Leveraging the Community of Practice Approach for Green Jobs in Asia and the Pacific

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"Maybe we should write that spot down."
**Mantras on Knowledge: Sharing vs. Hoarding**

If you give it away…
You still have it!

Guess what…
they’ll find out anyway!

The more quality you share…
the more you gain!

Knowledge is a fresh product - it becomes obsolete & quickly loses its value!
Outline

• Leveraging the CoP approach
  o Explore what a CoP is, their history, types, features & rationale
  o Critical steps in setting them up
  o Emerging lessons & challenges from using CoPs

• Food for thought moving forward – how it could work for us?

• Plotting a starting point and a future for the CoP
Leveraging the CoP Approach
CoP conceptual history: their origin

- Rooted in specialized work e.g. medical & legal profession, engineering etc.

- Start appearing in KM literature (1991)

- Private sector saw it as adding $ value

- Boeing, Xerox, Volvo & HP explore CoP potential in various specialized business units

- UN explores CoP concept in late 90s

- Constituents grant ILO mandate to begin using CoPs in 07
What is a CoP: some common definitions

Bonding by exposure to common challenges:
"a group of professionals, informally bound together through exposure to a common class of problems or pursuit of solutions…”
– Peter & Trudy Johnson-Lenz, Awakening Technology

Commons sense of purpose:
“Peers executing 'real work'. What holds them together is a common sense of purpose and a real need to know what each other knows”
– John Seely Brown

Working strategically – organizational glue:
“Organizational thematic priority around which professionals come together to learn, improve service efficiency, develop skills and to help shape and execute corporate policy… “
– Johan Arvling
Basic Features: what do they look like?

• Members have common professional ambition / interest / motivation / passion

• Members believe they will achieve common goal more effective through collaboration

• Members share sense of responsibility & accountability for a given task, output or result

• CoPs can be time bound and/or long lasting

• CoPs are topic focused & problem-solving oriented
Rationale for CoPs: why use them?

- Improves bottom line e.g. service delivery
- Enhances individual & organizational learning
- Helps build member ownership & shape policy through sharing knowledge & experiences
- Relatively cheap way to centrally collect, disseminate, re-use & apply traditional and/or new knowledge
- Concentrates energies / resources on niche areas
Types of Communities:

**“Enabling”**
- loosely organized
- learning & sharing
- broad topic area
- Q & A

**“Delivery”**
- tightly organized
- specific outputs
- narrow niche area
- issue / problem

- **External**
  (Founding members ++)

- **Internal**
  (Founding members only)
### How virtual groups are different:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Glue</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Groups / Project Teams</td>
<td>Communities of Practice</td>
<td>Knowledge Networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product or Service Specific Task</td>
<td>Exchange Knowledge</td>
<td>Information Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigned or Selected Under one manager</td>
<td>Demand Self – Selected</td>
<td>Donor Driven</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job / Budget / Project milestones</td>
<td>Passion within Group</td>
<td>Passion or Technology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Until restructured / Project completed</td>
<td>While passion lasts / What’s in it for me?</td>
<td>Funding or Market dynamics</td>
<td></td>
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Critical Steps when establishing CoPs:

Phase 1. Scoping & Analysis
  • Identification of demand / expansion of existing smaller groups already networking – formalization process

Phase 2. Planning
  • Develop Conceptual Framework for the CoP – niche process

Phase 3. Implementation
  • Roles & responsibilities, utility of tools – performing process

Phase 4. Evaluation & Feedback
  • Review of achievements – learning process / moving on…
Emerging lessons: UN / ILO / Private Sector

- **Niche based** – *a CoP that does everything is at the end doing nothing*
- **Dedicated resources** – *Facilitator / Thematic Champions / F2F event*
- **Start-up group / passion to productivity** – *critical mass of practitioners*
- **CoP membership** – *must visibly impact work behavior/style of members*
- **Start-up F2F between members** – *key feature / building trust & quality*
- **Regular monitoring of performance** – *moving forward together*
- **Branching out** – *creating mutually beneficial CoPs at national levels*
How could this work for Green Jobs: Moving forward

• **Membership** – growth strategy?

• **Purpose** – what’s the rationale for creating a community of this kind

• **Service** – tools e.g. discussion forum / roster / good practices / yellow pages?

• **Branding** – virtual one-stop-shop / outreach / advocacy?

• **Geographical links / scope** – global / regional / sub-regional?

• **Management** – by ILO staff / members / dedicated facilitator / outsourced?
How does online discussion work in reality?

“CONSOLIDATED REPLY”
To all subscribers Globally
- Acknowledging contributions
- Final Product for codification

“Consider:
- Local governance

“Consider:
- Incentive structure”

“Consider:
- Proportion of administrative and managerial budgets
- Youth employment alternatives / gender roles
- Number of social and professional organizations dealing with youth employment

“Network query: India Comparative Research – Youth Employment experiences”
Plotting the evolution of Green Jobs-AP:

- **External**
  - (Founding members ++)

- **Internal**
  - (Founding members only)

- **Enabling**
- **Delivery**