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Knowledge Management in Development Cooperation

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Abstract

The main assets of organisations involved in development cooperation are the knowledge, experience and capacities of their staff. Therefore knowledge as an important resource of an organisation has to be used efficiently in the day to day work of their personnel. The objective of knowledge management has to be a more systematic handling of knowledge. This means it has to be made readily available wherever it's needed.

One can differentiate technical knowledge (know what), know how, explicit (can be documented) and implicit (connected to people) knowledge. Knowledge management means that information are collected, validated and are made available to the staff in a structured form. For a consultancy company active knowledge management leading to widespread usage of our assets has high priority.

Important structural elements of knowledge management in a learning organisation are standardised products; internet based data banks that include e.g. reports, evaluations and other project documents (e.g. contracts, planning documents) and special events (e.g. workshops, trainings). They document mostly technical and explicit knowledge. Face to face communication is an important element to collect implicit knowledge (e.g. debriefing when change of personnel is taking place). The main target groups for knowledge management are staff, external consultants and specialists and the main customers.

An important source of data for knowledge management in a company engaged in development are recent learning experiences from ongoing and completed interventions in development cooperation (e.g. methodology, approach, benchmarks and contacts).

Keywords: Debriefing, explicit knowledge, implicit knowledge, knowledge management, technical knowledge