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## TRANSCRIPT

# Claudia Teixeira on Community Centers of Excellence

### SUMMARY KEYWORDS

community, working, bank, practice, manager, excellence, support, team, crp, claudia, developed, center, organization, crps, capacity building, stakeholders, providing, recognition, part, content

### SPEAKERS

Claudia Teixeira, Anne Mbugua

#### Anne Mbugua 00:02

So hi, Claudia, if you could introduce yourself, what you do, the kind of community that you work for and how many years you've been, you know, around with an in community.

#### Claudia Teixeira 00:16

Hi, yes, sure. Thank you. And my name is Claudia Teixeira, I am Brazilian I am I have an educational background in business and then communication. And I had two different career paths. So I started as a, as a teacher, like, working with intrapreneurship. So it was some part of the work was on teaching and part of the word was consulting. I worked for a university teaching intrapreneurship to small, you know, businesses, and also worked for a government agency that provided support to small and mid sized enterprises. But then, at one point in my career, I pivoted, I had this, you know, life crisis that what is it that I'm doing? Am I happy with what I'm doing? So I moved to the US to go through a master's program on Strategic Communications at Georgetown in Washington, DC. And I guess I was I was, like, influenced by this whole international development environment, and started working for into the international development organizations working on communications on pieces around knowledge management, and then communities of practice. And that was the way that I started working with with communities, which was back in I mean, maybe seven, eight years ago, right. After, after working for three years for the International for an international organization called Organization of American States, I applied for a position at the World Bank as a community manager. So that was the first time that I was working actually, as a community manager, right, in 2016. And so that that's when it, that's when it all started.

#### Anne Mbugua 02:16

Wonderful, fantastic, Claudia. So briefly, you know, maybe let's describe what, what is a community of excellence, maybe that's a good place to start in terms of a definition. And then I would really love you to tell you a story about you know, creating, sorry, as a center of excellence, I should say, creating a center of excellence at the World Bank, and what that process looks like. So let's just define it, you know, what really is center of excellence.

02:46

So to me a center of excellence, it would be like, like a central place in, in our organization that is providing support to communities of practice in this whole organization. So, to me, basically, this is that, and, and I say that now, because when I joined that team, we didn't recognize or we didn't feel that we were a center of excellence. Even though we were doing a lot of the work, that Center of Excellence does mean teaching, consulting, helping communities of practice become their best, right. So I think it should be as simple as that, it doesn't mean that you have to have like, an award recognition, which we ended up getting this year. It was great. But it's this, I guess it's about providing the central support, right to connect all the communities in an organization. So that there is a sense is there is any standardized approach to community building in that specific organization.

**Anne Mbugua** 03:54

So which brings me to So describe your experience or share that experience of how you managed to do that at the World Bank.

04:03

Yeah, so. So yeah, so I'll start from the beginning, when I was applying for the position of community manager, I was reading all those books, right, Etienne Bangor on cultivating communities of practice, books from Richard many tongue, and you know, several different articles. And in many of those resources, I was finding mentioning to communities of practice in the World Bank, and I realized that you know, the story of communities of practice in the World Bank, they go go hand in hand with the story of the concept of communities of practice as we know it, because when Etienne vangor was proposing the concept of CRPS, in the early 1990s, he was a consultant with the bank. So he was studying what was happening there. And he draw a lot from that experience, I mean, in his theories, so so it felt really intimidating for me that I was joining this team working with CRPS in the bank. And I felt that I was really new at it. So it felt intimidating. But it also felt really good, it was a good challenge. So when I joined the team,

05:15

there was already I mean, many communities of practice in the bank, when we when we usually when we would do this ecosystem analysis, we would find that there are more than 300, for sure, maybe probably close to 400 CRPS in the bank. And, and they happen no matter if you have a central support system for them or not, it has become part of the way that the bank does business. So all the departments in the World Bank support communities of practice, and it has become part of the culture of how people work and develop their their relationships, either inside with other other workers or colleagues, but also outside with, with clients and with all the counterparts that are necessary for, you know, the good results of the project, right. So it's all there. But the question was about how, how did we develop the center of readiness, right? So when I saw when I first joined, I was our challenge was to

improve the the training capacity building for community managers. Okay, that's what we were working on. And so we did a good job, we developed this program. To train community managers, we thought that if we had if we could professionalize, you know, the community management profession, may be doing a great job for all of the, you know, communities of practice in the bank. That that was good, that was a good hypothesis. But then within time, what we learned is that the community manager doesn't do the work alone in a corp, of course, right, you need a committed core team, right, or a core group. So what we what we experienced was that many people that were that were joining this training that we called Community Management Certification, they wouldn't actually be community managers later on. Most of the times, they would be the CRP leaders, or they would be sponsors, or technical experts supporting the community. And they were all interested in the, in the how to make it, how to design or how to manage a community in an effective way. Right. So we changed the focus to only community managers to these team of groups. And we developed a different product, which was a CRP lab program, right, that was a nine month program that works like an incubation. So if you were part of a community would sign up with your team. So maybe three to four, four or five people from the team would participate in the trainings, you would there were, that would be of course, the the training sessions, the workshops, and we will, we will be providing content and providing a time for activities. But the good thing was that we also had a dedicated coach to each one of those European Communities of Practice. So we would follow Amin and be part of the core team meetings and follow the communities for these nine months, and give them a more you know, individual help. So so that was that was a very important piece of the central work of building the Center of Excellence, meaning is strengthening the capacity building part. But in the, in addition to capacity building, we also find that found that it was very important to have like a community for these, this this community of practice, right. So we had what we call the a community manager group, right. And then we had an online space for them. We had an regular newsletter to share news, I mean, to feature members and good practices. We had the annual summit celebration. And before the actually running up to the event on January, we had a competition, which was we called Stories of impact. And and so the competition would culminate in on the summit celebration. This was the day that we will be delivering the awards. And it will became like a big deal. Like we had high level managers and directors representing their departments being judges and selecting the CEO peas that have had performed better in that year. And that helped a lot giving them recognition and also giving our team recognition. And in addition to that, the third point was about content developers And so we invested in studying those ERPs, understanding what the challenges were, and indeed in designing content that was specific to them. So we have a CRP playbook that we called Community Building a primer, right.

10:17

Which is like a guide for people that are working in communities in the bank to develop a CRP from, from point zero. And then we also developed a toolkit, which is a digital tool with, you know, a lot of the content that we had on the primer, but packaged in a different way, so that you can just read, you know, bits and pieces that are important to you in the face or the stage that you are, and it's also more, more full of templates and, and more practical resources than then then the guide. Right. So that was three things. I mean, the focus on the capacity building piece, the focus on the giving the ecosystem support with the community, having a community of practice for communities of practice, right, and focus on content development.

**Anne Mbugua** 11:13

Which brings me to this question now looking back, having, you know, created a center of excellence. Now, looking back, what would be the things that you would do differently?

11:26

Yeah, the that's really interesting. I was thinking about this question. And it made me go back to relive, you know, many of those those times, because, like I mentioned to you, I'm working with another team right now. So that was an opportunity to reflect back. And what I feel is that I feel really peaceful about what we did and what we accomplished, right? So I really feel that I did, I gave my best and also the team, as a team, we gave our best, if I had the opportunity to live it again, right, I would, I would enjoy more, I would be more in the present, just enjoying the good things that were happening. Because when I think back, I see that I was stressed a lot to achieve, to you know, give my best to achieve the best results. And that would bring a lot of stress. And now that I look back, and I see that everything went well, I would just you know, relax and enjoy the ride.

**Anne Mbugua** 12:37

That's a very good point. That's true. You know, because in the process of it all, maybe you know, you weren't seeing what was going on, right? And getting stretched divided is really not the place to be considering that. After all, you know, you created the center of excellence, and it was a success. So what what what did that success look like?

13:01

It it's interesting, because it felt very good, of course, for us as a team. But it has always been very hard to convey this to set the success to convert the successes of support. What we feel is that, depending on the leadership, you might have support, or you might not have support, right, that doesn't mean that you are providing value or not providing value. So we what we realized is that the value that we provide, is not reflected in having or not financial support to the things that we were doing, right, because even if many times we didn't have like recognition, high level recognition or support, there was a very strong demand for everything that we were doing. And we could even provide like premium services to different areas in the bank, and guarantee our sustainability from from these, you know, different areas instead of getting the support from the, you know, from the, I mean from the direction of urbanization,

**Anne Mbugua** 14:17

right. So let's paint the scenario. So a community manager is thinking about creating a center of excellence, what would be a pro tip or two pro tips that you can share with them?

14:33

Um, the first thing I would say it would be about listening deeply to your to your stakeholders, right to what's happening in your organization, right. Because the kind of program that would that that that would be best for you is completely different, for example, that we developed at the World Bank, so we would need to feel the needs from your, from your colleagues. So that would be Really important, I mean to respond, respond to the demand. And if you asked me to four to the second one I get, I would say it's invested in routine. Because I mean, I guess the Center of Excellence is only as good as the as

the team who is running it, right. And I'm sure that, you know, everything that we accomplished, we accomplished because we had a great team, we had a great leader that was not afraid of, you know, people growing around her. On the contrary, she felt confident when she was giving space for everybody to thrive and come in with new ideas, in innovate even risks sometimes. So investing in your team in your development of the team and believing in you know, crazy ideas.

**Anne Mbugua** 15:52

Thank you so much Claudia, for sharing that wealth of information. That's really helpful. I usually like to end on this note, what inspires you about your community?

16:04

What inspires me about my community is changes its innovation. Right now, like I told you, I am with a different challenge. I'm running a community of practice, which is, which is trying to promote system change, right on the social entrepreneurship field. So it's a national community of practice connecting the different stakeholders on the field. And I love the idea of thinking that by doing that, you could big I mean different by bringing different stakeholders. You can you can bring actually a system and try to see this, make the system see itself and change what needs to be changed so that it's better for everybody.

**Anne Mbugua** 16:49

Oh, thank you so much. I really appreciate it.