Setting-up a community of practice
The CCT learning group in Latin America

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What is a Community of Practice?

- A group of active practitioners : group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

- Members learn from each other sharing information and experiences (telling stories), and have an opportunity to develop themselves personally and professionally . They share tips and best practices, ask questions of their colleagues, and provide support for each other.

- Dynamic: evolves over time

What does a CoP serve for?

- Increasing organization performance:
  - Decreasing the learning curve of new employees
  - Responding more rapidly to customer needs and inquiries
  - Reducing rework and preventing "reinvention of the wheel"
  - Spawning new ideas for products and services
- Sharing knowledge that may lead to higher productivity. A means to capturing the tacit knowledge, the know-how that is not so easily articulated.
- Helping individuals bridge the gap between knowing *what* and *how*.

The international CCT CoP: programs learning from each other at several levels

- Three global conferences sponsored by international agencies and hosted by local governments (2002 in Mexico, 2004 in Brazil and 2006 in Turkey). Smaller regional events since then.
- Numerous study trips, often to established programs
- Several detailed program websites
- Extensive publication of evaluation results in academic journals
- A "learning circle" among 5 LAC programs, facilitated by the WB

The global conferences

- Participants: all countries w/ a CCT program at the time
- Plenary sessions, discussion groups, field visits, information about programs
- Sponsored by donors: UNICEF, WB, DFID, GTZ, and host government
- Mix of policy and operational questions

Websites:

- São Paulo 2004 http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/0,,contentMDK:20823929~menuPK:2643917~pagePK:64020865~piPK:51164185~theSitePK:282637,00.html
- Istanbul 2006 w/ a virtual conference http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/WBI/WBIPROGRAMS/SPLP/0,,contentMDK:20892674~pagePK:64156158~piPK:64152884~theSitePK:461654,00.html

The learning group – Its start

- Emerged from demand from the client countries
- Program managers knew each other
- They saw the WB role as convening and facilitating the meetings, also helping develop and manage the agenda with the main purpose of sharing information in a trusted environment

The learning group - Objectives

- The group would:
  - discuss/share upcoming operational issues confidentially between peer practitioners
  - explore why programs responded differently to similar questions
- The group also helped new managers know their peers more rapidly

$\Rightarrow$a restricted group of senior managers

$\Rightarrow$programs of same generation

The learning group – Logistics (1)

- A working group of 5 program managers and their relevant technical staff + WB and IDB project staff + a VC technician (in most sites) + technical resource people as needed
- Hosted by the World Bank Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) with video-conference in Washington + 5 countries
- An internet group to share meetings agenda, presentations, background materials and minutes of meetings; and questions.

The learning group – Logistics (2)

- Started in November 2006
- Meetings every 5-6 weeks for 2-2 ½ hours w/ pre-established agenda
- Presentations shared by e-mail beforehand, projected to all VC sites
- Discussion moderated from Washington, each team taking turns
- Funding from the WB LAC Region's Knowledge and Learning Team and the SP Unit

The learning group – Logistics (3)

- The SP Unit also organized the meetings, managed them and prepared minutes
- Electronic support initially through DFID's d-group platform (WB had an institutional membership): announcements, background documents, on-line discussions
- B/c of access issues, now moved to Ning, a new type of social network w/ features that facilitate communication between members

The learning group – Topics

- Quality controls and accountability
- Relationship of the program with local governments, other sectoral ministries
- Responses to the crisis
- How to reach hard-to-reach groups?
- How to link beneficiaries to complementary services?
- Different approaches to monitoring conditionalities
- How to organize beneficiaries' "graduation"
- How to train field staff

The learning group face-to-face

- Two sessions in 2008 (Mexico - 2nd-generation issues on youth, graduation and M&E - and Colombia - urban areas-); one in 2010 (Brazil-ECD and overall SP system)
- Larger groups with more external inputs
- Seeking to address some "big" issues facing the programs
- Documenting experiences more formally
- Enabling informal personal contacts between participants

Some results
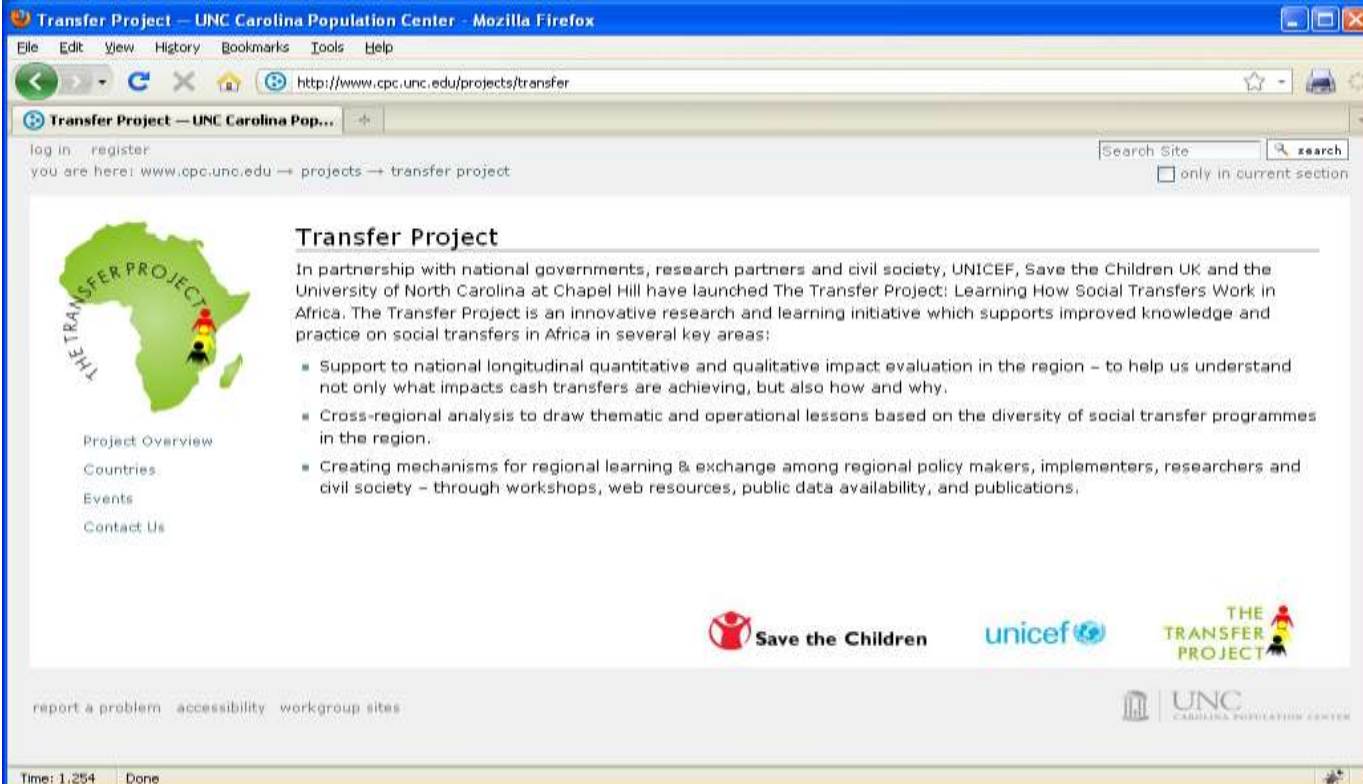
- Urban implementation issues: spreading innovative targeting methods (utility maps)
- Evolving role of M&E: clarifying which information program managers need
- WB/IDB project staff more aware of emerging challenges/issues facing programs
- Increased quick communications (phone, e-mails) b/w members => dividing information requests.

What does it take?

- Good technical platform
- A moderator/facilitator that reminds participants of their commitment
- A peer group who can be open about diverse experiences, with no one dominating the conversation
- A mix of communication tools between the meetings to keep the group going
- Money (VC and management costs funded by WB, programs make staff available)

- Recognized by the WB internal evaluation as an innovation in knowledge sharing

Some elements to build on:

- This regional meeting
- Your informal contacts
- A website:
  http//www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/transfer
- A listserv

An African SCT CoP

What else do you want to do?

What do you need to learn?

Thank you