

# Knowledge Management case study

## AMREF Kenya

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## Organisational setting 1

- Mission
  - Improve the health of the people of Africa as a means for them to escape from poverty & improve the quality of their lives
- Vision
  - Be leading voice on health development in Africa
- Goals
  - Design & test elements of health sector reforms
  - Increase efficiency & effectiveness of health providers
  - Document & share lessons and experiences



### Strategy

- Capacity Building
- Operations research
- Advocacy



## Organisational setting cont'd

- At Corporate level: 7 country Programmes in Africa
- Kenya– Largest Country Programme [50% of the total operations]
- Operational presence in Kenya – works in more than 22 districts
- Head office in Nairobi
  - Field offices at the district headquarters
  - Has extensive ICT infrastructure [Emails, Intranet & Internet]



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## The KM workshop

- Primer KM contact persons training
  - 2003 in Delft, Netherlands
- Institutional KM workshop
  - 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya
  - Involved participants from Kenya & HQ
  - Participants drawn from:
    - Water & Sanitation Programme
    - HRM
    - IT
    - Technical Support office
    - Senior Management



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## KM plans

- Goal
  - Improve documentation & sharing of knowledge & information
- This involved identifying :
  - Who had required knowledge & how they shared
  - Channels through which knowledge flowed
  - Obstacles to effective sharing of knowledge & information
- Above all, share experiences & lessons with Management at all levels



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## KM Plans cont'd

- Develop preliminary plans to integrate KM into programme activities
  - Identify opening for KM [Organizational goal]
  - Mobilize all to create common understanding
  - Identify & form core group of KM champions
  - Share experiences with Organizational Management
  - Train KM contact & champions
  - Conduct KM scans
  - Document lessons learnt & experiences



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## Before / after KM intervention

1. There is **awareness** of KM. For example, we have already devoted a study day/afternoon to the theme.  
There is clearer understanding & consensus on the meaning of KM
2. A **KM-Strategy has been formulated**. We know how we want to introduce KM into our organisation. We have learned from others how they have done it.  
Experiences being consolidated towards this goal
3. In one or some parts of the organisation, KM has been – partly – introduced. Experiments are being carried out with the application of KM-methods and techniques (**pilot projects**).  
Work in progress
4. KM has been **widely implemented** in our organisation, and in fact we could no longer think of doing without it.  
Knowledge is key to all our operations. Wide application of KM is the ultimate goal
5. We have **evaluated** our organisation-wide application of KM, and have learned lessons from this that are **incorporated in our new KM-Strategy**.  
Done on the parts KM has been introduced and preliminary lessons learnt



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## Before / after KM intervention

1. KM is **theory**.  
Before – Yes, Now – No
  2. KM is a point of **attention**.  
Before – Yes, Now – Greater attention
  3. We approach KM from **one** of the angles mentioned
  4. We approach KM from **two** of the angles mentioned
  5. We approach KM from **three** of the angles mentioned  
Before approached mainly from IT perspective
  6. We approach KM from **four** of the angles mentioned  
Approach it from all Angles
- Angles: Information and Communication Technology (ICT),  
Human Resource Management (HRM)  
Office and Workplace Instruction (KWI)  
Organisation Set-up(O).



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# Organisational Change

- Situation Before
  - Lack of consensus on the meaning of KM
  - KM equated to information management
  - No individual or group trained to lead process
  - No tools & methods available for our use
  - Due to this – difficult to maintain any emerging interest on the subject
  - Effort could kick off and die along the way



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## Organisational Change – What about Now?

- Have agreed meaning of KM in the context of our operations
- Core group of KM champions identified & trained
  - Theoretical [concepts & principles]
  - Practical [application of tools – scans, personal knowledge maps & organizational profile]
- KM scan conducted – establish baseline situation
- Management buy in in place
- KM plan developed & linked with organizational goal (s)o



Experiences shared to influence other programmes to integrate KM in their operations

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# Lessons from the KM pioneers

1. Enthusiastic champions are needed and to be located
2. Build KM initiative(s) on existing core competence
3. Address with KM initiative an urgent strategic imperative
4. Firm commitment from the top is needed for successful KM initiative / intervention
5. Early quick wins in KM initiatives neutralise the nay-Sayers

All these are true and were backed up by our experiences. Nay Sayers should not arise when organization has a consensus on the meaning of KM and are clear on the area of focus



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## Story 1

- We used to think knowledge sharing should be in hi-tech methods & approaches
- After PKM we now know actually knowledge sharing could be done simply & with basic tools
- Technical information must have 'human face' – this is only possible if one understands KM
- Story telling has recently become an important part of our sharing



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## Story 2

- We now know how to navigate the sea that many have drowned in the middle of debates – the Knowledge Management



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## Challenges / questions to discuss

- We are a reading & doing organization
  - How do we transform smoothly into a Learning & Sharing Organization?
- We believe that everybody is an expert in their own right
  - Therefore, who should be considered Knowledge Champions in the ‘learning & sharing organization’
- We are programme driven & each must account for 100% of time spent – mainly in terms of outputs.
  - Who then should fund my time on Knowledge Management, which is not contractually part of my deliverables?



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## Challenges / questions to discuss cont'd

- Implementation of Knowledge Management is like navigation in the deep sea.
  - How do we monitor the depth at which each is sailing?
  - That all are in the right course to the desired destination?
- Knowledge is important for our survival - & we have been surviving anyway.
  - Why then should we manage knowledge?



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