



Communities of Practice; the basics

Dr Rebecca Goodhue
Lead, Capacity Building
ARACY

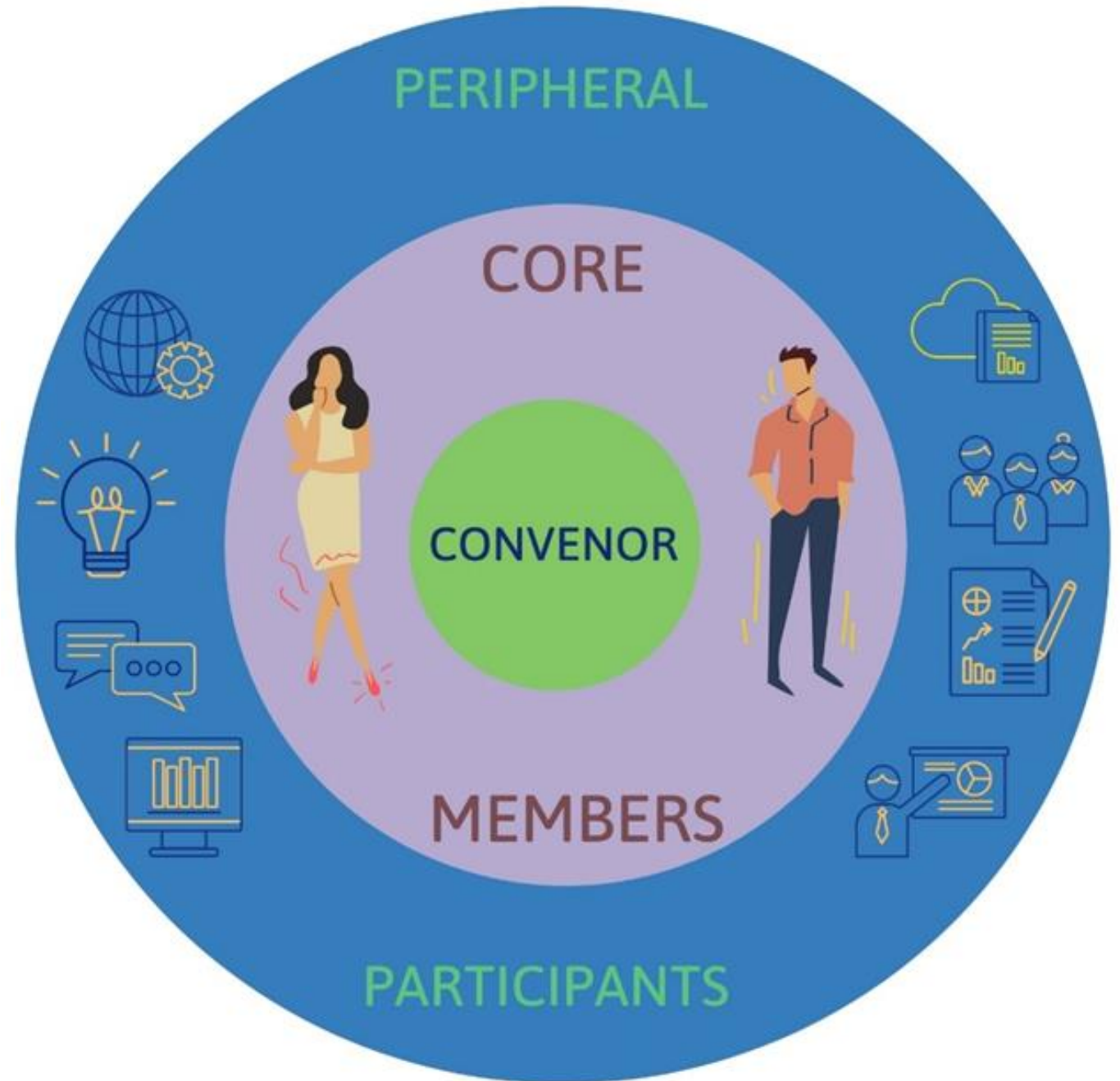
What is a Community of Practice?

1. Domain: shared area of interest
2. Community: members interact and learn together
3. Practice: members are practitioners who develop a shared repertoire of resources

Communities of Practice:

- Enable collective responsibility of knowledge management
- Create a direct link between learning and performance
- Connect people across organisational and geographic boundaries
- Innovate and solve problems
- Enable development of a collective and strategic voice

What does a
Community of Practice
look like?



Functions of a Community of Practice



Filters information	What information is worth paying more attention to?
Convenes people	Brings together different groups of people from potentially diverse geographical regions
Amplifies information	What new, little known or little understood information needs to be discussed/given a platform?
Creates resources	What resources would be useful to develop?
Builds values	Promotes and sustains values of individuals and organisations
Problem solves	How can we..?
Requests for information	Where can I find an example of..?
Experience sharing	Has anyone had a similar experience?
Creating templates & assets	I have materials from a similar session that can be used as a starting point
Enhances collaboration	Can we combine or work together? Can I visit your practice?
Discuss developments	What do you think of...?
Maps knowledge and gaps	Who knows what and what are we missing?



LONG-TERM VALUE TO MEMBERS

- Personal development
- Reputation
- Professional identity
- Collaborative advantage
- Marketability



LONG-TERM VALUE TO ORGANISATION

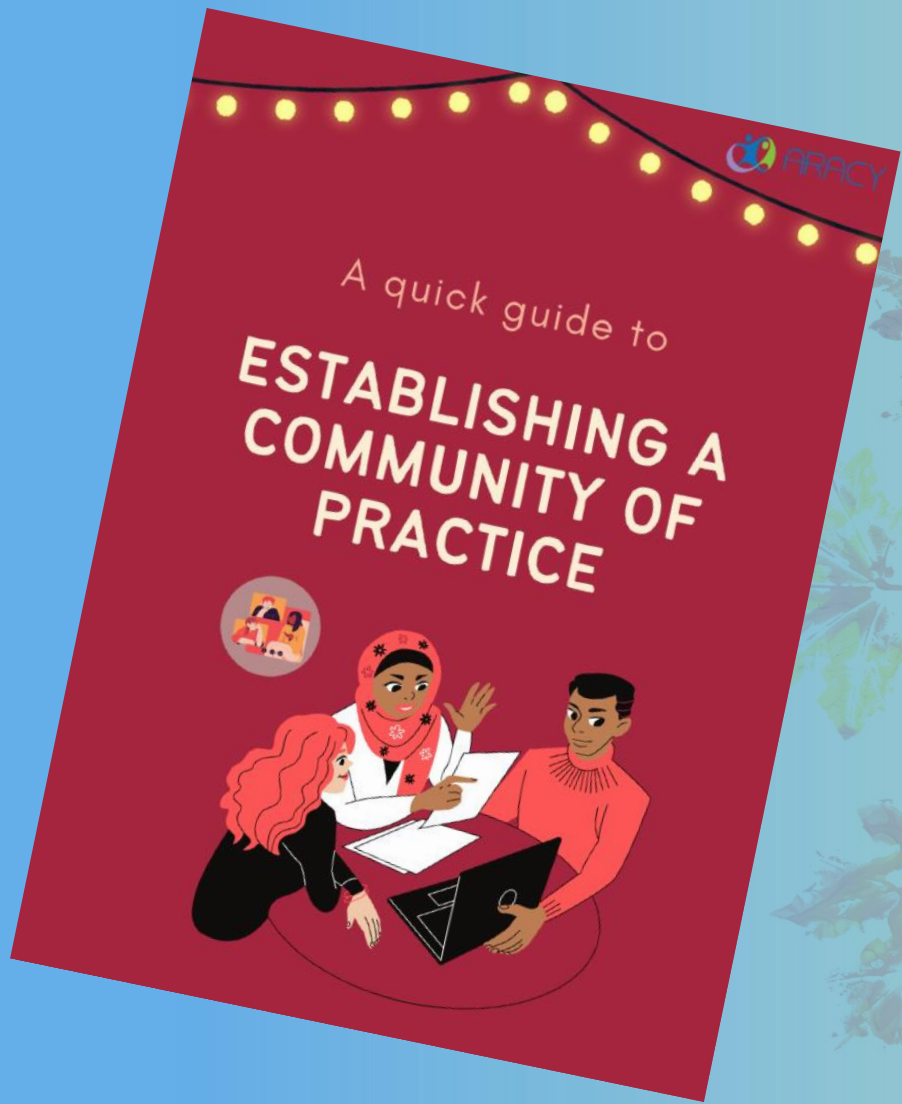
- Strategic capabilities
- Keeping abreast
- Innovation
- Retention of talents
- New strategies

Design principles for creating a CoP

1. Design for evolution
2. Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives
3. Invite different levels of participation
4. Develop both public and private community spaces
5. Focus on value
6. Combine familiarity and excitement
7. Create a rhythm for the community

Communities of Practice are spaces where;

- People have the freedom to ask for candid advice, share their opinions, and try their half-baked ideas without repercussion.
- Divergent thinking is encouraged.
- People can hear about the latest tool, exchange technical gossip, or just chat about issues without fear of committing to action plans.
- There is neutrality separate from the everyday work pressures of people's jobs



PASSING THE FITNESS TEST

RESULTS

- Is delivering and reporting on tangible results a common concern?
- Do members draw direct and practical benefits from their involvement?
- Are results officially recognised by the host?



RESOURCES



- Do members have sufficient time for the CoP?
- Is the host willing to provide time, space, and incentives?
- Is CoP facilitation attractive and stimulating?

VALUES

- Is listening to others a cardinal virtue?
- Are members willing to give without immediate return?
- Is diversity in thinking and practice validated?

