

EDITORIAL

It is with great pleasure that I write this Editorial for the 14th volume of this journal. Almost two years ago, it looked as if the journal had finally expired. The editorial team had run out of energy after more than 14 years of work. However, some reminders from Ewen Le Borgne, as well as the enthusiasm of two new Senior Editors, Helen Gillman and Chris Zielinski, mean that we now have two issues in the pipeline on the subject of ‘Challenges and opportunities in measuring KM results and development impact’ in addition to this one, one of which is to be launched soon, and with other planned for later this year. We consider that the journal is needed as much ever before because it is an open access journal which doesn’t require author fees and which aims to have a diverse group of editors and authors, specifically aiming to involve authors from the global South. The journal is also valuable because it aims to keep track of the developing field of knowledge management for development (KM4D), with its close alliance with the Knowledge Management for Development (KM4dev) community of practice www.km4dev.org.

I would also particularly like to thank the team of Senior Editors at this point for their continued commitment to the journal: Riff Fullan, Helen Gillman, Lucie Lamoureux, Ewen Le Borgne, Ivan Kulis, Charlotte Scarf, Denise Senmartin and Chris Zielinski. I would also like to welcome two new members of the team, Jorge Chavez-Tafur and Kim Martins. My apologies go to potential authors who may have had their paper in limbo as we struggled between the old and the new platforms while the journal was more-or-less dormant. Finally, I would like to thank all of the contributors who have written papers for this issue, as well as colleagues who reviewed papers and provided feedback to authors.

This Issue

This issue is a non-thematic issue. The first paper, ‘Evaluation and communication mentoring for capacity development: a hybrid decision-making framework’, written by Ricardo Ramirez, Wendy Quarry, Dal Brodhead and Sonal Zaveri, summarizes over six years of action research in capacity development in the fields of evaluation and communication. It is based on the experience of the Developing Evaluation Capacity in Information Society Research (DECI) project, funded by the International Development Research Centre’s (IDRC) Networked Economies Program. The project brought together a team of practitioners spread over Asia, Africa and Latin America. Testing the hybrid approach which combines utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) and research communication in the field yielded many findings. The second paper, ‘Suitability of a community-based creative arts therapy intervention for abused children in South Africa’, written by Nadine van Westrhenen, Elzette Fritz, Adri Vermeer and Rolf Kleber, presents the results of a study to consider the suitability

of trauma-focused creative arts therapy as an intervention to treat abused children in South Africa. The intervention was implemented in a child trauma clinic situated within communities in and around Johannesburg, South Africa.

The next two papers are concerned with learning in large development organizations, one of which take an historical perspective. The first of these, ‘Following evidence from production to use at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): where does it all go?’ by William Walker Hankey and Gabriel Pictet, undertook a network analysis of documentation produced by the organization to examine how evidence is produced, circulated and used within the IFRC. Network graphs were produced from a sample of 404 documents, depicting the structure of citations between documents, demonstrating that the uptake of evidence within these documents was inadequate. The authors found that the limited and fragmented use of citations within these documents was probably the result of the organizational culture in the aid sector which fails to encourage reflexive practices in the production and use of evidence. The next paper ‘Method in the madness? Some new ways to learn from staff experiences in humanitarian crises: the historical case of UNICEF’ by Jeremy Shusterman, reviews why tapping into tacit knowledge of relief workers to inform humanitarian responses is seen as a valuable exercise that paradoxically often fails to live up to expectations. This paradox is explored through the example of historical efforts undertaken by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) over the years to learn from the tacit knowledge of its staff. The article briefly reviews the challenges to learning within humanitarian organizations, and why humanitarian organizations may see tacit knowledge as an attractive alternative source of evidence. It also emphasizes the value of taking an academic approach to research because the findings of academic papers appear to have a longer shelf-life than the intermittent results of learning initiatives within organizations.

The final contribution is the ‘Tools and Methods’ section of the journal, ‘Checklist for the development of portals for international development’ has been written in a participatory manner by Sarah Cummings, Nancy White, Michiel Schoenmakers, Victor van Reijswoud, Martine Koopman, Chris Zielinski, Cavin Mugarura, Ramin Assa and Srividya Harish. This guideline is designed to provide guidance for development organizations who are setting up portals – also known as knowledge portals, hubs and websites – as a way of counteracting what is known as portal proliferation syndrome. The guideline provides a checklist of issues which are important in the development of portals, covering what to take into account before starting, during the design phase and implementation, and technical standards and specifications. It will be further developed in the future to identify the most important issues in new portal development.

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