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The creation of the Knowledge Zone of Curaçao: the power of a vision

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to present a case study of the creation of a Knowledge Zone (K-Zone) in Curaçao to provide an insight into how a Knowledge Zone is established. After devising a vision, strategic alliances were formed. This created synergy and momentum, giving the project and process a life of their own.

Design/methodology/approach – The project of creating a K-Zone is based on a theoretical framework which draws upon the notion of a creative class, and how it can be attracted to a specific location. It also deploys change management methodology, which describes how change is implemented. The theory states that creativity will drive the economy in the future and that societies that are able to attract the creative class will excel. It is not clear what attracts the creative class but it is believed that a certain life style, concentrations of peers and virtual and physical connectivity are essential. To create these conditions some changes must be implemented and these changes are often resisted in the beginning.

Findings – Knowledge Zones can be created if there is a clear shared vision, leadership and alliances that forge synergies. The project was started in 2010 by the UNA under the presidency of Dr Miguel Goede, the Rector Magnificus of the University of the Netherlands Antilles. With the support of the Board of Supervisors, the UNA entered/sought alliances with the nearby Carmabi Research Institute and the neighbouring school for nurses, which opened a new school building within the designated zone. The UNA also provided the impetus to start a campaign to construct a new hospital that was planned for the area neighbouring the university and to start a school of medicine. But the breakthrough came when the local telecom provider, United Telecommunication Services (UTS), decided to provide the university with dedicated internet connections that were capable of the highest speed available on the island.

Originality/value – The paper contributes to a framework for understanding the creative economy of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean and how change can be implemented in these settings.

Keywords Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, Caribbean, Globalization, Change management, Strategic alliances, Knowledge economy, Creative economy, Small islands developing states

Paper type Case study



Introduction

On 10 October 2010, the two Caribbean islands of Curaçao and St Maarten emerged as autonomous countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as a consequence of constitutional changes that secured the right of self-determination for the citizens

of those two islands. Since then Curaçao has been passing through turbulent times and is facing both great opportunities as well as serious challenges. In the path of its future development, the University of the Netherlands Antilles (UNA), which was founded on 12 January 1979 or more than 32 years ago, is called upon to play a key role in the development of the new countries and especially the one of Curaçao.

Among the numerous tasks central to an institution of higher education, this key role can be exemplified in the plan for the creation of a Knowledge Zone (K-Zone) in Curaçao, called “UNA 2020”. The foundations for the plan for the creation of a K-Zone in Curaçao were laid following the appointment of a new President of the UNA on 21 June 2010.

The present article presents a case study of the plan for the creation of a K-Zone in Curaçao by describing the main stages in the process from the creation of a vision, the formation of strategic alliances, to the creation of both synergies and momentum before the project resumed a life of its own. This conceptual article starts by introducing the cornerstones of the theoretical framework for the creation of a K-Zone. It is followed by a brief description of the particular situation of Curaçao. The next sections present the vision of the K-Zone in greater detail and describe the process of its implementation. The article finally resumes some of the most important insights gained from the realization of the plan for the creation of a K-Zone in Curaçao so far.

Theoretical framework

Knowledge society

The post-industrial society is associated with many concepts: globalization, the new economy, the information economy, the knowledge economy, the weightless economy (Coy, 2000; Dean and Kretschmer, 2007, p. 573; Greenspan, 2007, p. 493), the creative economy (Florida, 2002, 2007; Howkins, 2001), and the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

The knowledge economy (1995 to date) is characterized by connecting power to share data and information faster and further. Technology enables us to tap into each other’s creativity. The knowledge economy is the result of bringing together powerful computers and well-educated minds to create wealth. Technology enables people to work 24/7. Work and personal lives merge. Work without being personally present is possible (Kamberg, 2007). Kamberg states that we are moving toward the conceptual age where employees are the source of creativity that will make the difference when competing in the marketplace. This makes employees a major asset (Bolkin, 1999; Handy, 1996, p. 201):

But when the vital assets are people, there can be no true ownership by corporations. The best corporations can do is to create an environment that makes the best people want to stay (Coy, 2000).

The 21st century may see the emergence of a kind of “welfare capitalism” in which corporations try to recruit and retain employees by providing services that in another area were provided by government agencies or families [...] (Coy, 2000).

The time has come for a company to treat its employees as real assets. In the broadcasting industry they refer to their people as “the talent” (*The Economist*, 2007).

In the creative economy, the creative class will bring produce great economic growth for their country. The creative class consists of artists, designers, media workers, scientists, healthcare professionals and business and financial people. Countries and cities compete to attract this creative class. Cities that attract this class are characterized by talent, technology and tolerance (Florida, 2002, 2007; Hospers and van Dalme, 2005; Carrol del, 2005):

At the heart of such an effort is recognition of the vital roles that art and culture play in enhancing economic development and, ultimately, divining a “creative community” – a community that exploits the vital linkages among art, culture and commerce. Communities that consciously invest in these broader human and financial resources are at the very forefront in preparing their citizens to meet the challenges of rapidly evolving, and now global, knowledge-based economy and society (Eger, 2006, p. 18).

Ethical guiding principles for knowledge society

UNESCO (2005a, b) posed the question of whether we must endorse the hegemony of the techno-science model in defining legitimate and productive knowledge. They stress the importance of the digital divide and the knowledge divide. In the first UNESCO World Report, *Towards Knowledge Societies*, the emphasis is on the need to renew an ethic for guidance of the emerging knowledge economy[1]. UNESCO states that history and anthropology teach us that all societies are knowledge societies. The knowledge society is about connecting this traditional knowledge and the knowledge economy model. The knowledge economy is based on freedom and expression, the right to education and the right to participate freely in the cultural life. According to UNESCO, in the late 1970s the growth of new technology seemed like a panacea for many nagging domestic problems. But the growth of information and communications technology (ICT) networks alone will not be able to lay the foundation for the knowledge society. While information is a knowledge-generating tool, it is not knowledge itself. There is still a long way to go to achieve genuine knowledge societies. The question is whether the knowledge society will be based on knowledge sharing for all or on partition of knowledge. The future stability of the world will depend on whether division and schisms emerge between North and South, and within each society. The closing of the digital divide is not enough to close the knowledge divide. The digital divide is not only about connectivity but also about content and education.

UNESCO also embraced the concept of the creative economy. They even created the Creative City Network (http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=28053&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) in 2004 (UNESCO). As important elements of the creative economy, UNESCO (2001, 2005a, b) also embraced the concepts of “cultural diversity” and the “diversity of cultural expressions”.

More concretely, UNESCO states that to develop a cultural economy all relevant government agencies, civil society and the private sector must be involved (Carrol del, 2005). Siems and Ratner (2006, p. 17) state that:

[...] findings suggest that innovative ideas and entrepreneurship are at the heart of economic growth. However, if not supported by institutional policies and practices that create and sustain growth, innovative ideas may not be enough to cause the economic spark that emerging economies are so desperate to kindle.

The policy implication for developed nations is that they need to focus more on people, ideas and technology. Developing nations first need to put a good policy in place to protect their citizens and property (physical and intellectual); in other words, they need good governance (Siems and Ratner, 2006, p. 27; Greenspan, 2007, p. 251). According to Kuan Yew (2000, p. 691), the basic principle for the progress of Singapore is “social cohesion through sharing the benefits of progress, equal opportunities for all, and meritocracy, with the best man or woman for the job, especially as leaders in government”. It is all about achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG)[2]. In the context

of development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2008, 2010) also released two reports on the creative economy. In the reports, UNCTAD identifies artistic, scientific, economic and cultural creativity as the key components of creativity and single out the cultural industries as one of the key concepts. They also recognize among other things that in order to enhance creative capacities and identify creative sectors with greater potential policies need in particular be articulated through cross-cutting and multidisciplinary policies, take into due account the role of intellectual property rights, transcend the arts, business and connectivity and to respond not only to economic needs but also to special demands from local communities (UNCTAD, 2010).

Creative economy

The conclusion that can be drawn from the literature is that there is no clearly defined framework and therefore we need to construct a framework on the basis that the creative economy is an aspect of the post-industrial age. It is an integral part of the knowledge economy. The main actor in this emerging style of economic organization is the creative class. The following factors are identified as contributing to the rise of the creative class in different sectors:

- *Talent*. It is a personal gift that cannot be owned by corporations.
- *Technological infrastructure*. The availability of internet connectivity and other ICT infrastructure and services. But this also implies the presence of traditional infrastructure such as airports, harbours and seaports.
- *Tolerance of people*. Tolerance is a way of ensuring that the right of people to be different and to be included and not to be ignored or excluded is respected.
- *The level of education of the people*. The knowledge economy becomes feasible if 50 percent of the working population has a higher education background (HOOP, 2004).
- *The development of real estate*. This is not only about price but also about the availability of (old and historic) buildings. “Where are the places where you can actually have money left over after rent, taxes and other costs?” (Gertner, 2004).
- *Institutional framework*. The protection of property rights and intellectual property rights is especially important:

To keep the creative economy growing, governments will have to strike a delicate balance: enforce patents, copyright, trademarks and non-competitive clauses to preserve incentives to create, but not so much that it suppresses competition (Coy, 2000).

- *(Re-)Distribution of income*. This is part of the institutional framework. Together with education, this is the main strategy in the fight against poverty, and the reduction of poverty will in turn lead to stronger social cohesion. A community with a just distribution of income is a condition for further development (Maris, 2005; Kuan Yew, 2000).
- *Meritocracy*. Appointing people based on their talents and capabilities (Kuan Yew, 2000).

The sectors of the creative economy that transfer knowledge between them are:

- Arts.
- Tourism.

- International financial services.
- Science.
- Higher education.
- Sports.
- Information and communication technology.

The dynamics of the creative economy are focused on the creation of business clusters based on geographical and transsectoral networks and transsectoral innovation. Sectoral clusters do not provide for the necessary cross-fertilization of ideas.

Finally, it is helpful to focus on the question of how communities can attract growth. Some will pursue what we could call a “seed” strategy: try to attract and nurse young talent in the hope that they will eventually stay, work, and make lots of money. Typical approaches will here be to establish world-leading universities close to attractive, creative communities. The drivers for success include ensuring the presence of a creative and artistic culture, reasonable immigration regulation, and availability of low cost housing.

The second approach will be the “harvest” strategy, which means to attract existing companies and people who already have money and large incomes. The key factors here include economic and legal stability, education opportunities for children, low crime, low tax and depth of financial services in particular appealing to wealthy.

Of course each one of these two models can lead to the other (Tvede, 2010, pp. 397-9). Both models strive to create an informational city. The informational city is about the different ways in which design and architecture interfaces with digital and analogue technologies and how we might begin to address information networks for the twenty-first century (Castells, 1989).

Research problem

Small Island Developing States (SIDS):

[. . .] are small island and low-lying coastal countries that share similar sustainable development challenges, including small population, lack of resources, remoteness, susceptibility to natural disasters, excessive dependence on international trade and vulnerability to global developments. In addition, they suffer from lack of economies of scale, high transportation and communication costs, and costly public administration and infrastructure (www.sidsnet.org/2.html, accessed 30 October 2010).

They are three clusters: Caribbean, Pacific and AIMS. The Caribbean cluster is the biggest, consisting of 23 members. The crucial question is whether the knowledge economy or the creative economy is a viable option for the SIDS.

Curaçao

Curaçao, with its 444 square kilometres, since 10 October 2010 an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, is inhabited by approximately 142,180 inhabitants of over 40 nationalities. It has three official languages: Dutch, Papiamentu and English. The Dutch Kingdom is currently made up of The Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten. Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten are Dutch overseas self-governing countries in the Caribbean. Defence and foreign affairs are Kingdom responsibilities, while the people hold Dutch nationality and citizenship and have full mobility to The Netherlands. Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius have become a sort of Dutch municipality.

Curaçao is part of the Caribbean, an amazing part of the world shaped by influences from European civilization through colonization, which have left a legacy of religion, culture, social structure and infrastructure, languages and dialects, political systems and administrations, in economics, race and ethnicity. This all adds up to the creation of vibrant and challenging Caribbean societies. These societies have a development of their own with a flavour of Dutch, Spanish, French and English legacy. However, they are all extremely creative societies (Duncan, 2007). So many components are available to create the knowledge economy or the Creative Economy.

Curaçao, as a Caribbean society, has passed through several transitions, from the pre-industrial era to the post-industrial era:

- Nomad society.
- Agriculture colonial slave economy.
- Industrial economy.
- Information economy.
- Knowledge economy and creative economy (Covey, 2004, p. 13).

The K-Zone can be the heart of the knowledge economy and the creative economy of Curaçao.

The vision and strategy: UNA2020

Formulating a strategy is like sculpting a statue. According to Michelangelo sculpting is simple: Just remove everything that does not look like the sculpture. So formulating a strategy is no magic. The UNA must be the centre of the knowledge economy of Curaçao. The knowledge economy will be concentrated around the university and will be called the K-Zone. In this zone knowledge workers will come together.

In the 1950s the Government of Curaçao set up a scholarship programme. Nowadays about 450 students leave the island annually to study abroad, mainly at universities in The Netherlands. Of these students only 30 percent return to the island after they graduate. This represents a considerable loss to the creative class, the so-called brain drain. To reduce this drain the UNA was founded in January 1979 as the successor of the School of Law that was founded in the early 70s (Heiligers, 2004). Since the year 2002 the number of students has increased significantly (Table I).

The UNA has six faculties: Faculty of Law, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Social and Economic Science, General Faculty, Faculty of Social, Behavioural Sciences and Medical School. The UNA is based on a unique concept, working with European, American and regional universities, attracting scholars, students and interns to the islands. There are 30 nationalities studying at the UNA. “Students are leading indicators of global talent flows” (Florida, 2007, p. 11). Obtaining European accreditation of the educational programmes in 2010 and 2011 and building new facilities are crucial in the plan to create the K-Zone.

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Students	684	670	767	1,064	1,355	1,677	1,922	2,038	2,104	2,088	2,058

Source: University of the Netherlands Antilles

Table I.
Number of students of the University of the Netherlands Antilles

In recent years Dutch students in higher education have discovered Curaçao as a location for their internship. In the old, decayed part of the historical city, whole blocks of ruins have been reconstructed to house these students and they are attracting artists, cafes and restaurants.

This is in line with the following statement of Gertner (2004):

It's important to understand that even if you aren't looking for a hot new city in which to live – and even if you are over 40 – the 18-to-39 demographic can be crucial to you and to your region's health. A recent census report on the late-1990s migration of young, single, college-educated men and women made the point that they bring to a city large amounts of human capital, which helps increase entrepreneurship and deepen the area's talent pool. The same migration brings people who stimulate development by moving to neglected neighbourhoods and making long-term investments in schools, homes and businesses.

Empirical analysis

The Curaçao K-Zone is already starting slowly to take shape with the arrival of the IFE (<http://ife-curaçao.com/website>) (school for nurses) near the UNA, the presence of a United Telecommunication Services (UTS) (www.uts.an) Training Center and the projection of a new hospital near the UNA. In September 2010, the establishment of a School of Medicine at the UNA was announced and preparations have started. The business plan was presented at the end of 2010. On 10 September 2010, the UNA2020 vision was made public at the opening of the academic year 2010-2011. Before that a Memorandum of Understanding with Carmabi (www.researchstationcarmabi.org/, accessed 30 October 2010) was signed. The UNA also has an understanding with Curaçao Airport Holding (www.ca-holding.com), and, at the other extreme, with Kura Hulanda (www.kurahulanda.com/index.php). The K-Zone stretches from the airport city, including the new housing project of Wechi, to Otrobanda, part of the UNESCO World Heritage site. The K-Zone is a cluster of existing projects that seek to produce synergy by synchronizing efforts by connecting together (Figure 1).

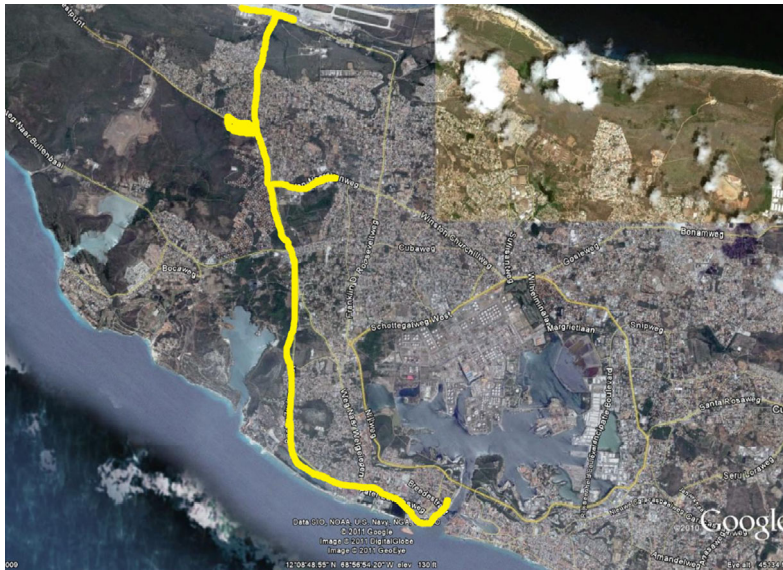
Besides the vision, the binding factors are connectivity and mobility. In this zone people must have the best available internet speed and connectivity on the island and special arrangements for public transportation. To obtain these, state-owned enterprises will have to play a key role as corporate citizens and exhibit corporate social responsibility.

The UNA is at the center of the K-Zone, offering European accredited programs, and taking advantage of the role of Curaçao as the Caribbean integrator and the crossroad of the Americas and Europe.

Five years ago, the UNA adopted the theme of sustainable development as the subject matter for its research agenda. In August 2010 the UNA signed the agreement with the UNESCO to establish the Chair of Caribbean Small Island Development States, competing with all other 22 SIDS in the Caribbean. Also the UNA Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences agreed with government agencies, in 2009, to play an important role in achieving the MDG in The Netherlands Antilles by 2015. This means that the vision of the UNA for 2020 is:

To be a Knowledge Center of Excellence in the area of Sustainable Development of SIDS enabling the achievement of the MDG.

The UNA will be the Knowledge Center where Caribbean SIDS can obtain and contribute to solutions to the challenges facing Caribbean SIDS (www.sidsgg.com). The UNA will attract students and scholars from the region and beyond. It will turn



Source: Google

Figure 1.
The Curaçao Knowledge
Zone

the brain drain into brain gain. A student city will emerge in which students live in Otrobanda and take a shuttle bus to the UNA. Learners from abroad will arrive at the Airport City to attend conferences. But the K-Zone is also about creativity. This was demonstrated in the weekend of 3 September 2010 when Curaçao hosted the first Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival (www.curacaonorthseajazz.com/en/) at the World Trade Center (<http://worldtradecentercuracao.net/>) (Table II).

The implementation

The K-Zone is not a plan: it is a vision and it is an unfolding reality. It was already there. The only thing that needed to be done was to embrace it. Everybody who was involved had to do what they have to do. Creating a vibrant K-Zone is all about alignment. Just as Michelangelo said: just remove everything that does not look like the sculpture. In this case one might say: just connect the dots.

According to Kotter (1996) in order to implement change eight steps had to be taken (Table III).

1. Establishing a sense of urgency

It was easy to create a sense of urgency, given the financial situation and the governance crisis at the UNA. For these reasons, the newly appointed President was confronted with difficult decisions in order to confront the challenges and overcome the crisis. The emergence of Curaçao as a new country added to the momentum.

2. Creating a guiding coalition

A taskforce was developed by several stakeholders over time and an alliance was forged with the Knowledge Platform of Curaçao (<http://sites.google.com/site/curacaoknowledge>).

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UNA	Meteo
Carmabi	Bloedbank
IFE	DEZ
Hospital	NASKO
Airport	GGD
Caribbean University	Extra
Aqualectra	La Prensa
UTS	CPS
Jacob Geltdekker Institute	SKO
Luna Blou	Z86
La Tentashon	Selikor
Bureau Telecommunication & Post	WTC
Dialyse Center	TV11
Cancer Institute	Renaissance
FKP	Hilton
ABC Busbedrijf	Marriott
Museum Kura Hulanda	ACU
Soltuna	ICT Platform
MCB	Banco di Caribe
Giro	CTB/Chata
Hagen Design & Strategy	SVB
Museum Curacao	USONA
Sociaal Kennis Centrum	

Table II.
The partners in the
K-Zone

When the K-Zone was being prepared the campaign for the parliamentary elections of 27 August 2010 were well under way. There was a chance that there would be a change of government coalition. That would mean that political support would have to be secured all over again from the beginning. When a change of government did, in fact, take place that is exactly what happened. Conversations were held with the new Minister of Education and the new Prime Minister at the end of September 2010. On 10 September 2010 the vision and the K-Zone were officially announced at the opening of the new academic year of the UNA. On a 20 October 2010, ten days after the new country Curaçao was born, an official launch was held, attended by the Minister of Social Affairs. During that event the UNA and UTS signed a partnership agreement by which UTS would make the highest internet speed available to the university and integrate its own training facility in the UNA. Also the logo of the K-Zone was presented, and a Facebook account and web site (<http://knowledgezone.webs.com/>) were launched. And on 2 December 2010 a partner networking event was organized by the UNA and hosted by Kura Hulanda at their conference centre to connect the separate visions.

On 12 January 2011, the Dies Natalis, of the UNA, the government changed the name of the UNA in the University of Curaçao. This change creates a challenge for the UNA which is now called to develop a new brand name.

3. Developing a vision and a strategy

The vision was further developed by a taskforce in the UNA after the opening of the academic year. All organizational units within the UNA participated in the taskforce, taking ownership of the vision. In January 2011 the first version of the Strategic Plan UNA2020, covering the period 2011-2015, was presented to the management of the UNA. Also the feasibility study for the School of Medicine of the UNA was approved.

The eight steps

1. Establishing a sense of urgency	Examining the market and competitive realities Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities
2. Creating a guiding coalition	Putting together a group with enough power to lead the change Getting the group to work together as a team
3. Developing a vision and a strategy	Creating a vision to help direct the change effort Developing strategies for achieving the vision
4. Communicating the change vision	Using every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies constantly Having the guiding coalition role model the behaviour expected of employees
5. Empowering broad-based action	Getting rid of obstacles Changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision Encouraging risk taking and non-traditional ideas, activities, and action
6. Generating short-term wins	Planning for visible improvements in performance, or “wins” Creating those wins Visibly recognizing and rewarding people who made wins possible
7. Consolidating gain and producing more change	Using increased credibility to change all systems, structures, and policies that do not fit together and do not fit the transformation vision Hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture	Creating better performance through customer – and productivity-oriented behaviour, more and better leadership, and more effective management Articulating the connections between new behaviour and organizational success Developing means to ensure leadership development and succession

Table III.

The eight-stage process of creating major change

Source: Kotter (1996, p. 21)

4. Communicating the change vision

The vision was publically launched on 10 September 2010 at the opening of the academic year of the UNA. After that many articles were published in local media and several talk shows were visited to disseminate the vision. A logo was made and all partners placed this on their doors near their own logo. The logo was also used to brand the K-Zone internationally.

In November the airport announced space travel (www.space-travel.com/reports/KLM_Announces_Suborbital_Flight_Relationship_With_Space_Experience_Curacao_999.html; <http://knowledge-zone.com/>) globally. The K-Zone tried to connect its brand with this project.

5. Empowering broad-based action

The UNA taskforce took over the implementation of the vision within the university. The partners embraced the concept and continued to develop their projects as part of the K-Zone. On 2 December 2010 a conference was convened to synchronize these efforts. The conference was also visited by the Dutch TNO (www.tno.nl/), at their on request. The mission of the TNO is to connect people and knowledge to create innovations that boost

the sustainable competitive strength of industry and the well-being of society. A delegation of TNO was visiting the island and asked to be invited to attend the conference after they heard of it through the grapevine. They introduced the concept of trans-sector innovation and offered partnership to assist in developing the K-Zone. Their proposal was accepted.

6. Generating short-term wins

Quick wins were being achieved even before the launch of the vision, as with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. The biggest quick wins were the internet connection and the signing of the agreement with UNESCO to establish the professorship. From 26 to 28 November 2010, the UNA participated in a UNESCO workshop on Education for Sustainable Development in Jamaica University of the West Indies and presented the K-Zone to the region. A few weeks later the project was presented in Guadeloupe at the University of the French Antilles and Guyana. From that point on, strenuous activity was undertaken to promote the K-Zone brand through the media.

In March 2011 the UNESCO Chair Caribbean Small Island States was launched, by hosting its first international conference. This was attended by 85 scientists from 15 countries. In March 2011 international workshop on restoration of monuments was hosted. Another event was the visit of the Mayor of Rotterdam visiting the K-Zone and accepting to become a partner. Rotterdam is the home city of 22.000 Curaçao born people, among which many students.

7. Consolidating gains and producing more change

Consolidating gains and producing more change and anchoring new approaches in the culture are the biggest challenge ahead. This challenge has become an even bigger issue with the arrival of a new completely new Board of Supervision of the University.

Conclusions

The plan for the creation of a K-Zone in Curaçao, called "UNA 2020", indicate that K-Zones can be created provided that there is a clear and shared vision, leadership and alliances that create synergy. The said plan was started under the aegis of the President and Board of Supervisors of the University of the Netherlands Antilles. It was further supported by the major stakeholders in the field and numerous alliances were formed, such as with the nearby Carmabi Research Institute and the neighbouring school for nurses. The latter opened a new school building within the designated zone. Furthermore, a campaign was started to construct a new hospital that was planned for the area neighbouring the university and to start a school of medicine. A major breakthrough occurred when the local telecom provider, UTS, decided to provide the university with dedicated internet connections that were capable of the highest speed available on the island.

To briefly resume, it can be said that in less than a year from the beginning of the plan for the creation of a K-Zone in Curaçao, some considerable progress has been made. Moreover, it makes it probable that the theoretical framework outlined in this paper is useful for the understanding of the creative economy of small Caribbean islands and perhaps even islands facing similar but not identical challenges elsewhere. At this stage, it has materialised that the plan for a K-Zone in Curaçao provides a useful example for how change can be brought to the economies of small Caribbean islands.

This article covers only the first stages of developing a K-Zone in Curaçao. Creating a coalition of stakeholders and consensus is a big part of it. It is important to stimulate

and cross sectional innovations. Also a more empirical study is needed to advance further insight how K-Zones develop.

Notes

1. This is what I call the prelude of the Wisdom Economy (Covey, 2004). The knowledge economy will present societies with great dilemmas, like sustainable development and poverty, that must be resolved with wisdom. Wisdom occurs when people develop both character and competence. Character is integrity, maturity and the abundance mentality. Competence is about technical competence, conceptual knowledge and interdependence (Covey, 2004, pp. 149-51).
2. The eight MDGs break down into 21 quantifiable targets that are measured by 60 indicators:
 - Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
 - Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education.
 - Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
 - Goal 4. Reduce child mortality.
 - Goal 5. Improve maternal health.
 - Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
 - Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
 - Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development.

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