay attention to how to ensure that the CoP isn't dependent on one person. It may also make sense to put a timeframe on the CoPs so that expectations are not raised beyond a specific timeframe which the leadership is certain of being able to commit to personally. As stated earlier, it will be important that the INK office is behind the CoPs, that there is recognition of time and effort put into them, that there is a willingness to listen to the knowledge emerging from the CoP, that energizing expectations are put onto it, and that there is alignment in impact measurement.

Establishing the enabling environment also entails practical tasks such as setting up an email list and web page for the CoP, identifying meeting times and places etc. as well as identifying the person or team to fulfill the facilitation/coordination/information integration roles.

4.3.2. Inviting and convening members

Members will now be invited to join the CoP and to attend a first session. Members need to be clear on the scope of the CoP so that they can self-select based on its relevance to them.

One option mentioned in previous conversations with INK was to launch the CoPs in a learning conference for INK team and stakeholders. Whether in this form or another, it is crucial that the first meetings or events linked to the CoP be exciting and energizing for all the members. It may also help to link prestige to being a part of the CoP and certainly to communicate that this is a space for real, rich learning that respects the knowledge of members and is able to bring this knowledge out to be shared. This is what will set the tone for the entire life cycle of the CoPs.

4.3.3. Agreeing shared practices

Some of the shared practices will already have been created as part of the business case for the CoP. These should be shared with members at the first meeting. However, it is a good idea to save some of these formulations of goals and modes of interaction for the group to decide on together. How does this group want to work, learn, be together? What principles do they want to govern their interactions? (eg. trust, openness, diversity, listening...)

The members can also engage in the choice of tools and processes (eg. how often they want to meet, whether they want to use case-clinics, expert advice, etc.) and how they want to share information (eg. whether they want an address book with their profiles on the website).

If you want members to support with leadership and facilitation of the group it is a good idea to create such a practice early. Decide whether to create an explicit 'core group'/ steering group/ facilitation group to help identify expertise, resources and references, presenters, site visits, venues, and topics as well as facilitate meetings.

4.3.4. Cultivating the CoPs

As stated earlier, the CoPs should be facilitated by someone who has strong facilitation skills – either from within the INK team, or by bringing in an external facilitator. We recommend that this person review the piece of the guidelines section above which describes the role of the facilitator. If someone has the personal qualities needed for the facilitator but not the skills and knowledge of the available tools, trainings are available to provide these.

Important pointers to remember when cultivating the CoP include:

- Stay focused on the primary purpose of learning

- Keep members energised through stimulating, quality discussion and real dialogue around cutting edge issues for them
- Remind members multiple times by email and sms of upcoming meetings to help them prioritise the CoPs activities
- Pay attention to participation of members – if people leave or join, try to find out why
- Keep feeding the CoP useful material and information, share information on visiting experts and other relevant events
- Assess the success of the CoP by level of participation, diversity of participation, outputs achieved, evaluation of outputs usefulness, member satisfaction

Once the Community of Practice is active we refer back to the lifecycle in the first section of this report. The CoP will likely move through phases of maturing, evolving, winding down, and dispersing.

4.4. PROJECT CLOSURE AND NEXT STEPS

This report is a beginning. The terms of reference for this project was to research ten international applications of Communities of Practice in the public sector, and to draw out guidelines and implications for INK ABM/URP. The ten cases clearly show the beneficial possibilities of introducing such an approach and we hope this project will lead to the creation of one or more vibrant Communities of Practice serving the well-being of residents in Inanda, Ntuzuma, and KwaMashu. We also hope it will contribute to the culture of learning and experimentation already present in INK ABM/URP and to making work more exciting for the practitioners serving the programme.

The terms of reference did not include drawing up an actual business case for Communities of Practice for INK, which would be the next step following the recommendations put forward in this section.

The report is accompanied by a smaller illustrated guidebook and a compendium with readings on Communities of Practice. The project will be presented to INK ABM/URP on July 19th, 2005 in Ethekwini Municipality.

APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDIES

CASE 1: CARE FOR YOUTH

De Lier, The Netherlands

Contact person: Moraan Gilad [moraan@pioneersofchange.net]

Background

The municipality of De Lier is a small municipality in the west of The Netherlands, with a total of 11.500 inhabitants. The economy is mostly based on commercial agriculture and it is surrounded by the cities of Rotterdam and The Hague. About one third of the population is 21 years or younger. There are 5 physicians, 1 dispensary, 1 pre-school, 6 primary schools, 1 secondary school, 1 youth activity centre, 1 social work organisation, 1 police office and many clubs for sports, music, scouts, etc. The more specialised organisations are regional organisations, mostly located in the surrounding cities.

The typical problems for youth in this area are the high unemployment rate for youth (16 years and older), many children of immigrants showing a language deficiency, high divorce rate of parents, and alcohol and drug-related problems. In 2004 the municipality merged with four other municipalities to become a middle sized municipality of 98.500 inhabitants. The CoP described in this case has stayed the same, and covers the same area as before. The process of setting up similar CoPs for the other regions of the new and larger municipality has started.

This case is based on the experience of working with this CoP for 1,5 years. No official evaluation was held, this description is merely from the point of view of the policy maker of the municipality with additions from the co-ordinator of the CoP.

About the Community of Practice

This CoP identifies problems of youth between the ages of 0 and 21. The problems are complex, and can't be solved by one organisation alone. They can be of a social, physical and/or psychological nature. By combining the different points of view of all the specialised organisations involved, problems can be detected early. If it involves an individual case the CoP finds and implements the shortest and most adequate way of addressing the problem. If the problem is on a group level, the CoP advises the policy making body of the municipality.

This CoP originated from a network for all the organisations within the municipality that are involved with youth. This network was an initiative of the youth policy maker of the municipality, in order to hear from 'the field' what kind of developments and needs they saw within their work. It was a three-monthly meeting where professionals working with youth could meet each other and hear from others what they were doing. At one of these meetings a health-worker mentioned that it took a long time to find help for some children because the information about their problem was scattered across several organisations. Others recognised the situation, and it was decided that a formal structure to address these complex cases was needed.

The policy maker of the municipality co-ordinated the designing process. Examples of similar CoPs and additional information from other municipalities were sought. A series of interviews was held with the foreseen participants. The organisations were asked to

estimate how many cases they thought they would bring in, how often they would need to meet, what other organisations they would need within this CoP, what formal and informal co-operation structures were already in place, what privacy rules they had to obey, etc. One organisation was chosen to become the co-ordinator of the CoP. After collecting all the information a contract was written where all the rules of the CoP are stipulated. The directors of every participating organisation had to ratify this contract during the launch.

Members

The participants are all professionally involved in the field of youth between 0 and 21 years. There is one co-ordinator who doubles as a secretary. Participating organisations are:

- dispensaries
- schools (pre-schools, kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools)
- (youth) physicians
- (youth) psychologists
- specialised aid organisations (addictions, violence, crime, etc.)
- social work
- youth work
- sports associations
- police

The youth network was the main advisory body for the identification of organisations that work with youth, most of them were already present in the network, although some organisations were working regionally rather than locally. These were approached separately to join the CoP. Every organisation has been asked to put forward a contact person who they thought would best represent their organisation for the purposes of the CoP. The participants all committed to the CoP by signing a contract. The contract stipulates the rules for participation, privacy, liability, etc.

When a situation needs the expertise of a professional who is not yet represented in the CoP, this person can be invited for a session. Or when the input is needed more structurally, the organisation will be invited to join the CoP by signing the contract.

The CoP exists of three layers. The inner circle encompasses those participants who are always present, no matter which cases are being discussed. These are the organisations that are in contact with the local youth every week; schools, physicians, social work, youth work and police. Then there is a middle circle of professionals from local and regional organisations that are more specialised and can be asked to join the meeting of the CoP when their expertise is needed. The third layer is different, because these are experts from organisations that are not officially part of the CoP, but who can be asked to become a temporary member in order to contribute to a specific case.

Tools and Processes

All participants, and non-participants (such as parents, neighbours, etc.) can email the co-ordinator of the CoP and put forward a situation that they are worried about. The co-ordinator then matches which participants from the middle layer and/or experts from the third layer should be invited to the next meeting. The invites and agenda are emailed to those who are joining the meeting. For privacy reasons there is no on-line information

sharing of the cases.

There is a meeting of the CoP every two weeks. The co-ordinator collects the requests to discuss specific cases, invites the needed participants and sets the agenda. During the meeting the person who introduced the first case on the agenda starts with a description of the case. Then the other participants offer their knowledge of the situation and possible solutions. The group agrees to a certain strategy for the case. The co-ordinator/secretary notes down the agreements. After this a next case can be introduced. Cases are also revisited, to follow the developments or redesign the help-strategy.

The secretary does keep notes of the cases. Because of privacy reasons these notes are strictly confidential and cannot leave the CoP. They are used as long as the case is being discussed. After that they are filed at the co-ordinator organisation's archive.

Principles and Practices

The written rules are all stipulated in the contract. These are the frequency of meeting, the participants, the structure of the CoP, the responsibilities and duties of the co-ordinator and the participants and the rules of privacy. An unwritten rule that has developed over time is that a case cannot be discussed for longer than 20 minutes per meeting, because each case on the agenda deserves to be discussed and an average of 5 cases is being presented during the 1,5 hour meetings..

A satisfying situation to a problem should be reached within 5 meetings, if the CoP does not succeed to do so, the responsibility to find a solution is given to the most appropriate organisation. This organisation can re-enter the case when there is need for a new strategy.

Resources

There is a co-ordinator who doubles as a secretary. This person makes sure that every participant is aware of the meetings, whether or not their presence is required at the next meeting, sending out the agenda, providing a meeting space, taking notes during meetings and filing these once a case is closed.

The co-ordinating organisation spends about 5 hours a week on the CoP. It also provides meeting and filing space for the CoP. Since the co-ordinating organisation is part of the local government no extra funds had to be spent on these tasks. The participants from the inner layer have committed to 1,5 hours of being present at the meetings every two weeks. They are not receiving any compensation for this, as it is contributing to their work. The other participants are expected to join the meetings when they are invited. They are also not receiving any compensation for their time.

Achievements and Lessons

Initially many cases were brought in, because there was no platform to share these complex needs. The atmosphere during the meetings tended to be quite official. Eventually things calmed down a little more and there was more time to find a good strategy for the cases. A more casual relationship developed between the participants. Now that they are familiar with each other they consult each other also outside of the

meetings.

Complex cases where a child was in need of help were answered, some cases had been lingering for years before the CoP took up this multi-disciplinary approach. Situations are easier to understand because of the various information resources. Solutions are reached faster, since the help-strategy involves all the relevant approaches. Organisations and citizens who are worried about a certain child have a place to share these worries and know that a professional team will look into possible assistance that can be given to the child and/or family. The overview of care-giving for youth is more explicit. Professionals are more familiar with what the other organisations do, and therefore consult each other more often, both formally as well as informally. Lines between organisations seem shorter. Co-operation between organisations goes faster, because less time is needed to transfer a case.

The key lessons from the case include:

1. A strong and structured co-ordination and regularity of meeting is indispensable.
2. The contract is a formal way to bind the participants to their responsibilities and duties.
3. The CoP provided professionals from the same field with the opportunity to meet and learn more about each other. The good relationships between them make co-operation between organisations much easier.

There are no web-links as most of the outcome of the meetings of the CoP is confidential.

CASE 2: WECAN! FOOD FOR FIFE
The Centre for Human Ecology, Scotland
Contact person: Nick Wilding [nick@energise.org]

Background

Two ‘nested’ communities of practice are described in this case. The Centre for Human Ecology (CHE) (the ‘mother plant’, combining activist/academic analysis of community, place, identity and globalization), and a community-based CoP which CHE Fellow Nick Wilding has been supporting for several years (imagine a long ‘runner’ root from the ‘mother plant’ of CHE, continuously fed by a local context as it moves, but drawing on depth of analysis and skills from CHE when needed).

CHE is a Scotland-based organisation carrying out action research and education for personal development, environmental sustainability and social justice. It works with individuals, communities and organisations wishing to take responsibility and initiative for effective, enduring change for sustainability and justice. The CHE has been evolving since its creation as the ‘School of the Man-Made Future’ at Edinburgh University following the first earth summit in Stockholm in 1972. In 1996, it became an independent hybrid social enterprise/academic institute offering a sought-after Masters degree in Human Ecology through a ‘head, hand and heart’ pedagogy (see www.che.ac.uk for more).

In recent years, facilitating and catalyzing CoPs has become increasingly central to CHE’s educational mission, and the professional practice of CHE ‘Fellows’. MSc students learn about CoPs by doing – for example, key assignments examine their effectiveness as CoP participants and facilitators in real world contexts (the quality of their internet discussion threads are ‘marked’ for assessment). Staff and CHE ‘Fellows’ are all practitioners, applying human ecology across many fields. For example, the CHE ‘Community Programme’ combines popular education approaches (including ‘Training for Transformation’) and participatory action research approaches with emerging locally-based CoPs.

About the Community of Practice

One example of a CHE community of practice is the center’s work with Working for Environmental Community Action Now! (WECAN!) in Fife (a region of Scotland where three CHE Fellows live). Two of the Fellows, Nick Wilding and Tara O’Leary, helped to start WECAN! in 1996, building on the success of an earlier ecological education and demonstration project which they developed at a farm community where they lived for three years in 1995-1997. Since 2001, Nick and Tara were engaged by WECAN! to find a new focus for the network’s activities, and a ‘Food for Fife’ (FfF) programme emerged aiming to catalyse community-led local food projects across the Kingdom. Within a framework of ecological sustainability and social justice, FfF seeks to localise and connect food growing, distribution and recycling systems, raise consciousness of local people about our interconnectedness with food and environment (and health), support local ‘food champions’, and contribute to regional and national policy in support of these community development goals.

Nick's current role with the programme is as an 'action research evaluator' – which is proving to be an effective way of mentoring key staff as an effective CoP evolves. The project is funded by grants and a developing portfolio of sales of services.

Members

Studying with CHE entails becoming a member of at least one CoP. Graduates apply to become Fellows after at least a year of study and work experience, and then work together on projects that may understand themselves as CoPs.

Participants in CHE CoPs usually gather around a constellating passion. It is important that CoP participants feel they have permission to be themselves, rather than identifying solely as representatives of organisations with whom they may be volunteering or working. Before embarking on a CoP, CHE emphasises learning to listen for emerging themes where there are strong feelings, and building a strong community of practice around these evolving themes which will be present both within the group as concerns of participants, as well as in the wider community/society. CHE does this work within an over-arching frame of human ecology and values of ecological sustainability and social justice.

At FfF, participants are all activists and local people involved with promoting local food initiatives. All participants join as 'local people' in response to WECAN!'s ongoing listening process, but some also wear other hats of networks they are involved with. For example, **Newburgh Orchard Group** focuses on Newburgh's historic apple and pear orchards, originally planted by monks at a nearby Abby, and now distributed through the gardens of residents in the village. Thousands of tons of fruit go to waste every year (they used to be picked and sold before supermarkets globalised the local food economy). The orchard group is comprised of local residents and business people who have come together to explore ways of developing social enterprises to regenerate the orchards and village in an area of deprivation. Some started in the local history society, others were interested because of the potential to use the fruit in their gardens, and others were mothers keen to create a new community orchard by the school to be used as an edible and educational school ground.

Newburgh Orchard Group has launched a number of initiatives, and with the help of Food for Fife is establishing links with an urban food co-operative **Inverkeithing Food Co-operative Group** (another area of multiple deprivation and poverty, a 'food desert' without access to reasonably priced healthy food) supplying fresh fruit in season. Making a conscious connection to Fife's history has been an important motivating factor as local people and incomers re-connect and identify more strongly with their place, and tend to feel more secure in their own identity and sense of belonging, and therefore more committed to local projects. Another example is **Oakley Orchard Project** where local people including schoolchildren and conservation volunteers are regenerating waste ground for fruit cultivation, while the **St. Monans' allotment association** is developing land for communal food growing.

At Food for Fife, members must be actively involved in local food initiatives, live/work locally, and commit to being with the project for at least a year. CHE is not yet using the language of CoPs explicitly in this context, but allowing an understanding of what it means to be a community of practice emerge and make sense to people from their own value system and context.

In both instances, some people leave completely, but most tend to move in and out of scale of involvement with the network, with a central 'core' of people who are involved that may change gradually over time.

Tools and Processes

In the CHE experience with CoP's, face-to-face meetings are essential. CHE Fellows often reflect on the comparative poverty of electronic communication in conveying meaning, especially as they stress 'whole person' intelligence (eg. mind/ body/ emotional/ spiritual intelligence) and communication as essential in promoting centred self-knowing. They utilize a large range of facilitation techniques, drawn from popular education, process psychology, deep ecology, action research, and management learning approaches.

That said, CHE overall does use email lists and discussion boards extensively, while WECAN! is tentatively using email lists and considering the potential for using discussion boards. The CHE is developing its website as the primary store of knowledge and WECAN! has a website that will be developed in the future, but really mainly focuses on using networking 'celebration' events.

Principles and Practices

As part of the facilitation process, participants agree purpose, principles, and procedures for the CoP together, and review these when necessary. At CHE in particular, there is a strong and resilient culture of inquiry that is, for example, consciously passed on from student cohort to student cohort every year. They seek to ensure the structures at CHE are congruent with this culture of inquiry. Conflict situations are usually facilitated in-house using approaches drawn from those outlined above. However, outside assistance has been used with approaches appropriate to the context.

Resources

Both CHE and WECAN! have paid staff with administrative and management responsibilities, who ensure the structures necessary are in place (from rooms to a functioning website). In addition, there are important qualities to volunteers at Food for Fife who act as 'hub co-ordinators', hosting the CoPs. They are 'can-do' people, enterprising, good at listening, networking, and making connections, with a deep personal passion and commitment for their programme that is infectious (rather than exclusive). Hosts tend to be community-builders in ways that are often invisible. The majority (though not all) are women. Less often, these people were also born and bred in their place, and where this is the case (such is at the **Craigencalt farm Ecology Centre** and **Inverkeithing**) the projects have rapidly gained the trust of other 'locals' (as opposed to 'incomers'). Several of the Food for Fife 'hosts' have connections with Fife's School for Social Entrepreneurs, which provides a number of complementary services including access to IT and training in social enterprise development.

Achievements and Lessons

WECAN! was at a low ebb in 2000, following a lack of funding to continuing a previous focus theme on energy and recycling initiatives. CHE initiated what turned out to be an

18 month 'listening' process, 'tuning in' to local community needs and emerging initiatives. Towards the end of this process, a group constellated that became passionate about food issues, and with this reinvigoration came a successful funding bid for an eighteen month 'pilot' programme. The group built in facilitation support for its community of practice in the form of an 'action research evaluator'. The first year of the programme was a time of rapid and painful learning about the practice of catalysing local food initiatives. The programme is now maturing to the point where most participants in the CoP are consciously recognising the value of the learning community in addition to the emphasis on food, and it is anticipated to continue for at least another three years.

There are several key factors that, to date, appear to be conditions for success in the Fife project:

- The 'hub' co-ordinator(s) must provide leadership that is both passionate and facilitative, that inspires confidence but also allows others to believe in themselves. Taking the time to 'find' these people has been important – CHE finds that once the 'generative theme' (domain) has been found through a community listening, if it is the right one, very often people will step forward into leadership roles.
- These co-ordinators need reliable support from allies around them. WECAN! has attempted to design this support for its 'local champions' both through a project worker (who in turn is supported by volunteers on the management group), and also through embedding an on-going participatory action research evaluation process into all project funding, allowing regular reflection and learning, and twice-yearly celebration and networking events for wider stakeholders.
- The core CoP group needs to work together over at least a few months, consciously developing trust and shared values. CHE has found that making local-global connections – by, for example, understanding how the local food economy and economic globalization are inexorably interconnected – continues to breathe life into the group even after difficult times. For example, more recently Food for Fife has innovated by calculating the carbon emissions of the project as a whole, and talking about how the project can ensure it is not contributing more than absolutely necessary to climate change. By linking the agendas of food and climate change in this way, and by attempting to be congruent across all the project's activities, the community of practice is affirming its values and commitment.
- Language is important to get right, and varies in every context. In Fife, local people are able to grasp 'the power of learning from stories and story-telling' much more easily than an abstract language of 'communities of practice'. There is a long tradition of story-telling in Scotland, with many traveler people settling in Fife, and some of the most famous contemporary story-tellers living in the Kingdom. The tradition 'ceilidh' culture – where people gather for pints of beer to share poems and sing, is still alive. It is important to graft conscious community learning approaches onto existing, indigenous culture.
- Building a trusting and reciprocal relationship with funders/local authority is important, and a complex task because in some cases this means challenging funding structures that effectively prevent on-going learning, and long-term planning, by the project. Food for Fife! hasn't cracked this quite yet; the project still needs several years of core funding to be an effective CoP, especially as it has started from

a very low base of community morale and zero food-related community development activity.

- Linked to the above lesson is that, in search of financial security, Food for Fife! over-commits itself in service of top-down agendas. An example is being an intermediary organisation to supply 'healthy eating' programmes in schools, now government policy in Scotland. In this example, whilst the project is in dialogue with the local authority over this programme (especially attempting to get 'fair trade' and 'food miles' concepts onto the political agenda), it would be a mistake to become too closely affiliated with the local authority as local people would then perceive the organisation as an extension of the local authority and lose trust in the organisation. For too many years, local people have experienced over-consultation that does not result in real change, and instead requires too much time of local activists who then 'burn out' in service of an agenda that isn't theirs.

Behind these stories lies a series of continually evolving theoretical frameworks of what makes effective CoP practice that CHE has been developing over many years. In addition, the CHE's conscious role – of attempting to connect communities with academia, government, agencies and business – is a complex, rare and (now) proven way of effectively promoting ecological sustainability with social justice.

CHE has been an effective and catalyzing ally of Food for Fife and the action research evaluation model of continuing support is working. As a trusted NGO with a growing reputation for radical thinking and effective participatory practice, the CHE has acted as an ally, in response to invitations from local community projects such as Food for Fife as they establish themselves. CHE is increasingly working simultaneously with local people and local government, business and agencies' management and staff to develop community development CoPs inquiring into the practice of bridging the 'top-down, bottom-up' divide.

CASE 3: INTER-DISCIPLINARY LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Gentofte Municipality, Denmark

Contact Person: Signe Andersen [sia@gentofte.dk]

Background

Gentofte Municipality employs approximately 5400 people. The main function of the municipality is to serve the citizens of the area in such fields as childcare, elder care, tax, etc.

The rapidly changing demands with regards to efficiency and quality of the services provided by the municipality as well as continuing demands regarding IT and technical skills are making it increasingly challenging to be in a management position in Gentofte. Continuing efforts to decentralize as much as possible are also contributing to the increasing demands in regard to handling personnel as well as human resource management. The context and the culture both support the idea of further improvement of an already highly efficient organization.

The organisation is currently in an extensive restructuring process from a traditional public administration structure to a more project-based organisation where work areas and projects are in focus over organisational departments and structures. This means that in the future, the specific task or desired outcome will determine which employees should be involved in solving it. This brings challenges for all the employees around flexibility and adapting resources to the specific project, collaboration across departments, knowledge-sharing in cross-organisational networks, etc. All the employees are currently influenced by, and to varying degrees occupied with, this organisational restructuring.

The development and communication unit is an internal unit in the municipality tasked with organisational development, strategic financial management, digital development, and communication. This department is primary responsible for the leadership network described in this case.

About the Community of Practice

As a response to the increasing demands on managers in the municipality, the interdisciplinary leadership network was set up in 2004 to try to establish a supporting network system for managers from all levels in order to create a confidential forum for learning and growth based on the respective experiences of the members.

In short, the concept is thought of as being an initiative to ensure better leadership/management practices as well as a self-help group in cases of stress or minor professional crises. The network supports managers to develop themselves personally and professionally so that they can match the ongoing challenges and expectations posed to them as leaders in the municipality and in organisations more generally. It is a professional meeting place for coaching and for reflection on leadership practice.

The benefits to members include:

- targeted coaching on concrete challenges
- greater awareness of possible actions to take

- insight and reflection on their own development in the leadership role
- understanding for how they individually, but also how others, relate to leadership and leadership development
- influence on the development of the leadership culture of the municipality
- direct influence on relevant and current thematic discussions in the municipality
- increased understanding of wholeness and relationships and to the many different workplaces in the municipality

The concept was introduced by the top managers of the organization and included the recruitment of 25 network consultants within the organization who after a training period were put in charge of two networks each.

Members

Approximately 360 employees in management positions from every field of local public government and service are participating in the network concept in Gentofte municipality. All personnel in leadership positions are required to participate. In other words participation is not optional. Members have the right to take time out from other work assignments to participate and they have the responsibility to do so.

Tools and Processes

The network is divided into small network groups, each consisting of 7-8 members from different parts of the organization. On average, every group is required to meet 6-8 times a year for 3 hours. Experience shows various degrees of attendance but in general the rate is around 80%.

Experience has shown that the managers to various degrees have accepted and taken the particular Gentofte network concept to heart. Every group is supposed to use the same model for the securing adequate pay-off at the meetings. The process involves exchanging their respective leadership challenges and most importantly using the input from each other, utilizing the coaching method of “reflective teams”. Each meeting starts with a round where each member shares what they are most occupied with at the moment. On the basis of serving the greatest need first, the group together with the network consultant decides who should be coached. Usually one to two in-depth coaching rounds are covered in one meeting. The network consultant asks questions of the person receiving the coaching who explains what the challenge is and what he or she is hoping to gain from the coaching. Then the network consultant and the other members serve as a reflective team, whose task it is to help the person being coached to become clearer on his or her own challenges and choices. The focus is on asking questions, not offering advice.

This method can be very effective, but is difficult to master, which is – as mentioned above - why each group has a designated network consultant who assists in applying the reflective team coaching method. Most of the resistance within the groups concerning the networks has so far been attributable to this method which for some people is a difficult personal challenge.

In addition to the coaching purpose, the network also serves as a “sparring partner” for the top management of the municipality. The top management puts out a couple of relevant topics annually, which they would like input on, and the network groups then

have a discussion about these topics. The essence of this dialogue is then put back to the top management to continue work on the topics.

There are no specific technological supporting systems in place – other than MS outlook for booking of meetings. Nothing more is required.

Principles and Practices

Each group has formulated a number of guidelines, among other things stipulating acceptable reasons for occasional non-attendance. All groups formulated these guidelines - called the constitution for the group – at the outset of the network project i.e. at their first meeting.

With regard to unwritten norms, these are group specific and are confidential. However, confidentiality is considered pivotal for the entire project. Conflicts – which ostensibly have been few – are handled inside the group or by the network consultant or by the responsible central organizational unit who is in charge of the network project. This unit consists of four human resource management consultants.

The municipality has specifically chosen to create the groups along a principle of maximum diversity – each manager is assigned to a group with people who are least like him/herself by professional background, task area, leadership level, age, gender, etc. Managers are never put in a group with their own boss. This diversity is often a precondition for being able to pose open questions to each other, which in turn enables open coaching and learning. It also facilitates confidentiality.

Resources

In terms of human resources the support system in place consists of the 25 network consultants as well as the central four member team of consultants whereof one is specifically in charge of matching newly employed leaders with a suitable group. The turnover rate is approx. 30-40 percent per year which means this task is quite time consuming. (Turnover in this respect also covers management rotations within the organization).

The network consultants are offered regular training sessions headed by one very experienced network external consultant. In addition, many of the network consultants are themselves members of a network for network-consultants in order to have a training and support group, but also to make sure they take their own "medicine" on a regular basis.

Achievements and Lessons

The experiences to date with the network have shown that:

- The cross-disciplinary leadership networks increase the understanding of leadership and leadership thinking in the municipality and at the same time give insight into each leader's own role and the role of others. Leaders gain tools and training in the reflective approach to leadership which enables them to better understand their own leadership practice.

- The groups have worked very differently and it seems that the groups have different visions for how the chosen method should be adapted and changed.
- The majority of participants have participated continuously.
- The gains seem to be proportional to the individual leader's investment in the network.
- The groups need time to establish safe space and trust in the groups – this doesn't happen automatically.
- There is a need for support from the top leadership, if the individual leader is going to have the courage and interest to participate in the network and achieve a good outcome.
- For many leaders it is a challenge not to be a problem-solver or to have all the answers, and to surrender to the reflective method, focused on questions.
- The benefit of having a consultant attached to each group is, that there is a person taking responsibility for facilitation of the process.

It is relatively more difficult to get the network to work, when there is a large difference in the level of the leaders' positions and task areas than if the networks were formed around groups that are similar in practice or level.

Key success factors are among others to maintain the integrity of the group in terms of securing the absence of direct organizational relations among members within the group. Another important factor is to ensure that the method for exchange of views and learning is not unacceptable to the participants. But it is perceived that a method is required to ensure that the meetings are not exclusively forums for coffee and small talk.

The whole network project has been in place for 10 months and remains to be evaluated in a more systematic fashion. A comprehensive evaluation is planned to be concluded by late autumn 2005. Therefore it is not possible to draw any conclusions with regards to results just yet.

CASE 4: PREPARING THE WORKFORCE
The Pilbara Region, Western Australia
Contact Person: Jenny Thomas [jenny.nec@bigpond.com]

Background

The Pilbara region, situated in the North West of Western Australia is a large area (500,000 square kilometres) which is home to 40,000 inhabitants. While this beautiful region is rich in minerals and natural resources and boasts a rich cultural heritage, it is also affected by the legacy of a history of disenfranchising indigenous people, who today make up 15% of the population. While the region has a low official unemployment rate (4.9%), the indigenous unemployment rate is very high (42% including Community Development and Employment Programme participants). Only 8% of all adult indigenous people hold post-secondary qualifications (8%), as compared to the non-indigenous group (35%). 40% of the people in the local Pilbara communities are under the age of 15, and only 6.3% are over 55. (See Pilbara Area Consultative Committee; www.pacc.pilbara.net)

In the past, there has been a lack of educational opportunity, and a history of discriminating against employing indigenous people. The Australian Government created the Indigenous Employment Policy in 1999 – to improve the employment circumstances and future prospects of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, focussed on working through the private sector. Now, the current economic boom in the Pilbara region has created a current and future labour shortage in the resource industry, which has resulted in employment opportunities. With the high unemployment rate amongst indigenous people, the recent change of policy to improve their employment circumstances, and the need for labour in the resource industry, there was a clear way forward for the Pilbara region, that resulted in a Community of Practice being formed - the “Preparing the Workforce” Community of Practice (CoP).

Pilbara Technical and Further Education (TAFE), who conceptualised and project managed this Community of Practice, develops and delivers training programmes for industry and community clients throughout the Pilbara region, and offers non-academic post-school studies such as apprenticeships and traineeships up to degree level. (See www.pilbaratafe.wa.edu.au)

About the Community of Practice

This Community of Practice was set up to develop a training and support programme for indigenous people to gain access to the mining and resource industry. This project was formed to meet with the objectives of Australia’s national strategy for Vocational Education Training 2004-2010.

According to the Action Plan submitted by Pilbara TAFE to “Reframing the Future”:

“The Community of Practice (CoP) capitalises on the employment opportunities created by the current boom (and subsequent labour shortages) and spirit of cooperation between government, non government agencies and organisations (addressing existing and potential economic and social issues) within the Pilbara region. The CoP engaged all key stakeholders (including the resource industry,

educators and job service and social providers) in the development of a customised holistic training programme specifically for indigenous people wishing to find employment, trainee or apprenticeships in the resource industry. In particular, the indigenous people to be targeted for the programme are the long term unemployed and the school leavers who don't qualify for traineeships or apprenticeships. The programme includes a training and resource materials, work experience, drug and alcohol counselling, job readiness skills and overall social support.

In essence, all stakeholders benefit from the CoP. TAFE will have an increased market for training which they could not consider without external support from the social service providers. Job service providers will have an additional avenue for increasing the local employment pool and increasing the number of job placements. Apprenticeships WA will have more candidates to place in trainee and apprenticeships. The resource industry will be able to alleviate the pressure applied from the lack of labor supply. Most importantly, indigenous people will find employment in long term, well paid positions.”

http://reframingthefuture.net/Action_Plans/2004/files04/cp177-8-1-1.pdf

The Community of Practice was conceptualised by Alan Scott (the Director of Pundulmurra College, Pilbara TAFE) and the specific goals of the community were formulated through the Local Employment Strategy and stakeholders. Alan had previously organised pre-employment programmes in individual resource companies through Pilbara TAFE for the last 5 years, and had seen that there was a clear demand for general skills in the resource industry. He put in a successful submission on behalf of Pilbara TAFE to Reframing the Future, which is a major initiative of the Australian National Training Authority (whose aims are to assist in building the capacity of the Australian Vocational Education Training sector to facilitate the achievement of a national training system). The Community of Practice was then project managed by the Pilbara TAFE Training Solutions through Northern Edge Consultants and Pundulmurra Campus.

The Community of Practice achieved its aims and ended in November 2004.

Members

Prior to the formation of this Community of Practice, most of the stakeholders were involved in the Local Employment Strategy group which comprises community groups, government agencies and local industry leaders. The Local Employment Strategy group establishes partnerships with outside organisations to develop and support recruitment pools and training opportunities for indigenous candidates. The members of the CoP were in support of it, but weren't on board until the funding grant was successful.

There were generally 20 participants, mostly from the managerial level, and all in positions somehow dealing with employment and community development. The participants were:

- Key members of the resource industry

- Job service providers
- Education providers
- Social service providers

There was no formal system of members joining or leaving, other than adding them to the e-mail list when they joined. People were sent invitations to attend and were not asked to sign contracts. It was voluntary to be a part of the Community of Practice, and only a few participants dropped out.

There was a core team of 3 people (Project Manager, Facilitator and Submission & Acquittals Officer) who ran the project through Pilbara TAFE. It was noted that the core CoP members from the beginning were service providers (Pilbara TAFE, BHP, Pilbara Job Futures and Bloodwood Tree Employment Directions Network) while others came in along the way.

Tools and Processes

To facilitate learning, this Community of Practice focused primarily on face-to-face meetings. They met 3 times face to face over 6 months as a whole group, and in a number of working group sessions, small group meetings and one-on-ones in between meetings. There was no online meeting space - the only technology used was group e-mail, videoconferencing and teleconferencing. It was important to have these technologies given that many members were working at significant distances from each other, and the end product required intense collaboration.

In the first session it was explained what a Community of Practice is, and this information was also sent out to all the members. The facilitation had the following characteristics: have a clear and highly developed process, have clear outcomes and objectives, ask key questions, mainly using large group discussion and using some small group discussion work, summarise everything that is said, write it up and send this information to all people involved (who, when and how), draw up an action plan at every meeting.

The emerging knowledge of the community has since been incorporated into a holistic training programme aimed at indigenous people seeking employment, traineeships, or apprenticeships. Knowledge will be managed and recorded through Pilbara TAFE. All documentation including workshop agendas and meeting notes are stored at Pilbara TAFE.

Jenny Thomas from Northern Edge Consultants was the facilitator of the Community of Practice. The kinds of qualities that she said were needed to facilitate this Community of Practice successfully were to start with allowing people to “purge about their issues”. Be really “pushy, bossy, strong and flexible”. She felt it is important to have a clear process and to keep going back to the purpose, keeping people on track. She would try to interpret what people were saying quickly and to summarise it and capture it so that the conversations wouldn’t go off topic or take too long.

At the end of each session, Jenny would ask everyone how they were feeling, what concerns they had, and what were the two actions resulting from the meeting they were

going to do the next day. The actions would be recorded and sent out to the whole group. It would be important to put responsible names on for all the decisions taken, and to set up a meeting date quickly if a new working group was needed.

Jenny emphasised the need for an external facilitator, preferably a local person. The facilitator should have no attachment to outcomes and concentrate purely on the process.

Principles and Practices

There were no formalised processes for dispute/conflict resolution. It was felt that it was part of the facilitator's role to deal with issues as and when they came up. The facilitator created an issues board, where arising issues could be posted and then revisited after the agenda had been completed. If the issue was better off dealt with externally, this was arranged for a separate time.

Resources

There was funding allocated for a Project Manager, Submission & Acquittals Officer, and a Facilitator, all three part-time. These three staff members organised hospitality, travel, administration, facilitation and project management. All participants' travel to meetings was paid for by the Pilbara TAFE.

Achievements and Lessons

The community went through a clear set of phases over its lifecycle.

- Coalescing: Identification of stakeholders, invitation of members, initial one-day meeting covering introductions, purpose, background, skills overview, strategies for achieving the purpose, and communication strategies
- Active: In the active phase, the CoP was communicating actively - sharing resources, knowledge and skills, looking at industry profiles, developing the customised training programme, and communicating its successes and actions through existing networks.
- Dispersed: The community went for six months and ended as it achieved its aim of developing a holistic training programme for indigenous people to gain access to the mining and resource industry. Once the training programme was tried and evaluated, it was modified and then delivered again.

The aims of Preparing the Workforce were achieved through a cooperative approach. It built on relationships with and among members of the resource industry by involving them in the community with the view of assisting them in solving their current and future labour shortages. This approach enhanced relationships with and between local job service providers, social service providers and other educators and trainers, all of whom have a vested interest in seeing positive employment outcomes for indigenous people.

The first training programme is complete. There were 13 people enrolled, 11 completed the training and 9 have now gained employment. The second training programme has just begun.

One of the lessons of the experience was the importance of meeting face-to-face. Some participants who were unable to meet with the group due to distance and not being able to travel dropped out of the community.

According to the final report of the Reframing the Future Sub-Programme and Communities of Practice, the conditions for success were:

- “Development and implementation of a structured process for the facilitation of CoP meetings based on what had been happening in the region previously,
- Conducting CoP forums utilising a clearly defined process (with purpose, outcomes and actions clearly defined),
- Confirming notes of point and actions at the CoP meetings and documenting them accordingly,
- Placing names of CoP members next to actions and the prompt distribution of these notes to all stakeholders,
- Follow up phone calls with CoP members in relation to the actions and involvement in any subsequent working parties/ groups,
- Formation of sub groups and working parties to develop and implement strategies in response to identified actions,
- Emailing of notes and documents,
- Regular networking with all members of the CoP,
- The participants were all very willing to be a part of the CoP. Good relationships between different sectors develop from things like this CoP.”

(Reframing the Future Sub-Programme and Communities of Practice Final Report 2004).

Case appendix: A note on Communities of Practice in Australia

Communities of Practice in Australia are all over the country in the public and the private sector (and frequently the two are intertwined), although they are sometimes not titled “Community of Practice”. There are communities of practice within government in a singular department e.g. tax, defence, or the South Australian Department of Health as well as inter-departmental such as the knowledge management forum, e-democracy or e-government CoP.

One particular government initiative that is worth highlighting is “Reframing the Future”. According to their website (www.reframingthefuture.net), “Reframing the Future is a national staff development and change management initiative funded through the Australian National Training Authority. Funded on an annual basis from National Project Funds, Reframing the Future provides limited matched funding for approximately 200 projects every year (approximately half of these are Communities of Practice). Since inception in 1997, the Reframing the Future project team has worked with over 43,000 participants who are implementing the national training system in workplaces around Australia.”

Another government initiative is the Australian Government Management Office, AGIMOs support for CoPs. AGIMO specifically has a role as facilitator and catalyst,

especially in the establishment phase of CoPs across government in Australia (www.agimo.gov.au/resources/cop/).

In the private sector CoP's are used informally or formally to support organisations' business objectives. For example, Lend Lease is a leading real estate services business which has developed, constructed and managed real estate assets for 45 years. Over the last 4 years they have created a Community of Practice and implemented a team of full-time knowledge brokers to activate sharing and drive buy-in (www.lendlease.com). Rio Tinto (mining company), BHP and BP are other examples of organisations aligning Communities of Practice with business improvement. Finally, there are Australian organisations involved in world-wide Communities of Practice, such as the Rabobank Australia and New Zealand CoP, or the Ford Plant in Geelong, which is a part of a world-wide Ford Community of Practice.

CASE 5: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH CANADA
Ottawa, Canada
Contact person: Tatiana Glad [tatiana@engage.nu]

Background

Health Canada is the federal department of the Government of Canada responsible for helping the people of Canada maintain and improve their health. In 1997, Health Canada staff members involved in “Public Involvement” (PI) came together in response to the government’s 1997 mandate to deepen its commitment to citizen engagement (“Speech From The Throne” 1997). The PI staff members came together initially to draw on the shared expertise of PI practitioners in drafting a policy statement, but this initiative soon evolved into a community of practice with wider and deeper impact.

Through their co-learning, the PI CoP created the *Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision Making* which remains in place as the standard for how to do the work, and has gained recognition across the federal government and beyond. Wenger states in his writing about this same CoP, that “it may be surprising to find such engagement in a bureaucratic context, yet the spirit of meaningful engagement is definitely part of the PI community. Members say it carries enough hope for them to suspend their cynicism. This is good news for a public-sector organization. Such organizations have a tremendous, though often underleveraged asset: the appeal of public service. Many people join public institutions with a calling to serve the public good. In these institutions, community work has the potential of resonating with the calling of public servants and reawakening their sense of mission.”

This case study is based on an interview with Wendy Atkin (Consultation Advisor, Corporate Consultation Secretariat, Health Canada and member of the PI CoP), secondary research, and Etienne Wenger’s December 2003 research paper “The Public Involvement Community of Practice at Health Canada”.

About the Community of Practice

The PI CoP originally emerged to leverage the resources of a small team charged with the difficult task of dealing with thousands of PI staff across the country. As someone at the organisation recently reflected, “the goal was efficiency as well as fostering learning from the experiences of doing the work.” Formed in an organic fashion - in the sense that staff who were already doing the work came together to work on a response to the call for engagement - the CoP was endorsed officially with allocation of a director’s guidance and a small budget.

The original four areas of focus that prompted staff to come together from across branches and functions were:

- To develop a departmental policy for public involvement;
- To produce a toolkit of practical resources for conducting public consultation;
- To create a mechanism for coordinating consultation events and access to stakeholders; and,
- To organise an annual conference on public involvement.

Participants were further encouraged as they teamed up around shared expertise to develop the toolkit, finding that they knew the policy work - and how to advance and

apply it - more intimately than the hired external consultants. “The involvement of practitioners in all phases of compiling the Toolkit was critical to its success; they knew what was needed and contributed knowledge from the strength of their own experience.” As the PI CoP started to define itself and came to understand the spirit of what was evolving, it was a matter of “amplifying” what they were experiencing rather than constructing a new intervention.

Members

Members joined voluntarily based on interest in the topic, not formal affiliation or mandate, resulting in “collegial rather than hierarchical” relationships.

Members self-selected and by word-of-mouth let the secretariat know if they wanted to be on the e-mail list, participate in monthly network meetings, or become active closer to the core (working/advisory groups, etc.). The participants have been as diverse as the department, representing different regions and programmes, some in scientific fields and others in population health. The nature of participants and their levels of engagement fluctuated, with movement in and out of the community generated by interest at various points throughout the process, and Wendy Atkins emphasised that “we experienced that as a positive thing”. After a few years, the community reached a level of maturity in which the more advanced members started to pay attention to the needs of its more peripheral members.

At the time of Wenger’s research, December 2003, the PI CoP was vibrant and facing several challenges/opportunities: *to extend the community*, engaging more participants from other regions and moving away from Ottawa as the connecting hub; *to enliven the online component*, bringing the sense of community spirit and interaction to the intranet site; *to think more strategically about the domain*, potentially extending PI and policy work and/or more directly engaging the public in this CoP; and, *to increase visibility*, attracting new members and sustained support for the community.

In May 2005, one of the members shared, “I believe that we are seeing the end of the CoP now - it cycled through birth, growth, productivity, experimented with various processes, and now that our policy approach has shifted a bit and the department has undergone some reorganization (the creation of the Public Health Agency of Canada), the CoP is largely inactive.”

Tools and Processes

Processes used by the PI CoP to meet and learn include: monthly network meetings, informal channels of communication, shared learning activities, and a shared intranet space, as well as collaboration on tools/policy pieces. A bi-monthly speaker series opened to participants outside the CoP infused the community with “new thinking by bringing in outside perspectives as well as new faces.”

The Corporate Consultation Secretariat unit within Health Canada had a mandate to support the CoP by organizing the monthly meetings, supporting/facilitating working groups, distributing the policy, maintaining an e-mail list, and offering learning opportunities. However the CoP strongly upheld its informal nature, even when offered to become part of a formal structure reporting to the management committee, asserting their wish to not lose the essence of an informal network.

The facilitation style within the CoP was dialogic, with a director trained by Dialogos in “the art of dialogue”. A CoP participant shared, “This helped us create the conditions for meetings that were pleasurable as well as productive and we coached each other and CoP members on the art of listening to understand.”

In terms of technology, it seems that their intranet site was less successful than face-to-face or phone relationships. “We used Simplify software (www.tomoye.com), which is designed to support our CoPs. Unfortunately, in a department that is already overflowing with electronic communications options and without senior management championing the site, it was under-used.”

The CoP stores knowledge in an intranet space and in the formal policy toolkit, which is still being distributed department-wide.

Principles and Practices

The CoP has no specific processes in place for dispute resolution/ conflict resolution. On encountering resistance from outside the group, the community responds through openness and inviting collaboration. On encountering the realities of being situated within a larger more bureaucratic organisation and the structural barriers that in itself may present, members practise understanding organisational dynamics, adapting language when needed and being inventive in reaching goals.

The only 'rule' that was often reiterated was that members of the PI CoP were self-selecting. “This was important in a hierarchical organization because sometimes people worried that they could not attend a meeting if someone else from their unit was already participating.” And people were encouraged to come for what they cared about, “I think the secret is the idea of people being there because they want to be there.... you can take this as an operating principle.” It was important that the managers of PI CoP participants be aware of their involvement and recognise the value of it.

The CoP thrived on a sense of belonging rooted in “shared inquiry, truthfulness and dialogue” putting into practice and reflecting the principles from their own experience as public involvement practitioners. Wenger observed a spirit of community leadership that he described as characterized as being: ‘the change you wish to see (Ghandi)’; inspired credible, available, smart with time, facilitative, part of the [larger] process.

Achievements and Lessons

This CoP created a number of tools, policy contributions, learning opportunities, and a network of staff that was important for many who appreciated experiencing a community that was horizontal, safe, productive, and informal.

Most importantly, the department created a Policy Toolkit that reflects much of the learning throughout the CoP process and remains an active tool across the department, and an example of an engagement toolkit to other groups across the federal government and internationally. As Wenger states, the Policy Toolkit as a common and co-creative initiative has given the CoP a “common language and a view of the domain. It also gave it an identity in the organisation. It contained a set of models and useful tools that made

the practice visible. And perhaps most importantly, it was itself a product of the community.”

Benefits of a CoP identified throughout the life of this PI CoP include:

- elevating the profile of public involvement within the department, giving visibility to the domain
- connecting people across silos, networking practitioners across the organisation
- creating a space for practitioners to take responsibility for their own learning and come together around shared areas of practice that they care about

As has been captured in documentation about the PI CoP, “members report that their participation has made a substantial difference in their lives.”

In terms of lessons learned, one participant reflected that, “Within an organization, I believe that a senior management champion is critical to success as well as technological interface that people really buy into.” However, she also shared that while a champion in senior management might help sustain the CoP, “that is a bit contradictory, no?”

CASE 6: AYUDA URBANA

World Bank

Contact: Lesley Williams [lesley@pioneersofchange.net]

Background

The World Bank Group's mission is to fight poverty and improve the living standards of people in the developing world. It is a development bank which provides loans, policy advice, technical assistance and knowledge sharing services to low and middle income countries to reduce poverty.

At the annual meeting of the Bank in 1996, James Wolfensohn, the previous President, announced a new focus for the Bank. It would move beyond the lending of money to developing countries, but would become the "knowledge bank", as he believed that knowledge is a key lever in the fight against poverty. An effective information infrastructure needed to be put in place to allow for information to be easily retrieved when a similar question came up. By 1997 it became clear that knowledge-management needed to move beyond "collecting" information, to connecting "people", and that knowledge-sharing worked best when practitioners interacted on a regular basis. These informal communities of practice groups focusing on issues such as community-based rural development, roads and highways, public health, nutrition or water resource management became known as Thematic Groups.

About the Community of Practice

In early June 1999, the Mayor of San Salvador, chair of the Economic Development Committee of UCCI/CAMC (Union of Capital Cities of Ibero-America/Central America and the Caribbean), and urban specialists from the World Bank started conversations about inter-city capability. They recognized the value of connecting peers across borders to address problems and challenges that cities in the region all faced.

By early 2000, Roberto Chavez, who was the project leader of Ayuda Urbana at the World Bank, secured funding along with his colleagues, and worked on forging partnerships to give birth to the project. A group of ten cities decided to participate in the initiative: Guatemala City, Havana, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San Jose, San Juan, San Salvador, Santo Domingo, and Tegucigalpa. Mayors and municipal staff were consulted to define the objectives, the process, and the responsibilities. The project proposal was approved by the council of mayors in September 2000.

The objective of the project is to improve the quality of life of all city dwellers by improving municipal effectiveness and efficiency in each of the cities involved. The project brought mayors and their staff together to understand issues, analyse problems and apply both established and creative solutions to the delivery of an array of services. Along with the expertise of the World Bank with communities of practice, the participants of the initiative proposed that they create CoPs that would take advantage of the knowledge available among the dozens of urban specialists in the participating cities. They identified key issues, questions, and problems they shared, and selected eight topics that represented the most urgent challenges they were facing:

- e-government
- urban upgrading
- environmental sanitation

- municipal finances
- urban transportation
- renovation of historical city centers and poverty alleviation
- disaster prevention/management

Tools and Processes

A central theme of the initiative has been “partnership”, bringing various organisations together to join forces with the participating cities to provide the necessary resources for the success of the project. These included financial resources, facilities, personnel, domain knowledge, and process knowledge. Etienne Wenger noted these partnerships in his writing on this CoP:

- The World Bank provided overall coordination.
- The Central America, Mexico and Caribbean chapter UCCI was the regional partner. The mission of the UCCI is to promote ties among cities and conduct studies of issues that affect municipalities in Spanish-speaking regions. The UCCI is also actively involved in training technical staff in metropolitan areas.
- The participating cities contributed their staff and took turns hosting meetings.
- Several other local organizations contributed expertise and personnel to meetings when it was deemed useful.
- The British and Dutch governments provided a total of \$249,000 in funding through their international development departments.

Principles and Practices

The communities of practice were officially launched through a series of two-day workshops, each focused on one of the topics. It comprised of dozens of practitioners specialising in different areas of urban planning and management in the various cities. These took place every 2-3 months in different cities. According to Wenger, each workshop brought together:

- about 30 people from the participating cities, mostly specialists in the topic
- a few World Bank Thematic Group members with relevant expertise
- members of other organisations as appropriate
- a team from the World Bank to facilitate the meeting.

Wenger observed that the workshops were very interactive as their purpose was to:

- create an initial forum to develop relationships and trust through face-to-face interactions among participants
- give a chance to each participating city to share their experience
- engage participants in a discussion of lessons learned based on presentations by World Bank experts
- establish a prioritised list of the most pressing issues and most frequently asked questions

- introduce web-based tools for use in providing an ongoing learning process and train participants in the use of the system
- choose a person to coordinate the collection of resources to be shared via e-mail and the website.

Resources

Web-based tools provided an online conversation forum. It enabled participants to discuss issues, ask questions, share relevant information, and stay in touch. The project has created an interactive website that serves as a repository for the seven communities of practice. The resources on the website are available to the public. The Thematic Groups contributed to the development of material for the website. The website's contents include:

- a library of “structured collections” of “knowledge objects” relevant to each of the topics. These are organized for two types of audience:
 - *For policy makers and administrators:* description of the topic, its importance, the issues involved.
 - *For practitioners:* The nuts and bolts of the practice, processes from start to implementation, lessons learned, case studies, and tools.
- a series of downloadable manuals
- a glossary of relevant terms and concepts
- links to resources, including bibliographic references and websites
- links to municipalities and other relevant organizations and agencies
- workshop proceedings and presentations
- directories of communities of practice

Achievements and lessons

Ayuda Urbana has revealed the value of collaboration across borders to address urgent issues in urban development. The experience of the team has also brought to light a number of principles for this type of initiative. Etienne Wenger and Ronald Kim have observed the following key lessons:

Communities of practice are a very effective vehicle for learning.

The highest value of the project resided in the communities of practice that linked practitioners in the various cities. These communities enable the development and sharing of knowledge with direct applicability to practice, because they connect peers who share similar responsibilities, concerns, and challenges, and enable them to learn from each other.

What constitutes a “best practice” is subjective.

Local conditions require adaptability and intelligent application. A community is useful in this regard because it allows people to explore the principles that underlie a successful practice and discuss ideas and methods in ways that make them relevant to local circumstances.

Members must choose which policy topics, content and activities are appropriate for themselves.

Develop an ecology of complementary activities.

Learning in a community is best enabled by a variety of activities that enhance each other's effectiveness as vehicles for developing and sharing knowledge.

Respond to actual needs of participants.

At every step, consultation with members is the key – the members must drive the ideas and content. Engage in ongoing consultations and conversations, whether in planning events or in building resources.

Engage practitioners.

Provide assistance to enable members themselves to develop material and organize events. Over time distribute the work of coordinating communities.

Bring a variety of resources.

The process takes substantial resources to start with. These resources are diverse, including funding, time available, and facilities, but mostly consist in knowledge resources—knowledge of the process as well as the domain.

Prepare for hand-over.

Start with a lot of support, but be prepared to hand over the initiative. Develop local capabilities. This implies training people in operational responsibilities as well as convincing local authorities to take over the sponsorship of the project.

The Municipal Councils of participating cities endorse the project and have integrated it into the annual plans for their respective municipality. The cities alternate taking the coordinating role for the communities and managing the website, hosting it and developing new content. When operations were handed over to a new team managed by the local association of mayors, the World Bank provided the new team with training in web and content management.

The project has resulted in a self-sustaining learning system. It was developed to the point where the local partners were prepared to take over the responsibility for continuing the program. The benefits of the programme were evident enough that the municipalities were ready to include it in their own annual plans. This local takeover is perhaps the most significant sign of success of the initiative. Ayuda Urbana coordinators are now advising the World Bank task teams on the replication of the model in countries seeking to form their own communities of practise on urban issues. These countries include China and India who have initiated similar projects.

CASE 7: COMMUNITIES THAT CARE
Municipality of Rotterdam North, The Netherlands
Contact: Moraan Gilad [moraan@pioneersofchange.net]

Background

Communities That Care (CtC) is a community-based early intervention and prevention programme which aims to tackle future social problems. The programme is based on an understanding of risk and protective factors to help communities develop an integrated approach to:

- the positive development of children and youth
- the prevention of problem behaviours, including substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and violence.

The Communities that Care process was first developed in the United States by Professors J. David Hawkins and Richard M. Catalano, of the University of Washington, Seattle. Today, that process is being applied in more than 600 American communities – in most cases with state and federal support. CtC is also active in Australia and the United Kingdom.

The approach is based on mapping the influential risk factors in children's lives that increase the chances they will develop health and behaviour problems as they grow older. Once this is done the next step is to identify and implement protective factors that help to shield young people from problems in circumstances that would otherwise place them at risk.

About the Community of Practice

The case described here, is based on the experience of the CtC programme in a neighbourhood in Rotterdam, named Het Oude Noorden (The Old North). This neighbourhood counts 18.000 very diverse inhabitants. Young, old, rich, poor, students, actors, artists, entrepreneurs and shop owners live in a small area in the north of the city of Rotterdam which is one of the largest cities in The Netherlands. Most of the people in this area are considered immigrants, meaning they or one of their parents have been born outside of The Netherlands. It is one of the poorer neighbourhoods of the city, with a high unemployment rate. About a quarter of the population is below 18.

Members

A Dutch criminologist has been researching CtC since 1996. She was enthusiastic about the crime prevention possibilities of the approach and brought the programme to the attention of the ministries of Justice, Education and Wellbeing. The Dutch Institute for Care and Wellbeing (Nederlands Instituut voor Zorg en Welzijn) was commissioned to research the possibilities of implementing the CtC approach in The Netherlands. They became a licensed agency to train CtC co-ordinators in 1999. Later that year the Dutch government offered partial funding to pilot the CtC approach in four locations in The Netherlands. Rotterdam was one of them.

The municipality employs a co-ordinator. This person is supported by a team of experts of the Dutch Institute for Care and Wellbeing. The co-ordinator makes sure the steps of the four-year implementation period are carried out. CtC starts with the development of a

body of expertise in the identification, measurement and analysis of the risk and protective factors experienced by young people within a community. This is the Steering Committee. This committee is responsible for forming a Prevention Team, a group of fieldworkers who are in touch with the people from the community on a daily basis.

At the same time a standardised questionnaire is used to ask pupils about their experience in school, their friendships and peer groups, relationships with their families and their behaviour and attitudes. This School Survey and the expertise of the Steering Committee and Prevention Team are then used within the preventative strategy to profile the risk and protective factors of young people across an area, stratified geographically, by age and gender and / or by target group.

When the problems of the area are identified, a priority list can be made. CtC has an overview of best practice programmes that are targeting a specific risk situation. This overview is titled 'CtC's Promising Approaches'. With this overview an Action Plan can be made to maintain, transform or end existing services and add missing services that target the not yet addressed risk factors.

The Steering Committee is a group of influential key persons from the neighbourhood. Leaders with the power to make change happen. The Steering Committee is headed by the CtC co-ordinator.

The Prevention team consists of representatives from the municipality and the Safe Together group (Veilig Samen). This group is a collaboration of various professionals who are working in the neighbourhood: Child-protection, youth work, social-cultural work, welfare, police and health work.

The co-ordinator is appointed by the municipality. The co-ordinator approaches those community leaders who are identified as key persons to change things within the community to join the Steering Committee. This Steering Committee searches which professionals are working within the identified field in the community, who are invited to form the Prevention Team. Together they profile the problems in the area and their causes. Participants of both groups can be added and are free to leave when so desired.

The co-ordinator is the most actively involved person who works fulltime to co-ordinate the processes. The Steering Committee has to identify the neighbourhood's strengths and weaknesses and decide on which problems have to be targeted. The committee also convenes the Prevention Team. The committee meets often in the beginning and then more sporadically (every 6 weeks) to do the strategic planning. The Prevention Team is the executive body of the programme. The members meet more often and only get involved once the strategic plan has been decided on.

Tools and processes

The contact, mostly in the form of advice, with the Dutch Institute for Care and Wellbeing is maintained both on-line as well as off-line. The meetings of both the Steering Committee and the Prevention Team are planned on-line. Agendas and notes and other information are sent by e-mail. The Municipality has some information about the programme on-line to inform citizens.

The Steering committee meets often at first, until there is a strategic plan, and then more

sporadically, currently once every 6 weeks. The Prevention Team meets more often, currently once a week. Meetings are held at different places, usually at one of the participating organisations, and have a fixed chairperson.

The co-ordinator is responsible for taking notes and the distribution of information. There is no library other than the collection of notes and documents that have been produced so far and are stored with the co-ordinator or with one of the other participants.

Principles and Practices

Communities that Care carries a copyright. The programme requires a licensed distributor who can train and support co-ordinators and distribute the tools. More information is available on-line at www.communitiesthatcare.org.

An agreement is needed between all participants about the action plan. If an organisation doesn't agree with the proposed strategy the co-ordinator has to try to either convince the organisation or adapt the strategy until all are in agreement. If the organisation keeps disagreeing they are free to leave, but the organisation won't be able to participate and will not receive any funds from the municipality anymore.

The Dutch Institute for Care and Wellbeing trains and supports the co-ordinators. The co-ordinator is a full time employee of the municipality and s/he can use all the municipality's facilities.

Resources

The fees for the co-ordinator are covered by a fund from the government. The organisations are already receiving funds from the municipality, but sometimes their projects have to change. Some projects are dropped and others are added. Overall the same amount of money is spent on youth projects.

Achievements and lessons

Communities that Care was started in late 1999 in Rotterdam North. The first step was to examine if there was an interest for the programme. Afterwards the organisational structure was developed, which led to the establishment of a Prevention Team. The prevention team made a district profile of the area in 2001, containing data concerning problem behaviour, the positive and negative aspects in the district and the present offers of programmes for youth. This district profile formed the basis for the prevention programme developed in 2002. This programme describes how the negative aspects are diminished and positive aspects can be reinforced. It also states how the organisations concerned can improve their efficiency and co-operation. In 2003 a beginning was made with the implementation of the prevention programme. In 2004 the first evaluation was made after which the prevention programme was adapted.

The programme has promoted understanding of the factors that influence healthy youth adjustment, and actively involves different parties from the community in the development and implementation of a co-ordinated prevention programme.

Because of a positive evaluation of the four pilots after a try-out period of four years the Dutch government has decided to offer funds for co-ordinators and support by the Dutch Institute for Care and Wellbeing for more municipalities in The Netherlands.

The most important lesson is that making changes to service delivery or bringing in new practices and services within a geographical area needs to include people from all levels. For Communities that Care this has four dimensions:

- Key leaders (strategic partners such as Heads of Education and Social Services, Chief Executives, etc.) are critical to this process.
- Having a wide range of key personnel involved at the operational and managerial level throughout the programme is important. It is especially valuable to have groups involved who are responsible for the delivery of services.
- Being 'joined up' - crossing not only agency boundaries but also hierarchical institutional boundaries between strategic and operational functions and/or the local community - is critical if successful implementation of early intervention and prevention is to be achieved.
- Participants have to be involved in the programme early. Having mechanisms for building up knowledge and understanding is critical if prevention is to become more established in service delivery.

Other lessons are:

- The process of measuring risk and developing and implementing interventions in youth services is complex, time-consuming and requires strong leadership from above.
- The role and management of co-ordinator is critical for communication.
- An Action Plan has to be constructed as a consensus of all parties and agencies at both operational and strategic levels, otherwise the chances of successful implementation are limited.
- Local professionals and communities find the process of analysing the data and making priority decisions based on evidence very useful in helping them construct services that are evidence-based.
- The CtC approach shows how some of the problems highlighted in multi-agency practice can be overcome.

The CtC approach is based on changing factors that affect childhood development, which are likely to take many years to bear fruit. Therefore it needs to be borne in mind that the first evaluation could only give some early indications.

CASE 8: WINSFORD NETWORKED LEARNING COMMUNITY
Winsford, Cheshire, United Kingdom
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Background

The National College for School Leadership (www.ncsl.org.uk) is a Centre of Excellence in promoting school leadership in England and Wales, set up by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) in collaboration with other governmental, public and private agencies. In 2002, the NCSL established the Networked Learning Communities programme, an extensive effort to link schools around issues of common interest and to promote networked learning.

The Networked Learning Communities programme is a development and research initiative. The core assumption behind the programme is that only through establishing good networks and working directly with them will we be in a position to learn more about the phenomenon of 'networked learning'. Among the key questions the programme is looking to address in relation to networked learning are:

- How does effective collaboration between schools happen?
- How does a network achieve 'reach'?
- How is knowledge practice transferred?
- How do leaders, teachers and others work best together?
- How can such collaboration be sustained?
- How is all this best focused so that it improves pupil achievement?

Through support and consultation by the Networked Learning Group resources, facilitators and co-leaders, networked learning communities are formed around key themes of interest and developed intentions (eg. understanding learning styles, ICT development, learning mentors, building community partnerships, student leadership, inclusion etc.).

The emphasis on equality of access, learning about learning, and generating genuine learning communities is powerfully evident in building networked learning communities. These communities of schools share common characteristics with the notion of Communities of Practice in core dimensions (share knowledge, build trust and reciprocity with others, apply the community's knowledge in practice) deriving from voluntary participation (Snyder and Briggs, 2003). Snyder and Briggs do describe CoP as a particular type of network, which is the basis of a networked learning community. Within such a community, emphasis is given on the differentiated type of *learning* that occurs in networks. As opposed to a structure or a pattern implied by a "network", networked learning reflects the activity which happens in a network. This activity shares the essential characteristics of a CoP and places special value on joint planning and dialogue, shared leadership, fostering system-wide change. Dynamic and sustained participation and purpose is crucial for understanding networked learning, and networked learning is the dominant element that drives and operates within a networked learning community.

The similarity is illustrated though the definition of Networked Learning: 'Networked learning' takes place when individuals come together in groups to engage in purposeful, and sustained developmental activity informed by the public knowledge base, utilising

their own know-how and co-constructing knowledge together. They learn with one another, from one another, and on behalf of others. (Jackson & Horne, 2004)

The case presented here outlines the work of the Winsford Networked Learning Community on Building Community Leadership. This CoP acts as catalyst in networking action with the purpose to explore and realize the concept of Community Leadership on the benefit of multiple agencies from both public and private sectors. It provides a practical illustration of the significant elements found to be evident when developing community leadership through a CoP and in a networked context.

The case study is based on an Account of Practice included in the series “What We are Learning about...” published by the National College for School Leadership in May 2005. With special acknowledgements to Kate Bond, lead developer of the publication and Val Godfrey for her contribution to the generation of this account of practice.

About the Community of Practice

Winsford Networked Learning Community is in a small rural Cheshire town, containing pockets of deprivation. The network involves 17 schools: 13 primary, 2 secondary and 2 special schools, and can be described as being driven from the ‘bottom-up’, in that it sprang from the needs of schools, teachers and pupils.

The key characteristics of the network and the community in which it sits are as follows:

- a lack of job prospects in the area
- low aspirations amongst families – poor post-16 retention rate
- few links between school governing bodies and local businesses
- an egalitarian leadership structure within the network – no one person or interest dominating
- a focus on leadership that facilitates school improvement within the network
- a steering group which is seen to be innovative in its involvement of community members

The initial objective set by the network was to explore and realise the concept of community leadership in practice. The network members share a clear vision of how they want to shape their leadership. Positioning education at the heart of the community is a clear aim, as is engaging those not normally involved in education. Throughout explorations of community leadership in action within the network, the community’s intention was to create new ways of thinking and acting, underpinned by the development of new structures and processes. Ultimately, the improvement of life chances, learning experiences and standards of achievement for all children and their families are the expressed goals of the network. In the context of these aims, nurturing community leadership and involvement is seen to be *“not about imposing the form that community engagement takes, but about creating the context for an equal dialogue between the community and the education sector”*.

Members

The network is facilitated by three co-leaders supported by a steering group. Winsford is innovative in having borough and county councillors on its panel, one of whom chairs the steering group, as well as one co-leader who is currently the chair of the local Sure Start scheme and the local Play-scheme Association. The network set out with the intention of

bringing together all the agencies whose actions impact on the lives of children and families in their local area. The community leadership project currently involves representation from the following groups and organisations:

- Local parents and families parent governors
- Pupils
- Local residents
- Elected members
- Local businesses and the Business Support Agency
- Local Authority support agencies
- Religious communities
- Social services
- Sure Start
- Job Centre Plus (employment promotion service)
- Connexions service (youth support programmes)
- Primary Healthcare Trust
- Weaver Vale Housing Trust
- Leisure services
- Local employers group
- Winsford Town Council
- Voluntary and community groups, such as three resident groups, Mind, Youth Forum, Wincap, Churches Together, sports clubs
- Parent, teacher associations

Tools and Processes

The network has initiated community engagement through a variety of means, including: Interviews, focus group work, and active consultation with agencies, community groups, headteachers, governors, school leaders and the leaders of the leadership groups within the network. They also extended this work to include interviews with local business leaders and small groups of pupils. These connecting activities aimed to enable a wide group of network community members to explore their understanding of the concept of community leadership from within their own context, with a view to developing a shared understanding of what possible models of community leadership might be implemented within and across the networked community.

More specific examples of applying processes and connecting activities in the wide range of agencies involved in order to explore understandings about community leadership are:

Children – Jigsaws were developed to enable small groups of children in each school to explore the themes of community leadership. The types of questions asked were: Who do they listen to? Who listens to them? Who do they see as leaders? And What do leaders do?

Local residents – A group of local residents trained in focus group techniques and hosted focus groups on each of the main estates in the area to discuss who they saw as leaders within their communities, which communities they identified with, what roles they saw for schools, and what their aspirations were for their communities. This group then carried out focus group work with parents, governors and representatives from agencies and organisations within the town.

Governors and parents – Parents and parent governors were brought together in small focus groups to discuss issues around community leadership.

Agencies and organisations – Representatives from a range of agencies and organisations took part in focus groups led by local residents, and subsequently met together with the co-leaders of the network to discuss what connections exist to assess the potential for collaborative working and to share the best approaches to take in developing leadership within the community.

In addition, the following strategies have also been employed within the network to promote community involvement and leadership activity amongst a diverse range of network stakeholders and participants.

Business Afterhours: This is a local not-for-profit organisation which facilitates small business networks. There are over 600 companies involved. Business Afterhours joined with the networked learning community in developing a new project funded under a programme called *Passport to Success*. One of the main aims is to counter low expectations about jobs amongst school children. The first step was to interview teachers and a key finding of these interviews was the lack of business representation amongst local governors, widening the disconnection between schools and the business sector. The next stage involved the Afterhours club representative interviewing 150 businesses to build a database of their activities and services in order to match them up with the needs of schools. The aim of this project is to build sustained relationships between local businesses and schools.

Neighbourhood nursery: Over Hall Community School has created a not-for-profit organisation led and managed by representatives from the local community. The neighbourhood nursery will be designed to be a portal organisation, bringing together child-care, health and family support services so that families have one point of access. In line with Sure Start objectives, this integrated approach will provide holistic support for children's development, support for families and will facilitate the return to work of those parents who are currently unemployed.

Multi-agency leadership learning: A Cambridge-based leadership consultant worked in two network schools for two terms. His work focused on leadership models in the schools. This has developed in the current year into a multi-agency programme involving community representatives and staff from the agencies and organisations whose work plays a role in the life of our children. If this new programme is a success those involved will facilitate its roll-out across the whole network.

Extended School development: The Winsford schools have developed a model that will enable all network members to benefit from working together instead of in competition. The model will see them working as one extended school community by sharing resources, and in collaboration, offering different services in each school to enable them to meet the diverse needs of the community.

Local governors' group: A local governors' group has been successfully established. Each school or locality was asked to nominate a governor to represent local interests. The aims of the group are to raise awareness of what is happening in the wider network and area. It is hoped that this will quicken the process of getting governors on board, engaging different local communities or opening up schools for local use.

Principles and Practices

The networked learning community practices strive towards enabling and enacting 4 key-notions of effective community leadership in networks:

1. Sharing leadership with a focus on 'bridging' rather than 'bonding' relationships, processes and actions.
2. Collaborative working which builds social capital and coheres around a shared focus which is child-centred.
3. Joint planning and dialogue which promotes active participation in decision-making-for-action by all.
4. Designing local strategies for long term system-wide change.

This seems to be happening through a strong interaction and fostering of mutual nurturing between schools and the community. This can be described as 3 inter-relating domains of school-community activity:

Community resources: Community use of school facilities eg ICT, out of hours provision, football pitches at weekends etc.

Community voice: Parents and community members included in school life eg by becoming governors or becoming involved in a school-based social enterprise such as a nursery.

Community Education: Parents are invited into school eg to learn new skills or learn how to help their children learn.

Achievements and Lessons

The network has seen a big shift in attitude away from isolated schools to schools working in partnership. The Networked Learning Community has looked more widely than previous initiatives in the area, and was built on the solid foundation of previous network activity. There has also been a growth in awareness about the benefits of community leadership and working together, through the provision of opportunities to work with other schools in the pursuit of one vision. Flexibility is seen as a key to the network's success, and people are seen as more important than structures. The aim is for control to be in the hands of the many not the few. In this way, schools in the network are moving away from assuming what the community needs, to actively consulting and involving them as stakeholders in education. They are creating definitions of what community leadership means to each stakeholder group, and community stakeholders are engaged in active dialogue with each other.

The network has started to act together to respond more effectively to local needs and circumstances. Examples include teaching assistants leading behaviour management training sessions together and holding community events. Sharing and collaborating around local issues has also brought benefits to children with special needs within the network – as one headteacher of a special school described it, involvement in the

Networked Learning Community has resulted in bringing his school closer to the mainstream system.

The network is now considering becoming a federation of schools, with the potential to co-ordinate funding for family support services, out-of-hours learning and educational improvements. The next phase of shared community leadership is to further develop distributed leadership across the network and to extend community involvement in developing school policies, allocating funds and planning for provision in the light of current public sector reform initiatives.

Quotes on learnings/impact by people involved in the networked learning community:

“We’ve got a single vision reality which is about using all our resources as effectively as possible – and not for the community, but with the community.”

“The community links within the NLC are better than other networks I have previously been involved in, which tend to be more educational links.”

“I think what’s happened with the NLC is we’ve all woken up together to realise there’s a lot of key issues that need solving, that we’re just one player among other people and that we really do need to do our best to engage with our locality very fully.”

CASE 9: UDAIPUR AS A LEARNING CITY
Shikshantar Institute, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India
Contact person: Shilpa Jain [shilpaminajain@yahoo.com]

Background

“...cities in developing countries are expected to grow by 140,000 people a day for the foreseeable future.” - Janice E. Perlman

“Cities take up 2% of the earth’s physical land space, they consume 75% of the resources and produce 75% of the waste. 27% of India’s population live in cities and produce 64% of India’s GDP.” - Kirtee Shah

“In 1900, just 15% of the world’s population were urban. Today it’s more like 50%. And by 2025 it’s likely to be at least 60%.” - Vanessa Baird (in *The New International: Green Cities*, June 1999)

“...ecological problems are emerging as a major source of forced migration and urbanisation. In 1996, the International Organisation for Migration estimated that 25 million persons are environmentally displaced world-wide. Slums and squatter settlements are now home to an estimated 25-30% of the urban population in the developing world.” - Gleeson and Low (in Consuming Cities)

Cities are growing, it is quite clear. However, this growth is marked by its quantity, not quality. Within cities around the world, many are facing an astonishing decline of humanness. Trends such as consumerism, corruption, violence, prostitution, pollution, environmental degradation, and drug abuse are increasing alongside economic growth. We feel the fracturing impacts of city life reflected in our selves, in our relationships, in our families and in our communities, as we become more alienated from one another and more dependent on the ready-made world provided by the Market and State. Further, the city as driven by mainstream urban planning cannot grow without feeding off the natural resources, people and wisdom of the hinterland, often to their detriment. Unfortunately, most development efforts are still symptomatic and focused on rural areas with very little attention being given to cities as holistic and healthy systems.

While the city harbors systems destructive to the human spirit, it is also a precise reason why positive re-generation from within is so important. As the nucleus of educational and developmental decision- and policy-making, the city provides opportunities for closer work on related critique, positive regeneration and other direct, meaningful action. This is the impetus behind Udaipur as a Learning City.

About the Community of Practice

The Sanskrit term, *Swaraj* can be translated as ‘radiance of the self’ and ‘rule over the self’. It was re-invoked during India’s freedom struggle by MK Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in the early 20th century, as a spirit, sensibility, and form of organization that would value the uniqueness of each individual as well as the diversity of community. *Swaraj* means that we personally and collectively co-create what terms such as “freedom”, “progress” and “justice” mean, and try to manifest a way of life where one is neither controlled nor controlling. After the British left India, the larger agenda of *Swaraj* was forgotten amidst the agenda of nation-building. (See “Hind *Swaraj*” by MK Gandhi).

Launched five years ago by the Shikshantar Institute, Udaipur as a Learning City (ULC) is an innovative process to explore what the practice of *Swaraj* means in the context of urban India today. At the core of *Swaraj* is a deep commitment for people in all spheres of society to reclaim ownership and responsibility for their own learning. ULC aims to support this by re-valuing and re-connecting the diverse spaces for deep learning within the city of Udaipur, based in the northwest state of Rajasthan, India. It is an open invitation to people of all ages and all backgrounds in Udaipur, to explore ways of living and learning that are more balanced, more meaningful, more just and honest for them.

All of ULC's processes are geared towards regenerating the local "learning ecology". By this is meant that the city is a living organism and people are active co-creators of meaning, relationships, and knowledge. The learning ecology approach recognizes that an infinite knowledge exists within people and contexts far beyond what can be documented and stored.

Principles

The four major principles or process-goals behind ULC are:

- Developing our own visions and practices of *Swaraj* in Udaipur.
- Appreciating the unique strengths, capacities, potential, talents, skills of each person.
- Building feelings of caring and connected communities.
- Challenging unjust, dehumanizing institutions, attitudes, structures, plans, etc., particularly those related to urbanization and globalization.

These principles came out of a few years of dialogue with local people, and were articulated by Shikshantar during the process of conceptualizing ULC in the year 2000. They have been, and continue to be, integrated into each activity that emerges under ULC. Given the openness and the spirit of the principles, they have not led to debate, but rather have inspired the members' imaginations to make them manifest in practice.

Processes and Practices

The four process goals are present in each of the activities that organically emerge in Udaipur around the practice of *Swaraj*. Such activities include:

- **Intergenerational Community Reflections and Dialogues:** Festivals are seen as potent opportunities for deep reflection and social engagement. For example, ULC has hosted interactive dialogues on both local and international festivals. Here posters, games, discussions and hands-on activities are combined to deepen understandings of the core meanings and purposes of such celebrations and to open up diverse narratives to define and co-create them. They have also supported dialogues on prominent issues, like water or pedestrian-friendly roads; or by screening thought-provoking films, like *Baraka* and *Modern Times*. Despite a strong national and international trend toward Hindi and English, strong efforts have been particularly made to regenerate reflections and conversations in *Mewari* (the local language). Such an approach offers a means by which to more dynamically share peoples' stories, songs, proverbs, etc. and to break down

professional hierarchies in order to critically and creatively look at present problems and possibilities with new perspectives.

- **Unlearning and Ulearning Workshops:** These are particularly related to critical media awareness and creative expressions – people making their own music, dance, dramas, films, puppets, masks, sculptures, especially out of so-called ‘waste’ materials. Such workshops predominantly occur within local neighborhoods. Questions raised during such workshops include: *How can we share our feelings, stories and ideas through our own expressions? How are our creations different from the readymade world of mass media? What do notions like leadership, success, freedom, justice, peace, security etc. mean to each of us? What are our creative capacities and power (beyond institutions), and how do we unleash them to make the kind of life we want?*
- **Natural Living in a City:** ULC is currently exploring ways that city-dwellers can reconnect to their hands/bodies and to nature, through organic farming on their rooftops, rainwater harvesting, solar cooking, medicinal plants, spinning cloth and other such efforts at home. These processes enable city folks to link local culture with ecology; for example, the wisdom in *Mewari* is intimately connected with nature and has to be re-defined for city life. Natural living efforts also give city people a chance to ‘get their hands dirty’, thereby re-introducing them to the beauty and power of labor and physical work and to new forms of dialogue, knowledge and wisdom.
- **Learning Exchanges:** ULC seeks to move beyond NGO/Government institutional boundaries and agendas and directly involve local artists, organic farmers, artisans, businesses, healers, etc. in questions and experiments related to regenerating urban life. It also plays a role in regenerating the local learning ecology by encouraging youth who are not interested in school or college (or those who want to change their career) and who would rather create their own meaningful paths of living, livelihood and learning with exciting apprenticeship opportunities. We encourage people to reclaim their own learning processes by building their own learning webs.

The activities of ULC are entirely off-line, as internet use and access is quite limited in Udaipur. People meet face-to-face as needed, depending on the activity (whether a publication in *Mewari*, a rooftop garden, a theater workshop, etc.). No separate building has been especially constructed for ULC; rather, they have chosen to creatively utilize what already exists in Udaipur: peoples’ homes, local neighborhoods, public gardens and parks, art galleries, temples, ashrams, businesses, or local organizations’ offices.

Members

There are various levels of engagement in ULC. Shikshantar: the Peoples’ Institute for Rethinking Education and Development, an independent not-for-profit applied research institute and open learning community, has been the primary impetus behind ULC. Its local team has supported the emergence of various parts of ULC, either directly by initiating activities, or indirectly by engaging with local people to encourage/involve them in sharing their hearts, heads and hands in a process. Families, friends and neighbors are well involved in different aspects of ULC (depending on their interests).

They have also been able to generate many new relationships with individuals from a variety of local organizations in Udaipur, including artists, craftsmen, healers, activists, farmers, story-tellers, academicians, scientists, etc. They make an effort to partner with individuals, rather than institutions, to stay true to the spirit of ULC. In this way, there are no formal mechanisms for getting involved in ULC, no compulsion and no bureaucracy. People co-create what is of interest to them, thereby ensuring fairly strong commitments to the action at hand.

For this engagement to happen, it has been important to invite each person to be a co-creator in ULC. This means seeing leadership in an entirely different way – a leadership that every person innately possesses, that builds upon their own strengths, and that is not about having followers. The core team of Shikshantar and the core volunteers in ULC have had to be ready to listen and to ask engaging questions, in order to discover where they might connect with new people. They have had to maintain a high level of energy, as this becomes contagious and excites others to open up and get involved. And they have to keep a creative mind and open heart, in order to support the emergence of multiple processes — farming, Mewari language, music, festivals, etc.— which often crisscross in fantastic ways.

In this way, people join ULC either through an existing activity, which has been initiated by the interests and questions of others, or by sharing their own curiosities to start something new. It is self-organizing, and the core team of Shikshantar plays a role in fleshing out, supporting, and deepening the emergent activities. This is why the work of ULC is so broad and deep, spanning everything from vermicomposting to anti-globalization campaigns to learning with local artists.

This is a fundamentally different orientation from many other learning city projects in the West, where the focus is on expanding technology (computers and internet usually). In those cases, the definition, purpose, means, and ends of ‘learning’ are often rooted in the military-industrial paradigm of development and rarely ask questions about the direction of this paradigm. ULC is also very different from the popular notion of public-private partnerships, where ‘public’ only refers to government bodies, and ‘private’ only to corporations. ULC is trying to transcend these categories of public and private and to appreciate and integrate the authentic concerns and strengths of local people.

The principles behind ULC lie in paradigms of abundance as opposed to deficit and scarcity driven frameworks. In practice, this means beginning with an appreciation of what people have and an openness to any and all to join in co-creating. These activities evolve naturally from ‘ordinary’ peoples’ own unique gifts, questions and dreams, to connect to larger systemic issues and concerns. This approach actively nurtures peoples’ capacities to say ‘no’ to the institutions/ attitudes/ structures that do not serve them, and to instead organically construct spaces and relationships that do serve them. Much of the approach is built on exploring how to do things with as little money as possible. This not only ensures sustainability and honesty of efforts but also encourages innovation and imagination.

In other words, in Udaipur as a Learning City, individual people and intergenerational relationships are the starting point — not abstract ideas, pre-determined projects or results-based indicators. ULC enables us to be alive to surprises and to feel a constant excitement in journeying into the unknown.

Achievements and Lessons

Udaipur as a Learning City has provided a space and an opportunity for people who have a greater vision of their future and of the future of Udaipur. Both within this city and with others from India and abroad, they have been building a network of concerned and motivated people and organizations, committed to rethinking and experimenting with urban living.

Over the last five years, the team at Shikshantar have been astonished and inspired by the directions ULC has taken. They have realized that they work more closely with individuals and families in neighborhoods rather than with formal institutions, and that motivation which comes from within is far more invigorating and self-sustaining than forced action. They have found that interactive dialogues in public spaces such as parks have been very effective. It allows them to work at a different scale and increases interaction with a much larger network of children and families (beyond normal NGO circles). They have also been excited by how such resourcefulness of space and materials reminds people that you do not need a lot of money to do wonderful things to start to transform your life and community.

Their stress on the regeneration of Mewari language has helped to build up a relationship with local people (particularly artisans and farmers). The several intergenerational story books they have published in Mewari have been widely appreciated by people especially in the surrounding villages and towns. They have reached around 4000 families and have started to generate a new sense of self-confidence in many people, that they have the know-how, wisdom and capacity to face the challenges before them and create something different from the rat-race. They know there is tremendous untapped potential in self-organizing communities such as local businesses, local community media and local caste groups, and are continuously trying to find new ways to involve them in ULC.

Lastly, ULC is continuously re-energized by a strong team of youth volunteers. Their involvement in many different workshops and activities has helped to shape where ULC goes and how it sustains itself. They have realized that work with youth needs to be more focused on “practical activities” that gives them more self-confidence and encourages their creative powers. ULC offers them a space to create their own concrete projects in specific contexts. It is also important to support them with adult and elder mentors/practitioners from their diverse communities.

Overall, Udaipur as a Learning City has been (and continues to be) an exciting journey. Shikshantar invites you to share your reflections on new possibilities for urban living.

Many more details, stories and images, from the Udaipur as Learning City process can be found at www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/udaipur.html

CASE 10: SANTO ANDRE MORE EQUAL (SAMI)
Municipality of Santo Andre, Sao Paulo, Brazil
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Background

This case study covers the Integrated Programme for Social Inclusion in the municipality of Santo Andre in Sao Paulo state, Brazil. The case is based on interviews with two professionals working on the programme (the Urban Development and Housing secretary and the Housing Director), as well as on reading of official documents of the programme. (Please note that all this material has been translated from Portuguese and so some of the English names given to structures in the programme may not be the official ones.)

The “Santo Andre Mais Igual” programme (SAMI, meaning “Santo Andre More Equal”) is inspired by the idea of communities of practice, but is a very formalised version of the approach, incorporating network ideas into the very organisation of the municipality as well as in how the municipality works with stakeholders from multiple sectors and the local people living in the slum areas of Santo Andre. We decided to include this case even though it is not a pure community of practice example, because it is a very inspiring example of an urban renewal programme, faced with a similar context to the INK area, working on implementing an integrated and network-based approach. This programme was formed to combat social exclusion, through the intention of going beyond the sector approach of public administration.

About the Community of Practice

The municipality of Santo André is located in the “ABC” area, a metropolitan region in São Paulo, and has 648.433 inhabitants. As in most of the municipalities of the same area, Santo Andre in the 1990’s experienced illegal land occupations, a growing number of people in the outer areas, and a decaying population in the central neighborhoods. Today, nearly 20% of the total population of Santo André, 132.000 people, live in 139 slum areas.

In 1997, the municipality, as a result of the will and determination of its Mayor, Celso Daniel, launched the SAMI programme, also called the Integrated Programme for Social Inclusion. The programme aims to integrate actions in the municipality for servicing families living in slum areas as a result of the process of urbanization. It combines different sector programmes (housing, education, health, income security, economic development, etc), articulating them institutionally while integrating the implementation geographically/ regionally in a participatory way. During the first period of the SAMI’s implementation (1997-2000), about 3700 families (16% of the slums’ population) were involved in four neighborhoods. The last estimate for the following period (2001-2004) was that another four slums were involved, reaching an additional 2000 families.

SAMI was a visionary proposal, since there was no other similar experience at that time in Brazil or, for that matter, since then. Continuing the work initiated in his first mandate (1989-1992), when he launched the urban renewal proposal as a way to promote housing with a specific methodology to work with slums, Celso Daniel in his second mandate decided that part of his administration would be organised through a matrix system. This meant acting not just “vertically”, but also “horizontally”, where the different

departments and stakeholders interact with each other as a strategy to optimise the initiatives for social inclusion. To implement this strategy, he decided to create three new secretariats and to work with these as well as two existing secretariats in the Integrated Programme for Social Inclusion. These five sectors would work in the matrix system, discussing, planning and acting together.

Members

The programme is organised through three managing groups: the General Coordination Group, the Executive Coordination Group and the Technical Coordination Group.

- The General Coordination Group, comprised of the mayor and the five secretaries (Social Inclusion and Housing, Health, Education and Professional Development, Economic Development, and Regional Action), is responsible for defining the general guidelines for the programme and for its evaluation. The General Coordination team meets and takes decisions based on the data sent by the diverse structures and the executive coordination.
- The Executive Coordination Group, under the responsibility of the Social Inclusion and Housing Secretary, has as its main activity the articulation of the matrix management itself. They work directly with the local teams and the Technical Coordination Group in forums.
- The Technical Coordination Group is formed by the department directors and coordinators of the programmes involved, directly responsible for the execution of the different programmes. They get together (coordinated by the Executive Coordination) every 3 weeks in general forums and daily in specific forums, requested by the local team, technical, executive or general coordination groups.

Beyond these three coordinating bodies, there is a local team for each slum, formed by the technicians and local agents for health, education, housing and minimum income, the People's Bank and the local incubator. The local teams get together monthly with the executive and technical coordination. They also act as initiators of other structures as and when they sense the need for it. Furthermore, 14 NGOs, which work directly in the slums as partners in implementing the programme participate in the teams. The NGOs participate in the monthly meetings, through the local team, as well as in specific forums, when there is the need. They also have direct access to the technical team.

People may join or leave according to their political and administrative roles assigned to the network.

Among the main partners (local, national and international) for the implementation of the programme are: the European Commission, the UN Programme for Urban Management, the ABC area Institute of Government and Citizenship, the Brazilian Institute of Municipal Administration (IBAM), the Catholic University at São Paulo (PUC-SP), the Slumdwellers Rights Movement (MDDF), and the Federal Government/Interamerican Development Bank, which has been collaborating with financial and technical resources.

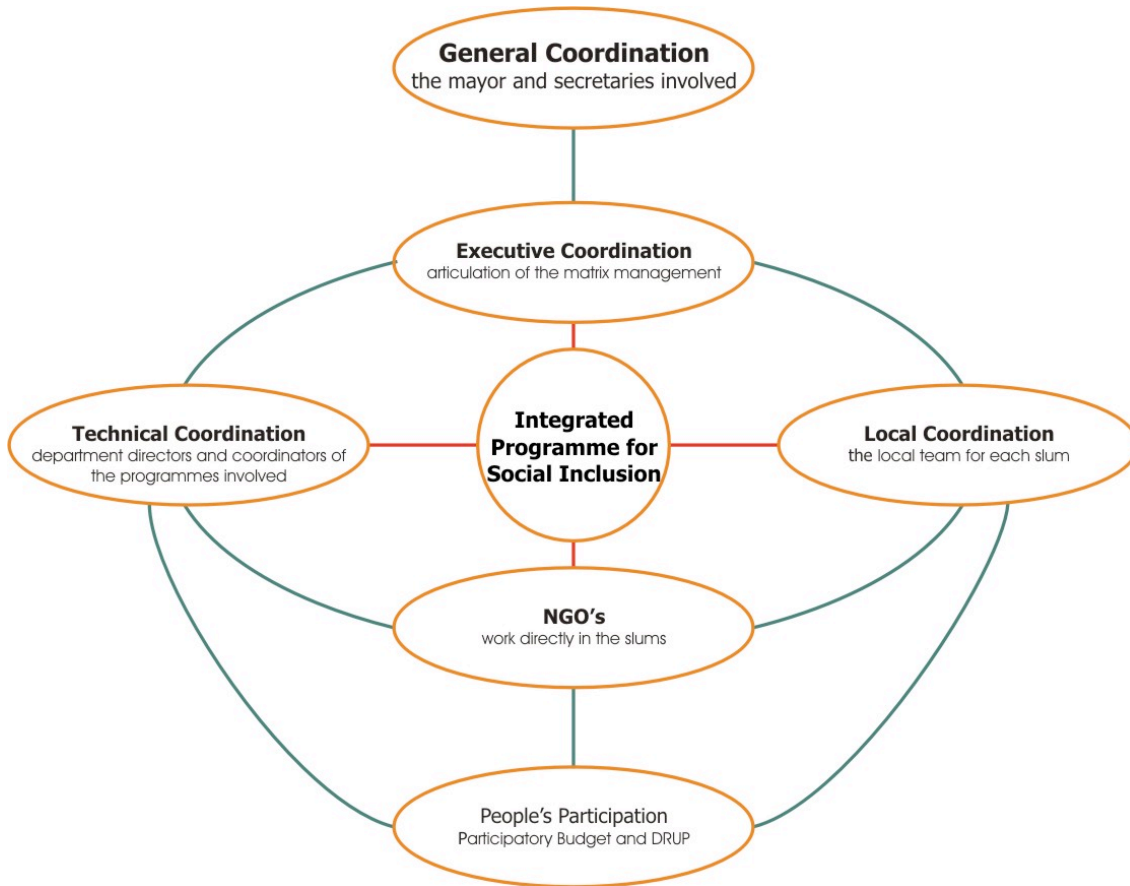


Figure 1: SAMI Structure

Tools and Processes

There is constant, vibrant communication between the local teams on-line, by phone, and face to face.

Every 15 days a meeting is held across departments, bringing together the three levels of coordination: the general, the executive and the technical. In these meetings, recent results are presented, solutions are discussed for new problems, and action strategies are established.

For popular participation, the most important method utilized is called DRUP, Fast Urban Participatory Diagnosis, developed by the German Society of Technical Cooperation (GTZ). This instrument aims to allow people a larger involvement in elaborating the project, including not only the leaders and organized groups, but also the majority of the people living in the community. They are able to express their desires, values, worries and needs, and the professionals from the municipality take that popular perception into account regarding the problems and solutions for the slum.

On the information technology side, currently e-mail lists are used for sharing of information among all teams involved, due to the matrix nature of the programme. The Secretariat of participatory budget and planning coordinates an information system

called SIGPRO to manage the participatory budgeting process, through which all people living in each neighborhood or region are invited to meet and discuss their wishes and needs and then choose their priorities for the public investment in their area, even presenting their own solutions to the municipality. Furthermore, there is the website from the Santo Andre municipality, which will contain data of all the programmes (currently being updated). Beginning this year, there will be a specific coordinating role accountable for information on the management of social inclusion (CIGIS), which has been responsible for the follow-up of the SAMI programmes. This coordinator acts directly with the executive, technical and local coordination groups, and shares the compiled information with the other areas, again in a matrix form.

Each secretary has an ensemble of books, magazines and technical publications related to its own area. When needed, the professionals have easy access to that material, which can also be requested by people from other sectoral areas of responsibility.

Principles and Practices

The core principles of the programme are integration of actions, horizontal management (reducing bureaucracy and hierarchy), regionalisation/localisation, and popular participation.

The whole SAMI programme happens within the municipality's administrative system, and as such is subject to the system's laws and practices.

In general the processes take place through negotiation and dialogue based upon reliable information, collected through the evaluation of the areas in the urban, economic and social domains, and including research carried out with the participation of the population. Since all the people involved share the same vision and approach (presented and discussed in seminars involving all the participants), the struggles and conflicts are not over radical divergences in direction. In case there are major conflictual divergences, the final decision would be the mayor's responsibility.

Resources

Because this work and the SAMI programme are so central to the main priority of the entire municipality, the general resources of the municipal administration, such as staff and infrastructure, are made available to the programme. In all forums the executive coordinator of the matrix system (nominated as social inclusion coordinator) is the facilitator. He has the role to support all structures and the general coordination (meaning secretaries and mayor), through reports elaborated together with the other areas.

Achievements and Lessons

This process was launched during the first period of Mayor Celso Daniel (1989/1992) in the municipality, when there was a serious effort to face the slum problems effectively. During that period, many urban, social, economic and juridical tools were developed, but without applying a truly integrated approach.

After a 4 year interruption, during which another political party was in power, the integration experience finally took off at the beginning of Daniel's second period as

mayor, in 1997, with great results, but without new advances or replication to other slums in the municipality. The programme is now in a phase of evaluation and restructuring, since a new period has just started, with a new mayor, João Avamileno, who has been vice-mayor in the previous period and belongs to the same political party. The experience continues and is charged with applying the lessons of the past and coming up with some new approaches in the near future.

It is well known that the policy in Santo André is evolving in a way to diversify the types of intervention, to institutionalize and to broaden people's participation through tools like the Participatory Budget, and to promote more institutional integration of the government's sectors through the development of integrated projects. Particularly innovative are the institutional changes towards a matrix approach with the aim of improving the urban interventions.

The matrix system, the fundamental basis for the strategic and shared action in public policies, at the same time and at the same place, has been working and showed the municipality that it is possible to construct social inclusion with the articulation and availability of different basic services. To exemplify this, the results of many programmes that happened in the region as a whole were made possible through the action of other programmes in different secretariats. This means that from a matrix planning, the results of each secretariats action are not isolated, but contributes to the success of all the other secretariats as well.

Some of the key overall results of the programme have included:

- Improvement in the quality of life: growth in the number of income-earning residents, improvement of school performance, decreasing illiteracy, elimination of unhealthy and high-risk situations, improvement in housing conditions, food and nutritional safety, increase in professional education attendance, improvement of self-esteem,
- Higher effectiveness of the social programmes in the affected areas: Eg. in other areas, the Family Health programme reaches 81% of the pregnant women, while in the SAMI area this figure is 96%. The programme for nursing of children from 0-3 months reaches 91% in other communities and 95% in the SAMI areas, and the vaccination of children is 91% for SAMI areas as compared to 83% elsewhere.
- Building of a new organisational culture: A community of practice with a focus on social inclusion.

However, the results achieved, mainly related to both the improving in the urbanization policy and the institutional changes, are not followed by sufficient concrete results in the number of projects concluded and families involved. The SAMI's main limitations seem to lie in its low reach and low replicability potential to the high number of existing slums in the municipality. It is also still a challenge to overcome the tradition of working in a more fragmented, compartmentalised way in the public sector and to promote the matrix management.

Since the core programme of SAMI is the integrated urban renewal programme, which involves a great amount of resources, it requires that the municipality take a long time to finish one piece (including external fundraising). Because of the lack of needed resources to service all requested regions, the programme was postponed many times.

After eight years, the programme encompasses seven areas, and has a forecast of two more for the near future.

The enormous amount of resources required in order to promote the integrated urbanization of all the favelas without forgetting the quality of both the intervention and the services rendered, is incompatible with the actual investment capacity of the municipality. Considering this fact, the Secretary of Social Inclusion, through its Social Inclusion coordination, has been developing a new programme which works to integrate different actions, still in a matrix format, focusing on the poorest population from the municipality. In that way, it's hoped that a larger number of socially vulnerable and at-risk families will be served, without depending of such a large amount of resources and bringing to these families the economic dimension, citizenship, health and education.

The journey continues in Santo Andre.