

Why do so many projects in which technology transfer is involved, fail? This chapter analyzes this problem and offers an alternative for well-intended but unreflected ways of dealing with technology transfer. The authors offer a comprehensive approach, taking into account the needs of the receiving society and the sociocultural context in which the technology should be embedded. Many examples, positive and negative, are mentioned from which such a methodology should learn and which in turn illuminate the methodology.

The challenge consists in finding the right fit between technology and social needs, technology and social environment, and in addition to get the right management capacities and systems in place. This results in a comprehensive model of technology transfer. Its application requires cooperation between engineers and sociocultural researchers and takes the involvement of a diversity of stakeholders.

Topics that are addressed include:

1. 1.  
Which products and technologies suit the needs of the local society?
2. 2.  
Which redesign do technologies need to suit a specific local context? How could institutions of higher education coordinate their efforts in order to find/invent/design technological products that suit local contexts?
3. 3.  
What are the real needs and sociocultural requirements of the local context? People's participation and sociocultural research supported by NGOs and other stakeholders should provide the answer. Deep interviews, questionnaires, pilot projects, etc., may be part of this type of research.
4. 4.  
Feasibility study: what does it take to run a technology – and is this a feasible option or can a business case be made out of it?
5. 5.  
What skills are required for the production of contextualized technologies?
6. 6.  
Capacities and cultural characteristics: along with business skills, what will be the characteristics of the business culture and how can they be trained?
7. 7.

What intercultural learning or training processes need to be in place to make the technology transfer successful? How can a viable equilibrium be created between traditional values and a modern business culture, or within a project?

8. 8.

How can diffusion of this technology along with skills, capacities, learning processes, be realized?

The chapter analyzes the historic origin of various value systems and describes tools to analyze these differences. The value systems and ways of life that have emerged in history can be considered as a collection of repertoires of dealing with each other and with technology. Four types of such repertoires are distinguished in relation to the perspectives of time (past and future) and space (inside and outside). Different cultures cultivated a different set of such values. In the era of globalization these repertoires become a common stock for all members of world society. This approach opens the field for a deliberate trade-off and choice depending on time and situation between so-called traditional and so-called modern values. Sometimes training will be necessary in those human qualities, which may help at some time to speed up the functioning of the business or at another time slow down the rhythm in order to gain time for mutual understanding during a meeting. Sometimes collectivism and solidarity may be necessary, and at other times individual judgment and choice, etc. Successful technology transfer may depend on the right mix and equilibrium of such human qualities and values.