

Knowledge Management: Worth the effort?!

Summary Report from an Off-line
Workshop on KM
at IWSD on 21 September 2004



28 participants, most from African RCs and NGOs.

Workshops activities:

- Introduction to effective KM concept in the WATSAN sector
- Overview of IWSD's activities on Info and Knowledge management
- discussion constraints, benefits, successes and scaling-up of KM from African perspective

The findings to the IRC e-conference:

KM, Worth the effort?!



Key issues of KM workshop

- Data, information
- Information management
- Knowledge and Knowledge Management
- KM levels: personal, organisation and network level
- Community of Practice
- KM process (KVC) and conditions for success
- 8 Cs for ICT as instrument on KM

Knowledge Value Chain

Mission	Knowledge Needed	Available	Develop	Share	Apply	Evaluate	
Vision							
Goal							
Strategy							Do it
Culture							Hard
Man. Style							Hard
Personnel							Hard
Structure							Easy
Systems							\$



Key Questions

- What constraints can we identify in knowledge management?
- What are the benefits and added values of KM?
- What KM success stories are worth sharing?
- How can we scale up, what can we do next for effective KM for water and sanitation programmes/organisations?



Atmosphere of workshop

- Lively discussions by energetic group
- Enthusiasm on subject and eagerness to learn more on KM at all three levels
- Some participants knew about KM but learned more
- Some participants did not know much about KM, eye-opener and learning opportunity
- sharing of knowledge is not easy; trust!



1. Constraints

- Communication: language and channels
- Culture: organisation; individual – attitude, fear; oral vs. written (more audio less text!); K is power; Africans are ‘silent’!; subordinates do not speak if boss is there, but always comments; fear: people steal my ideas; legislation may be too strict (copy right & property acts)
 - ‘big people’ go to conferences but do not share!
 - Restricted or limited access: only Chiefs have access to email-internet!
- Lost knowledge: people change jobs; people die young (e.g. from HIV/AIDS) – tap/document their knowledge!
- Literacy or illiteracy: info provided may be beyond their comprehension
- Resources: funds; ICT (old); skills; time (lot of junk info)



2. Benefits

- KM builds up institutional memory; knowledge sharing and building within organisation; no re-inventing the wheel
- KM → continuity in organisation → efficiency and optimisation of resources
- KM gives organisational clarity: Vision, Aims, objectives, procedures → less conflicts
- Collective sharing of K → easier problem-solving and more appropriate and accepted solutions
- Collective sharing of K → preparedness to change; more trust + less resistance
- KM → improves professional attitude and inter-personal interactions
- IM → Improves internal and external communication → better service delivery → better image of organisation



2. Benefits cont'd

- Enhancement personal K → personal gains and professional confidence and new endeavours
- Development of new K: novel solutions, competitive edge
- KM → better linkages with other like-minded organisations, more effective networking and realisation of synergies; no re-inventing the wheel
- KM → better coalition building among stakeholders
- KM → access to wider expertise (risk too much expertise so need to filter!)
- IM+KM among partners in a coalition: better co-ordination



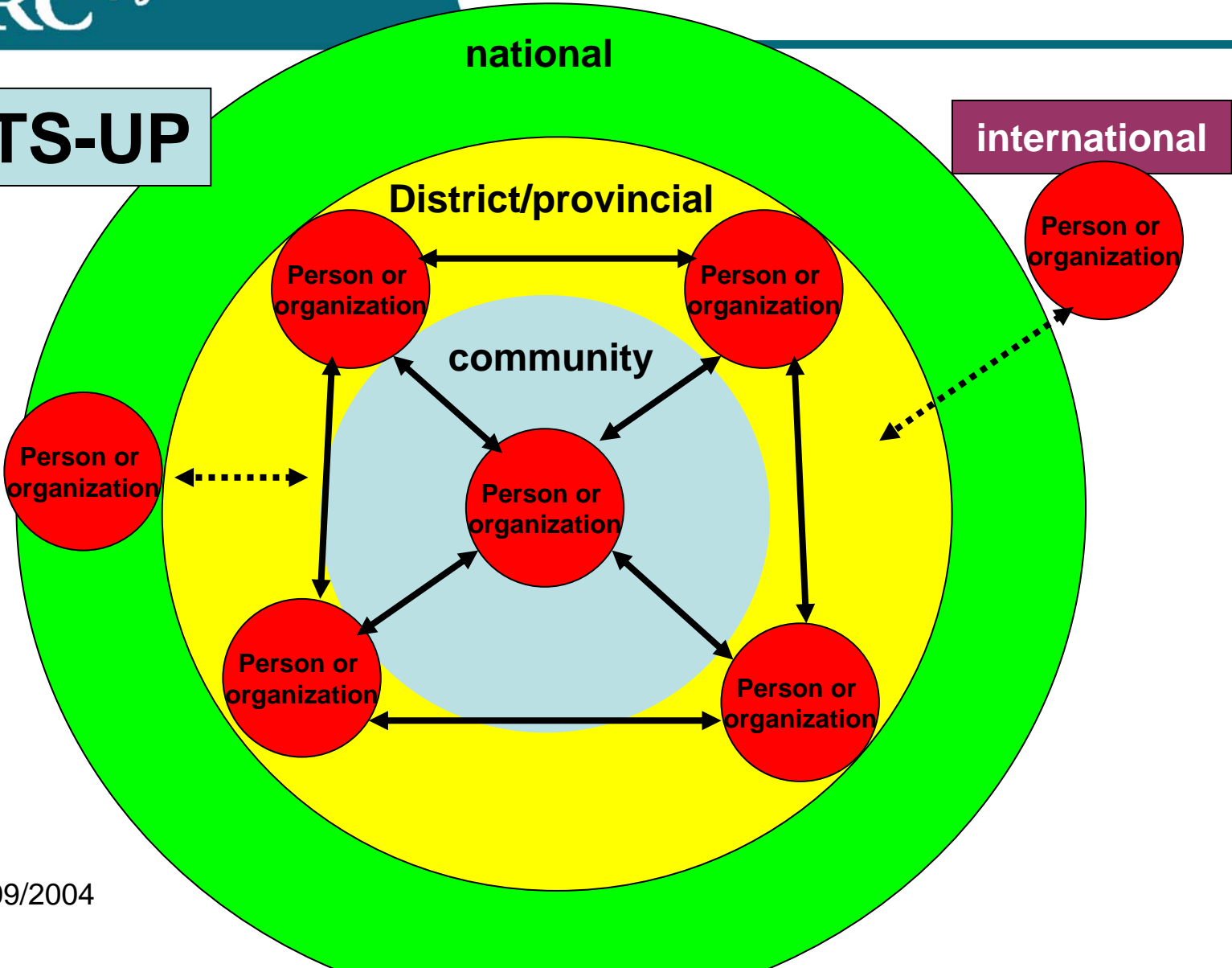
3. Success stories

- Success of Coca Cola: do not share info!
- Verbal communication more effective in communities with high illiteracy!
- Knowledge of local culture: means success or failure of project
- “Drinking dirty water brings snakes and worms in stomach” or how Samuel kept alive with local/mother’s knowledge!
- Where VIPs contaminated groundwater, EcoSan does not; great acceptance!
- Water jar with tap costs now only 1/3 of initial cost due to local knowledge
- Waste water from hospital contaminated lettuce; now water from well!

4. Scaling-up

WATS-UP

international





4. Scaling-up-2

Elements in WATS-UP:

- At personal, organisation or network level
- Good strategy on KM
- Good knowledge managers
- Innovative use of info media
- Building and strengthening networks
- Linking with other partners inside and outside 'level'
- Effective enabling environment
- Use (practice), effectiveness and impact assessment

→ Need for more and effective **ADVOCACY ON KM!**



- Organised by IRC
- 20 Sept – 15 October 2004
- 4 weeks, every week new topic
 - Constraints
 - Benefits
 - Success Stories
 - Scaling-up
- **Join it!! It's worth-a-while: www.irc.nl**