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Abstract

Knowledge is the source of competitive advantage to regions, countries and organizations. It has also become an important part of the development cooperation because it is the key element for development. After all, most of the problems that developing countries face are results from insufficient knowledge. The purpose of this study is to describe the process of international knowledge transfer through development projects by studying a Finnish funded Community Health Education Program in Egypt. The program is carried out by Fida International. To provide full understanding of the topic following sub-objectives are needed to be analyzed: what type of knowledge is transferred through development projects, how the knowledge is transferred and how knowledge recipients adopt and learn new knowledge and what is the influence of the culture in knowledge transfer process. The research strategy of this study is qualitative and it uses a single case study approach. The data is collected through personal interviews with Fida officials in Finland and also with Fida's personnel and the local people involved in CHEP in Egypt. Direct observation is used as the second data collection method in Egypt. The knowledge that is transferred through development projects varies remarkably in different types of projects. In this study knowledge is categorized into four different types. Knowledge can be tacit or codified and it can be general or local. Naturally these different types of knowledge require different learning methods to become adopted. The knowledge that is transferred through CHEP in Egypt is mainly health knowledge. All the knowledge is based on a general concept which is then adapted to the Egyptian culture. Even though most of the knowledge is quite general and also codified in the beginning, it requires modification and understanding of local knowledge before it can be transferred to local people. As in development projects is general, tacit knowledge plays an important role in CHEP in Egypt. To be able to reach the tacit component of knowledge it has to be transferred through participative learning methods such as active-, adoptive- and horizontal learning methods. Participative learning methods have been very successful in Egypt. The knowledge is transferred through discussions instead of using the traditional class room teaching. Sketches, plays, games, stories and dramas are used as a part of the teaching to increase the participation of people. Obviously local people are a significant part of the knowledge transfer process because they can modify the knowledge according to their own local knowledge and transfer it in a way that is the most suitable way to each target group. However, as in every development project, it is worth remembering that every country is its own unit and some best practices that have worked well in Egypt may not work in the same way when transferred to other developing countries.

Key words	knowledge transfer, development cooperation, development projects, Egypt
Further information	