

CROSSROADS



Youth farmer in the Philippines. © Melissa Alamo

Sharing learnings in Kigali

BY KATJA VUORI

On May 16th-18th, we will be sharing lessons learnt and best practices from the FO4ACP programme in Kigali event hosted by PAFO. As this is a great opportunity to showcase our achievements, we are excited to share some news about this event!

PAFO is inviting three AA/FO teams from AgriCord: two from Africa and one from the Caribbean. The secretariat will also participate in the event.

The AA/FO teams were selected based

on a survey sent to the agri-agencies. We are happy to announce the selected cases: Trias/FUPRORIZ from West Africa, FFD/NADO from East Africa, and Trias/CLAC from the Dominican Republic. Congratulations!

However, this does not mean that others are left behind. Other AA/FOs are invited to join the event on their own budget or online. Also, AgriCord will have a stand, where learnings from various cases submitted by the AAs will be displayed and shared by posters, videos and flyers. In the coming weeks, we will be busy in shaping the stories and preparing all the materials together with the agri-agencies.

Get in touch with us, if you want to know more about the event!

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The Method: Experience Capitalization

BY DANIEL SZCZEPANSKI

There is a general recognition that a large part of knowledge, generated by projects, is not documented or shared. This limits the potential for learning within and across initiatives.

Experience capitalization can help with this issue. Experiences refer to the tacit knowledge that project teams and organisations gather when doing their work. An experience capitalisation process starts with identifying these potential experiences and ends with reintegrating the learnings into the daily work. This process helps practitioners to understand their own experiences, learn from them and contribute to practice-based capitalization.

Experience capitalization combines qualitative and quantitative research methods, but goes beyond pure data and statistics to search for the story behind them.

One caveat should be added here: often the focus is only and purely on documenting and showcasing 'success stories'. In a way, this is natural: after all, success stories present a positive image, also toward donors.

Practitioners, however, should not only focus on successes. There are equally vital questions. What could be improved? What challenges existed and how did we (not) deal with them?

Every project has had at least some issue. In this sense, lessons learnt should be viewed in a multi-faceted manner.

There are several methodologies for collecting experiences. Two examples of those are: after action reviews and storytelling.

An After Action Review (AAR) is a tool to facilitate assessments. It brings together the team to discuss an activity or project openly and honestly. Such an internal After-Action Review (AAR) meeting could be conducted, for example, after advisory field mission to discuss key topics (e.g. logistics, donor coordination etc) and identify action points for the next mission. A short AAR summary could document these key issues identified.

Storytelling refers to the use of stories as a communication tool to value, share, and capitalise knowledge and know-how of individuals. For example: particular farmer's experience during the project could be captured - with space to describe the landscape, any challenges faced and actions that farmer took and a resolution or lesson learnt.

There is also a communication aspect to experience capitalisation. How is the information to be shared and to whom? There are many formats and platforms to choose from: a written product (e.g. a blog post or a document) or audiovisual materials (e.g. a video, infographics or images).

Interesting Resources:

- [Knowledge Solutions, Asian Development Bank](#)
- [KM4ARD - Experience Capitalization](#)
- [FAO E-Learning: 'Experience Capitalization for Continuous Learning'](#)



TESTIMONIAL

"Experience capitalization means that now you are reflecting on what you have been doing in the past, so that you add value and you gain new knowledge for the future."

SOFIE TREINEN,
COMMUNICATION FOR
DEVELOPMENT -
KNOWLEDGE SHARING
AND ICTS FAO (FROM
[FAO, 2015](#))

TESTIMONIAL

“What makes a good story is making the story relate to people... You want to get somebody to change their farming practice, you need them to value this idea and they will only take that on board if you can put them in the shoes of the person whose life has already been changed by it. It is all about change.”

PAUL NEATE,
COMMUNICATIONS
EXPERT IN RURAL
RESEARCH (FROM [CTA](#),
[2018](#))

The Method: Communicating Stories

BY DANIEL SZCZEPANSKI

Sharing lessons learnt is a key aspect of capitalization. While it may not always be desirable for a variety of purposes, capitalization processes should also consider dissemination and communication. Related to this, a variety of issues should be reflected upon and ideally defined in advance of a capitalization process.

One key question is the target audience. Who are the learnings for? Are they for wider public or mainly for internal learning? Defining the audience is key. It determines formats, platforms and medium to package and disseminate the learnings among a target audience.

A second consideration relates to the concrete dissemination activities. What format, platform or medium would be used? There are many potential channels but we look at three main channels: print, digital and events.

Print (e.g., brochure, poster, corporate presentation, scientific paper): Products in print remain a very effective way of communicating project results and learning. An article in a publication can go a long way to sharing lessons learnt with stakeholders.

Digital (e.g., photos, videos & infographics, website, social media): [An online platform](#) (website or social media) can be an excellent way of communicating results. High quality visual material can tell many stories.

Project teams can produce [mini-documentaries](#) and [photo or video diaries](#) of farmers to track and share the project's progress and results. An [infographic](#) is effective in explaining learnings in a synthetic and visually appealing manner.

Events (e.g., peer meetings, roundtables, workshops, focus group discussions, AARs, conferences or online webinars): these are a prime forum for interactive sharing. They allow for in-depth exploration of project learnings and planning for further development. Events can be organized in a structured manner, such as AgriCord, online learning moments with panel speakers and break-out sessions on key topics. Alternatively, events can be more open-ended and exploratory with good facilitation to ensure flow and capturing of main takeaways.

A key aspect in communicating results and project learnings is the ability to recount a story or narrative with a concrete point. This differs from purely descriptive products.

To tell an effective story:

- Keep it to the essentials but don't focus only on the (scientific) facts; a story is more than a list of results
- Have a clear beginning, middle and an end. In this sense, focusing on key aspects would be ideal: 1) There was an issue or a challenge (beginning), 2) This is what we learnt or how we solved it, and 3) Conclusions and take-aways.
- Concentrate on the why, not only on the how

Some interesting links and sites:

- [Access Agriculture](#)
- [Climate and Development Knowledge Network](#)
- [Family Farming Knowledge Platform](#)
- [Dgroups Community Connector](#)

Towards a Culture of Learning at AgriCord

BY KATJA VUORI

At AgriCord, we have a variety of products and processes related to capitalization. Through them, we strive towards creating a shared culture of learning in AgriCord.

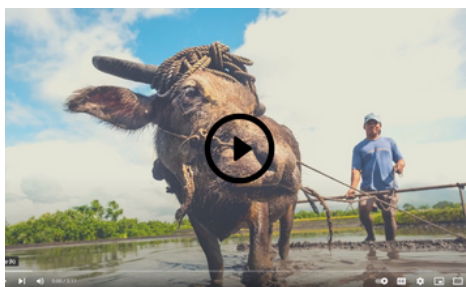
To promote a more harmonized approach to learning across all agri-agencies, the Program Commission established a Knowledge Management Working Group. Some members of this Working Group participated also in the selection of the cases for Kigali event.

This year, we look forward to Working Group sessions on methodological issues in support of project activities. In particular, as our [FO4 programmes](#) are well underway, this year impact stories from farmers will be collected.

AgriCord secretariat and the different thematic Program Commission Working Groups organizes also learning moments on specific topics.

Last year, we were excited to organize two learning moments on access to finance, featuring agri-agency members and partners from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa. In March 2023, Access to Finance Working Group continued to deepen this topic in a session mapping the strengths and weaknesses at alliance level. In 2023, we hope to organize more sessions focusing on access to finance and business planning, climate change adaptation, agroecology and inclusion.

Last but not least: our products. Crossroads will be published as last year, four times per year showcasing some lessons learnt from our projects. [Spotlight](#) is a video series, where it is possible to focus on for example on specific agricultural technique (bokashi), FO extension service provision (FF SPAK) or an individual farmer's story. Both products share the same objective: improving the knowledge within the alliance - and beyond - about the best practices and learnings across the AgriCord programs and reinforcing the culture of sharing and evolving together.



Annonces

Impact stories will be collected this year across the programs, focusing on farmers' experiences, challenges and issues, as well as impacts and opportunities for the future.

The Knowledge Management Working Group also welcomes those working on and/or interested in learning. Let us know!



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QUESTIONS? WANT TO SHARE YOUR STORY? A FRIENDLY CHAT?

CONTACT US!

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AgriCord is a global alliance of agri-agencies mandated by farmers' organizations. The mission of the AgriCord Alliance is to promote and help to build strong, democratic, inclusive and professional farmers' organisations and cooperatives and in that way to spur development.