

Knowledge management practice to foster knowledge sharing in socio-environmental project

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Abstract

Knowledge management (KM) is a systematic approach that allows organizations to deliver value from their knowledge assets. For this purpose, organizations can use KM practices, which refer to conscious and intentional managerial activities to support the KM and its processes (e. g., knowledge sharing). Those practices can support the interaction within the team and the work in collaboration, which permits to delivery of results based on a transdisciplinary approach. The purpose of this abstract to present evidence regarding a KM practice to foster knowledge sharing in a Brazilian socio-environmental project. The project was part of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, and it aimed to conduct a socio-environmental diagnosis to create a protected area. The team was composed of 47 people, including professors, students, and consultants of several fields, such as fauna, geography, anthropology, and environmental education. A qualitative research approach was adopted using Action Research as the strategy of investigation. The data collection was based on observations and semi-structured interviews, which took place between September 2019 and July 2020, and the thematic analysis method for data analysis. To participate in the KM practice, the team used a WhatsApp Group to send videos, audios, or texts with the main results obtained by their investigations according to an established schedule between March and July 2020. For example, the first week was scheduled for the environmental education team, the second week for the anthropology team, and thus all the teams could participate. The KM practice permitted the teams to share their results, which could be fruitful for several research fields. For instance, the results from the geology team helped the analysis of the Hydrology team. Also, it allowed a collective discussion regarding what one of the teams have shared on the WhatsApp group. Therefore, it has contributed to the achievement of tasks and the increment of interaction between the teams. Furthermore, through the KM practice, the teams shared information, doubts, and opinions from the community where the project was carried out to be discussed collectively with everybody. Doing that helped the Environmental Education team to clarify doubts regarding the project to the local community. In addition, it contributed to the project team understand concerns and expectations from the community regarding a protected area creation and how was the occupation process of that territory. The KM practice supported the knowledge creation based on the interdisciplinary vision, which contributed to delivering robust and interconnected results concerning the environmental, cultural, and social aspects. Consequently, the final report, which presented the final results and indicated a protected area type and its limits, was written integrating the knowledge from the different research fields and the opinions and demands from the local community. To conclude, the KM practice fostered knowledge sharing, promoted collaborative work, and provided a robust study to create a protected area.