

## Learning and Organisational Resources for Communities of Practice

**Type of resource:** Organising, managing, developing, and evaluating CoPs  
**Type of scenario:** Reification / Debate & Decide / Identity development

### OrganisingCoPs: Organising, managing, developing, and evaluating CoP activities

#### Summary

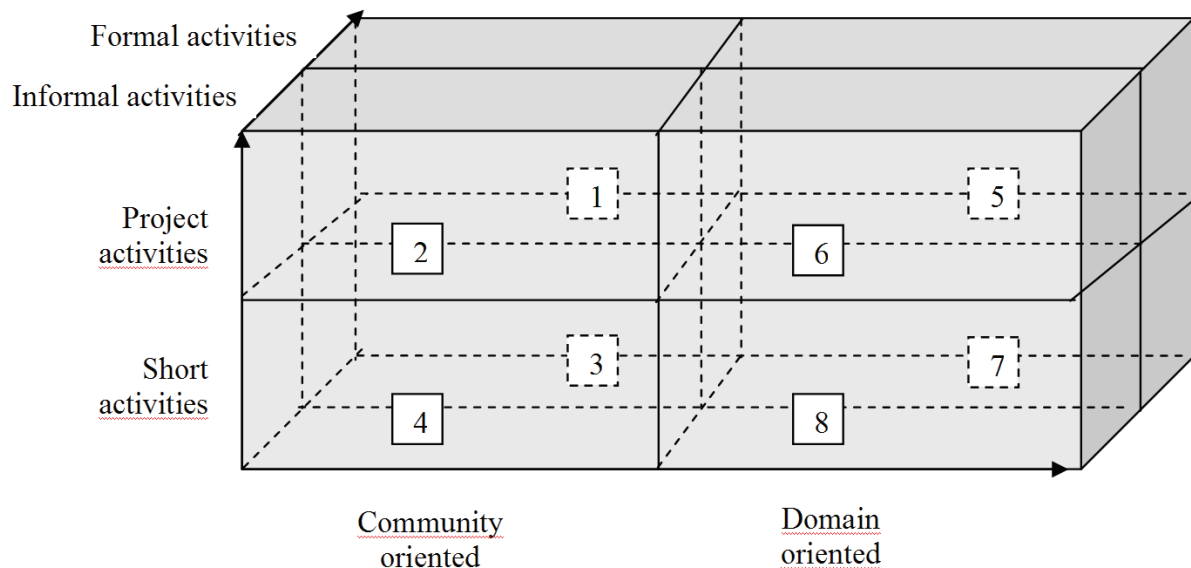
- Objective: for the CoP coordinators to diagnose what types of activities are carried out within a CoP or to make decision about what activity to organise.
- Scenario: individual or group reflection for analysing the CoP activities.

#### Objectives

For CoP coordinator to map the different activities which can occur or be organised within the CoP. The CoP activity model proposed below will help the coordinator to manage, i.e. to evaluate and to support individual and collective, formal and informal learning activities as well as the use of the CoP tools by its members. It can be used as a tool box for decision-making processes.

#### Description of the CoP activity model

The different dimensions for describing a CoP activity are divided into three axes: formal/informal, project/short, and community/domain oriented.



#### Axes definition

- Community oriented activities (coordination and communication activities): This dimension concerns activities that aim at managing and facilitating the interpersonal relations inside the CoP. The objective is here to allow people sharing common social rules that help them to communicate, understand each

other and negotiate meaning. These activities help members to build and share a collective identity. They also help them to know each other as individual, to know their individual needs, motivation to participate in the CoP, their interests and beliefs, as well as their personal objectives.

- Domain oriented activities (knowledge sharing and knowledge creation activities): This dimension of activities is about CoP members sharing knowledge, competences and practice related to their professional domain. It concerns the explanations related to tacit and explicit knowledge used by the CoP members in their practice.
- Formal activities: These activities represent all the explicit activities that are organized formally within the CoP.
- Informal activities: These activities represent all the implicit activities, that are organized tacitly within the CoP or that are not organized and appear spontaneously. These activities can be related to the community or the domain of the CoP.
- Short activities: Activities that are not intended to be repeated and that have a short-term impact. They occur punctually.
- Project activities: Activities that last over a long period of time and that need a calendar to be followed. They are organized in order to have a long term impact.

To illustrate how to use the model, we have tried to classify different kinds of activities in the eight boxes of the model. The table below summarizes the different characteristics of each activity:

		Community-oriented	Domain-oriented
Project activities	Formal activities	1	5
	Informal activities	2	6
Short activities	Formal activities	3	7
	Informal activities	4	8

As examples of activities, the short name of other LORs that the reader can refer to is given.

1. *Community oriented – project – formal activities*: CoP organisational development activities, shared database “Who’s Who”. For example, the LORs NeedCoP, YellowPages, MapCoP, CharterPolicy, ScenariosUses, ChoicesTools, UsesTools.
2. *Community oriented – project – informal activities*: arguing, debating about a long-term, community-oriented issue.
3. *Community oriented – short – formal activities*: planned CoP social events (for example, the LOR LearningSwot).
4. *Community oriented – short – informal activities*: lunch between CoP members, exchanges between members during a break, etc.
5. *Domain oriented – project – formal activities*: associated activities with communicated results. Example: Project activities, shared knowledge database “who knows what”, knowledge creation activities between members, etc. (see the LORs DefineOntology, ObjectivesActivities, ScenariosUses).
6. *Domain oriented – project – informal activities*: informal practice-based activities such as usual discussions on specific issues without notes or reification process.
7. *Domain oriented – short – formal activities*: planned short domain activities (with explicitly defined inherent goals) and realization of short activities included in projects. For example, the LORs AnalysingLearningProc, GoodPractices, WhatHow, IndividualIssue, ActivitiesToolsScenarios.

8. *Domain oriented – short – informal activities*: spontaneous short domain activities (with tacitly defined inherent goals), punctual decisions about unplanned events and issues that have an impact on coordination of CoP domain activities. Example: defining together at the end of a meeting, during a chat session, the topics, themes, subjects to be presented for the next meetings.

### **Scenario**

When a CoP member is designated as animator, coordinator, moderator or when he has chosen to assume one of these roles, he /she should be able to identify existing activities that happen within the CoP. He can also compare these activities with the CoP performance (as defined by its members). From this perspective, this LOR represent a diagnosis tool.

Based on the desired CoP performance defined by its members, this LOR can be also used to identify activities to organise in order to support community or domain development, for instance.

This LOR can be considered as a strategic diagnosis and as a decision-making tool.

### **Further resources**

Behind the links below, lists of activities for supporting knowledge management in CoPs are provided:

- [http://www.km4dev.org/wiki/index.php/Community\\_Knowledge](http://www.km4dev.org/wiki/index.php/Community_Knowledge)
  - [http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf)
  - [http://www.daretoshare.ch/en/Dare\\_To\\_Share/Knowledge\\_Management\\_Toolkit](http://www.daretoshare.ch/en/Dare_To_Share/Knowledge_Management_Toolkit)
  - <http://knowledge.usaid.gov/communityhome.html>
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