Knowledge translation in international public health NGOs

By

Catherine Grace Malla
BSc. (Hons), MIPH, Grad Dip. Remote Health Mgt

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Abstract

This thesis explored how knowledge translation occurs within international non-government organisations (INGOs). The development work of INGOs relies on multiple knowledges, ranging from local to global, and from highly technical to tacit and contextual. Knowledge in the international development sector is not a neutral concept. It is bound up with the hierarchies of development and debates around 'whose knowledge counts'. INGOs, as key actors in the sector, need to navigate these complexities and are, therefore, important sites for exploring knowledge translation in development.

This research set out to examine the dynamics of knowledge translation in a single public health-focused INGO with a head office in Australia and country offices around the globe. It took the form of a qualitative, in-depth case study including 24 interviews with country office staff and technical advisors, across nine countries. The research explored what types of knowledge were valued within the INGO and how these knowledges were used, with a focus on the details of the 'work' of knowledge translation. It examined the organisational and broader factors that influence this work, and considered how knowledge translation processes may be improved within the INGO.

The findings revealed that country office staff play a crucial role as 'middle figures' in the knowledge translation work of the INGO, working at the boundaries of different knowledge cultures, such as between in-country partners and head office. In this role, they conduct two specific, interlinked, forms of knowledge translation work. First, they contribute to the merging of heterogenous knowledges, transforming them into something that can be effectively utilised for practice. Secondly, they conduct vital social and relational work at these knowledge boundaries. Importantly, both components of this knowledge translation work were crucial to the INGO's ability to access and use local, contextual knowledge, a key element of adaptive development practice.

However, it emerged that this work was largely unseen and under-valued within the broader INGO. The nature of this work, particularly its social and relational elements, meant it did not fit into a rationalised model of work, and was therefore easily overlooked. This supports previous research showing the invisibility of the work of local staff within INGOs. This research also found that managerialism within the INGO stifled and complicated knowledge translation work at boundaries, and eroded the social and relational elements of this work. There was tension between a 'development' and a 'corporate' mindset amongst staff, with the latter further contributing to the invisibility of the knowledge translation work of country office staff.

Finally, this research found that staff at various levels of the INGO were searching for better ways to facilitate knowledge across boundaries. They desired knowledge translation approaches that are social and relational, counter the managerialist mindset, and draw on participatory and decolonising approaches.

This research contributes to better understandings of the complex and varied work of local staff of INGOs, and provides deeper insights into how the work of knowledge translation is conducted. It adds to the current literature around managerialism in the international development sector, with a focus on the ways in which knowledge translation is affected. This research has the potential to inform guidance for INGOs on their knowledge to action practice.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis:

1. Does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and

2. To the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: CMalla. Catherine Malla

ORCID Reference: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2324-5655

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The effective use of knowledge to influence practice and policy is well recognised as a key factor in improving health and development (Davies et al., 2015, Welch et al., 2009, Ferreira, 2009). The setting for this thesis is the world of international development, which has been described as a "knowledge-intensive sector", one which relies heavily on a wide range of different types of knowledge in order to carry out the practice of development (Ferguson et al., 2010, p.1807, Powell and Cummings, 2019). However, the relationship between knowledge and international development is not necessarily straight-forward. Many important questions continue to be asked in the sector, including: What does the effective use of knowledge mean? What and whose knowledge counts? What influences how knowledge work can be conducted? These questions frame many of the contemporary debates around knowledge in the international development sector. This thesis contributes to these debates by focussing on a key player within the sector, the international non-government organisation (INGO). It presents an in-depth single case study that examines what types of knowledge are valued in INGOs, how this knowledge is used, and what organisational and broader contextual factors influence knowledge processes. I use the concept of knowledge translation to attempt to disentangle some of the intricacies of knowledge use in this setting. The purpose of knowledge translation is to "narrow the perceived gap between knowledge and practice" through enabling the use of appropriate evidence to develop interventions for practice and to influence policy (Salter and Kothari, 2016, p.1, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2016). Through an exploration of the dynamics of knowledge translation in one INGO, this research aims to contribute to better understandings of how knowledge translation works in the international development sector.

This chapter introduces the thesis by providing a background to the field of knowledge in international development and the roles that INGOs play. I introduce my research setting, the case study INGO, and then define how I am applying the term knowledge translation in the context of this research. Finally, I present my research questions, and outline the structure of this thesis.

1.1: Knowledge and international development

This thesis builds on the history and critiques of knowledge in international development[1]. International development as a concept is difficult to define simply (Lewis et al., 2021). On one level it refers to intentional efforts by development professionals to guide positive change in society through improving health, and reducing poverty and inequity (Lewis et al., 2021, Powell and Cummings, 2019, Rosenkranz, 2011). It is also used as an overarching term to describe the system of organisations involved in the practice and research of development, ranging from small networks to large global organisations (Green, 2012, Horner, 2020). Part of the reason that international development is difficult to define is that there are various and changing understandings of development, such as those that focus on economic development of 'poor' countries, and those that focus on global sustainable development in all countries (Horner, 2020, Lewis et al., 2021, Powell and Cummings, 2019).

These changing perceptions and debates are also important when thinking about knowledge in the sector. Knowledge in many forms is crucial for the functioning of international development because of the nature of the challenges facing the sector, and the requirement to provide contextualised responses to development issues (Ferguson et al., 2010, King et al., 2016, Powell and Cummings, 2019). An intersection of various types of knowledge is needed to do this, knowledge from a wide range of stakeholders that ranges from local, contextual knowledge to highly specialised technical knowledge (Ferguson et al., 2010). This reliance on knowledge and its processes in order to 'do development' has led the sector to be considered a knowledge-intensive environment or knowledge industry (Ferguson, 2016, Lannon and Walsh, 2020, Laszlo and Laszlo, 2002, Powell, 2006).

International development encompasses multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to primary stakeholders[2], implementing partners, donors, decision-makers, researchers, governments, NGOs,

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[1] **Note on terminology 1:** The term 'international development' is sometimes shortened to 'development', and I use both terms interchangeably throughout this thesis. This sector is characterised by constant change, and some now regard this terminology as reflective of the inherent power differentials in the sector, and have suggested alternatives (Horner, 2020, Powell and Cummings, 2019). However, I use these terms throughout this thesis as they are still widely used, and the case study organisation refers to itself using this term.

[2] **Note on terminology 2:** The term 'primary stakeholder' is used in place of the term 'beneficiaries', which until recently was commonly used to describe the "individuals and communities that INGOs aim to represent and serve" (Crack, 2013,

and INGOs. These stakeholders may all have different sets of truths about the nature of knowledge, and hold and value different forms of knowledge, depending on their perspective or their particular role in the sector. These variations in the way that different stakeholders form beliefs and hold different ways and forms of knowing is important to the way knowledge is used, and reflects different epistemologies of development (Malavisi, 2019, Jacobson, 2007). Such heterogenous forms of knowledge are integral to the practice and shaping of development and have been described as 'multiple knowledges' (Brown, 2010, Ferguson, 2016).

Critiques of knowledge in development revolve around the link between power and knowledge, and reflect broader patterns within the sector (Chambers, 2014b, Mawdsley et al., 2002). Knowledge is not a neutral concept, and within international development, power and hierarchy can determine which types of knowledge are deemed more important and therefore more visible than others, and how knowledge is able to be accessed and produced (Mawdsley et al., 2002, Narayanaswamy, 2017, Chambers, 2014b). In this way, knowledge is "mutually constituted" with power (Narayanaswamy, 2013, p.7, Davies et al., 2008).

My research focuses on one microcosm of knowledge within development, the INGO. The macro ideas that shape development are often displayed at the INGO level (Lewis et al., 2021, Mosse, 2011). Thus, INGOs are often the vehicle through which ideas about knowledge flow, and they become settings where much of the complexity around knowledge is navigated (King et al., 2016). Development organisations, including INGOs, are a defining feature of the international development system, and exist to "achieve whatever are currently defined as international development objectives" (Green, 2012, p.49). The number, size, diversity and influence of INGOs has been steadily increasing since the 1980s, and many are now large, multi-faceted organisations that work across the globe (Bush and Hadden, 2019, Cochrane and Davis, 2020, Iannacone, 2021, Lawrence, 2018, Madon, 1999).

INGOs are positioned in a complex space within the international development context. They navigate partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders at the local and global level, and are accountable to both local communities and donors (Iannacone, 2021, Madon, 1999). Within individual INGOs themselves there are a variety of internal stakeholders, including staff spread across the globe, in head quarter offices and regional or in-country offices (Lawrence, 2018). In this

p.810). This is because the term 'beneficiaries' is "encoded with norms that undermine the rights of people and communities to expect that INGOs should be accountable to them" (Crack, 2013, p.809).

way, “programmes and projects are managed across often huge cultural spaces” (Jackson, 2011, p.208) and are simultaneously engaged with the local and the global (Johnstone, 2003). Development is a rapidly changing sector and working within it requires embracing constant change (Lewis, 2021). As one of the main players responsible for implementing development policy and practice, INGOs are expected to keep up with trends in development while working in complex and challenging environments (Hovland, 2003, Lawrence, 2018, Madon, 1999). Additionally, there are often inherent hierarchical structures within and between organisations that must be navigated (Lawrence, 2018, Lewis et al., 2021).

INGOs are holders of a diversity of knowledge and have “carved a reputation for themselves as experts in many areas” (King et al., 2016, p.18, Johnstone, 2003). The unique context under which they work affects the types of knowledge that are important to INGOs, as well as how they interact in a complex system to produce, access and use this knowledge. To stay relevant and viable, INGOs need to adapt in relation to shifts and trends in the global environment, and therefore the way that they have “conceptualised, created, and employed different forms of knowledge and evidence” is influenced by these trends (King et al., 2016, p.19).

1.2: The research setting

This research takes the form of a single in-depth case study of a public health-focused INGO. This INGO has headquarters in Australia, regional offices in four other countries, and country offices in 14 countries. I chose a single in-depth case study design to enable a deep exploration and understanding about the knowledge processes within this real-world setting. The case was my own workplace at the time. I worked in a role where supporting knowledge translation processes turned out to be an important part of my role (although not necessarily specified in the job description). I noticed how certain types of knowledge were being accessed and used, and began to see gaps and opportunities for knowledge translation within the organisation. I realised that there was a number of knowledge processes occurring that Hardwick et al. (2015) describes as ‘hidden’ knowledge processes. In particular, I became aware that there was a separate series of processes around knowledge that occurred between country offices and their own local in-country partners, which, without knowing the details, I understood to be crucial to the functioning of the INGO. These observations pushed me in the direction of researching knowledge translation in my workplace.

This thesis forms part of a professional doctorate in public health, which focuses on research that contributes to a public health policy, management or practice setting, with emphasis on practical contributions (Flinders University, 2021). Therefore, my motivation, as well as contributing to knowledge in the fields of knowledge translation and international development, was also to contribute in a positive and solution-focused way to my own workplace.

At the time this research was conducted, the structure of the case study INGO consisted of several layers, including head office (in Australia), regional offices (South Asia/Middle East, Africa, East Asia, Australasia) and country offices (in 14 countries). In most cases, the country offices carried out programming and advocacy work through in-county implementing partners, who were usually government agencies or local NGOs. Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of this structure.

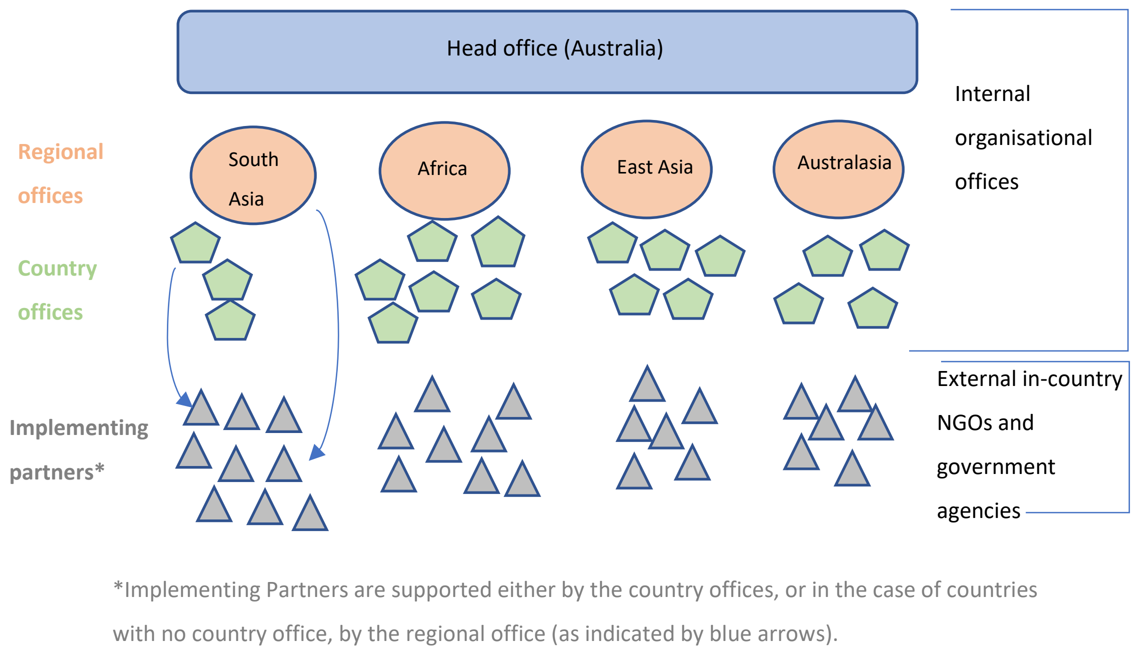

Figure 1: *Diagrammatic representation of the different levels within the case study INGO (number of country offices and implementing partners not accurate)*

My key interest was in investigating the knowledge translation processes that occurred between the various layers of the INGO, such as between country offices and implementing partners, and country offices, regional offices and head office. I focused exclusively on programming and advocacy-related knowledge. Accordingly, I narrowed the focus of my research to the experiences of country office staff and, to a lesser extent, technical advisors from head office. Country office staff, in general, are an under-researched group within the international development sector, particularly in relation to knowledge translation (Kamruzzaman, 2017).

1.3: Concepts of knowledge and knowledge translation

An important question for a study about knowledge in an INGO is *what* is seen and valued as knowledge. In the context of this research, I use a very broad definition of knowledge which encompasses all types of knowledge that are used for programming and advocacy within INGOs. I take the paradigmatic approach that knowledge is socially constructed and that there are multiple truths, as opposed to a positivist view of knowledge. Therefore, this study is built on a 'practice-based' definition of knowledge (Ferguson, 2016) whereby "people's knowledge is highly embedded in their perspectives on reality, rather than an objectively knowable 'truth'" and it is impossible to separate knowledge from human activity (Ferguson, 2016, p.6).

I use the concept of knowledge translation as a lens through which to examine knowledge use within the case study INGO. Knowledge translation can be simply described as the utilisation of knowledge for decision-making and action (Dagenais et al., 2015), although throughout the thesis I introduce more detailed definitions. Knowledge translation is regarded as a complex, interactive process, heavily dependent on context (Davies et al., 2008, Greenhalgh and Wieringa, 2011, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2012). My research is based on the premise that knowledge translation involves complex social processes, is non-linear, and influenced by both the nature of knowledge and the context under which these processes occur (Kitson et al., 2008, Kothari et al., 2011, Reimer-Kirkham et al., 2009). Although there is a large body of research concerned with knowledge translation in public health (Armstrong et al., 2006, Liverani et al., 2013, Estabrooks et al., 2006, Siron et al., 2015), much of it has focused on technical and organisational processes with a large focus on the route from research to policy (Jacobson, 2007, Davies et al., 2008, Kitson et al., 2008). Much less research has focused on the contextual factors within communities and organisations that influence these processes (Jacobson, 2007, Dagenais et al., 2009, Kothari and Armstrong, 2011), or the varied and sometimes contentious nature of knowledge that is acknowledged in the international development sector (King et al., 2016, Powell, 2006). This research, therefore, will focus on the social and contextual factors that underpin how knowledge translation processes occur, and how these interlink with the nature of knowledge itself, within the context of INGOs. It is hoped that this research will contribute to better understandings of how knowledge translation processes may be facilitated through and by INGOs, ultimately contributing to improved practice and policy.

1.4: Research questions

This research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the types of knowledge that are valued by staff within a single INGO, how this knowledge is used, and how context and social factors influence these processes. From my own experience working across different teams within the INGO, I was aware that there was likely to be differences in the ways that these research questions would be answered by different types of staff within the INGO. It was also likely that, due to their roles in the INGO, staff would play different roles in knowledge translation processes and be affected by contextual factors in different ways. For this reason, early on, I planned to pay attention to these differences by type of staff.

The overall research question was:

How does knowledge translation occur in a public health INGO?

To make this question manageable and answerable, I developed a series of four sub-questions, as follows:

1. *What knowledge is important at different levels of the INGO, and what are the characteristics of this knowledge?*
   This question is derived from the premise that international development practice relies on multiple knowledges and that different stakeholders, including within the one organisation, quite possibly place different values on different types of knowledge. I was interested in finding out how these different types of knowledge were described and valued, and what characteristics of this knowledge were important for staff in terms of accessing and using it.

2. *What are the existing knowledge translation processes of the INGO, including between different stakeholders across the global structure?*
   This question examines who is carrying out knowledge translation work within the INGO, and what this this work looks like in practice. I was aware that there may be some hidden processes of knowledge translation occurring within the INGO, and this question extends to examining why some of this work may appear to be hidden.

3. *What are the contextual factors that influence knowledge translation at different levels of the INGO?*
   This question explores the question of context, both organisational and beyond. I was interested in finding out whether there were common barriers and facilitators to knowledge

translation activities, whether these affected different staff or different knowledge processes differently, and whether they related to the broader influences on knowledge processes reflected in the development literature.

4. *What would it take to improve knowledge translation processes within the INGO?*
   The final research question is solution-focused and invites staff to examine the current knowledge translation practices of the INGO and provide their opinion as to what may improve them.

1.5: Thesis structure

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature on knowledge translation in low- and middle-income countries. It takes the form of a critical interpretive synthesis, and appears exactly as it was published in *Global Health Research and Policy* in 2018 (Malla et al., 2018). The themes arising from this review assisted me in defining a second, more focused literature review, and in informing the research design and analysis.

Chapter 3 is a narrative review which builds on the literature review in Chapter 2. This review focuses on factors that affect the use of knowledge within the international development sector, with a specific focus on INGOs.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology behind my chosen research approach, and the methods undertaken within this research project.

Chapter 5 is the first of two findings and discussion chapters. It is an examination of the 'work' of knowledge translation within the case study INGO, with a focus on the role of country office staff. It examines the types of knowledge that are valued within the INGO, and why, and describes two aspects of knowledge translation work of country office staff – the merging of heterogeneous knowledges, and the social and relational work with key stakeholders.

Chapter 6 is the second findings and discussion chapter. It explores some of the contextual factors that influence how knowledge translation work is conducted within the INGO, with a focus on the effects of managerialism. Additionally, this chapter presents some of the approaches to knowledge management favoured by staff.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions to this thesis, including implications and considerations for practice.

Chapter 2: Knowledge translation for public health in low- and middle-income countries: a critical interpretive synthesis

The literature review in this chapter was published in the journal *Global Health Research and Policy* in 2018 (Malla et al., 2018). It takes the form of a critical interpretive synthesis, after Dixon-Woods et al. (2006), and is a broad review of the literature on knowledge translation in low- and middle-income countries. This review was undertaken early in my candidature (2016) as part of the Doctor of Public Health coursework, in order to develop my research proposal, and therefore examines literature from the years 2000-2016. This is an exploratory literature review, the purpose of which was to inform a broad understanding of the field before deciding in which direction to narrow the focus of my research. The subsequent literature review, in Chapter 3, uses the themes of this literature review to focus on a much narrower field of literature, that is, knowledge translation within INGOs.

There are two additional authors of this literature review. Paul Aylward and Paul Ward provided original guidance on conducting a critical interpretive synthesis and suggestions as to the design of the review, and revised drafts for intellectual content. However, the topic was conceived by myself, and I alone extracted and analysed the data and drafted the paper, overall completing approximately 95% of the work. The publication is contained within Sections 2.1 through 2.6 of this chapter and was not modified for this thesis[3]. The summary of this chapter (Section 2.7) was not part of the publication.

2.1: Abstract

Background: Effective knowledge translation allows the optimisation of access to and utilisation of research knowledge in order to inform and enhance public health policy and practice. In low- and middle-income countries, there are substantial complexities that affect the way in which research can be utilised for public health action. This review attempts to draw out concepts in the literature that contribute to defining some of the complexities and contextual factors that influence knowledge translation for public health in low- and middle-income countries.

Methods: A critical interpretive synthesis was undertaken, a method of analysis which allows a critical review of a wide range of heterogeneous evidence, through incorporating systematic review

[3] Exceptions were adjustment to the figure number to align with other figures within this thesis, and a link to the publication in place of a link to the Additional Files referred to in the publication. I retained the acronyms used in the original publication, including those for knowledge translation (KT) and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), although I do not use these acronyms in the remainder of the thesis.

methods with qualitative enquiry techniques. A search for peer-reviewed articles published between 2000 and 2016 on the topic of knowledge translation for public health in low- and middle-income countries was carried out, and 85 articles were reviewed and analysed using this method.

Results: Four main concepts were identified: 1) tension between 'global' and 'local' health research, 2) complexities in creating and accessing evidence, 3) contextualising knowledge translation strategies for low- and middle-income countries, and 4) the unique role of non-government organisations in the knowledge translation process.

Conclusion: This method of review has enabled the identification of key concepts that may inform practice or further research in the field of knowledge translation in low- and middle-income countries.

2.2: Background

There is international recognition that accessing and using health research is a vital component of improving health and reducing health inequities (World Health Organization, 2008). However, there are substantial complexities that affect the way in which public health research is utilised for action in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) (McCoy et al., 2004, Sanders et al., 2004). The "unacceptable gap between unprecedented knowledge about diseases and their control, and implementation of that knowledge" described by Sanders et al. (2004, p.758), highlights the need for better utilisation of research evidence, particularly in LMICs where the burden of poor health and healthy inequity is high. Analysing the factors that contribute to this gap may contribute to enabling solutions for better utilisation of research in LMICs (Sanders et al., 2004).

Knowledge Translation (KT) - which goes by a host of different terms (McKibbon et al., 2010, Norton et al., 2016) - describes the process of using evidence to make decisions and create action (Dagenais et al., 2009). A commonly used definition of KT is the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's:

> *A dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically-sound application of knowledge to improve [health] … provide more effective health services and products and strengthen the health care system … within a complex system of interactions between researchers and users.* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2016)

KT provides a mechanism by which the inequities in public health outcomes for LMICs can be reduced (Welch et al., 2009). Research on KT processes can provide an opportunity to examine how KT can better contribute to reducing these global health inequities (Welch et al., 2013).

In the context of public health in LMICs, there are substantial complexities that affect the process of KT. Some of these relate to the realities of living in resource-poor settings, such as low levels of infrastructure and a lack of financial, technical and skilled human resources (Bennett et al., 2015, Ruggeri, 2014). There are also complexities that are borne out of existing structural inequities, such as the historical influence of high-income countries in the field of global health and development, and questions of who and what shape the research agenda, and how this research is used (Bissell et al., 2014, Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Goyet et al., 2015, Redman-MacLaren et al., 2010, Sanders et al., 2004).

The following is a review of the literature on KT for public health practice and policy in LMICs, focusing on the contextual factors that influence the access to and utilisation of research evidence. This review takes the form of a critical interpretive synthesis (CIS) as described by Dixon-Woods et al. (2006) and attempts to draw out themes in the literature that contribute to defining the current state of public health KT in LMICs. It is not intended to be a comprehensive review of what works in KT in LMICs or to describe KT processes in LMICs in detail, nor relate KT in LMICs to existing theories and models of KT, some of which has been carried out elsewhere (Orem et al., 2012, Siron et al., 2015, Hanney et al., 2003). Rather, this review attempts to examine the research on KT processes in LMICs and draw out and analyse some of the complexities and contextual factors that influence KT in this setting.

2.3: Methods

Literature review type

The CIS method of analysis is a review type that incorporates systematic review methods with qualitative enquiry techniques to enable the synthesis of a range of types of evidence. From this analysis, ‘synthetic constructs’ are generated, in order to draw together themes to form new concepts or theories (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006, Moat et al., 2013, Fane et al., 2016). The CIS method was chosen for this review because it allows for the synthesis of a large and diverse body of literature, followed by the development of concepts through an interpretive analysis (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). The literature on KT in LMICs is indeed large and diverse, and prior to the analysis, it was not known what the key concepts would be, rather they were allowed to develop during the synthesis, as per the CIS method (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). The CIS process begins with developing a ‘compass question’ to initially guide the literature search and analysis, and then an iterative process is followed that enables the question to be modified in response to search results (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). The compass question that this review began with was ‘*How is evidence accessed and used by policy-makers and public health practitioners for improving public health in low- and middle-income countries?*’

Search strategy

The search strategy was kept intentionally wide-ranging, adopting two broad search terms: ‘research utilisation’ (and related terms) and ‘LMICs’ (and related terms). Consideration was given to narrowing the search through including the search term ‘public health’, however it was felt that this could potentially omit sources that were public health-related but did not specifically use this term. Despite yielding a high number of source articles, this broad search was adopted to maximise the likelihood of capturing all relevant publications. Additional articles were purposively sampled in order to fill conceptual gaps during the course of analysis (in line with the CIS method) such as general papers on research utilisation/knowledge transfer that would form part of the introduction, discussion and the theoretical basis of the literature review. The entire search strategy can be found in Additional File 1 (see Malla et al., 2018 for access to this file). Databases searched were Medline, PubMed, CINAHL, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Cochrane Library and PsycINFO. The database searches were limited by English language, humans, and between the years 2000 – 2016.

Search results

Table 1 shows the number of articles were retrieved from each electronic database.

Table 1: *Electronic database search results*

Database	Articles retrieved
Medline	3806
PubMED	930
PsycINFO	3145
CINAHL	3211
Cochrane	304
Web of Science	1163
Scopus	944
Google Scholar	240
TOTAL	13,743

A "PRISMA" (Moher et al., 2009) flow diagram (Figure 2) summarises the process of article selection. A total of 13,743 articles were retrieved from the electronic database search, and after removal of duplicates the list numbered 10,610. After reading titles and removal of irrelevant articles, 1,219 remained. Upon further reading of titles and abstracts of articles that were border-line relevant, a further 770 were removed, leaving 449. At this stage, exclusion criteria were applied using title and abstract, and where required, the full article. Developing exclusion criteria at this stage was necessary as the articles displayed such a wide range of setting and contexts for KT, and the number of articles for the review needed to be kept at a manageable size. The exclusion criteria that were developed aimed to ensure that the articles chosen were most relevant to the compass question.

Articles that focused on the following were excluded:

1. Clinical practice rather than broader public health
2. Knowledge translation activities directed at clinicians
3. Knowledge translation activities directed at community project beneficiaries
4. Not strictly related to low- and middle-income countries
5. Suggestions that an innovation/trial should be taken up, rather than an actual process
6. Laboratory/biomedical processes
7. Non-health related issues
8. Translating policy into action

9. Protocol papers

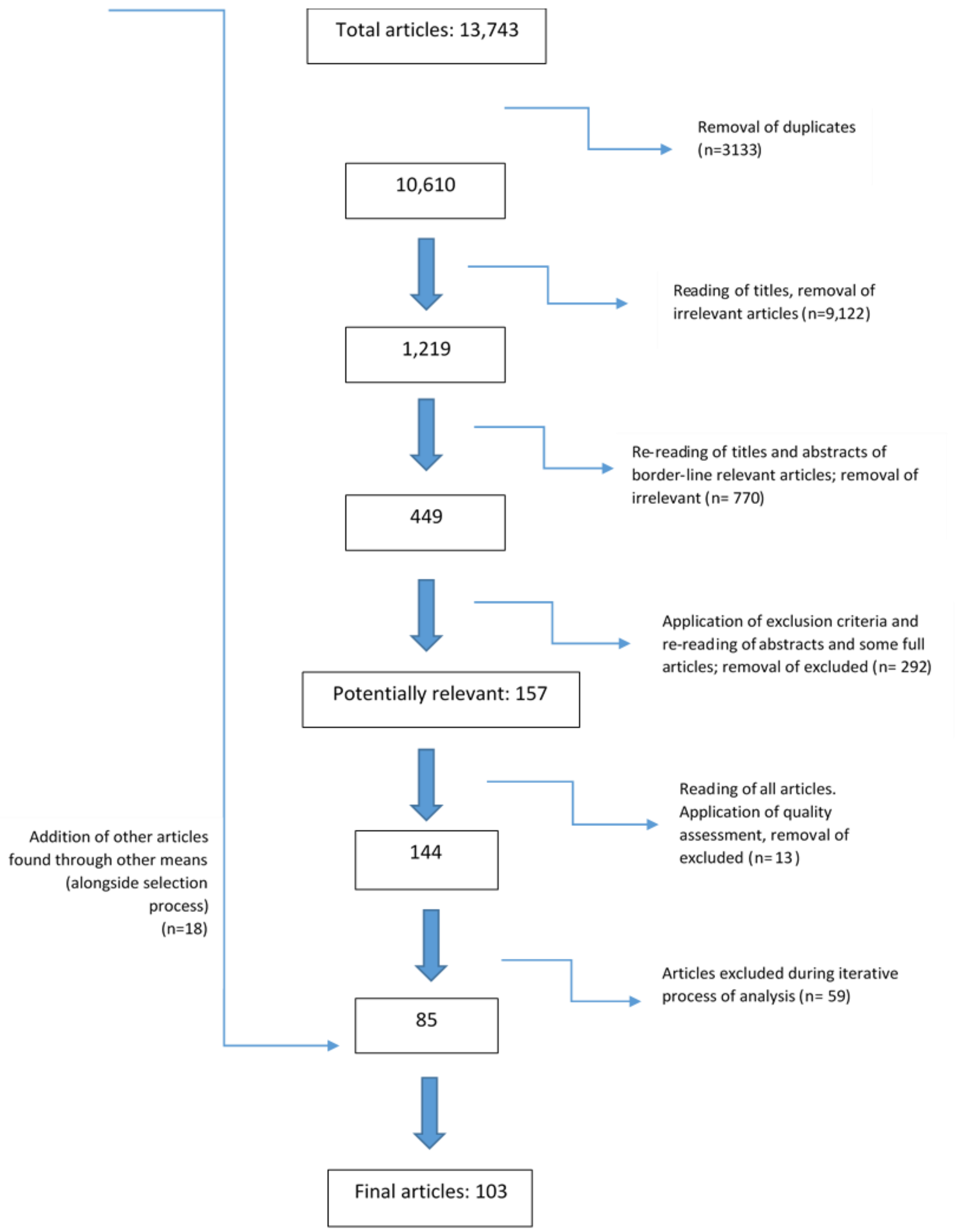

Figure 2: *"PRISMA" diagram outlining process of electronic database and other searching (as per (Moher et al., 2009))*

After applying the exclusion criteria, 157 potentially relevant articles remained which were each critically examined, and details entered into a data extraction table (Additional File 2) (see Malla et al., 2018 for access to this file). The table was developed to capture key concepts from the articles that would allow them to be categorised into themes that could be further developed later into the 'synthetic constructs' required for a CIS. The data extraction table also categorised the articles by type of article, methods and key findings.

At this stage, the articles were also assessed by the first author for quality, utilising a quality assessment tool, drawing on Fane et al. (2016) use of Attree's grading system from A-C (Attree, 2004) whereby an A grading was for primary research or review with high relevance to the compass question, B was primary research or review with less relevance, and C was an opinion/commentary, description of programs, or an article that provided background information only. Thirteen papers were excluded at this point. During the process of the CIS analysis of the remaining papers, additional papers (n=59) were excluded, as it became apparent that they were no longer relevant enough to provide insight into the compass question.

Some articles that were not results of the original search were added during the process of analysis (n=18). These were sourced by scanning the reference lists of the chosen articles for any potentially relevant articles and checking the citations of selected articles using Google Scholar if it was felt that this would provide further insights on a particular concept. Other articles were sourced through Google Scholar in order to fill conceptual gaps.

Types of articles included in the review included primary research (quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods), systematic and scoping reviews, program descriptions and conceptual papers/opinion pieces. Given the large amount of relevant material identified, grey literature was not searched, however specific documents were purposively sourced to capture definitions or the position of a global body such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) (n=4). Table 2 is a summary of the characteristics of the articles, by year and type and method of searching (format modified from Moat et al. (2013)).

As each article was read, details were added into the data extraction table (Additional File 2) (see Malla et al., 2018 for access to this file).

Table 2: Characteristics of articles reviewed

Characteristic		Number	
		Searches	Purposive
Year published	pre- 2000	0	1
	2000-2005	4	4
	2006	2	0
	2007	3	0
	2008	1	1
	2009	5	1
	2010	9	3
	2011	9	3
	2012	9	2
	2013	6	1
	2014	16	1
	2015	18	0
	2016	3	1
	TOTAL	85	18
Article type	Conceptual and opinion/commentary	18	5
	Primary Research:		
	Qualitative	47	2
	Quantitative	4	1
	Mixed methods	4	1
	Reviews	9	5
	Description of program	3	0
	Grey literature	0	4
	TOTAL	85	18

Analysis

This review used a CIS approach, and therefore the analysis was an iterative process, with some papers being excluded and added during the analysis process itself, as described above. The analytic approach of a CIS involves the development of 'synthetic constructs' and then a 'synthesising argument' (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). A 'synthetic construct' interprets and transforms the underlying evidence into a new conceptual form; and then these 'synthetic constructs' are integrated together to form a 'synthesising argument' that interprets the evidence as a whole (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006, Moat et al., 2013).

The data extraction table was used to draw out the key findings in each paper that related to the compass question. Using NVivo, key findings were coded into general themes which were developed during the process of reading the articles, and which numbered 12 at the end of the process.

The groups of key findings coded into each general theme were then re-examined, with the original article consulted again if further clarification was required. Each article within a theme was then re-summarised into one paragraph (some articles had paragraphs in more than one theme), and then using these paragraphs, each theme was summarised into 4-5 key points (using only a few words of a phrase for each key point). All of these key points were written onto one sheet of paper, and from here the synthetic constructs were developed. During the process of writing the synthetic constructs, the synthesising argument was constructed. Additional File 3 (see Malla et al., 2018 for access to this file) shows which articles were aligned with each synthetic concept, as well as additional articles that were purposefully sampled to fill conceptual gaps.

2.4: Results

Four synthetic constructs were developed through the analysis of these articles. These include: 1) the tension between global and local health research, 2) complexities in creating and accessing evidence, 3) contextualising strategies for KT in LMICs, and 4) the unique role of NGOs in the KT process.

Tension between 'global' and 'local' health research

Tension between the concepts of 'global' and 'local' is woven throughout the literature describing KT in LMICs. The distinction is made between 'global' evidence and 'local' evidence – 'global' being research on global level health issues or involving global organisations in defining, funding or carrying out research in LMICs; and 'local' being research that is produced at the national or sub-national level by local agencies in LMICs (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Adrien et al., 2013, Banerji, 2012, Cordero et al., 2008, Frenk and Chen, 2011, Goyet et al., 2015). Burchett et al. (2015) describes a similar distinction made by public health stakeholders in Ghana between 'big' research (tending to be on national or international scale public health issues) and 'small' research (carried out at the local level, including operational research, evaluations or pilot projects, designed and controlled by local programme managers).

There can be a complex relationship between global and local evidence. Global-level evidence brings an international lens to certain issues such as non-communicable diseases and globalisation, as well as potential links to the latest international thinking and resources to carry out high quality research and provide in-country capacity building (Hunter and Fineberg, 2014, Jönsson et al., 2007, Keusch et al., 2010). However, the importance of local evidence in the development of public health programs is being increasingly recognised, as it ensures that local priorities are recognised, and that research agendas are relevant for the country's policy context and are more connected to realities at the country level (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Cordero et al., 2008, Decoster et al., 2012, Hunter and Fineberg, 2014, Jönsson et al., 2007). The literature describes some programs that have not sufficiently taken on board local-level evidence, to their detriment (Banerji, 2012, Goyet et al., 2015, Tomson et al., 2005, Jönsson et al., 2007).

Partnerships between international and local organisations have been established as a way to link the production and application of global evidence with local contextual evidence. Strategies such as employing local researchers, directly funding local institutions, building collaborative networks, funding joint initiatives and building research capacity have been employed within such partnerships (Adrien et al., 2013, Keusch et al., 2010, Rodríguez et al., 2015, Cash-Gibson et al., 2015, de-Graft Aikins et al., 2012). Some of these partnerships have prioritised and facilitated two-way learning where both partners learn and benefit (Keusch et al., 2010, Adrien et al., 2013, Cash-Gibson et al., 2015), challenging the "paradigm of uni-directional problem solving" (Adrien et al., 2013, p.ii54).

However, there is concern that global-local partnerships can be characterised by power imbalances or even exploitation (Banerji, 2012, Orem et al., 2014a, Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Young, 2005). This can mean that research priorities are set by the global partner, resulting in research agendas that have little relevance to local contexts and circumstance, and potential erosion of a country's own research capacity (Cordero et al., 2008, Young, 2005, Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, de-Graft Aikins et al., 2012). Although research partnerships may utilise local researchers or organisations, these can be inequitable relationships, where the local partners are in subordinate positions, on the "peripheries" (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, p.1794, Redman-MacLaren et al., 2010), contributing to "historical inequity in the conduct and access to research" (Redman-MacLaren et al., 2010, p.25).

Sometimes LMICs are under pressure to undertake certain research as a precondition to receiving funding or loans (Orem et al., 2014a, de-Graft Aikins et al., 2012). Cáceres and Mendoza (2009) call for an increase in scrutiny on the growing number of global research collaborations, due to the intricate "political, institutional, economic and cultural variables" (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, p.1792) that are involved in research in LMICs.

'Global' or 'local' status forms part of the assessment of the trustworthiness of evidence by public health decision-makers in LMICs, with policymakers acutely aware of the differences in these types of evidence (Rodríguez et al., 2015, Orem et al., 2012, Burchett et al., 2012, Reddy and Sahay, 2016). For some decision-makers, global research has a lower value due to its perceived lack of relevance (Burchett et al., 2015, Reddy and Sahay, 2016, Hennink and Stephenson, 2005) whereas local research is believed to be able to provide 'hands-on' evidence and hence has higher value (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Decoster et al., 2012, Ensor et al., 2009, Reddy and Sahay, 2016, Rodríguez et al., 2015). On the other hand, local research can sometimes be seen to be of low quality due to the lack of skills of local researchers, or because it doesn't provide the conceptual evidence that global research can sometimes provide (Hennink and Stephenson, 2005). Some stakeholders prefer a mixture of the two where one type of evidence can support the other (Onwujekwe et al., 2015, Burchett et al., 2012, Decoster et al., 2012). Trust is important in valuing different types of research - if the researcher, institution or provider of knowledge can be trusted, the evidence is seen to be of higher value (Albert et al., 2007, Corluka et al., 2015, Decoster et al., 2012, Orem et al., 2014c). Local researchers (those not from international organisations) may be considered trustworthy, depending on their reputation and level of authority (Albert et al., 2007, Reddy and Sahay, 2016), however well-known institutions such as the WHO are considered intrinsically trustworthy in some instances (Burchett et al., 2012, Albert et al., 2007). There is heavy reliance on the trustworthiness of the providers of evidence, as many decision-makers don't have the capacity to critically analyse the research themselves or to be confident in their analysis of a situation (Mijumbi et al., 2014, Reddy and Sahay, 2016). Knowledge brokers can play a key role as providers of evidence, as people or organisations whose role is to facilitate and mediate between researchers and decision-makers, adapting the research to the local context to reduce barriers to understanding between the two (Dagenais et al., 2015, Norton et al., 2016, Waqa et al., 2013).

Two forms of evidence that are highly valued across many decision-making settings are local routine data collection and operational research, both forms of 'small' research. These types of data are seen as particularly useful, and often essential, by local stakeholders for several reasons: their ability to provide local context to policy and practice (Burchett et al., 2015, Brambila et al., 2007, Fabic et al., 2012, Orem et al., 2014c); the fact that they can be collected by local researchers, practitioners and other non-academic figures (Zachariah et al., 2012); and the fact that most of the time the agenda for this data collection was set locally, not at a global level (Burchett et al., 2015).

A wide variety of types of evidence is used to inform policy and practice in LMICs (Hawkes et al., 2015, Hyder et al., 2010, Orem et al., 2014c, Onwujekwe et al., 2015, Burchett et al., 2015), ranging from formal studies and government reports, to “anything that is done to understand a situation” (Burchett et al., 2015, p.22). Evidence may be valued or defined by its “relevance, applicability and generalizability to a specific context” rather than necessarily its quality (Hyder et al., 2010, p.79), and can hold very different meanings depending on the way it is presented, and for which audience (Orem et al., 2014c, Storeng and Béhague, 2014). For example, experience and discretionary judgement was the main source of evidence used in updating essential medicines guidelines in Tanzania, as opposed to scientific evidence such as cost-effectiveness studies (Mori et al., 2014). Similarly, local burden of disease studies were preferred by countries making decisions on vaccines, rather than global data (Burchett et al., 2012). The potential of qualitative research evidence to broaden the evidence base in terms of providing context and explanations for quantitative findings in LMICs is discussed briefly in the literature (Bosi and Gastaldo, 2011, Burchett et al., 2015).

The country in which research is conducted can have an impact on its interpretation and dissemination possibilities. Research produced from low-income countries is less likely to be published than that by a researcher from a high-income country, reducing its dissemination potential (Harris et al., 2015, Winnik et al., 2013, Uthman et al., 2015).

Complexities in creating and accessing evidence

Conducting public health research in some LMICs is limited by weak resource infrastructure and limited institutional capacity. These limitations include little or no government investment for research, low levels of training and skills for researchers, poor academic environments where researchers may work in isolation or combine research with clinical caseloads, limited or no peer review systems, and limited access to research tools such as analysis software (Frenk and Chen, 2011, Miranda and Zaman, 2010, Young, 2005, Hennink and Stephenson, 2005, Bennett et al., 2015). These limitations contribute to the lack of a research culture sometimes found in LMICs, leaving countries open to “research imperialism” (Bissell et al., 2014, S4) where external agendas influence research (Bissell et al., 2014, Banerji, 2012, Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Decoster et al., 2012, Redman-MacLaren et al., 2010). They can also lead to limited incentives to carry out research that is policy-related (Hawkes et al., 2015) or to incorporate KT as part of the research process (Valinejadi et al., 2016, Ssengooba et al., 2011). Reluctance of local researchers to share data or research results can arise, due to uncertainties about who might be requesting data and why, concerns about data being misrepresented, and the fear of someone else publishing results without permission or appropriately acknowledging the original researcher (Hate et al., 2015, Jao et al., 2015, Uthman et al., 2015). Limited understanding of 'Western' approaches to research can also affect applications for research funding, resulting in a possible unfair advantage to researchers from high income countries (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Burchett et al., 2015). These patterns highlight the "balance of prevailing global power, perspectives and interests" (McCoy et al., 2004, p.1631) in accessing and utilising research evidence.

A globally-defined research agenda has meant that important areas of research have not been necessarily prioritised in LMICs (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009), such as research on the social determinants of health (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Miranda and Zaman, 2010, Borde et al., 2014), non-communicable diseases, urbanisation and health inequities (Kendall and Langer, 2015), however this is changing rapidly (English and Pourbohloul, 2017). Health systems research, another neglected area of public health research in LMICs (El-Jardali et al., 2010), has tended not to be a priority of 'big' research, but can be beyond the scope of 'small' research (D'Souza and Sadana, 2006, Goyet et al., 2015, Jönsson et al., 2007, Burchett et al., 2015).

In some LMICs large amounts of data are collected in the form of national health surveys, program monitoring data and operational research (Fabic et al., 2012, Bissell et al., 2014, Brambila et al., 2007, Zachariah et al., 2014), creating a reservoir of potential 'valuable' local evidence for decision-making. However, the use of this data is limited by low levels of capacity to analyse it for dissemination for policy and practice (Hawkes et al., 2015, Bissell et al., 2014, Quaglio et al., 2014) and issues of data quality (Hawkes et al., 2015, Hennink and Stephenson, 2005, Cockcroft et al., 2014, Jönsson et al., 2007), hence the description "data rich, information poor" (Bissell et al., 2014, p.S4). Policymakers lament the difficulty in accessing relevant research findings that are of high quality and in digestible formats and they often have limited skills in interpreting evidence (Hawkes et al., 2015, Hennink and Stephenson, 2005, Cockcroft et al., 2014, Jönsson et al., 2007). They struggle with being provided an uneven mix of evidence from different sources that is difficult to evaluate, and with being able to ask the right questions for good policymaking (Cockcroft et al., 2014, Hennink and Stephenson, 2005). There is a role here for international agencies in supporting operational research and analysis, prompting a call for international support for LMICs to use their operational research data (Quaglio et al., 2014).

The unavailability of electronic databases for accessing research evidence due to cost and infrastructure is a significant impediment to its use for public health for some places in LMICs (Orem et al., 2012, Chen and Yang, 2009, Tharyan, 2010). Some advances have been made in this area, such as the establishment of Hinari (Anyaoku and Anunobi, 2014, World Health Organisation, 2018) and similar programs (Hawkes, 2012, Tharyan, 2010, Zachariah et al., 2012) which are platforms that provide access to scientific literature for little or no cost to health knowledge users in LMICs. These schemes have provided much greater access to online health journals, however there are still some limitations relating to the dissemination of some of these programs, and the provision of practical training in their use (Chen and Yang, 2009, Glover et al., 2006, Yousefi-Nooraie et al., 2009). Additionally, infrastructure issues such as inadequate hardware, poor Internet connections, and unreliable electricity serve as major impediments to the access and use of evidence (Albert et al., 2007, Cockcroft et al., 2014, Jönsson et al., 2007, Mbonye and Magnussen, 2013).

Contextualising strategies for KT in LMICs

Utilisation of research findings to influence public health policymaking is complex (Armstrong et al., 2014) and this is compounded by the many other factors aside from research evidence that influence public health policy (Walugembe et al., 2015, Hanney et al., 2003). In LMICs there are particular factors that add to this complexity, including the issues relating to power structures and capacity discussed above. It is important that KT strategies used in LMICs are contextualised for the cultural, political and economic decision-making context (Orem et al., 2012, Young, 2005, Dagenais et al., 2015, Siron et al., 2015).

There are many KT models described in the literature (Tabak et al., 2012), however most have been developed in high-income countries and therefore may not be applicable in the context of LMICs (Orem et al., 2014a, Ssengooba et al., 2011). In general, there is a lack of awareness, knowledge and clarity of KT techniques in LMICs (Orem et al., 2012, Orem et al., 2014a, Valinejadi et al., 2016). Despite this, there have been attempts to trial and utilise specific KT techniques in LMIC settings, often via a partnership approach. The literature describes a number of these techniques, including: systematic reviews (Bennett et al., 2015), rapid response mechanisms (Mijumbi et al., 2014), evidence briefs and deliberative dialogues (Moat et al., 2014, Rosenbaum et al., 2011), KT platforms and formal knowledge networks (Kasonde and Campbell, 2012, El-Jardali et al., 2014, Yazdizadeh et al., 2014, Lavis et al., 2010, Orem et al., 2012), integrated KT (Yehia and El Jardali, 2015), the use of knowledge brokers (Dagenais et al., 2015, Waqa et al., 2013, Norton et al., 2016) and social knowledge management (Sullivan et al., 2015). Common features for success across these techniques include a strong training or capacity building element, ensuring the cultural, political and economic context is taken into account, and encouraging a collaborative approach across sectors and between researchers and decision-makers.

Factors that facilitate KT in LMICs have been reviewed by Orem et al. (2012), who found the most significant factors to be institutional strengthening for KT, the characteristics of the research itself, and partnerships between researchers and policymakers. Building capacity for KT in LMICs requires institutional strengthening of both research and policymaking systems in order to promote a greater use of evidence in policymaking (Brambila et al., 2007, Hawkes et al., 2015, Orem et al., 2012, Orem et al., 2014a, Hamel and Schrecker, 2011, Gadsby, 2011, Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009). Existing capacity strengthening in these areas is sometimes *ad hoc* (Hawkes et al., 2015) or targeted at individuals rather than at an organisational level (Frenk and Chen, 2011, Gadsby, 2011, de-Graft Aikins et al., 2012). Institutional strengthening in policy-making systems requires resources for infrastructure as well as legitimacy and regulatory support (Hawkes et al., 2015, Orem et al., 2013). It requires technical capacity in critical research skills, knowledge management and in leading KT processes, stemming from a good understanding of the organisation's capacity for research use in the first place (Brambila et al., 2007, Hamel and Schrecker, 2011, Orem et al., 2013).

The influence of partnerships between researchers and policy-makers provide clear advantage to KT, including both formal and informal knowledge networks and personal relationships (Hyder et al., 2010, Orem et al., 2013, Shearer et al., 2014, Yazdizadeh et al., 2014, Corluka et al., 2015). Institutional platforms that allow researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders to engage with each other increases appreciation of each other's processes and challenges (Orem et al., 2013, Kasonde and Campbell, 2012, de-Graft Aikins et al., 2012, El-Jardali et al., 2014). Such platforms may take the form of formal networks (including virtual networks), events, websites, or be a separate entity with an office (Kasonde and Campbell, 2012, El-Jardali et al., 2014). Longer-term links between institutions enables a continuous, rather than *ad hoc*, exchange of information, strengthening capacity of both the suppliers and the users of evidence (Brambila et al., 2007, Hawkes et al., 2015).

A number of strategies have been suggested for optimising the adoption of research findings by policymakers. A review of research characteristics that improve uptake of findings by policymakers (Orem et al., 2012) found the most effective to be timely, high quality, contextualised evidence that provides economically viable recommendations for policy options, preferably provided by local researchers with high credibility. One way in which research with these characteristics can be produced is through engaging in user-driven research agendas, which result from collaborations between researchers and decision makers (Albert et al., 2007, El-Jardali et al., 2010, Lapaige, 2010, Reddy and Sahay, 2016, Tomson et al., 2005). Research that appeals to a political agenda can have a significant effect, such as in Nepal where data on the household cost of a birth attendant presented a novel perspective to health planners and influenced decision-making on maternal and child health policy (Ensor et al., 2009).

Contextualising KT for LMICs can be aided by monitoring and evaluating KT processes, however the lack of systems for doing this in LMICs was noted in this literature (Valinejadi et al., 2016, Cordero et al., 2008, Siron et al., 2015, Hamel and Schrecker, 2011, Dagenais et al., 2013, El-Jardali et al., 2014), and more widely (Dagenais et al., 2009). The development of robust evaluation frameworks, systems and instruments for KT in LMICs is required for assessing the outcomes and impact of KT activities on changes in behaviour of decision-makers and the structural impact on health systems (Valinejadi et al., 2016, Sumner et al., 2011, El-Jardali et al., 2014, Siron et al., 2015). Some examples of evaluations of KT strategies were found in the literature, however these were few (Dagenais et al., 2013, El-Jardali et al., 2014, Johnson and Lavis, 2011).

The unique role of NGOs in the KT processes

Non-government organisations (NGOs) in LMICs are in a potentially unique position to be involved in KT, and the literature found that they often carry out KT-related activities as part of their day-to-day activities. NGOs are generally known for their connections to the realities of what is happening at the community level, ability to mobilise communities, and their role in representing and advocating for the vulnerable (Drake et al., 2010, Zachariah et al., 2012, Hamel and Schrecker, 2011, Olivier et al., 2016, Delisle et al., 2005), so are well situated to play a role in utilising evidence that promotes equity. NGOs have involvement with a range of KT processes in LMICs including managing, synthesising and utilising knowledge for practice and advocacy, disseminating findings, acting as knowledge brokers, implementing research findings, working with partners, advocating with policy makers to implement evidence, and having input into policymaking (Adrien et al., 2013, Dagenais et al., 2013, Delisle et al., 2005, Drake et al., 2010, Hamel and Schrecker, 2011, Orem et al., 2013, Orem et al., 2014b, Orem et al., 2012, Siminerio and Mbanya, 2011, Woelk et al., 2009, Young, 2005, Zachariah and Draquez, 2012, Zachariah et al., 2010, Zachariah et al., 2012, Olivier et al., 2016).

NGOs in LMICs can have influence over the research process through being involved in research priority setting, resource mobilisation for research, promoting and advocating for relevant research, partnering with international agencies to ensure research relevance and effectiveness and conducting operational research (Delisle et al., 2005, Drake et al., 2010, Orem et al., 2014c, Zachariah et al., 2012, Zachariah et al., 2010, Olivier et al., 2016). Having NGOs involved in research has been shown to increase the use of research findings in contributing to social development and health equity (Delisle et al., 2005), can increase the role of community in research, and increase the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts (Zachariah et al., 2010). Formal partnerships between NGOs in LMICs and researchers in global health are increasing, and one framework for navigating successful partnerships is described by Olivier et al. (2016).

Despite this wide range of roles played by NGOs in KT, there has been little exploration of further capabilities of NGOs in this space in LMICs (Hamel and Schrecker, 2011, Orem et al., 2013, Sanders et al., 2004). NGOs are important stakeholders in the field of public health and may often have potential capacity for a key role in public health KT (Delisle et al., 2005, Kothari and Armstrong, 2011, Wilson et al., 2010, Zachariah and Draquez, 2012). Supporting local NGOs to better generate and use research evidence has been suggested as an important way to improve KT generally (Kothari and Armstrong, 2011, Wilson et al., 2010, Zachariah et al., 2010).

2.5: Discussion

Within the field of public health in general, there are few systems and structures in place to support the promotion and facilitation of KT strategies (Armstrong et al., 2014, LaRocca et al., 2012). In LMICs, structural inequities and limited resources have added barriers to the utilisation of evidence. This review highlights some of the complexities specific to LMICs that can be considered when developing KT strategies in these contexts. The findings from this review show that KT is influenced by both the nature of knowledge and the context under which these processes occur, and therefore that there is value in identifying and placing importance on these factors. Influencing or acting on such contextual factors may enable "conceptual and strategic ways to bring about changes in knowledge and understanding, or shifts in perception, attitudes and beliefs" (Davies et al., 2008, p.189).

This review has identified four 'synthetic constructs' that attempt to interpret some of the research in the area of KT within LMICs, in order to provide a response to the original compass question: '*How is evidence accessed and used by policy-makers and public health practitioners for improving public health in low- and middle-income countries?*'. These 'synthetic constructs' can be viewed as concepts that may provide an insight into some of the complexities of utilising research for action in LMICs. The four concepts identified from the literature were: tension between 'global' and 'local' evidence; complexities in accessing and creating evidence; contextualising strategies for KT in LMICs; and the unique role of NGOs in the KT process. Although these concepts were drawn from a range of different literature on this topic, there are some unifying themes that enable some generalisations from the findings.

The relationship between knowledge and power, or the 'politics of knowledge', was implicit in this literature and influences each concept described above. Power can dictate whose and which forms of knowledge are recognised, valued and used for action, which areas of research are prioritised, and who 'owns' knowledge (Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009, Redman-MacLaren et al., 2010, Sanders et al., 2004). This is important when considering the value of knowledge in a globalising world shifting from an "industrial economy to a knowledge economy" (Lapaige, 2010, p.35). It is known that the value that stakeholders place on knowledge, evidence and research has an impact on KT processes, and can vary considerably across individuals, organisations, systems and sectors (Armstrong et al., 2014). This review suggests that power and politics can influence this.

The significance of partnerships that influence KT, both global-local partnerships, as well as partnerships between researchers and decision-makers, emerged as a theme across all the concepts that were developed during this review. Analysis of certain aspects of such partnerships may therefore be a valuable undertaking in order to maximise the potential for effective KT.

Capacity building focusing on different aspects of KT was another theme that emerged through the concepts - including research capacity; capacity of decision-makers to utilise research evidence; and capacity of various stakeholders to employ KT strategies. It was clear in the literature that the key to effective capacity building in all three of these areas was through institutional strengthening, which should be carried out alongside the capacity building of individuals. This can play a role in building supportive systems and structures for KT in LMICs.

KT has been described as having the ability to redress global inequities (Welch et al., 2009) through enabling the use of evidence to improve practice and policy. As described in this review, there are still many issues that can hamper effective utilisation of research in LMIC settings. Analysis of these issues, through research or monitoring and evaluation, in order to improve them, is therefore an important factor in improving health and global inequity. Additionally, there is an acknowledged need for further theoretical development to better understand KT in order to improve it (El-Jardali and Fadlallah, 2015). Greenhalgh and Wieringa (2011) call for research in the field of KT to "move beyond a narrow focus on the 'know-do-gap' to cover a richer agenda" (p. 501). This "richer agenda" may include some of the complexities in LMICs described in this review, including the global-local dynamic, links between power and knowledge, and the contextual factors that influence capabilities in LMICs to access, generate and utilise evidence.

2.6: Conclusion

This review has outlined key concepts that arise in the literature around KT for public health in LMICs. Although there are many ways to look at this complex and dynamic area of public health, this review focuses on the themes of global-local interactions, the value placed on evidence, the contextualisation of KT for LMICs, and the unique role of NGOs in this space. This review utilised the CIS method of inquiry, which allowed a flexible approach to interpreting the literature on the topic. This method was useful in allowing the synthesis of disparate themes within a large body of literature and enabled the development of some theoretical concepts relating to the topic. The result of this analysis is a generalised overview of this huge body of literature. Each concept itself could have been analysed to a much greater depth. However, this analysis has drawn out some key theoretical concepts that may inform practice or further research.

2.7: Summary of this chapter

Sections 2.6 through 2.6 of this chapter were a direct copy of the literature review that was published in 2018. This review allowed me to scope the landscape of knowledge translation within low- and middle-income countries and arrive at some general themes that would provide background to my subsequent research. The macro-level themes that arose from this literature review relating to power and knowledge, local versus global evidence, the importance of relationships and partnerships to knowledge translation, and the relative value of different types of knowledge to different stakeholders, provided a backdrop for the subsequent literature review (Chapter 3), as well as my research focus and theoretical reasoning. I return to some of these broad themes in the analysis of my research findings.

Chapter 3: Knowledge for development within INGOs

This chapter presents a review of the literature on how INGOs use knowledge. It takes the form of a narrative review that examines knowledge processes within these organisations, and how they are influenced by the international development context. The lens through which I analyse this literature is derived from the themes that arose in Chapter 2, including the power-knowledge nexus, the tension between global and local knowledge, the influence of context on knowledge translation, and the importance of partnerships to knowledge translation processes. I build on the unique role of NGOs in knowledge translation discussed in Chapter 2 and expand this for a deeper consideration of the role of INGOs.

I begin this chapter with a broad overview of the history of the global 'knowledge for development' movement and its influence on knowledge trends in the international development sector. I then focus specifically on INGOs and consider how their position in the international development sector and the wider context influence their knowledge agenda. Following this, I consider the literature on knowledge translation as a concept and discuss how it relates to international development. This leads to an exploration of how knowledge translation occurs within the 'knowledge spaces' of INGOs, and the influences on these processes.

3.1: Knowledge in development

Concepts of knowledge play an important role in the international development context. Knowledge in development is characterised by a dynamic, shifting, and "continually contested and variable" nature that shapes and defines development practice (King et al., 2016, p.26, Mosse, 2011, Boaz et al., 2019, Green, 2012). It is often complex, reliant on multiple sources and stakeholders, and defined by heterogeneous perspectives and contexts (Powell and Cummings, 2019, Ferguson, 2016, Stone et al., 2020). The production of knowledge in development has been described as set of "complex interactions between a number of actors, organisations, local contexts and development systems" (King et al., 2016, p.21).

Knowledge is not a neutral or static concept, but rather something ongoing, subjective, and "inseparable from everyday life and practice" (Marchand, 2010, p.S15, Stone et al., 2020, Ferguson, 2016). Knowledge that is important in the international development sector may have many interpretations and mean different things in different contexts (King et al., 2016, Mawdsley et al., 2002, Powell, 2006, Brown, 2010). Contemporary debates in the field of knowledge and development centre around issues such as what constitutes knowledge, the value of, and relationships between, different types of knowledge, whose knowledge counts, how knowledge is produced and by whom, and power/knowledge relations between stakeholders in the sector (Boaz et al., 2019, King et al., 2016, Narayanaswamy and Schöneberg, 2020). These debates define the changing nature of knowledge in international development. They are important because the nature of knowledge influences how knowledge translation processes occur (Reimer-Kirkham et al., 2009).

Although the importance of knowledge to development, along with a "nuanced understanding of knowledge to take account of its implicit complexity and uncertainty" (Milner, 2017, p.110), is not new to the development sector, the phrase 'knowledge for development' (Powell and Cummings, 2019) became well-known through the Knowledge for Development agenda adopted by the World Bank in the late 1990s (World Bank, 1999). This agenda overtly positioned the effective utilisation of knowledge as central to development, in particular, economic development (Milner, 2017), and knowledge as the "meta-resource of all resources" (Ferreira, 2009, p.94). However, the World Bank agenda has been critiqued from several perspectives. It is argued that it valued certain types of knowledge, such as scientific and technical knowledge, over others such as local contextual knowledge and indigenous forms of knowledge (Enns, 2015, Schech and Haggis, 2000). Secondly, the agenda implied that knowledge is transferred through one-way, top-down approaches, with a focus on the transfer of (mostly technical) knowledge from 'most developed' to 'least developed' countries, thereby reinforcing existing power structures (Narayanaswamy, 2013, Enns, 2015, King et al., 2016). These ideas were based on the notion of development assistance being widely understood, at the time, as the one-way transfer of modern scientific and technical knowledge (Escobar, 1995).

As outlined in Chapter 2, issues of power are implicit throughout the literature on knowledge translation in low- and middle-income countries, and this link between knowledge and power has been widely acknowledged in the international development sector, particularly around whose and which forms of knowledge count and are used for decision-making and action (Chambers, 2014b, Narayanaswamy and Schöneberg, 2020). International development as an intervention relies on a variety of different types of knowledges (Ferguson et al., 2010), but the link between power and knowledge can facilitate knowledge hierarchies, making some forms of knowledge appear more important than others (Powell and Cummings, 2019). Most significantly, it reinforces the hierarchy of 'specialised' knowledge, framed as scientific, technical, expert, 'Western' or global, over local knowledge, such as contextual realities and indigenous knowledge (Powell and Cummings, 2019, Briggs, 2013). One of the ways this hierarchy plays out in development is through the concept of "world-ordering" knowledge (Mosse, 2011, p.1), whereby dominant paradigms and ways of thinking in development have been skewed towards Western ideas of knowledge (Davies et al., 2015). These global ideas hold significant power (Mosse, 2011, Narayanaswamy, 2017). An example of this is the concept of global health governance, where global organisations act to govern health through the development of global or national policies (Hill, 2011, Rani et al., 2012). This has resulted in dominant power/knowledge patterns that "effectively own the agenda for global health policy and research" (Gill and Benatar, 2016, p.351). For these reasons, it has been recently argued that knowledge is the "new inequality" (Walsh and Lannon, 2018, p.918).

The international development context is therefore characterised by different worldviews, truths and ways of thinking about knowledge (Jacobson, 2007). These different ways of thinking about knowledge can be referred to as epistemic diversity (Ludwig et al., 2021), and it has been argued that it is important to understand the nature of different types of knowledge in development and their epistemological foundations (Powell and Cummings, 2019, Malavisi, 2019). As described above, development has traditionally been rooted in theories of economic growth, "entrenched in the knowledge paradigm dominated by Western thought and ideology" (Malavisi, 2019, p.95), with little regard for other knowledge epistemologies. The power dynamics described above can result in 'epistemic injustice' which occurs between different stakeholders in the international development setting (Malavisi, 2019). Malavisi (2019) describes two different forms of epistemic injustice which are relevant in the international development setting. The first, testimonial injustice, refers to how different levels of credibility are assigned to different groups of people or different types of knowledge, depending on who they are or where they are from, and is often a systemic type of injustice. The second type of epistemic injustice is hermeneutical injustice, which relates to how people or institutions in a position of power influence "interpretations and understandings which are socially embedded" (Malavisi, 2019, p.92).

Since the time of the World Bank agenda, however, the knowledge for development movement has shifted from its narrow focus to "embracing a broader, more inclusive, more socially just vision of a 'knowledge society'" (Narayanaswamy, 2015, p.176). Push-back against the traditional categorisation of 'developed' and 'developing' countries provides opportunities for more meaningful knowledge exchange across this boundary (Horner, 2020, Lewis, 2017). With growing interest, both in practice and academia, in this area, there has been an imperative to create new and different narratives on the role of knowledge in development (Powell and Cummings, 2019). It is recognised that the unique context of international development provides fertile ground to explore other knowledge mechanisms and dimensions of knowledge, including the knowledge that sits within people's diverse realities and languages (Narayanaswamy, 2017). To this end, there have been concerted efforts to ensure that knowledge has a place in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015) with the creation of an Agenda Knowledge for Development (Knowledge for Development Partnership, 2017). This agenda presents thirteen Knowledge Development Goals that are designed to complement the SDGs and assist them in being achieved, and include such aspirations as "pluralistic, diverse and inclusive knowledge societies" and "improved knowledge strategies in development organisations" (Knowledge for Development Partnership, 2017, p.iii, Powell and Cummings, 2019).

In this way, therefore, there is recognition that development depends on multiple knowledges (Brown, 2010, Powell, 2006). This move is a recognition of the importance of making different 'non-traditional' knowledge epistemologies visible, in order for them to co-exist with each other, forming what is referred to by some as an 'ecology of knowledges' (Malavisi, 2019). This alternative knowledge paradigm brings about the concept of 'negotiated knowledges' which moves away from the notion of knowledge as something that is static, and towards a conceptualisation of knowledge that is "continually co-opted, contested and shifting" (Narayanaswamy, 2017, p.49, King et al., 2016).

The effective implementation of development projects relies on accessing and applying relevant knowledge, particularly local situational knowledge, from various stakeholders to make decisions about how to act (Ferguson et al., 2010). Therefore, knowledge in development is viewed as a highly social process with a number of "heterogenous and dispersed stakeholders who rely on one another for in-depth knowledge sharing" (Ferguson, 2016, p.5). This view draws on theories of the social construction of knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), which are concerned with the way knowledge is established, constructed, or agreed upon within different contexts, and conceptualises knowledge as both a social factor and as an agent of social change. In this way, knowledge is socially distributed, and ideas are made legitimate through social and cultural means (Kleinman, 2010). When applied to the context of global health, this theory can explain how the relative significance of different global health issues differs between cultural settings, leading to "tensions between global policies and local reality" (Kleinman, 2010, p.1518).

The nature of knowledge, and the social and contextual backdrop for its use is a key concern in this thesis. Knowledge remains an important concept for the international development sector, and therefore its significance for development practitioners and policymakers remains crucial (Ferguson et al., 2010, Mouget, 2017). In fact, some suggest that it is now impossible to work in the development sector without a specific focus on knowledge (Mouget, 2017), and there are an increasing number of online communities and repositories to assist development practitioners and organisations (see for example KM4Dev, 2021). As shown by the literature in this section, knowledge in development is complex, diverse, and relies on negotiation between various stakeholders. With knowledge-based processes being described as lying "at the heart of development practice and debate" (Ferguson, 2016, p.5), they effectively shape development decision-making and interventions.

3.2: Knowledge and INGOs

INGOs play a unique and influential role in the international development sector and manage relationships with stakeholders from the global to the local level (Lewis et al., 2021, Green, 2012, Iannacone, 2021). This means that they influence, and are influenced by, knowledge trends in the broader sector. Their relationship to knowledge is "bound together with shifts in international political economy and associated trends in international development" (King et al., 2016, p.19). In practice, INGOs are mostly funded by institutional or private donors, and therefore often occupy an intermediary position between donors and local organisations, many having headquarters in donor countries and working through partnerships with in-country organisations and other stakeholders (Storeng et al., 2019, Mosse, 2011, Lewis et al., 2021, Mawdsley et al., 2002). Although there is great variety in the models and modes of operation of INGOs, for example, top-down approaches with headquarters making decisions compared to more decentralised models, in general, resources move from high-income to low-income countries, creating an inevitable power gradient (Rovaniemi, 2015, Lewis et al., 2021, Elbers and Schulpen, 2013). This hierarchy has the potential to affect knowledge interactions, unless there are open negotiations around knowledge and power between partners (Kruckenberg, 2015, Tran and AbouAssi, 2021).

In their intermediary position, INGOs are both recipients and transmitters of the concepts and language of development (Jackson, 2011, p.200, Chambers, 2017, Mawdsley et al., 2002). They therefore contribute to shaping the globalisation of knowledge and the wider knowledge and power agenda of development (King et al., 2016, Fouksman, 2017). In this way, they "reshape the geography of knowledge" (Fouksman, 2017, p.11). Part of this shaping is through the emergence of development discourse, or buzzwords, "vague and complex English" words, passed down from the most powerful agencies, which are "not directly translatable into other languages and carry culturally specific connotations" (Tesseur and Crack, 2020, p.25, Cornwall, 2007). These words and concepts become "travelling rationalities" (Mosse, 2011, p.vii), moving across the globe, often through INGOs. Even the words 'knowledge' and 'evidence' have become buzzwords within development NGOs and their meaning is therefore sometimes ambiguous (King et al., 2016). In this way, the relationship between power and knoweldge in development cannot be seperated from language (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, Narayanaswamy, 2013, Pigg, 1995, Powell, 2006). Through this influence on knowledge, INGOs contribute to how development itself is shaped.

The types of knowledge that INGOs need to operate effectively are varied, dynamic and heterogenous. They need to collect "detailed usable knowledge of the wider environment in which the work takes place, including its cultural, political and historical dimensions" (Lewis, 2017, p.330). Other examples of the types of knowledge that INGOs need to access, generate, manage, use and disseminate include community knowledge, technical knowledge, research knowledge, experiential knowledge, implementation knowledge, and knowledge of the development sector and donors, amongst others (Gibson, 2019, Ferguson et al., 2010, Fouksman, 2017). Knowledge within INGOs is subject to the knowledge hierarchies described above, meaning that some types of knowledge may be prioritised or legitimised over others (Gibson, 2019). Sometimes this results in a narrow depiction of knowledge that prioritises 'expert' forms of knowledge over 'soft' knowledge such as local, contextual knowledge, which is often difficult to codify (Green, 2009, Evers et al., 2009, Honig, 2019). However, in practice, INGO practitioners often employ a pragmatic approach to defining what knowledge and evidence means in their context, meaning that there can be tensions but also strengths that may allow flexibility and inclusion in the evidence used for development practice (Gooding, 2016, King et al., 2016).

As well as being heterogeneous, knowledge within INGOs is deeply practice-related, because ultimately, knowledge is needed to inform effective development practice (Ferguson, 2016). INGOs have been described as having three main roles: implementers of programs; catalysts that carry out advocacy and contribute to ideas; and partners, who work together with others to achieve their goals (Lewis et al., 2021). All these roles require a connection to various forms of knowledge. Building on the social construction of knowledge theory, Ferguson (2016) describes how the work of INGOs is a social process and their "everyday practices are dynamically shaped through the sharing and generation of knowledge between peers" (p.6), often through subtle interactions. Because of this focus on practice, much of the knowledge within these organisations is tacit knowledge, borne from experience both of development practice as well as of living and working within a particular context, and based on "shared understandings, on-the-ground knowledge and common identities" (Stone et al., 2020, p.5, Boaz et al., 2019). Tacit knowledge produces difficulties in terms of its capture and sharing, and many organisations have struggled with this (Honig, 2019, Kothari et al., 2011). Implementation work requires the ability to access and use tacit knowledge as well as other types of knowledge such as scientific knowledge, meaning that these agencies are juggling knowledge from multiple sources and at multiple levels (Powell, 2006, Ferguson et al., 2010).

International development is a rapidly changing context, and INGOs must constantly navigate a range of complexities whilst operating at multiple levels from the global to the local (Lannon and Walsh, 2020, Roche, 2015). The current environment in which INGOs work is often unpredictable and unstable, resources are scarce, and there are ongoing demands to adapt to the dynamic environment, as well as constant information flow to navigate (Lewis et al., 2021, Hovland, 2003). Increasing pressures around professionalism and accountability to both donors and communities, as well as increasing scrutiny of areas such as security and due diligence, are commonplace within INGOs (Lewis et al., 2021, Gibson, 2019, Milner, 2017, Walton et al., 2016). This pressure has meant that many INGOs operate in an increasingly managerialist fashion, prioritising 'institutional' over 'development' priorities (Lewis et al., 2021). This may mean that the accountability that INGOs have to local communities can often be sidelined due to these competing pressures (Lewis, 2014).

This increased scrutiny on INGOs and competitiveness for funding has also led to the need for INGOs to continually show their effectiveness through producing and prioritising certain types of evidence in order to survive (King et al., 2016, Eyben and Guijt, 2015). This influences what types of knowledge are considered important within an organisation and may contribute to 'output culture' or a 'target mentality' and results-based management (Kontinen and Katsui, 2015, Briggs, 2013). The pressure to "produce success" (Rovaniemi, 2015, p.100) means that organisations must focus on knowledge that aligns with donor definitions of success, which means that learning, reflection and meaningful evaluation may be sidelined (Walsh and Lannon, 2018, Kontinen and Katsui, 2015, Narayanaswamy, 2016). This 'upward accountability' leads to a reliance on codified forms of knowledge being prioritised and the implementation of "mechanistic methodologies" within projects (Chambers, 2017, p.63, King et al., 2016). However, INGOs are also responsible for 'downward accountability' to local people and communities, which relies on "greater knowledge of contextual realities, appropriate adaptation to context and greater flexibility to respond to changing circumstances" (Honig and Gulrajani, 2018, p.68). These competing priorities can create ethical, political and managerial issues for INGOs in deciding which knowledge 'counts' (King et al., 2016, p.21, Eyben and Guijt, 2015, Rovaniemi, 2015). Therefore, INGOs "sit uneasily between institutional knowledge and power on one side and local knowledge, experience and priorities on the other" (Gibson, 2019, p.69).

Although local knowledge has not historically been valued as highly as other forms of knowledge within the development sector, it is emerging as a powerful and important knowledge resource for INGOs (Mawdsley et al., 2002, King et al., 2016). Valuing local knowledges and labelling them as legitimate forms of knowledge is important as "to do otherwise … perpetuate[s] the ultimately colonial practice of allowing unacknowledged (Western) epistemologies to masquerade as universal ones" (Yeh, 2016, p.36). Local knowledge has unique characteristics, some of which have been described by Chambers (2017), who asserts: "local knowledges are incorrigibly plural and permanently provisional and changing" (p.58), and Yeh (2016) who describes local knowledge as "embodied practice" (p.36), a term which reinforces the centrality of practice to knowledge in international development. Similarly, Briggs (2013) identifies the term 'practice' as being critical to the definition of knowledge that is "grounded and rooted in a particular context" (p.238). Yeh (2016) describes this embodied practice as "neither a product transmitted fully formed, nor conveyed in written words or symbols" (p.36), emphasising the tacit nature of this knowledge. There has been some successes in combining indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge, which has been shown to produce better results than using either system on its own (Briggs, 2013). However, power relations between these two knowledge systems is an issue that has been identified, with indigenous knowledge needing to be "given the stamp of approval by formal science" (Briggs, 2013, p.235). Scholars have argued that in order for local knowledge to be valued and utilised more effectively, development organisations need to move beyond gathering local suggestions or having a focus simply on the transfer of content (Briggs, 2013). This involves a move towards local (traditional, indigenous) ways of knowing, "indigenous logic and rationale" (Jackson, 2011, p.209) and having a "sharper focus on the epistemology of indigenous knowledge systems" (Briggs, 2013, p.237). The contrast in conceptualisations of knowledge between these approaches and the evidence-based approach described above highlights the clash of knowledge cultures, or epistemologies, that may exist within INGOs.

3.3: Knowledge translation

Knowledge translation is the use of knowledge to inform action, and includes activities such as the "synthesis, dissemintation, [and] exchange" of knowledge (Dagenais et al., 2009, Bedford et al., 2017, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2016). Many alternative terms are used to describe processes of knowledge being used to inform action, crossing a variety of disciplines and having slightly varying definitions, however they are closely related and the boundaries between them "fuzzy" (Shaxson et al., 2012, p.3, McKibbon et al., 2010, Graham et al., 2006). Terms such as knowledge exchange, knowledge management, knowledge integration and knowledge mobilisation are used inter-changeably within the public health and international development literature (Shaxson et al., 2012). In essence, these terms are all an attempt to move away from definitions that imply the 'direct transfer' of knowledge content from one place to another, or one group to another, and to capture the complexity and non-linear nature of these processes.

Although some definitions of knowledge translation refer specifically to the use of *research* knowledge, the conceptualisation of knowledge translation that I use for this research encompasses the vast array of what is considered knowledge within international development, as described earlier. Conceptualisations of knowledge translation that refer to research knowledge alone have been criticised for being too narrow, as in practice, research knowledge is rarely utilised alone, and often accompanies, or relies upon, other forms of explicit and tacit knowledge to be actionable (Kothari et al., 2011, Gabbay and le May, 2004, Oborn et al., 2013, Eljiz et al.). Additionally, this focus on research knowledge draws from the concept of evidence-based practice, which is the premise upon which the concept of knowledge translation is based (Kothari et al., 2011). This narrow definition of evidence-based practice can be problematic, not least because of the power implications in this, and certainly this is the case in the international development sector (Crosschild et al., 2021, Salter and Kothari, 2016). However, as described by Ward et al. (2012), "the knowledge that is needed to solve problems and bring about changes is likely to be distributed throughout organisations and to come from many different sources" (p.302). Examining how different knowledges are incorporated into practice can provide a clearer picture of how knowledge translation actually works, and may also give insight into the social and political aspects of knowledge translation (Oborn et al., 2013, Morgan-Trimmer, 2014).

Many models of knowledge translation have been developed (Brehaut and Eva, 2012, Estabrooks et al., 2006, Tabak et al., 2012). Davies et al. (2015) summarises the changes in approach to knowledge translation as three 'generations' of knowledge to action: linear approaches; relationship approaches; and systems approaches. A fourth approach incorporating social epistemology has been proposed by Jacobson (2007), which allows a critical examination of the effectiveness, power and equity related elements of knowledge translation processes. There is an acknowledged need for further theoretical development to better understand knowledge translation in order to improve it (El-Jardali and Fadlallah, 2015, Rycroft-Malone, 2007, Thomas et al., 2014).

I have decided to use the term 'knowledge translation' for this study of the international development sector (rather than, for example the oft-used term 'knowledge management'), as the term 'translation' implies some kind of transformation of information, "translating knowledge from one format to another" (Shaxson et al., 2012, p.2), which other definitions do not completely encompass. This translating function is particularly important in the field of international development, where knowledge moves across cultural spaces through a wide variety of stakeholders, and is social and relational (Jackson, 2011). Capturing the richness of knowledge interactions is important for better ways of understanding and conceptualising knowledge translation, as encouraged by Greenhalgh and Wieringa (2011), who suggest alternative metaphors for translation, such as "created, constructed, embodied, performed and collectively negotiated" (p.501). Similarly, McFarlane (2006, p.1430) presents some alternatives for the term translation including "displacement, drift, invention, mediation, the creation of a link that did not exist before and that to some degree modifies the original two", and goes on to say that during this processes, both the knowledge itself, as well as the people and places involved, are changed. These conceptualisations of knowledge translation correlate well with the dynamic context of international development described above.

In order for knowledge translation theory not to turn "narrow and mechanistic" (Jacobson, 2007, p.125), it is important to acknowledge that knowledge translation is a "social process, embedded in the cultures, language and norms of organisations, groups and individuals" (Hardwick et al., 2015, p.10). This is in line with a social interaction perspective on knowledge translation, whereby social interactions between people allow an integration of research and other knowledge that may already be held (Kothari et al., 2011). The social nature of knowledge translation is intricately tied to the social nature of international development itself. International development has been described as

> *… a set of social processes, one amongst many, that are crucial to knitting together a diversity of ideas, perspectives, values and aims across a variety of spaces and places into a tangled web of meaning.* (Fouksman, 2017, p.1851)

This weaving together of knowledge is part of the process of knowledge translation within international development.

3.4: Influences on knowledge translation in INGOs

This section outlines the literature on how INGOs engage in knowledge translation processes, and the contextual factors that influence how they are able to do this. The broader contextual factors described above, such as the unique position of INGOs in the development sector, and the wider knowledge for development agenda, are over-arching influences. Details of the ways that INGOs conduct knowledge translation activities are relatively overlooked in the literature, considering the contemporary challenges that development organisations are facing that influence, and are influenced by, knowledge (Hayman et al., 2016, Narayanaswamy, 2017). Additionally, details of how context influences knowledge translation is often not examined in detail in the literature, despite scholarship on knowledge and INGOs suggesting that the role of context is paramount (Davies et al., 2015).

One way of describing how development organisations have used knowledge over time, is through describing different generations of 'knowledge management for development', as outlined by Cummings et al. (2013). The first is information and communication technology (ICT)-based, where knowledge is characterised as a commodity. The second views knowledge as an asset and focuses on organisation-based processes and the "human and cultural dimensions of knowledge" (p.15). The third focuses on knowledge sharing between organisations and emphasises the social nature of knowledge, and the fourth is practice-based and concerned with knowledge that is situated and contextual. The fifth generation is seen as a significant departure from the mainstream model of knowledge management, and more specific to development. It focuses on "cross-domain knowledge integration and knowledge co-creation" (p.10) which values the existence of multiple knowledges or world views. The fifth generation is seen by Cummings et al. (2013) and others as the way forward for knowledge management in development, as it is more adaptive and non-linear than previous generations. This fifth generation aligns with the notion of knowledge in development being heterogeneous, dynamic, multi-faceted and dependent on social processes, as described in the previous section (Brown et al., 2013, Cummings et al., 2013).

The knowledge work of INGOs involves interactions and relationships with a range of different stakeholders in different locations, and therefore the social and relational elements of knowledge translation can often be more important that the technical content of the knowledge, in terms of its use (Georgalakis et al., 2017). For example, Ferguson et al. (2010) shows how in-country local INGO staff prefer face-to-face knowledge sharing activities over the organisation's official knowledge management strategies, especially as a way to share local, contextual and tacit knowledge. Similarly, knowledge gained through peer learning was found to be more trustworthy amongst local staff than knowledge presented by headquarters (Walsh and Lannon, 2018). Social, cultural and political differences between stakeholders, even with the same organisation, can have an impact on how knowledge translation occurs. For example, cultural and epistemological differences between INGO staff can influence what types of context-specific insights are shared with others, what knowledge is prioritised, and what feedback and learning opportunities occur (Walsh and Lannon, 2018). Cultural differences in organisational leadership may also affect how relevant knowledge is identified, utilised and disseminated (Jackson, 2011). Connectivity between staff in an INGO enables the formation of knowledge networks, sharing of ideas, and knowing where different knowledge exists within the organisation (Fouksman, 2017). The face-to-face aspect of relationships is important to establishing knowledge exchange, as described by Fouksman (2017) who claims that it is "relationships – often formed and nurtured in person – that set and spread the discursive content of [networks], which in turn facilitates the creation and sharing of knowledge" (p.1852). Engagement with the INGO end-users of research at the design stage, as well as continual building of trust and credibility between researchers and INGO staff, has been shown to increase research uptake amongst these INGOs (Kung and Kamp, 2018). Co-construction of knowledge allows the situated knowledge of key persons such as primary stakeholders to be drawn upon, rather than only professional forms of knowledge (Ferguson et al., 2010, Roche, 2015). Additionally, engagement and inclusion of stakeholders can assist in gauging the suitability of knowledge and technologies that have been imported from other settings (Jackson, 2011). A scoping study of third sector organisations found that amongst these organisations, there is a “preference for collaborative, relational approaches to knowledge mobilisation” (Hardwick et al., 2015, p.10).

INGOs, for the most part, work with and through partners and therefore partnerships and networks are often key places to exchange and combine different forms of knowledge (Walsh and Lannon, 2018, Fouksman, 2017). These partnerships and networks of INGOs can form “epistemic bridges”, creating and spreading ideas and facilitating the exchange of conceptual knowledge and understandings of practice (Fouksman, 2017, p.1847). However, power dynamics within networks and partnerships can affect the creation and the exchange of knowledge, and in addition, the knowledge from networks may be selectively used for political purposes (Fouksman, 2017, Ferguson et al., 2010). The roles that INGOs play in knowledge exchange with communities and decision-makers “depend crucially on epistemic virtues such as reputation, trust, integrity, which in turn depend on high standards of truthfulness, error recognition, open-mindedness to new ideas and ability to learn” (Johnstone 2003, p.312). Such relationships can be complex, and power imbalances in different forms may exist and flow in different directions (Lewis, 2014).

Knowledge translation occurs at different levels of an organisation, including at the individual, organisational and strategic level (Oborn et al., 2013). In terms of the individual level, it useful to examine knowledge translation from the perspective of individual staff within an INGO. Different staff within INGOs are the holders of different types of knowledge. Local, in-country or field staff, for example, have access to crucial knowledge about the local context that others in the organisation do not (Honig, 2019). However, hierarchy and power structures within and between INGOs and other agencies can influence the use of this knowledge. Local staff may often have a lower rank on a development project, which may mean that they do not contribute their knowledge as much as others, even though they may be recognised as more knowledgeable in relation to the local context (Ferguson et al., 2010). Similarly, Beaulieu (2013) found in a case study of ten NGOs in Ghana, that the process of making decisions about what knowledge is relevant and of acceptable quality was almost always associated with power issues. There is a lack of emphasis on the importance of local knowledge within some INGOs, which affects the amount and type of knowledge that reaches the global level of the organisation (Honig and Gulrajani, 2018, King et al., 2016, Mawdsley et al., 2002). This can lead to weak feedback loops between the local and the global, which means less input of local knowledge into policy and practice (Walsh and Lannon, 2018, Jackson, 2011). As noted by Chambers (2014b), "knowledge in all organisations is partial and distorted by power relations" (p.534). Although INGO staff are often aware of these power issues, it can be difficult for them to know what to do practically to resolve this and still fulfill donor requirements (Ferguson et al., 2010).

Organisational factors including size and maturity, makeup of the workforce, the structure of the organisation, and organisational capabilities can affect the way in which knowledge is used (Matturi, 2016, Walsh and Lannon, 2018, Hardwick et al., 2015). Lack of time to engage with codified forms of knowledge such as research, the concentration of knowledge by certain individuals, and limited time and space for reflection were common issues within INGOs (King et al., 2016, Mawdsley et al., 2002, Walsh and Lannon, 2018). Staff turnover may lead to a loss of tacit and technical knowledge, as well as knowledge of the values of the organisation (Matturi, 2016, Walsh and Lannon, 2018).

There is often a focus on codified forms of knowledge within INGOs, despite tacit knowledge being so important for these organisations, which means that documentation often focuses on the reporting of information over knowledge (Walsh and Lannon, 2018, Eyben, 2015, Roche, 2015). Ferguson et al. (2010) describes this as an objectivist view, which takes a rationalist approach to knowledge (encompassing codified forms of knowledge such as case studies, and the direct transfer of knowledge). In contrast, the post-rationalist approach is more in line with a practice-based view (for example, talking face-to-face with stakeholders, and engaging in emergent knowledge sharing) (Ferguson et al., 2010). This practice-based view emphasises "ways of observing, discussing, questioning, analysing and making sense of information, whether it is new or received" (Briggs, 2013, p.237). Attempting to transform tacit knowledge into a codified form is often problematic because much is lost, which means that the knowledge becomes "disconnected from local particularities, dynamics and capacities" (Evers et al., 2009, p.62).

Decolonising approaches to knowledge processes have been discussed over time in the development sector, in an effort to recognise and counter the existing power dynamics and systems around how knowledge is produced, accessed, valued and used (Cummings, 2020, Naude, 2019). A decolonising approach can also challenge global governance (Dutta, 2014). The term 'decolonising knowledge' has recently been used as an umbrella term by the Knowledge Management for Development community and others to encompasses these processes and discussions (KM4Dev, 2021). Such approaches include ensuring a wider consideration of what constitutes knowledge and whose knowledge counts, paying attention to how knowledge is influenced by power and privilege, and effectively engaging knowledge holders (Young, 2021, Cummings, 2020, Istratii, 2021). Part of paying attention to whose knowledge counts and ensuring knowledge is collected from primary stakeholders, local staff and organisations and those on the margins, is through the concept of 'listening', which has been recently explored in the INGO context (Dutta, 2014, Crack, 2013, Tesseur, 2019, Tesseur and Crack, 2020, Anderson et al., 2012). As so much knowledge work in international development is relational and drawn from interactions between INGOs and communities, as described above, this is an important consideration. Smith and colleagues' 'Thought Space Wananga' describes a decolonising process of research translation framed by indigenous ways of producing and sharing knowledge (Smith et al., 2019). This is work that can be done within INGOs, and aligns with participatory approaches to knowledge translation in INGOs, in order to transform organisations so that knowing and learning works better (Chambers, 2014a).

3.5: Knowledge spaces of INGOs

This section builds on the argument that knowledge translation is a social process. One way to envision how knowledge translation happens within INGOs is within a 'knowledge space'. Such spaces have been described as the interface between various types of knowledge, stakeholders, or knowledge cultures (Jones et al., 2012, Star and Griesemer, 1989). These different 'knowledge cultures' incorporate different ways of knowing, different knowledge paradigms, and forms of inquiry, and therefore different epistemologies (Brown, 2010). In order for these different knowledges to better co-exist, and the work of fifth generation knowledge translation to occur (that of cross-domain knowledge integration and co-creation), there needs to be appropriate space (Brown, 2010, Cummings et al., 2013, Jackson, 2011). Work at knowledge interfaces involves some kind of negotiation between different stakeholders, and therefore there are "contradictions and struggles that emerge from knowledge interfaces" within an international development setting (Arce and Fisher, 2003, p.75). Development organisations including INGOs often have attributes that allow them to do this, such as holding relationships with both local and global stakeholders, allowing the possibility of promoting conceptual understandings between these stakeholders (Johnstone, 2003, Jones et al., 2012, Lewis and Mosse, 2006). Work at such knowledge interfaces has been shown to be particularly important in development where it can play a role in the redistribution of power (Cummings et al., 2019).

These "dynamic knowledge interfaces" (Mosse, 2011, p.1) of international development can be described using the concept of boundaries. Boundaries refer to conceptual distinctions that are constructed to categorise individuals, objects, practices and even space and time (Lamont and

Molnár, 2002). Boundaries are inherently social and political and because of this, they can act "for separation and exclusion, but also for communication, exchange, bridging and inclusion" (Lamont and Molnár, 2002, p.181). Boundaries are therefore an interesting way to examine the details of knowledge translation processes, as these processes are inherently social (and often political) and usually require some kind of interaction at the interface between different knowledge actors. For example, the interface between research and policy is one knowledge boundary at which there is much social and relational work required, and where different actors may have different views, such as on what *types* of knowledge are important (Jones et al., 2012, Clark et al., 2010), as described in Chapter 2. In this way, the concept of boundaries is connected with knowledge in various settings (Jones et al., 2012). Boundaries are "essential to the circulation of knowledge across social worlds" (Lamont and Molnár, 2002, p.177), as they enable the mapping of knowledge movement across institutions, identities and countries (Lamont and Molnár, 2002), as well as allowing processes such as knowledge transformation to occur (Qureshi et al., 2018). For this to happen, the tensions between different actors at the boundary interface must be actively and effectively managed (Clark et al., 2010), which is often referred to as 'boundary work' (Qureshi et al., 2018). Boundaries facilitate the exchange of knowledge across knowledge cultures, and can therefore facilitate the social aspects of knowledge translation (Lamont and Molnár, 2002, Star, 2010, Timmermans, 2015).

It is often particular staff within INGOs that play a role at these boundaries, sometimes referred to as knowledge brokers or boundary spanners (Jones et al., 2012, Lewis and Mosse, 2006). Knowledge brokers are often social actors who need to be able to navigate relationships with individuals and groups, connect knowledge with those who need it, and understand the social, political and cultural context and power dynamics of a situation (Georgalakis et al., 2017). Although knowledge brokering is often understood to exist within the research-to-policy context, there is a much wider scope to be explored within international development, including the exchange "between local actors and development experts, recognising that this is not just a one-way process" (Cummings et al., 2019, p.791).

Despite formal knowledge brokers within organisations often being identified as researchers or policy-makers (Scarlett et al., 2020), there is one group of INGO staff who are under-researched but play a crucial role as knowledge brokers and at boundaries or knowledge interfaces. There are the local, in-country staff of INGOs, or 'national development experts' (Kamruzzaman, 2017). These staff act as brokers and navigators, negotiators and 'fixers'; they stabilise long-term relationships in-country, build trust, and carry out relational and reputational work that acts as a glue holding the international development sector together (Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021, Peters, 2020, Sundberg, 2020, Ward, 2020, Lewis and Mosse, 2006). These staff often understand multiple perspectives on development and are able to navigate implementation issues creatively as well as deal with trust and power issues. Their local, contextual knowledge, personal networks, cultural and linguistic competence and professional experience is key to project implementation and navigating the relationships of the INGO (Sundberg, 2020, Ward, 2020, Eyben, 2015). There is much scope for further examining these staff and their role in organisational knowledge translation activities at these boundaries.

3.6: Summary

Effective use of knowledge has become an important challenge in international development over recent years because of the rapidly changing context, and the vast number of stakeholders to consider. INGOs can shape how knowledge is used for development due to their unique position in the sector, however contemporary challenges for INGOs have a significant influence on how they are able to utilise knowledge. This review has raised several questions relating to how knowledge translation processes within INGOs are responding to the changing context of the international development sector. In particular, there is limited evidence around the details of knowledge translation processes within the knowledge spaces of INGOs, including which staff carry out this work, and the contextual influences on knowledge translation in these settings.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1: Methodological approach

Knowledge translation in this research is conceptualised not as a linear process, but a complex and interactive one, and the research methodology needed to reflect this, as well as capture the subtle and not-so-subtle factors that affect how knowledge is perceived and used. Capturing the richness of these intricacies is important for a better understanding of, and alternate ways of conceptualising, knowledge translation (Greenhalgh and Wieringa, 2011). Therefore, a qualitative research methodology was an obvious choice in this case. Qualitative research methodologies allow for the perspective of the participant to be paramount (Liamputtong, 2013). In the case of this research, the participants were staff working in the cross-cultural setting of an INGO. Capturing the perspectives of these staff was an important goal in this INGO setting, where assumptions can sometimes prevail and decisions can be made on these assumptions (Mawdsley et al., 2002). An aim of this research was to generate solutions to improve knowledge translation within the INGO itself, so the perspectives of people who generate and use knowledge was crucial. A qualitative methodology allowed for the complexities of this research topic to be explored in depth in a natural setting (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

The concept of knowledge itself can be contested and debated, but it is generally accepted that knowledge is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). It was fitting, then, to use social constructivism as an epistemological basis for this research. Knowledge translation is highly contingent on the nature of knowledge, the cultural interpretation and the context (Reimer-Kirkham et al., 2009). Therefore, research into the nature of knowledge, how different knowledge is valued and understood, how it is disseminated, and the meanings attached to this, may be explored through the lens of social constructivism. Constructivism takes the philosophical position that reality is socially constructed, is local to a specific set of circumstances, and dependent on who believes that reality (Punch, 2016). Constructivist social epistemologies can be useful in examining issues such as power, which is seen by many as crucial in the study of knowledge translation in the current context of globalisation (Jacobson, 2007). Thomas et al. (2014) describes how social constructivist theory can be applied to investigate how individuals use new forms of knowledge, which is pertinent to my research topic.

Single in-depth case-study design

Case-study research is a study of the particular. It is a form of in-depth qualitative research that allows a deep investigation into the phenomena at hand. It allows the pragmatic choosing of data collection methods in order to answer the research questions and can embrace different epistemological orientations (Rosenberg and Yates, 2007). A single in-depth case study design was utilised in this research, focused on the 'real-world' situation of an INGO. The benefit of conducting a case-study to answer the research questions was that it allowed a high level of rich detail about knowledge translation processes within the INGO (Flyvbjerg, 2011). In this research it was more important to gain clarity over the details behind knowledge translation rather than necessarily describing what the issues were and how frequently they arose, described as an attribute of case study methodology by Flyvbjerg (2011). The power of case studies to illuminate such details is described by Greenhalgh et al. (2011), who put forward an argument for the use of in-depth case studies for their ability to understand "dynamic complexities" (p.553) and "the particular in all its unique contextual detail" (p.543, quoting the philosopher Wittgenstein). Similarly, Tsoukas (2009, p.286) describes Toulmin's ecological style of case studies that "embraces complexity by reinstating the importance of the particular, the local and the timely".

Case studies are common in organisational research. This research is a case of a 'small-N' study as described by Tsoukas (2009), who argues the usefulness and purpose of such studies in the face of pressure for generalisation. Tsoukas (2009) tackles the issue of how the 'particular' relates to the 'general', and comes to the conclusion that the question of epistemology is key: "What is the status of the particular vis-à-vis the general? How are we to preserve the epistemic significance of the particular without losing sight of the general?" (p.286). This is a tension between the two questions "What is going on here?" (situational specificity) and "What is this a case of?" (theoretical reasoning), which needs to be balanced (Tsoukas, 2009, p.286). Tsoukas (2009) draws on the philosophy of Wittgenstein to describe a way in which to balance these two questions, by using concrete cases to further elucidate general concepts, allowing the case study to extend prior understanding of an issue. This involves choosing a case that elucidates something extra about what is already known, through detailing the richness of an interesting or poorly understood phenomena. A small-N case study was seen as appropriate to use in this research because it offered a chance to examine some of the intricacies of knowledge translation in a single INGO setting.

Cross-cultural considerations: as an outsider

A significant portion of this research was carried out in a cross-cultural setting. Thirteen out of 24 interviews were conducted with staff located in country offices of the INGO across nine countries. Accordingly, cross-cultural considerations were imperative. Examining my positionality, and working reflexively, the details of which are described below, were two methodological tools that I employed, and are important when conducting research in a cross-cultural environment (Halder et al., 2017). At each stage of the research process, decisions were re-evaluated in terms of appropriateness, as per Ilesanmi (2009). The qualitative methodology allowed flexibility in the research approach (Liamputtong, 2010).

Cultural sensitivity was important in carrying out this research, and Liamputtong (2008) advises that cross-cultural researchers have some understanding of the cultural context, including country information, social cues, communication styles, religion and cultural behaviour. This allows a more accurate and in-depth understanding and analysis of the research findings (Irvine et al., 2008, Liamputtong, 2008). As an employee of the INGO, I worked on a daily basis with the country offices from the South Asia/Middle East region for three years, two of which were spent based in one of the country offices in the region, whilst I made regular visits to the other countries. I therefore judged my level of understanding of cultural context was sufficient to carry out the research in these countries. I had less work experience with the countries in the other regions, so I sought general cultural advice relevant to the research from other staff, relating particularly to these countries. I felt that there was already a significant level of trust between myself and the participants from the South Asia/Middle East region and was aware of the lower levels of trust with participants from the other regions. Research questions needed to be culturally relevant and asked in an explicit way, as described by Liamputtong (2008). Having worked in cross-cultural settings for most of my career, I was able to use some of the personal qualities that I have gained over time to carry out this research, aiming towards “tolerance of ambiguity, patience, adaptiveness, capacity for tacit learning and courtesy” (Liamputtong, 2008, p.5, quoting Laverack and Brown, 2003).

Language was not considered a barrier in terms of conducting this research, as all participants from non-English speaking backgrounds worked daily in English, and their command of the language was excellent. However, I was aware that context is very important in both cross-cultural and qualitative research, that “concepts can move problematically across cultures” (Liamputtong, 2008, p.8). This has the potential for misunderstandings, as “cultural issues are inextricably linked to language”, and may affect the quality and rigour of the findings (Irvine et al., 2008, p.35, Liamputtong, 2008). Language is one of the tools that helps to co-create meaning and to describe the participants’ social realities, and in the context of cross-cultural research, this becomes more complex (Hennink, 2008, Irvine et al., 2008). One way around this, and to increase the rigour of this type of research, is to provide detailed and transparent descriptions of any language or communication issues that arise (Hennink, 2008), which I did as part of post-interview reflections. Using appropriate language styles and conceptualisations also increases the rigour of cross-cultural research (Irvine et al., 2008) and I was conscious of doing this during the interviews. Representation of participants’ voices was an important concern. I had to be continually conscious about how to best represent people's voices, not over-power them, and how to present the research data so that it was a true representation of knowledge translation within the INGO (Vannini and Gladue, 2008).

Research in my own workplace: as an insider

I conducted this research as an 'insider researcher', that is, I was an employee of the case-study INGO at the time. Insider research is defined as that relating to one's own social group or society, where there is a sharing of characteristics between the researcher and participants that relate to culture, biology or occupation, or where the researcher has prior, in-depth knowledge of the community (Greene, 2014). In my case, I had established working relationships with some of the participants, albeit to various extents depending on the participant. With some participants, I had a relatively close working relationship, having contact on a daily or weekly basis at the time. With others, my relationship was one of working together on discrete projects, and with some, I had perhaps fleeting contact once or twice a year at a meeting or gathering.

Going into this research, I knew that the complexities of being an insider would need to be addressed, both methodologically and ethically. Methodologically, I addressed this in both an over-arching way, and also within each interaction with a participant. I was aware that there would be a different relationship (social and professional) that I would have with each different person. Ethically, I ensured that participants did not feel coerced, and that the findings were not damaging to the INGO or to individual participants.

In a professional doctorate, it is not uncommon for the researcher to be an insider, as they often focus on practitioner enquiry and action research (Greene, 2014). In this research, there were some clear benefits in me being an insider. For me, these benefits included personally knowing the participants (some well, some not so well, as explained above), which made participant recruitment easy and the interactions with the participants quite natural. I was familiar with the context of the research and the environment, and this enabled me to ask meaningful questions which reflected an authentic understanding of the situation, as described by Greene (2014). Mutual understanding of workplace situations added depth to the interviews, and I had some level of credibility due to prolonged engagements with some of the participants (Greene, 2014). I felt that many of the participants trusted me.

Some of the disadvantages of being an insider researcher relate to subjectivity and bias (Greene, 2014). The perceived risk to subjectivity is that the researcher is too close to the topic at hand, meaning that they become 'normalised' to the topic, influencing the way that the data may be analysed (Greene, 2014). Bias may also creep in through being too close to the situation, with the risk that the "researcher's personal beliefs, experiences, values influence the study methodology, design and results" (Greene, 2014, p.4). The other risks for me were around the power balance between myself and the participants, and issues around confidentiality. For example, if I learnt of information about the participants or other people within the INGO that might affect my professional life (Greene, 2014). Two ways in which I addressed these risks methodologically were through careful assessment of my positionality within the research, and specific measures to ensure reflexivity, both of which are described below. These measures not only addressed potential risks related to my position as an insider, but also those that may arise because of the nature of a single case-study design, and qualitative research generally.

Being an insider researcher within a development NGO can also present additional challenges. Balance may be required between loyalty to the organisation and their public image, with the need to produce rigorous research (Rovaniemi, 2015). I was conscious of this risk throughout the research process and made an agreement with the INGO that publications arising from this research would be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, staff of NGOs where an insider is conducting research may expect that research results will be immediately available and applicable (Rovaniemi, 2015). I was careful to manage these expectations.

On reflection, the benefits of conducting research in my own workplace far outweighed the risks. I felt a strong connection with most of the people that I interviewed, and we were able to quickly reach the point of in-depth conversation during the interviews because of our shared understanding of the organisation and the context. Most interviewees spoke very freely and honestly, even about topics that had the potential to be perceived as negative towards the organisation. The data would not have been as rich without being in the position that I was in, having built up trust over a number of years with many of the interviewees.

Reflexivity

During the research process, I assessed my positionality in relation to the research as a whole and then in relation to each individual participant. This was a continual process throughout data collection and analysis, and it changed over time. It was important to investigate the reciprocal relationship that I had with each participant (as per Kincheloe et al., 2018). As an insider, my positionality was determined by the aspects of my own identity which aligned with that of the participants (Greene, 2014). As an outsider, I needed to be aware of the differences between myself and each participant. Being an 'insider-outsider' as a researcher meant that I had to build reflexivity into the methods throughout the duration of the research. This assisted in examining power dynamics and practicing "self-conscious criticism" (Kincheloe et al., 2018, p.243), but also for ensuring rigour through "reflecting critically on self as a researcher – my experiences, beliefs and personal history that might influence the research and acknowledging this" (Liamputtong, 2013, p.24).

The methods that I used to ensure that I was working reflexively included:

1. I wrote a researcher-identity memo, as advised by Maxwell (2013), prior to each of my interviews, reflecting on my relationship and positionality to that particular participant (including any possible power dynamics), exploring my own assumptions about what might come out of that interview, my goals for the interview and how I saw it being potentially relevant to the research. This was a way of "getting into [my] own head" (Greene, 2014, p.5) and articulating how I was like and unlike the participant and exploring any social identities that may influence the interview, as advised by Greene (2014). I reflected on how my relationship with each interviewee may affect the approach to the interview (Cassell, 2009).
2. I attempted to minimise the effects of subjectivity. If I knew the participant well, or we had talked about knowledge translation before, I would begin the interview by saying that this is a formal interview, so please don't be afraid to discuss issues we may have discussed previously in an informal setting.
3. I kept a reflexive diary that I wrote in it directly after each interview. This was done in a stream of consciousness style and reflected on how the interview went structurally and any changes that should be incorporated into future interviews, and also reflected on my thoughts about the participant's responses.
4. I kept detailed notes about the context and research setting, which were written prior to each interview, and added to when writing up the interview later.
5. I asked a trusted 'critical friend' to read my analysis as a form of peer review. This person was a colleague who understood the context of my research, but was potentially able to give a different view or analysis than me, and to provide an honest view on whether I introduced any bias into the analysis.
6. I asked a work colleague, who was undertaking a PhD, to allow me to debrief as a peer, and be someone with whom I could talk about my research (without giving away the identity of any of the participants) and my experience and thoughts on the process, as a way to reflect on the process and what I was finding. I was able to share findings and elements of the research, which allowed me to test my thinking and judgement (Greene, 2014). This also worked to "create distance and deconstruct the familiar world" (Greene, 2014, p.9).

7. I engaged in member checking, as described by Greene (2014). As a first stage, participants were invited to verify transcripts of interviews. Then, following my initial analysis of the data, I presented the findings and analysis in the form of a recorded PowerPoint presentation to all participants (individually), for their opinions.

Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was sought and received through the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Appendix 1 and 2), and hence complies with the National Statement on Ethical Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council et al., 2007 (updated 2018)). Guidance was also taken from the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) guidelines for ethical research in development (Australian Council for International Development, 2017), which is particularly relevant for research being conducted within development NGOs. ACFID provides suggestions for ethical research practice in the international development sector, including culturally sensitive design of research projects and sensitivity toward context. I utilised these suggestions to identify key cultural values that may impact on ethical research principles. This required being critically reflexive about my own cultural values and how these influenced the entire research process. This was particularly important for the participants that were from geographical regions that I was not particularly familiar with. I spoke to several staff members within the organisation that work across these different regions for any thoughts or perspectives that they might have on the most appropriate ways of conducting interviews with participants from these regions. Additionally, I drew on participatory approaches to research design and implementation. Staff were involved in the design, analysis and dissemination of the research to varying degrees. I developed a knowledge translation plan for the dissemination of this research, to ensure that participants can access and engage with the findings when it is complete, part of which was informed by participants and other staff within the INGO. Finally, I held discussions with my research supervisors throughout the research process to identify any arising ethical issues.

4.2: Methods

Research design

This study design was an in-depth single case study, carried out within a single Australian INGO. There was interest and support within the INGO to improve internal knowledge translation so that staff from across the organisation had access to appropriate for delivering quality programs and influencing policy. I had support from key staff members including the research team and relevant senior management. Organisational approval was obtained from the CEO, and key senior management staff were informed of the research. A discussion was held with the organisation's management around being professional and sensitive when reporting results.

This research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 was a consultation phase, designed to inform Phase 2, the main data collection phase. In Phase 1, seven staff from across the INGO were invited to take part in consultation interviews. These interviews informed the development and refinement of the interview questions for Phase 2, as well as provided suggestions on who should be interviewed in Phase 2, how interviews should be conducted, how data might be analysed, and findings disseminated. Ethical issues relating to privacy and publication were also discussed within these interviews. All seven of these participants agreed to be a point of continual reflexivity throughout the research process, and three people offered spontaneously to be interviewed again in Phase 2 (although this did not occur). Ethics approval was sought and obtained separately for both phases.

Sampling and recruitment of participants

Participants in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 were purposively sampled through careful consideration of their potential role in knowledge translation and their unique characteristics, such as work location, level of seniority, type of role and length of time at the organisation, as advised by Liamputtong (2013). The Phase 1 participants (n=7) included staff across a range of programming and advocacy roles within the organisation. These staff were chosen because of their perceived interest in the research topic, and potential insight how best this research could be undertaken.

The participants in Phase 2 were also purposively sampled, partly based on the recommendations of the consultation in Phase 1. I chose to interview staff from two main groups of staff, all of whom worked in programming or advocacy related roles. The first group was country office staff (n=13), who were local in-country staff based in any country office. I included regional office staff in this category as they are also local staff based in a country office. The second group of staff were technical advisors, based in head office (n=13). These staff held roles in a variety of technical areas including medical, research, monitoring and evaluation, program development, resource mobilisation, policy and advocacy. I chose these particular groups of staff so that the research could investigate how knowledge translation processes occur within different staff roles. This 'information-oriented selection' (Flyvbjerg, 2011) allows maximum utility of information from small samples.

Participants for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 were recruited via email. An initial email outlining the research and inviting participation was sent from my research supervisor to all potential participants, on the requirement of the Flinders University ethics committee. I then contacted those who agreed to participate and arranged a suitable time for an interview. Participants' email contact details were obtained through the organisational email system. Email was the most common form of communication within the INGO, and it was assumed that participants would be most likely to be comfortable with this approach. All potential participants were assured that the interviews were completely optional and there would be absolutely no negative repercussions of not participating.

In-depth semi-structured interviews

Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 involved in-depth semi-structured interviews. This format was chosen because in-depth interviews involve a process of “give and take” (Liamputtong, 2013, p.56), allowing a detailed understanding of the complexities of the issue. My position as a colleague to the participants allowed a “shared jargon” (Liamputtong, 2013, p.56) which improved the dynamics of the conversation. Directly prior to each interview, I wrote a pre-interview researcher-identity memo, reflecting on my relationship to the person I was about to interview, any perceptions I had about power dynamics that may exist between us, their particular role in the INGO and my assumptions about the potential importance of knowledge translation to that role, and how I thought they might respond to the interview questions. I thought about how I might approach the interview in light of these reflections and looked through the interview guide and tentatively marked some prompt questions that I thought might be most relevant for that particular person.

Phase 1 interviews

Phase 1 interview questions were developed with the aim to develop a framework to conduct Phase 2 data collection. Participants were given an outline of my draft research questions prior to the interview. The interviews began with an outline of the research idea so far and a reminder that it was a consultation interview to help me to develop questions and strategies that may assist me to carry out my research effectively. I explained that their input would help me to refine my research questions, to develop interview questions, and to make decisions around the selection of interviews for Phase 2 and how these interviews should be conducted. The interview guide focused on broad questions asking about what scope my research should take, what types of knowledge I should be looking for in my research, what kinds of contextual factors I should be looking for, what should be my approach to data collection, any cross-cultural insights they may have, and how I might go about gaining insight into in-country implementing partners. I then asked about appropriate potential participants for Phase 2. The interview closed with a question about ethical concerns relating to privacy and publications, and what might be some appropriate ways of disseminating the findings of the research. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 3.

The interviews were all conducted over Blue Jeans, an internal online video calling system, with the ability to record, that was used for all internal communications, so staff were familiar with its use.

They went for between 45 minutes and one hour. Interviews were recorded and hand-written notes were also taken. Transcripts of the interviews were sent to the seven participants for review and further comment.

The analysis of the interview data was conducted manually, and the results used to refine the overall research questions and to develop an interview guide for Phase 2. The draft interview guide for Phase 2 was sent to Phase 1 participants before it was finalised, along with a compilation of their suggestions on ethical issues to consider and ideas for research dissemination. They were invited to comment on or refine this summary.

Phase 2 interviews

An interview guide for the Phase 2 interviews was developed from the results of Phase 1 (Appendix 4). The questions in the guide were broad, and asked about which types of knowledge were valued by staff, current ways in which knowledge translation was occurring within the INGO, perceived barriers and facilitators to knowledge translation, and ways in which the INGO may improve knowledge translation. The interview guide included prompts for each question that could be varied depending on the job role, experience and interest of each individual participant, and allowed for each participant to spend time talking about the areas that were of significance to them. Therefore, during the interviews I was able to delve into several issues in an unplanned, but deeper, way.

I conducted these interviews in a specific order. I chose to conduct the 13 country office staff interviews before the technical advisor interviews. This was so that I could assess common themes from this group of staff first, and then potentially incorporate some of these themes into the subsequent interviews with technical advisors, if appropriate. I chose to carry out the first six interviews with participants with whom I had worked most closely with and were from countries with which I was more familiar with the context. This gave me an opportunity to familiarise myself with asking the questions, and with the ways they might be answered, with people that I felt comfortable with, and who may feel comfortable to give me feedback on the process if they wanted to. During the course of the first 13 interviews, I learnt to respond to the various pieces of information that were presented to me, and to modify questions or choose different prompt questions as I sensed where people were positioned.

Although I did not change the interview guide for the 11 interviews with technical advisors, I varied the prompt questions depending on the participant. This included asking these participants their views on what they perceived as important for knowledge translation for in-country staff, as well as themselves and their role. I chose to do this because technical advisors' primary role is to support country office staff to carry out programming and advocacy, so their views on what in-country knowledge translation needs were deemed important.

These interviews were also recorded using the Blue Jeans technology (with the exception of one technical advisor interview in which the participant wanted to use the phone). In addition, I took detailed notes during the interview. Interviews were written up using a combination of verbatim transcription and supplementing written notes with listening back to segments of the interview. Directly after each interview, I wrote in my reflection diary thoughts on how the interview went, both structurally and in terms of how engaged the participant was. I noted down any surprises, or issues that contradicted my assumptions, any issues that may have related to language or context, and any also links to previous interviews or strong key messages that came out in the interview. Transcripts from the interviews were sent back to each participant to check the validity of the content.

Data analysis

I began the analysis of Phase 2 interview data using NVivo, coding against very high-level codes such as: types of knowledge; knowledge translation activities; contextual factors affecting knowledge translation; and recommendations. As I did this, the different types of knowledge identified by participants became apparent, and I started to separately code for them (for example, medical knowledge or local knowledge). At this point, I kept the knowledge translation activities and the contextual factors together. I printed these out and used a process of writing in a scrapbook and sorting visually the themes emerging from the contextual factors and the knowledge translation activities categories. With this list of themes, I wrote a description of what was emerging from the data. I then left this for several weeks and worked on the literature review for this thesis. This enabled me to think about how I might link findings to the literature and theory, and how I might re-categorise the findings and themes. I went back to the interview data and re-coded using modified themes based on my original themes and the literature. I broke the themes down into lower-level themes and wrote them each on a post-it-note. At this point, I had approximately 50 post-it notes, which I put up on a wall. From there, larger groupings of themes became obvious quite quickly. I spent some time thinking and sitting with these themes and re-reading the data, until I was familiar with the interview material and confident in my groupings.

My analysis of the findings focused mostly on the perspective of the country office staff. I chose to do this because they emerged as critical actors in the knowledge processes of the INGO. I delineated country office staff by their organisational role into three categories: country managers, program officers, and regional office staff. This was because it became evident during analysis that the roles of staff influenced perspectives on knowledge translation. Country managers, in particular, demonstrated a broad oversight of many actors and scenarios within the INGOs, as their role requires a deep understanding of what is happening on in-country as well as at head office, at a strategic and practical level. I therefore found their testimonies the broadest in focus and their understanding of the many different complexities related to knowledge processes the deepest.

Translating the knowledge from this research

A research dissemination and knowledge translation plan was developed during the research process. As described above, the Phase 1 interviewees provided insight into how and when the results of this research might be best disseminated, and additionally, Phase 2 participants were consulted on this as the data analysis phase was occurring. In this way, the research process ensured that participants were involved in determining the most appropriate ways to dissemination this research. This is in line with the integrated knowledge translation approach to research, whereby the methodology may evolve as the project proceeds, and the primary audience are the knowledge users who participate in the research project (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2012, Lapaige, 2010). Additionally, I consulted with the research team within the INGO about their thoughts on the dissemination of this research.

I wanted to make sure that practicable, implementable suggestions arose from my thesis. It was important for me to disseminate knowledge back and ensure that the “research reaches the people who have helped make it” (Smith, 1999). However, I took on board Smith’s advice (1999) that “the responsibility of researchers and academics is not to simply share surface information (pamphlet knowledge) but to share the theories and analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented” (p.16). To this end, I carried out member reflections with those interviewed, presenting preliminary findings and analysis with them and asking for feedback. I also presented preliminary results to the organisation’s research team for feedback. I ensured that I did not provide highly synthesised results, but also delved into the theories that I used, and how I went about analysing the data, and the literature that backed this up. The preliminary findings resonated with the staff members. Several staff reflected that the results tied in with recent staff surveys about organisational culture. These staff, as well as the research participants themselves, said they felt this research was important and wanted practical solutions to arise from it.

Suggestions from both research participants and research team staff were that I disseminate the research back to the INGO in different ‘bite-sized chunks’ depending on the internal audience, develop clear recommendations for different teams within the INGO, present at all-staff forums, and provide summaries on the Intranet. These suggestions will from part of my research translation strategy once the research is finalised. Additionally, opportunities arose during the course of this research for some of the learning from the literature and broad themes as they emerged from my analysis to be utilised. The emerging findings informed an organisational knowledge management strategy, and provided input to organisational forums where this knowledge was relevant. Opportunities to present these findings to the broader development sector in Australia and beyond will be sought when this research is finalised.

Chapter 5: The work of knowledge translation

Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings and discussion of this research. Throughout these two chapters, I delineate staff by their role within the INGO. I use the term 'INGO' to refer to the organisation as a whole, including head office and all country offices. The two groups of staff included in this analysis are:

1. Country office staff, who are based in the INGO's country offices. These staff are local to the country of operation. I further delineate these staff into:
    - Country managers, who lead the INGO's work in-country and manage the country team.
    - Program officers, who work as part of the country team in programming and advocacy roles.
    - Regional office staff, who support in-country partners in countries where there is no country office.
2. Technical advisors, who are based in head office and provide technical support to country teams in areas such as program development, monitoring and evaluation, medical and technical expertise, and grant development.

In Chapter 5, I focus on the 'work' of knowledge translation within the case study INGO. This chapter responds to the first two research sub-questions: 1) What knowledge is important at different levels of the INGO, and what are the characteristics of this knowledge? and 2) What are the existing knowledge translation processes of the INGO, including between different stakeholders across the global structure?

In answering these two questions, I draw on the concept of 'work' explored by Star and colleagues (Star and Strauss, 1999, Star, 1995), to examine the details of knowledge translation work in the INGO. Star's method of analysing the "work behind the work" (Timmermans, 2015, p.1) is a useful way to examine who is carrying out different aspects of the knowledge translation work, which parts of this work may be visible or not visible, and what this work allows the INGO to achieve. For this aspect of the research, I narrow my focus to the role of country office staff, whilst acknowledging that other staff within the INGO are also responsible for knowledge translation work.

In this chapter, I first situate country office staff within the context of the INGO. Like many 'local' staff working in international development organisations, the INGO's country office staff work at the interface between the INGO and in-country partner organisations or communities (between the ‘local’ and the ‘global’). This work can be described as occurring at the boundaries between different social worlds or knowledge cultures (Lamont and Molnár, 2002, Star and Griesemer, 1989). I deploy the concept of the ‘middle figures’ of international development (Peters, 2020), local staff employed at the country level who work between such boundaries to carry out the implementation work of development.

Secondly, I examine the different *types* of knowledge that are valued by country office staff, how they are used, and how their characteristics influence use. This is in line with the premise that knowledge translation processes depend on the nature of the knowledge itself (Reimer-Kirkham et al., 2009). I show how knowledge in this context is crucial to shaping programming and advocacy work, and how local, contextual knowledge in particular, contributes to adaptive practice.

Thirdly, I show how these different types of knowledge, which I label ‘heterogeneous knowledges’ (Brown, 2010, Ferguson, 2016), are required to be brought together, or merged, in some way, in order for country office staff to successfully facilitate program implementation and advocacy work. This merging of heterogenous knowledges, therefore, forms a key element of knowledge translation ‘work’.

Finally, I consider the highly social and relational nature of the knowledge translation work that country office staff perform in their role as middle figures. I examine this through paying attention to two essential knowledge interactions in which country office staff engage. One is with in-country partners, and the other with technical advisors in head office. I argue that this highly social knowledge work carried out by country office staff contributes to the coming together of negotiated knowledge (King et al., 2016), which essentially enables more effective programming and advocacy, and therefore contributes to the INGO’s overall purpose.

5.1: Country office staff as middle figures at knowledge boundaries

This section sets the scene for the rest of the chapter by describing where country office staff are situated within the broader INGO, the roles that they play, and their interactions with internal and external stakeholders. This background assists my analysis of the staff’s knowledge translation work described in Sections 5.2 and 5.3.

The country office staff of the INGO are responsible for programming and advocacy in their country. These are the two closely related activities of INGOs which make up the practice of international development (Lewis, 2014), and are referred to as implementation. Country office staff are responsible for implementation in line with the INGO’s global organisational strategy, whilst also responding to community and in-country partner needs and the local context. In their implementation work, country office staff are supported by technical advisors and other staff at the INGO's head office. Country office staff work at the interface between a wide range of different stakeholders, including head office, donors, the country office and 'the field', often across large geographical and cultural spaces. One of the most important relationships that country office staff have is with in-country partners, who either directly implement programs with the INGO, or are pivotal to ensuring that the work of the INGO can be carried out. The INGO has a medical and public health focus, and its in-country implementing partners are often health facilities at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In most countries where the INGO works, these services are provided by government, and a smaller proportion by non-government agencies. Non-implementing partners include various levels of government, other NGOs, donors, research agencies, consultants, peak bodies, and community representative bodies, amongst others.

Working at this interface is often delicate and complex work for country office staff, requiring them to balance the motivations and capacities of these different stakeholders. One country manager described country office staff's role as a conduit of knowledge from the broader sector to local partners, and how staff "act as a bridge to source information from the international community and bring this information back to them" (Naserian, country manager, 13/06/2019). This type of 'bridging' role of the local in-county staff of international development, and their critical importance in the implementation of international development programs, has only recently started to be studied in detail (Kamruzzaman, 2017, Sundberg, 2020). Other elements of this bridging work included trying to find common ground between the project management and financial systems of the INGO and partners. Sanaya, a country manager, described the intensive interaction that is required with partners, particularly government partners, to enable the two organisations to work together:

> *The whole project cycle management, they need support because most of the time the way government works is completely different than us*. (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Country office staff described acting as a buffer between the INGO and implementing partners, to reduce the impact of requests or changes implemented by the INGO. In this way, they act as a "squeezed middle" that must comply with organisational requirements whilst also trying to "protect front-line practitioners and partner organisations" (Eyben, 2015, p.23). Country office staff were keenly aware of the layers of power and politics between different actors with whom they were working. For example, they were sometimes positioned in the middle of two layers of 'experts' – clinicians in partner organisations, and the development experts of the INGO head office.

Considering this positioning of country office staff, I have used the concept of the 'middle figure', coined by Merry (2006) and applied to the development context by Peters (2011, 2020). Peters applies the term to local staff at the country-office level who play an important role in facilitating the implementation of development work. Drawing on Merry (2006), who uses the term to describe intermediary figures that work between different social worlds and translate ideas between the global and local levels, Peters (2011) describes these staff as those who "make global, transnational ideas intelligible to local individuals and communities, and who express local concerns in a manner sensible to the international community" (p.22). This is, therefore, a useful concept to apply to the exploration of the knowledge translation work of country office staff in this INGO.

To define where the knowledge translation work of country office staff occurs, I draw on Star's definition of boundaries as "a shared space, where exactly that sense of here and there are confounded" (Star, 2010), rather than a sharp edge that delineates a difference. Some scholars posit that boundaries are "markers of difference", but boundaries can also be used to enable knowledge production and communication, and allow a shared vocabulary across different communities (Lamont and Molnár, 2002, p.180). Drawing on this scholarship, I use the concept of boundaries to denote a space that can be conducive to the exchange of knowledge between different knowledge cultures (Timmermans, 2015), which incorporates the concept of different epistemologies. Therefore, I am interested less in an examination of the boundary work that is conducted to maintain power (as described by Lamont and Molnár, 2002), but rather, in how knowledge translation happens within these boundaries. Boundary work is inherently social and relational, occurring across a socially constructed interface which needs to be managed (Qureshi et al., 2018, Jones et al., 2012). Section 5.3 will analyse in detail the social and relational knowledge work conducted by country office staff at these boundaries.

Country office staff are involved in accessing, exchanging, transforming and disseminating different types of knowledge. This occurs across the global-local divide, and involves navigation across cultural spaces and a wide variety of stakeholders. The meaning, purpose, and goals of programming and advocacy are translated at the point of interaction between country offices and in-country partners. The INGO, therefore, relies upon country office staff to work at these boundaries to ensure that its purpose is articulated in the way it was intended (see also Tesseur and Crack, 2020, Peters, 2020). One pertinent example of this work is offered by Maya, a country manager, who described translating development jargon to partners who were mostly clinicians:

> *In terms of [specialists], they have very limited knowledge of public health. So, when you talk about these theoretical things like* ***ownership or participation****, this kind of things, then they start to get lost.* (Maya, country manager, 24/05/2019, my emphasis)

The remainder of this chapter will describe, classify and analyse this knowledge translation work at the boundaries and show how country office staff play a middle figure role in the INGO's knowledge translation work.

5.2: Heterogeneous knowledges

As discussed in Chapter 3, the practice of international development relies on a range of different knowledge types that come from various sources (Ferguson, 2016). Country office staff interviewed for this study differentiated between knowledge types very clearly, both in terms of their characteristics and how they were used. Overall, knowledge was valued amongst these staff according to what it can bring to practice. This is unsurprising, given the body of literature that supports the notion of knowledge translation being deeply linked to practice, and the field of international development itself being so practice-driven (Mawdsley et al., 2002, Boaz et al., 2019). The term 'embodied practice' (Yeh, 2016) applies here, meaning that knowledge is 'lived', gained through observations and actions over time, and although perhaps not codified in words or symbols, an essential component in generating effective solutions. This knowledge, then, is embodied within the practice of the work. The different types of knowledge, their characteristics and uses described by country office staff in this section are closely associated with the actions of practice.

Contemporary discussions in the international development literature about knowledge often focus on what constitutes knowledge, what counts as knowledge, who shapes it, and who are the experts (Narayanaswamy and Schöneberg, 2020). From a country office staff perspective, the value of certain types of knowledge was related to how much a staff member or team needed that knowledge for practice. The types of knowledge described vary in nature, and they are produced, accessed and used in different ways and under different contexts. However, they are rarely used in isolation. A combination of different knowledge types is used together by country office staff to create the evidence required for planning, implementation and adaptation of programming. Country managers, in particular, were acutely aware of getting this balance right – of not spending too much time or energy chasing or interpreting certain types of knowledge that may not be as practically useful as another. The following describes and classifies the different types of knowledge that were important for country office staff.

Organisational strategic and operational knowledge

Knowledge of the INGO's global strategy and operational guidelines was foundational for country office staff, enabling them to align programming and advocacy to the INGO's strategic direction. Organisational strategic and operational knowledge in this way, acts as a guide, helping country teams to make decisions about how, when, and where to program and invest funds. This type of knowledge was referred to by several country office staff as the 'first' type of knowledge required, almost as a scaffolding for other types of knowledge to build on.

> ***First and foremost**, knowledge that my staff need is knowledge of [the INGO's] strategic direction. [The INGO] won't encourage and support us if it goes against the direction of the strategic direction*. (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019, my emphasis)

As Ravi explained, embedding this knowledge into programming is essential for garnering organisational support for programming. In some cases, knowledge of the INGO's strategy was more useful in justifying and affirming project proposals or presentations, rather than informing project design.

This knowledge also plays a key role in communicating to in-country partners about the INGO's goals and focus, and acts as a foundation for country teams to develop synergies with the work and operational systems of partner organisations. Words such as "interlinked" and "synergised" were used by country office staff to describe how they used this type of knowledge for implementation. Just prior to the interviews being conducted, a new organisational strategic plan was released by the INGO, and this provided a clarity that was welcomed by country office staff.

> *The strategy is not a heavy, lengthy document now. It's in infographic form. It's easy to understand and communicate to others … this could be government officials or charities.* (Faizan, program officer, 17/05/2019)

As Faizan described, clarity was a key attribute that enabled this type of knowledge to be used effectively. The fact that this type of knowledge was named first by most country office staff shows its importance to their practice. It may also be an indicator that prior to the development of the new organisational strategy, there was a lack of clear strategic direction which caused issues for country teams, particularly in communicating with in-country partners.

Local, contextual knowledge

Once the strategic parameters of the INGO were known, by far the most valuable type of knowledge for country office staff was local, contextual knowledge. They asserted that an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the context enabled effective programming, advocacy and adaptation. In the international development literature, local, contextual knowledge is described as crucial to effective development (Mawdsley et al., 2002, Briggs, 2013, King et al., 2016), and defined as the cultural, political and historical dimensions of a context (Honig, 2019), local particularities and dynamics (Evers et al., 2009), and "the intimate knowledge that one attains through familiarity with the local environment" (Kothari et al., 2011, p.6).

Local, contextual knowledge allows country office staff to understand what will work and what will not, to adapt programming when needed and remain flexible to changing contexts, to identify gaps that can potentially be filled by the INGO, and to identify where advocacy, funding, or changes are needed. Country office staff affirmed that this kind of information allowed them to make decisions about how to spend resources and to ensure that funds are used in the most effective and efficient manner, ultimately having the most impact on the communities that the programmes are intended to reach. Additionally, holding this type of knowledge increases the ability of country office staff to establish and sustain key partnerships in-country.

Local, contextual knowledge was described by country office staff as encompassing knowledge about community needs, the workings and politics of local and national health systems, 'people knowledge', personal and political dynamics of key stakeholders, cultural and contextual nuance, and knowledge of the local NGO and donor environment.

> *Because our work is with community health programs in different provinces, 50-60% of the knowledge [needed] is really about the needs in the community, the structure of the health referral systems and how they work, what other NGOs are doing and what's been effective. It's important to know about the local teachers that we partner with, the politicians, all the different groups that we partner with on the ground. I think it's important to see the context of how they view our interventions.* (Anjelica, country manager, 31/05/2019)

In this quote, Anjelica estimates that at least half of the knowledge that her country team utilises to effectively implement programs and carry out advocacy is local, contextual knowledge. Getting to know the local stakeholders and how they operate, gaining access to the knowledge they have about how things operate on the ground, and getting feedback on the INGO's work enable the team to design and implement successful interventions. This kind of knowledge also includes knowing how the INGO is viewed by various stakeholders, and how its reputation could be maintained or improved, as described below:

> *We have to know what our reputation is, how do we improve our reputation, what is our track record in the sector. How do we use that to support what we are doing, but also to gain further knowledge to keep that story journey going?* (Laura, regional office staff, 22/08/2019)

Knowledge inputs from community members was crucial. This is knowledge from those "who we are trying to achieve it for", as described by Laura (regional office staff, 22/08/2019), and included community knowledge, knowledge about local needs and priorities, and historical knowledge held by communities and people. Community feedback or ideas was used to influence local governments, as shown by this quote from Ana, a program officer:

> *The feedback that they gave us really helped to understand and to revise the model we were using … [and] has really helped to engage the local authorities. We have seen big results.* (Ana, program officer, 02/07/2019)

A key aspect of local, contextual knowledge was detail of the health system of the country. This included the broader health context with breakdowns to specific regions, the country's priorities for health (for example, knowledge of the National Health Plan or similar), key current developments in the health arena of the country, health data (for example, surgery backlog in different areas), gaps in resource allocation, and other challenges faced by the health system. Sanaya, a country manager, explains how this local information is key to the successful implementation of development programs:

> *We need knowledge about the health system, how the health systems are operating, what are the different tiers of service delivery within the health system in the country where you are operating. And then where the decisions are made, and how those decisions are then translated into actions. How your partners basically work, what is their mechanisms of working, what are their policies, how are decisions made over there and how those decisions are translated down into the field. So, knowledge of all of these fields are very, very important as an organisation for us to operate.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Here, Sanaya is referring to government partners and how important it is to know how local systems operate and how decisions are made and enacted. This will influence how the INGO works with government to implement projects. She called this "inside-information", critical knowledge about the power dynamics within the health system of the country. It includes the 'people' knowledge – who are the key stakeholders, which actor is doing what, and what are the dynamics of the partnerships between key stakeholders in the regions where the INGO is working or hoping to work. This was powerfully described by Sanaya as "cultural dynamics" as follows:

> *You also need to understand the* ***cultural dynamics*** *over there and how they operate, and when you would be talking, what those people like and don't like. Because if you don't really understand those dynamics, you cannot really run those partnerships successfully.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019, my emphasis)

Local, contextual knowledge also includes knowledge about the work of other organisations in the same field and where the gaps are that the INGO can inhabit.

> *So, we are able to see the gaps in terms of human resources, in terms of equipment, in terms of commodities, and in terms of health information systems. Those gaps, we now have the information, and we can say these are the gaps, this is what can be done.* (Sean, program officer 26/07/2019)

There were several important features of local, contextual knowledge. Firstly, this type of knowledge is dynamic, and staff in country offices must continually update their knowledge about any changes in the context. In this way, as explained by Laura (regional office staff, 22/8/2019), there is no "end point" to this knowledge, "there's just so much, and you never have enough knowledge, you never know enough". This type of knowledge exists in different layers or different levels across the country (for example, knowledge of politics at the national level compared to that at the local or district level), and cultural dynamics often vary across different places within the same country.

> *You need to understand the local context, local dynamics, local policies, and also keep yourself updated with all the changes that are happening.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

The source of most local, contextual knowledge is *people*. Obtaining this knowledge involves establishing and maintaining relationships with key people, mostly in-country partners. It is important for country office staff to hear different perspectives from different stakeholders, so that they can balance them all. This was articulated by Maya, a country manager:

We have to hear different perspectives. So, for me, I talked to the government counterpart [at the Central level]. I talked to the State Health Director, the people in the State Health Department, and I requested to help to communicate with the township medical officers, and I went there so I could hear everything from the health staff. (Maya, country manager, 24/05/2019)

Local, contextual knowledge is often in the form of anecdotal information and opinions, and evolves into a grasp of the "essence" of the local context (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019). This is not just a direct transfer or exchange of knowledge, but often an un-codified understanding of how things work which has been described "not as a tool, but rather more as a perspective on development, as a way of knowing, that happens within particular contexts" (Ferguson et al., 2010). In this way, local, contextual knowledge is embedded in practice, and is a type of soft knowledge that often takes the form of alternative ways of knowing (Ferguson, 2016, Briggs, 2013, Yeh, 2016, Honig and Gulrajani, 2018).

Medical and technical knowledge

Basic knowledge of the medical and technical aspects of the INGO's health interventions is important for country office staff. This type of knowledge is needed for program design, implementation and advocacy, to develop effective partnerships and to build and maintain credibility with partners and the sector more broadly. To be a credible player in the field, country office staff should:

Know what are the [different] diseases, how they actually develop, what are the treatments that you can offer in those particular diseases, what are the equipment that can be used to treat what kind of particular condition. (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019).

Because the INGO has a medical focus, staff need to be seen to know what they are talking about when talking to government staff and in-country partners, many of whom are medically trained. Without this knowledge, country office staff find it more difficult to engage in discussions or negotiate with these stakeholders. This kind of knowledge also enables new ideas to develop at the country level, as described by Sanaya:

In the country office … everybody needs to know [the medical and technical information] ***inside out*** *to be able to effectively develop new projects and then support partners in the implementation of those projects, and then bring in new*

> *ideas, innovation. I think this actually goes back to a basic question that you need to understand the problem definition, and if you don't really have the knowledge of the field then it is highly unlikely that you would be able to define your problem, and then obviously then you cannot define problem rightly, then solution would also perhaps be irrelevant.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019, my emphasis)

Here, Sanaya emphasises the role of medical and technical knowledge in identifying local service gaps and designing appropriate programs. Another example of this was provided by one country manager, who described the utmost importance of the country team to have a certain, quite specific, level of medical technical knowledge in order to engage effectively with government and other partners, particularly doctors. The quote from Ravi below highlights how country office staff need to demonstrate a certain level of technical competency to be able to engage in conversations with partners:

> *I keep on telling [my staff] that 'knowledge is power'. You can talk to the person and they will keep you on the same footing who have that knowledge. If they see that you do not have that knowledge, they will not give you any credit, they will just treat you as a non-person. When you are talking about [specific medical condition], you are talking to doctors who are highly technical persons, and there has always been a cold war between doctors and non-doctors in the public and private sectors. If you are talking about [this condition], go to the journals and try to know the basics of [it] … what does this equipment do, who uses it. Then you have the basic words, knowledge. Then you are on the same footing as doctors, at least you know the same as the doctor … otherwise he will not value you. You're not a technical person, you may not know the detail of the [equipment], but at least you know the name of [it] and what purpose it serves.* (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019)

Without having this level of medical, technical knowledge, Ravi, in his experience, believes that the doctors will "treat you as a non-person", effectively destroying any advocacy or other negotiating or knowledge exchange that may be required for effective implementation. Here, he is clearly affirming that "knowledge is power". Holding this medical knowledge is a crucial element of partnership and advocacy with key people in-country.

Research knowledge

Research knowledge was defined by staff as published or peer reviewed research, operational research carried out in-country, international frameworks and guidelines from peak bodies and other sector specific guidelines. Research knowledge brings new ideas to country teams and enables them to develop projects, define problems, ensure their work is evidence-based, and to "avoid re-creating the wheel" (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019). Country office staff described how research knowledge is used in interactions and negotiations with in-country partners, and for advocacy purposes. Faizan, below, explained the country team's role in ensuring that research knowledge reached in-country partners (in this case, a charity) who otherwise may not have access to it:

> *There are many charities who only do service delivery, but this type of knowledge is very important to build their capacity in the context of better quality, innovation, what is happening in other parts of the world. Many organisations are not aware of these things.* (Faizan, program officer, 17/05/2019)

Faizan describes here how the country office accesses this knowledge from outside the country, and ensures it is available to other organisations in-country who may not have access to it, and how this knowledge may benefit the quality of in-country programming.

Locally produced contextual knowledge is most useful for programming and advocacy purposes, however several country office staff felt they mostly rely on research data from international bodies and organisations due to a lack of local research. As described by Sanaya, below, this is often due to low research capacity in-country:

> *Unfortunately, the problem that we are facing in this country is that we are not really good at research. As a whole, entire country. And we always rely on data from international bodies and organisations. This is not really sometimes relevant with our context. When you go and really research in the local context, that is when the government is more convinced.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Many country office staff agreed that governments prefer local evidence, either in the form of published data on national prevalence rates, or research about gaps or "what works" (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019). For this reason, country office staff particularly valued forms of 'small' research (Burchett et al., 2015) such as operational research, 'knowledge, attitudes and practices' surveys, high quality local evidence, evaluations, and patient satisfaction surveys. Pilot studies were an example of the types of small research that governments like to see:

> *Local evidence … that look, this is something that we tried, tested, these were the challenges and this is how we addressed these challenges, and now this is the final*

shape of the project. If you go and implement that product, this would result in that (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

This interview material shows that research is perceived as most useful when it relates directly to practice and the local context. There is a balance to be struck that country office staff must manage. They do this by investing work into mediating between these types of knowledge, substituting or adapting global for local when necessary, ensuring that global knowledge is able to be accessed by local organisations, and using both types for advocacy purposes.

Experiential knowledge

Country office staff described experiential knowledge as experience working within the INGO, current and past knowledge of how things work, and experience gained through relationships with past and present in-country partners. This was described as "being able to use our own knowledge" (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019). Experience is a valued form of knowledge, as country manager Biyu suggests, "for me, and for the country team here, the first thing is experience – making sure everyone is experienced in what they are doing" (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019).

A significant aspect of experiential knowledge was knowing how to work with in-country partners. For some country office staff, having worked with government partners was a crucial piece of know-how, as described by Maya, "if you have experience working with the government and health systems, you know more or less what it is like" (Maya, country manager, 24/05/2019).

There was the sense of country programs learning over time, slowly adapting programming through building on different types of experiences, as Biyu summed up: "We just got this knowledge along the way" (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019). This was further explained by Sanaya:

> *For program development, most of the time we use our own knowledge and our own experience from the field … the programs team use their own knowledge, experience of, and learnings from, their programming for the development of new programming.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Learning from past programming, including mistakes, was described as crucial. Many country programs evolve over many years through "the lessons that we are taking from the past that we are trying to incorporate into our future programming" (Faizan, program officer, 17/05/2019). From the perspective of one technical advisor, Faizan's country program was evidently built on experience gathered over time:

> *[The country program] just seemed to evolve from small beginnings in the 90's not knowing anything about the context and trying to find a market for [medical consumables], and then realising there weren't actually that many surgeons that could [use these consumables] in the country, did training for surgeons and then gradually as things evolved, developed this kind of district model. I'm not sure how that emerged. Did the idea for that model come from the partners or the stakeholders in that context because there were a few different NGOs working in a similar way at the same time? And things seemed to coalesce for some time into a particular way of working that seems to have delivered something.* (Donna, technical advisor, 22/08/2019)

Although this technical advisor was aware of the history of the program, the reasons for how this happened remain elusive. This captures the tacit nature of experiential knowledge, important in evolving the program, but difficult to codify. Much of this knowledge lives inside the people and teams who were involved in the program.

Overview of heterogenous knowledge types

The diverse knowledge types described above can be described as heterogenous knowledges. They come from different sources, take different forms and provide information that informs different aspects of the work that is carried out by the INGO. Local, contextual knowledge and experiential forms of knowledge, in particular, enable the country teams, and therefore the INGO, to respond to local needs. Medical, technical and research knowledge plays a greater role in influencing partners, including government partners, and providing evidence for interventions. These different types of knowledge can be classified as tacit or explicit (or codified) forms of knowledge. Using groupings similar to Kothari et al. (2011), the tacit knowledge described by country offices staff includes most of the local, contextual knowledge (held by the organisation's staff as well as by in-country partners) and the experiential knowledge. The organisational strategies, research evidence and the medical and technical knowledge, for the most part, are explicit forms of knowledge. This distinction becomes important as this research begins to examine how these heterogeneous knowledges are used by country office staff and the broader organisation. The following sections within this chapter describe some of the knowledge translation work that goes on in terms of how these heterogeneous knowledges are used.

5.3: The work of merging diverse knowledges

The heterogeneous knowledges described above are rarely used in isolation by country office staff. A combination of different knowledge types is used together to create the evidence required for planning, implementation and adaptation of programming. According to one country manager, "all of this has to come together like a jigsaw puzzle" (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019). This is a subtle but necessary type of knowledge translation work, although not labelled as such by country office staff or the INGO more broadly. It involves sifting, valuing and ranking, and making decisions about what knowledges matter most in which context. This is a deliberate, considered type of knowledge translation work. It is the integration of these heterogeneous "multiple knowledges" that effective development is reliant on (Brown, 2010, p.120). One country manager argued that synthesising different types of knowledge together enables the transformative change that the organisation is seeking:

> *If we don't know these kinds of information and details, we cannot really make good programs, we cannot really talk with our partners who most of the time are clinicians, and we cannot bring about a good change within the system. So that information, attitude, understanding of context, culture, information about the broader policies of the government as well as your partners policies, and then knowledge of your field is very, very important.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Here, Sanaya refers to a range of knowledges from the clinical, to the personalities and culture of partners. Bringing these together is what enables country teams to design effective programs, collaborate with partners, and bring about a "good change within the system". Sanaya implies that knowledge merging brings new ideas to the table, supports partners in implementing high quality programs, and generates solutions and evidence that they work.

This work can also be described as knowledge integration (Brown et al., 2013, Ho, 2013), where "by integrating forms of (new) knowledge – academic, practitioner, educational and cultural expressions of knowledge – new insights can be created and strategies formulated that contribute to the development of new policies and practices for the development sector" (Hivos, 2012, p.6). This type of knowledge translation work within the INGO aligns with fifth generation knowledge management (Cummings et al., 2013), knowledge co-creation, and valuing the existence of multiple knowledges (Ho et al., 2012, p.213, Brown, 2010). I argue that this knowledge integration is part of the knowledge translation work of country office staff. This work is often complex in the sense that it involves "different frames of reference and differences in opinion" and draws on implicit knowledge that has not been codified (Brown et al., 2013, p.3). Kothari et al. (2011, p.7) points out that "integrating and reconciling tacit and explicit knowledge", and identifying overlaps between the two, is one of the most important aspects of knowledge translation.

Here, I draw on the concept of articulation work (Griesemer, 2015, Star, 1995, Peters, 2020) to describe this work of bringing different types of knowledge together. This is "the work of fitting things together in real time in the workplace" (Star, 1995, p.504). It is not just different knowledge types that country office staff need to fit together, but also the different knowledge cultures and knowledge needs of various stakeholders that need to be navigated and negotiated. Multiple stakeholders – communities, implementing partners, donors, decision-makers, co-implementers, NGOs, other INGOs – all hold and value different forms of knowledge, different views about the nature of knowledge, and use different language to describe it (Brown, 2010).

For country office staff, bringing together these heterogenous knowledge types involves a variety of processes, including relationship building and negotiation with a wide variety of stakeholders, assessing the difficulty and opportunity cost of accessing or using certain evidence, assessing the quality of evidence, transforming that evidence into something useful, and exchanging or disseminating it. It may involve presenting this knowledge in an appropriate way to a wide range of different stakeholders, depending on the purpose, including to in-country partners, community members, clinicians, or to head office staff, for example, to justify why they want to program in a certain way. These processes are social and relational and often rely on trust, reputation and relationships that have built over time. They also rely on a keen awareness of politics and power in relation to knowledge, whether relating to external partners or internal staff. Country office staff must understand the different values that are placed on different types of knowledge by different people. The knowledge translation work of advocacy, for example, requires country office staff to understand the medical field they are working in, identify the purposes of the advocacy, access or produce local evidence, gather and merge convincing evidence to address issues, including from practical trials of programming, and then be able to talk confidently to government partners or doctors and convince people. The relationship work that goes on as part of this knowledge translation work is therefore complex, cultural, contextual, dynamic, nuanced, and takes time.

The complexities of bringing these different types of knowledge together were explained by a technical advisor, Donna, who links this to the field of international development generally:

> *I feel like, if we are talking about international development generally, it's so hard because it is so broad, in any given sector there is going to be sector specific*

> *knowledge, and then knowledge around projects and programs and knowledge about that context. And you need somehow to bring those three things together to make a project in that context work, and then somehow you need to be able to share out of that context in a way that people not in that context can see and relate to, otherwise your tacit learning gets lost, and you don't necessarily formally capture it and learn as an organisation if you don't have ways of recording what has gone on and what has been learnt, or sharing that beyond a particular team.* (Donna, technical advisor 22/08/2019)

These findings showed that country office staff play a very particular role in knowledge translation – that is, the bringing together of heterogeneous knowledges in a way that adapts to the dynamic nature of this knowledge, and the local context. The purpose of this work, according to country office staff, is to ensure that programming is designed and implemented in line with local needs and changing contexts, and is flexible and adaptable. In other words, that programming 'works'. This is the key purpose of knowledge translation itself – enabling better practice and policy (Salter and Kothari, 2016). The work of merging diverse knowledges, therefore, is a key component of the knowledge translation work that INGOs need to engage in to improve the knowledge to action gap in international development.

5.4: The social and relational work of knowledge translation

Knowledge translation at the boundaries of the organisation also requires social and relational work. Above all, knowledge translation is a social process (Salter and Kothari, 2016). The *how* of many of these tasks relies heavily on what I have termed 'essential knowledge interactions', which are social exchanges essential for accessing, exchanging, transforming and disseminating these different types of knowledge. My research found that as well as being inseparable from practice, knowledge processes of country office staff were also inseparable from people and relationships. These knowledge interactions are one of the ways in which diverse forms of knowledge are merged, negotiated and transformed.

This section will uncover some of these crucial knowledge interactions that define the "social contours of knowledge" (Jacobson, 2007, p.120). These interactions are often very subtle, but shape development practice in a dynamic way (Ferguson et al., 2010). This knowledge work is social in the sense that it is co-constructed with a variety of stakeholders, arises through negotiation and dialogue, and is dependent on the social context under which it is being produced and agreed upon.

It is also relational work, affected deeply by the strength and type of relationships between knowledge partners.

Essential knowledge interactions with in-country partners

Much of the knowledge required for programming and advocacy is accessed, exchanged and interpreted through interactions between country office staff and in-country partners. In-country partners are particularly important to the exchange of local, contextual knowledge. Country teams rely on this knowledge for adaptive, practice-based approaches to programming, as described earlier. The value of the knowledge that is held by partners is largely in their linkages to local communities and their lived experience in the context. A program officer pointed out the importance of local partner information for implementation:

> *Programs are traditionally designed for the people. So, partner information, what they say, this is very important, because they are the ones going under the experience. So, the information that they will give you most likely is the best information that you can use to achieve the best results.* (Sean, program officer, 25/07/2019)

Here, Sean links the knowledge of partners to ensuring that programs are designed appropriately for the communities they are intended to support. He also describes this knowledge as lived knowledge, as these stakeholders are experiencing the intervention in their own context.

Significant investment is made by country office staff into building and maintaining relationships with in-country partners to keep the flow and exchange of information between the parties. Through these ongoing relationships, trust is built over time, with many country offices holding relationships with the same partners over many years. Constant interaction with partners is crucial to maintain the relationship. This is an ongoing, dynamic exchange that must be maintained over time, a long-term investment, as described by Maya:

> *This kind of information collection is not a one-off, things are changing on the ground all the time … so, the flow of information that you need to seek goes continuously, and from different sources, and we need to triangulate as well. Not just a snapshot survey, we need to learn more and more as the project goes.* (Maya, country manager, 24/05/2019)

Maya contrasts this long-term investment to build and maintain partner relationships with a “snapshot” approach. Here, she is referring to INGO head office thinking, mistakenly in her view, that it easy to capture a partners' opinions or knowledge in a one-off encounter or survey. Time is a crucial element to this relationship building as described by program officer:

> *We need to hear them out, we have a one-to-one with partners about how we can advance [health] services in those project locations, and then spend some time talking to beneficiaries, local NGOs and service providers, government counterparts, the district hospital, [sub-district] level, tertiary, at all levels. Just hearing out the local needs and priorities as well.* (Karan, program officer, 08/05/2019)

Country teams engage in two-way communication with partners and in this way build up relationships and trust over time. This has benefits to the broader INGO, as described by Ravi below, as it is deeply related to organisational credibility and reputation:

> *These NGOs have been working with us since 2008, we know how they work … our project lead is constantly in touch with them, and they talk to them about work, about project problems. When we had the cash-flow crisis, our credibility was at stake, but because of our relationship, they trusted us because our credibility is high. And we don't have a hidden agenda. The relationship is how you position [our INGO] in the eyes of the stakeholders, the NGO, the community.* (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019)

Ravi refers to a "cash-flow crisis" that required county office staff to explain to in-country partners why the INGO could no longer fund certain programs they had agreed to. The relationship work that the country office had done with these partners previously meant that the INGO's reputation was not damaged during this period. Keeping these relationships strong was key to country programs being able to survive.

> *If relationships are good, the coordination is better, we know what to expect of each other, and how to access information and from whom as well.* (Karan, program officer 08/05/2019).

Country teams share knowledge with their partners around what kinds of programmatic interventions are happening in other regions or countries. Sometimes, implementing partners and other stakeholders require knowledge of technical areas that may be newer to them, and where knowledge in the field is still growing. Information flows both ways. Country office staff share synthesised project data, such as monitoring and evaluation data, to facilitate discussion with partners. Country office staff recognise that there is always more that could be done in terms of knowledge interactions with partners, if there were more time, and that they "have not fully appreciated the technical expertise from our partners" (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019). They recognise that their implementing partners are often developing unique ways of working and innovations that are not necessarily being captured or shared further, highlighting the value and challenge of two-way knowledge exchange:

> *This is still a challenging area for us still as a country office. We are still trying to see how best we can position ourselves to be picking these learnings and using the learnings to strengthen our way forward.* (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019)

Here, Biyu recognises the importance of taking into consideration the different world views and epistemologies held by their implementing partners, and the fact that consideration of these differences is difficult due to the competing world views of organisational and donor requirements.

Specific forms of knowledge, and ways of delivering this knowledge, are required for effective advocacy with governments at different levels. The value of the social and reputational work for advocacy purposes cannot be underestimated. The social nature of knowledge for advocacy was explained by a number of country managers, such as Maya:

> *In terms of mid-level government staff, in my point of view, the first thing is how well do you know this person? How do these people feel comfortable with you? In terms of knowledge and experience, and their point of view on the person who is advocating. And also, friendliness. If you make friends it's easier to influence and advocate. And sometimes when you talk about changes, people always think about two things - what benefit would it offer to beneficiaries, and what benefit would it offer to them, the person. Sometimes we have to think about these things as well, it's human nature.* (Maya, country manager, 24/05/2019)

Sometimes, in the case of advocacy, knowledge must travel through several pathways, such as from one government official to another, or from one medical specialist to another as in this country, as described by this country manager:

> *When one governor hears from another governor itself, that's the only time they listen. When we were presenting the community health model, ok there was some acceptance, but when we brought them on learning visits – we brought them to visit our projects in our first two provinces in projects that were successful. Then the learning was like 99% because they can see oh they did it in a poor province so we*

can actually do it. They saw how the local nurses learned, how they implemented, so it was [specialists] hearing it from fellow [specialists] in other provinces. (Anjelica, country manager, 31/05/2019)

As Anjelica described, this involves the country teams knowing how to get things done locally by being aware of power and knowledge structures, and always working towards trust and credibility with partners, building this up over time. Another country manager described managing and negotiating relationships between different stakeholders, and the requirement for displaying the relational values of trust and transparency:

If you don't have a hidden agenda and are transparent, that is where your credibility comes in. If you have your own hidden agenda, then the trust is broken. You have to win them over by good behaviour, transparency, and that you are there to work for the people. (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019)

As well as displaying these traits of trust and dependability, it is also important to display the qualities of humility, and ensure that government or other partners own projects, as described by Laura and Sanaya, below. If these relationships are not managed very carefully, and in the right way, the INGO's work is at risk.

So, we can offer that support as well, but you've got to do it in a way so that you are not treading on people's toes or taking over, because the ministries have to own that. So, if they are not owning it, they are never going to take it forward. So, you've just got to tread carefully. (Laura, regional office staff, 22/08/2019)

The challenge is that the entire system is based on personalities. There is no really written system over here. If you have a good relationship with the head of department or team over there, the work will go very smoothly. If you don't have that relationship, then obviously there would be challenges. (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

As described by these staff members, this is relational work. The work is affected deeply by the strength and type of relationships between knowledge partners, and is dependent on trust, reputation and integrity. The second quote from Sanaya shows that power and politics must be navigated by country office staff, particularly when working with medical staff.

The quality and content of knowledge interactions with in-country partners depends on the quality of the relationship with them. The status of the INGO country office staff can also affect this relationship. Several country managers described missing a lot of the nuance of an interaction if a field officer is the person interacting with partners, rather than themselves, because:

> *Obviously that knowledge is always filtered, you really sometimes don't get the essence of those information because … only the top-line things come to you, up on the ladder the information is not that in great detail.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Maya reiterated this, saying that sometimes this information comes in a codified format from the field officers which is not as useful:

> *Sometimes we have to rely on our staff, and they might not have the same point of view as you. And sometimes they went to the ground and they bring back the information they collected, but it might not be what you need. Even if they collected the right information, it comes mostly in the form of reports. The reports may no offer all of the comprehensive information from the ground.* (Maya, country manager, 24/05/2019)

Country managers can engage in a different level of conversation with certain partner staff, for example senior management in partner hospitals, than other country office staff due to factors relating to hierarchy. For example, it may not be appropriate for the program officer level staff to engage with "top management" of partner organisations, as described Sanaya below, but this affects the ability to make decisions. This leads to a less nuanced understanding of the partner, as described by Sanaya:

> *When you are not really engaging with their top management, not sitting with them, and obviously the chance of getting new ideas, the chance of doing advocacy, the chance of doing required changes that you want to be made in those partners to institute systems and processes – that becomes slow and slows down because of lack of these regular interactions. The kind of new knowledge that you get from partners also is affected because of lack of opportunity to meet with partner's hospital leadership.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

A lack of contact with the leadership of local partner organisations "slows down" the work of implementation, as there is key information that is not exchanged in a timely fashion. Sometimes it may not be the position of the country office staff member that makes a difference, but their background or where they come from within the country which affects their understanding of the context and power dynamics of a certain place. Sanaya gave an example of one staff member not understanding the context of a particular region because he was not from that region and did not have a deep understanding of the correct way to act:

> *The provincial coordinator did not like his way of talking, his behaviour and way of dealing and immediately reacted and said, 'We don't want to work with you if you will be sending that person'.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Ensuring that the right person from the country office conducts certain interactions is particularly important in advocacy work, where the INGO is attempting to influence policy changes with government agencies, as described by Biyu:

> *The person doing that advocacy or lobbying is very, very important. Because I know within our teams here, when we have targeted a particular audience, we select who of our team members is most appropriate to run with this advocacy, because some people are not particularly appropriate for certain messages and certain audiences. So, this is very important - the medium through which our message is passed on.* (Biyu, country manager, 27/05/2019)

Sometimes this "medium" should ideally be a clinician, and one country manager described the positive effects of using one of the INGO's medical advisors to be the person responsible for knowledge exchanges with partners and clinicians. This "sends the message home, rather than a program person trying to talk about clinical things" (Biyu, country manager, 27/05/2019).

Essential knowledge interactions with technical advisors

The interaction between country office staff and technical advisors within the INGO is also very important for effective knowledge translation. Technical advisors, as described at the beginning of this chapter, are those staff who are in a global position based in head office, whose role is to support country teams (and the broader INGO) in various technical aspects of programming and advocacy, such as program development, medical, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, grant writing and research. Technical advisors also perform knowledge translation work, which ties in and flows with country office work, producing a cascade of knowledge translation activities. Most often, technical advisors play a role in accessing and translating certain forms of knowledge and distilling it for use by country offices staff. Country office staff can then take this distilled information and use it with partners, negotiating and then merging it with other types of knowledge to successfully implement and manage projects, as described earlier.

Knowledge interactions between country office staff and technical advisors were characterised in terms of relationships and trust, particularly country office staff *knowing* a technical advisor, and that technical advisor *knowing* the country office context. Something that was brought up by several country managers was the loss of knowledge that occurred when head office staff were turned over, which at the time of this case study, was happening quite regularly. This loss of knowledge referred to that held by the technical advisor about the country office itself, and all that goes along with gaining that knowledge, including the relationship and trust built between the country office and that technical advisor. The time that it takes to build trust to allow for effective knowledge exchange processes was a key theme. Having a relationship with a trustworthy head office person who knows the country team is especially important for country office staff. When I asked one country manager the question "What can the INGO do to improve knowledge translation?" their answer was:

> *Just one thing – don't remove the person who are already there for 3-5 years. If [they] go, I'm nowhere … they know us. See, you've spent so much time bringing them here, investing in them, making them knowledgeable. And they have a positive attitude, you can change things. And you feel comfortable. And then you can move forward. Because they have the knowledge and the learning. They know what works and what does not work. And that is the power. Knowledge is power. Only then I can start new projects.* (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019)

This relates to the importance of tacit, experiential knowledge and time. This was an important factor for country managers, once that caused a significant amount of angst, described further by Maya:

> *Whenever there is staff turnover [in head office], we have to build a new relationship and also, we have to find a way to make a new person to understand the country context. It is of course difficult.* (Maya, country manager, 24/05/2019)

Turn-over of trusted head office staff, especially technical advisors, was worrying to country managers because it meant a loss of someone that they trusted to exchange knowledge with, as well as time lost 'training up' new people in the context and ways of working of the country office. This differs from the concern about staff turnover of head office staff, who were more concerned about the loss of the different forms of knowledge itself, and saw it as a frustration, rather than the loss of the relationship and connection described by Ravi, above. This may point to the fact that trust and relationships are particularly important for country office staff in their role within the INGO – more so than technical and other head office staff, who do not appear to rely on trust and relationships to the same extent to complete their work. It also points to the reliance of country office staff on a small number of technical advisors and other head office staff who 'understand' them and have a deeper understanding of the kinds of work that country offices need to do: "They have a positive attitude, you can change things" (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019).

Technical advisors highly value knowledge that resides within country offices, and expanded the definition of 'local, contextual knowledge' to included knowledge about the country teams themselves, including how they operate and factors that influence how the team is able to work. This knowledge is important for enabling technical advisors to appreciate the realities of the local context. It allows technical advisors to appreciate and understand the challenges that country teams may face in implementing projects. The ways that technical advisors access and use this information is through relationships with country office staff, through learning from others and listening, spending time getting to know country offices and being able to draw out information from country teams in an appropriate way. Country visits were seen as critical to develop good working relationships with country teams in order to effectively support them technically, as described by Carl, a technical advisor:

> *Country visits are really critical in terms of accessing knowledge. Working with the Kenya team, it took a while to engage, and it wasn't until I got there face-to-face, that I could understand how the Kenya team worked, and who was who. It's the quality of the relationships, and sometimes you don't find out stuff until you get to know that person. This is critical.* (Carl, technical advisor, 28/08/2019)

Here, Carl describes the value of face-to-face interactions. However, importantly, he acknowledges that you don't "find out stuff" until you form a personal relationship with that individual. That is, knowledge exchange will not happen until the relationship happens. This relates to the country office staff's ideas on trusting relationships.

Both of the types of knowledge interactions described in this section make it clear that trust and relationships are crucial to effective knowledge translation. Building and maintaining these relationships forms a key part of the knowledge translation work of country office staff. This work is delicate, complex, and relies on attributes such as trust and reputation.

5.5: Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that country office staff play a specific role in the knowledge translation work of the INGO, and that this work is deeply practice-related, dependent on the nature of knowledge itself, and highly social and relational. This knowledge translation work mostly takes place in the boundaries between different knowledge cultures, and in this way, country office staff play a middle figure role, described previously in the international development sector (Peters, 2020). I have examined two main boundaries within which these middle figures are positioned – one is in between the INGO and in-country partners; and one between country offices and head office. Work at these boundaries enables communication and the development and maintenance of coherence across social worlds, as described by Star and Griesemer (1989). The description by Clark et al. (2010) of boundary work - managing tensions between different actors with "different views of what constitutes reliable or useful knowledge" (p.1) and allowing this knowledge to become useful - describes well how the country office staff in this case study carry out knowledge translation work. Importantly, these findings show that work at these boundaries is crucial to ensuring that local, contextual knowledge is able to be accessed and utilised, which enables locally led, adaptable and flexible programming.

I tie this middle figure role to the concept of 'work' (Star and Strauss, 1999). My findings show that country office staff conduct a very particular type of knowledge translation work, that is, the bringing together heterogeneous knowledges in a way that adapts to the dynamic nature of this knowledge, and the local context. The heterogeneity of these knowledges was described in many ways by country office staff. Some is 'big' evidence, some 'small'; some local, some global; some codified, some tacit or implicit; some is hidden and can only be drawn out through significant investment in long-term relationships; some is highly technical and medical; some is development specific and is couched in terms of 'buzzwords' that may be difficult to translate across contexts; some is operational, strategic and financial; some is about knowing how systems work. Inter-related with this work is the social and relational work of knowledge translation that also occurs at these boundaries. Working across boundaries produces syncretising mechanisms (Qureshi et al., 2018), which refers to the unifying and reconciling work of bringing different perceptions together.

Overall, this knowledge translation work is a type of articulation work, described by others as complex, delicate, and highly social and relational (Star, 1995, Peters, 2020, Graeber, 2012, Lewis and Mosse, 2006). This supports the recent literature on the role of local staff of INGOs, which highlights the crucial role of these staff in brokering relationships and carrying out the reputational and relational work that enables INGOs to operate (Kamruzzaman, 2017, Peters, 2020, Sundberg, 2020, Ward, 2020) . The knowledge work that country office staff in the case study INGO conduct is imperative to effective implementation, and therefore, the overall work and purpose of the INGO.

Chapter 6: Contextual influences on knowledge translation at the boundaries

This chapter builds on Chapter 5, which positioned country office staff as middle figures in boundary positions that carry out knowledge translation work. Here, I explore some of the contextual factors that influence this work of knowledge translation at boundaries. This chapter, therefore, answers the two final research sub-questions: 3) What are the contextual factors that influence knowledge translation at different levels of the INGO? and 4) What would it take to improve knowledge translation processes within the INGO?

Contextual factors, though often under-explored, have a key influence on knowledge translation processes (Davies et al., 2015, Milner, 2017). In this chapter, I focus predominantly on organisational context, as interviewees highlighted organisational culture, systems and processes as key factors affecting the work of knowledge translation. Factors such as organisational size, maturity, structure and workforce, can play a key role in what types of knowledge are valued and used within organisations, and this in turn is often related to power structures and the knowledge/power interface (Chambers, 2014b, Hardwick et al., 2015, Morgan-Trimmer, 2014, Walsh and Lannon, 2018).

The organisational contextual factors described in this chapter relate, for the most part, to the contemporary complexities of INGOs. The context of INGOs, as described in Chapter 3, is complex, dynamic, and subject to many competing external and internal forces and constraints (King et al., 2016, Lewis et al., 2021). These include increased scrutiny, accountability to primary stakeholders, donors, governments and the public, and global trends in the sector (Gibson, 2019, King et al., 2016, Lewis et al., 2021). The different knowledge perspectives of staff and stakeholders working across large cultural spaces can mean that the knowledge context of INGOs can be varied and contested (King et al., 2016, Kontinen and Katsui, 2015).

In this chapter, I first examine how organisational context influences the extent to which the boundary work of country office staff is valued. I draw on the work of Star (Star, 1995, Star and Strauss, 1999) to analyse how some types of knowledge translation work become 'invisible' or 'not work' when they are not in the form of a rationalised model of work. I examine how and why this plays out in the case study INGO, and link this to both the contemporary pressures of INGOs, and the power dynamics between different layers of staff within the case study INGO.

Secondly, I focus on the concept of managerialism within the INGO, which emerged as an important theme in the interviews. Managerialism can be described as the belief or assumption that an organisation will be improved using management tools and techniques (Klikauer, 2015, Eagleton-Pierce, 2020). I examine how managerialism affects the work of knowledge translation, particularly at boundaries, but also more broadly within the INGO. I demonstrate how managerial ideology and practices affect how staff time is spent and creates communication challenges and confusion, and highlights a clash of mindsets between different layers of staff within the INGO.

Finally, I consider the opportunities for improving knowledge translation processes within the INGO, taking a solution-focused approach. Here, I use the concept of boundary objects, which are tangible and intangible factors which facilitate or disrupt the flow of knowledge across boundaries (Star and Griesemer, 1989), to elucidate some of the barriers and facilitators to knowledge translation at these boundaries. I describe the existing boundary objects of the INGO in relation to knowledge translation, and then propose some alternative approaches that build on the social, relational aspects of boundary work.

6.1: The non-valuing of boundary work and local, contextual knowledge

In Chapter 5, I argued that the knowledge work of country office staff is central to effective programming and advocacy, and therefore essential to the INGO achieving its goals. I now argue that this work is largely unseen and under-valued within the larger INGO, as is local, contextual knowledge itself. In arguing this, I draw on research that describes the invisibility of some forms of work, particularly boundary work. This work is often unseen, and therefore under-valued, for the complex and relational work that it is (Star, 1995, Star and Strauss, 1999). Certain aspects of work at boundaries can be hidden, particularly that which encompasses relational and reputational, negotiation, articulation, interpretation and "triangulation, mediation, standardisation and translation" work (Star, 2010, p.609). Knowledge translation work, such as that carried out by country office staff is often rendered hidden within organisations because it is carried out behind the scenes, or it may never have been articulated in the way that other types of work are, making it "invisible to rationalised models of work" (Star and Strauss, 1999, p.10). Star and Strauss (1999) distinguish three ways in which work may be invisible within a workplace. One is invisibility of a person or a role; the second, invisibility of 'background' work, where the worker is visible but the work they do is at risk of being overlooked; and the third, where organisational indicators do not 'count' certain forms of work. Evidence of all three of these dimensions of invisibility were shown in my case study, as will be demonstrated in this section.

The invisibility of the country office staff's knowledge translation work was often due to it being a type of background work. Both country office staff and technical advisors agreed that the social and relational aspects of knowledge work is under-appreciated by the INGO. Country managers felt as though they were frowned upon by senior management if they travelled to meet in-country partners or to bring groups of stakeholders together. Some felt that people higher up in the INGO regarded this as "travel for travel's sake" (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019). As one country manger elucidated:

> *In our budget now, it does not look so good because you spend so much on a learning visit, but it's so useful. Others would look at it as a junket, but when we bring governors to other provinces, where they really see the implementation themselves, the nurses that we are training and we show them the nurses doing what they are doing, that's very helpful. I think it's useful because government people don't like it when NGOs are telling them something, they don't listen. They will listen when it's another government person, when the message comes from somebody exactly like them.* (Anjelica, country manager, 31/05/2019)

Anjelica describes a conflict concerning the money being spent on social and relational knowledge activities with in-country partners. On the one hand, spending this money "does not look so good", presumably because it cannot be directly tied to outputs. This type of work cannot be 'counted' by the INGO's indicators and therefore viewed as a "junket" (spending others' money on an extravagance). On the other hand, Anjelica has learnt from previous experience that these types of activities are the best way to communicate to, and influence, local government about programming. She knows that governments will listen when the "the message comes from someone exactly like them" and sets up the meeting accordingly. She knows this is important to achieving the goals of the INGO, but will most likely not be recorded as such, and so not 'counted' as productive work.

Another aspect of hidden work is that which staff conceal because its impact is not yet countable. Some country office staff were reluctant to reveal the unfinished, in-progress nature of their implementation work, or the background work behind the outputs, to the broader INGO. One country manager talked about navigating how much to show people from head office when they came to visit the country office:

> *I will hide things that are not working [yet]. I will not encourage [head office] people to come at an initial stage of project. If you want to come at the initial stage, you will*

> *only see things like equipment provided. Don't try to count how many clients are coming, because they are not coming yet.* (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019)

This is an example of what Star and Strauss (1999) refer to as the invisibility of work due to it not conforming to organisational indicators of work. Ravi acknowledges that a project, at the beginning stage, is still unformed and "not working", although work does happen. At this stage of a project, boundary work of negotiating and navigating is taking place, but in response to a perceived preference for outcomes, this work is hidden. As Ravi outlines, it becomes a carefully curated affair that country office staff must navigate, and this, in itself, is boundary work. In the international development sector, results-based styles of management similarly negate the background work that is imperative for success (Eyben, 2015, Roche, 2015). In her exploration of an international development project in the Congo, Peters (2020, p.40) found that the use of development tools, such as logframes, that measure outputs in a certain way, effectively "*disappears* the field staff's work" (my emphasis).

The non-valuing of the social and relational boundary work of knowledge translation was bound up with the non-valuing of local, contextual knowledge. Some decisions that affect implementation are made at head office based on limited local, contextual knowledge, and without listening properly to those who have invested the time in gathering that knowledge. This fails to recognise the time it takes to build up relationships and gather local, contextual knowledge, and the importance of this knowledge. A regional office staff member who worked closely with in-country implementing partners offers an example:

> *They [senior management at head office] don't take the time to understand the context in which we work. Everyone has a good idea about what should be done in a particular country, but don't necessarily understand the context, or have the knowledge to make that decision. And that is wearing really thin at the moment because it happens all the time. I'm not saying there is not good intent, and I'm not saying that people aren't coming at it from the right heart place, but it just creates more division than they acknowledge. Because every time, you have to go back and say 'But that's not going to work here. We can't do that, we're going to lose people'. It takes away from just getting the program out there. So that would be the biggest barrier for me [in terms of knowledge translation] and that's an internal one.* (Laura, regional office staff, 22/08/2019)

This quote shows a level of exasperation with head office, who “don’t take the time to understand the context” but appear to know what and how to implement. It shows a failure by head office to understand the layers of delicate work, trust, and relationship building that needs to happen with in-country partners to exchange knowledge and keep programming happening. This attitude by senior management also de-values the value of local, contextual knowledge itself, rendering it not important enough to make strategic decisions upon. According to Laura, this presents a risk of damaging programs and relationships: “we’re going to lose people”. The fear of losing partners or damaging organisational reputation is explored further in Section 6.2. The broader issue here is ‘whose knowledge counts’, and in this example, Laura’s knowledge did not seem to count as much as that of senior management, who are making strategic decisions. Here, I adopt the argument of Peters (2020) that the international development industry rarely recognises the importance of socially-dependent work practices such as these, leading to a “misreading of the social” nature of this kind of work (p.6). Here, Peters is referring to the development industry underappreciating and underestimating the depth of the social and relational work that implementation requires.

Another way in which this misreading of the social occurs, or when the boundary work of country teams is undermined, is when head office staff carry out work in-country without informing or involving the country office staff. One country manager described a study that was undertaken by the INGO in their country, without the country team knowing about it. This affected the country team’s relationships with in-country partners:

> *There was a study happening in [our country], we learnt this from our partners [in country], rather than from head office. It was [the INGO’s] research project happening here … which we didn’t know about … and we knew this information through a local partner. This was very embarrassing for us because our partner sees us as one organisation, but unluckily we did not get this information from the very beginning.* (Naserian, country manager, 13/06/2019)

Naserian saw this as happening in an un-thinking way, where the implications for the country office staff were not thought through. It revealed a misunderstanding, or misreading, of the social and relational conditions under with country teams work, because head office assumed it would not matter if they went ahead with this study without involving the country team. This is a de-valuing of local, contextual knowledge and the role of country office staff, and affected country office staff’s relational work with partners. This increased the complexity of the boundary work for country staff.

Some country managers felt that their role in knowledge translation was undervalued by the lack of opportunities to extend their knowledge and networks through attending global forums and related networking activities. There seemed to be an idea that they could only attend such events if they formally presented on their work, and this meant that they missed out because they had limited time for preparation of such presentations. This was described by Biyu, below:

> *Our limitation is the fact that the country offices are not much exposed to global or regional forums. Maybe there's a workshop or a symposium or whatever, but because of budget restraints, we have found ourselves having to cut back drastically, if you just want to go and listen. We were not able to get time to develop a presentation that we were supposed to share. So currently we are limited to what we can get from these local bodies and what we can get from the Internet.* (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019)

For many country office staff, attending these regional and global events is an important opportunity for networking and knowledge exchange. As described in Chapter 5, having a working knowledge of current developments in the sector was important for country office staff in terms of exchange with partners and programming and advocacy more generally. When head office restricts attendance at these events to those who conduct or present research, it hinders a crucial element of knowledge translation. At the same time, it sends a message that certain types of knowledge, those presented by the more 'academic' medical and research staff, are more important than the types held by country office staff. This makes the latter invisible in these international conversations and networks.

Processes of sharing experiential knowledge and the sociality of knowledge exchange and translation were found to be secondary to top-down approaches to knowledge exchange and the exchange of codified forms of knowledge within the INGO. An example was provided by a technical advisor about regional meetings, which were annual face-to-face meetings of a group of different country teams and head office staff. The agendas for these meetings were created by head office, and a common complaint from country office staff was that there was no time factored into the agenda for staff from the different countries to get together and exchange their own knowledge in a less formal setting.

> *Sometimes when we have the opportunity for people coming together from different teams, internationally, we manufacture these agendas like crazy so that there's no actual time to have these really important discussions. And I think if we are going to*

> *bring people together, and it doesn't always have to be face to face, but if we are going to make the investment, we need to allow the time for people to delve into those discussions.* (Rachel, technical advisor, 07/08/2019)

Tightly structured agendas left no space for more informal knowledge exchanges, discussions and reflections between peers and among country office staff. Didactic, top-down presentations from head office staff explaining things to country teams were valued over the opportunities for learning and exchange that country offices so craved. This results in one type of knowledge (knowledge around new processes, new teams and systems, new regulations, priorities of teams in head office) being given preference over another (tacit, relational, exchange based in practice). It also prioritised one type of knowledge exchange (didactic) over another (social and relational).

The invisibility of the knowledge work of middle figures at boundaries was noticed by technical advisors. One technical advisor expressed concern that the knowledge work of middle figures is not being captured anywhere, although it was obviously happening:

> *The practices, the behaviours, the tools that have been created on the ground, the relationship building type knowledge, the values that operate on the ground that our country offices are using, and they're using them but not capturing them, it's not being recorded in any kind of standardised way or recorded even at all. That has a big part to do with how effective and how efficient a program or activity was, but also how the quality around it, the feel-good factor, how the team felt in implementing it – what kind of impact it had with the relationship with the community, that kind of stuff. I don't think that knowledge gets captured in a way that can get shared with staff that come after that staff. Or even across country offices, or even back into the main offices. You know it's happening, it's just for a variety of reasons, it's at the bottom of the radar for us in the head office. You know it has to be happening, and you know in particular when you go on the ground and see how much is actually happening on the ground, that there's a lot more going into it than the tools, the activities that are being presented by monthly reports.* (Claire, technical advisor, 02/08/2019)

This long excerpt offers a technical advisor perspective on the value of local, contextual knowledge and the relational ways of working that produce and support this. Claire wonders about the emotional or affective aspects of doing development work, how this is not recorded or counted, and how it impacts on the quality of a project. Claire also speculates about the relationships that country office staff must have with the communities targeted by interventions. From her perspective, this type of work is hidden because it is not recorded or codified anywhere for head office to see. In the following excerpt, Claire goes on to speculate about why this type of information may not be recorded:

> *I do think that one of the biggest gaps I see in knowledge translation is country offices back to head office. Where we again don't get to see how they are using their day-to-day knowledge or evidence - either the cultural norms, partner relationships, all this stuff that they use to make decisions. And because sometimes it difficult to … I don't know, whether they feel like they don't have the permission to use that type of knowledge to justify some of the activities, concept briefs and [project design documents], they don't put it in. So then we don't know that it's happened, we don't know the significance of it, and then a value does not get placed on it. So, I think that's a challenge. So, country offices are trying to kind of feed us information we are asking for, and they are leaving out stuff that may be really significant, and then here at head office we don't learn what we really need to know, and what's justifying some of their actions. So, there's kind of a breakdown in knowledge translation there.* (Claire, technical advisor, 02/08/2019)

Here, Claire draws attention to the institutional processes of recording information, and how they shape the behaviour of staff in the INGO. Even though country offices use local knowledge to make decisions about programs and interventions, it does not feature in country office's responses to information requests in the formats required from head office. She sees a breakdown in the communication between country offices and head offices here. She questions whether the reason for this is that there is not "permission" to use this type of knowledge, or that the current processes from head office do not allow space for this type of knowledge. This type of work is therefore concealed because the institutionalised processes or recording mechanisms do not capture this, as per Star and Strauss (1999).

This gap that Claire described between country offices and head office affects technical advisors' ability to support country teams in developing and implementing programming and advocacy initiatives. A technical advisor, Carl, describes this below:

> *I sometimes feel that we miss some of the good stuff that is being done in countries. There have been a few times when I've heard about things later, and I though 'Oh*

> *wow'. Understanding what worked well and what didn't is really important.* (Carl, technical advisor, 28/08/2019)

As Carl points out, missing out on this kind of information means potentially not learning from previous work, which prevents others from knowing this information. In the following quote, he goes on to say that a crucial piece knowledge for head office staff is understanding country teams themselves and what is happening within those teams. Again, this was couched in terms of having enough of this type of knowledge to be able to provide better technical support to country teams.

> *Understanding country teams themselves – their structure, how they're organised, and any changes and how that impacts on programming. For example, in Rwanda, I understand there's a whole change process going on and it's really important. I do sometimes wonder if it will impact on this project. It would be good if some of this was more transparent. I've learned about it in a pretty ad-hoc way. These sorts of change processes happened in a siloed way, and I'm not sure how much I can ask and how much it will affect things. I'm aware that it does impact on programs. It's the same in Ethiopia, there is a huge change process going on across there.* (Carl, technical advisor, 28/08/2019)

Carl also alludes to organisational structure affecting the movement of this knowledge, in terms of the siloed nature of the organisation. Rachel, another technical advisor, also linked this knowledge gap to organisational structure, but this time in terms of the growth of head office and of the organisation itself, and the distance that this creates between head office and country offices:

> *Despite the fact that we call ourselves an international development organisation, or whatever we call ourselves, I think we sometimes don't appreciate the local context and how it impacts on what we do and what our partners can do. And maybe as the organisation has grown and people in support offices are a bit more at a distance to the programs than they perhaps used to be, I think maybe that information gets a little bit lost and maybe isn't appreciated. I'm not sure we do enough around capturing that and really appreciating it, and I do think it's really important because I think that it impacts everything we do really.* (Rachel, technical advisor, 07/08/2019)

In her comment, Rachel connects appreciating local contexts and in-country partners with good practice in international development. Her quip "… or whatever we call ourselves" alludes to her perhaps thinking that the INGO should not be referring to themselves as an international development organisation if they are not appreciating these local realities.

Why is this work invisible? One explanation for why technical advisors and other head office staff may not be as aware of the knowledge translation work of country teams is that country office staff want to *protect* this knowledge, and the social and relational means through which they access it. In fact, the general feeling from some country office staff on this topic is that there is *no need* for head office to know the details of the local, contextual knowledge and the relational work that goes into their knowledge activities. “Information is always local” stated Sanaya (country manager, 01/05/2019). This knowledge is precious to country teams, and is built through relationships, not templates. To make head office more aware of this work would require it to be formalised, put into templates, codified in ways that fit into the INGO’s systems, which in turn risks the foundation on which this work is built – trust, relationships, ease of communication. Codifying this knowledge (and details of the related knowledge interactions) may cause the real meaning of the knowledge to be lost, and therefore its usefulness diminished. There is also a risk that codifying it will complicate the boundary work that country office staff do.

Codifying this type of knowledge is difficult and takes time, and country teams are already under pressure to produce codified knowledge of many sorts through compliance and related activities. Local, contextual knowledge is often difficult to codify and therefore to express, and there are limited alternative options to communicate it. This soft knowledge, is, as Honig (2019) argues, “local, contextually bound information that is difficult to include in a formal report or in an email back to headquarters” (p.44). It may also be that this knowledge is difficult to convey because it is may often be closer to a ‘way of knowing’, a logic or rationale, rather than a piece of knowledge (Briggs, 2013). It has been suggested that this mismatch in conceptualisations of knowledge, the “general failure of intercultural knowledge generation/exchange” between Western conceptualisations and Indigenous or non-Western conceptualisations of knowledge, may account for the knowledge gaps in international development (Jackson, 2011, p.209). Many components of this type of work are difficult to describe, especially the “tacit and contextual knowledge, the expertise acquired by old hands, and long-term teamwork” (Star and Strauss, 1999, p.10). The work of country office staff could certainly fit into this description – the local, contextual knowledge, the experiential knowledge, and the long-term relationships forged with in-country partners. Another explanation may be that there is not effective listening mechanisms in place within the INGO for country offices to be able to explain how these efforts work. Existing templates and processes for capturing information are not conducive to capturing this tacit knowledge, as described by Claire earlier. As shown in Chapter 5, the relationships between country office staff and head office staff affects how much knowledge is shared between the two. This means that the importance of local, contextual knowledge and the work of country staff becomes *more visible* to head office staff through ongoing relationships and trust built over time between country office and head office staff.

However, there is the risk that if the details of this knowledge translation work are more visible, this type of work may be labelled as ‘not work’ by the INGO (Griesemer, 2015, Peters, 2020). I posit that country managers are reluctant to share about their knowledge translation work because they feel that if this is labelled ‘not work’, they may be asked to cut down the time and resources spent on these tasks. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a number of country managers worried that this relationship-building knowledge exchange work and the associated travel to project areas would be labelled a “junket” and that the all-important work done at the very beginning stages of a project could not be seen by head office staff or they would think the country office was not achieving results. In these circumstances, it may be preferable that some of this work does not become visible. According to Star and Strauss (1999) there is a trade-off in making this type of work more visible. If it is made visible, it can open up the work to more surveillance, an increase in process and paperwork burdens, a loss of discretion and ambiguity and the creation of difficulties in capturing what the work actually is, as described above. Star and Strauss (1999) suggest that in order to support articulation work, or, in this case knowledge translation work, there is a need for a “subtle and thorough analysis of the politics and culture of the work” to determine which aspects of the work should become more visible (p.10).

It may be that head office is actually *not* interested in the details of knowledge translation work, and this has been the experience of some country office staff. This would point to power differentials that have been described within the international development sector and more broadly (Griesemer, 2015, Graeber, 2012), whereby those staff who have lower levels of power must spend more time and energy interpreting, understanding, translating and responding to what those at higher levels of power say. The opposite holds true for those in higher levels, who do not need to bother to do the same interpretation of the staff at lower levels - they demand clear, codified explanations and if they don’t get it, they don’t try further to figure things out. This has also been described as ways of “not knowing” (Marchand, 2010, p.S15), and as “actively unseen” work (Peters, 2020, p.92). This is another example of the interpretive labour of development, which can be particularly labour intensive in a cross-cultural setting such as an INGO (Peters, 2019).

Within the case study INGO, the phenomenon of hierarchy and knowledge was summed up well by a technical advisor:

> *Knowledge translation for me … the thing that doesn't get spoken about is the hula hoops of power that has to get jumped in between. When we talk about what types of knowledge gets upheld and asked for, that's one kind of structure of power, a kind of hierarchy of power.* (Claire, technical advisor, 02/08/2019)

If work is hidden, it is less likely to be valued for the work that it is. My research has found that it is both knowledge translation work at the boundaries, as well as local, contextual knowledge that are under-valued within the broader INGO.

Power and hierarchy relating to knowledge is connected to the hierarchy of roles and professions within organisations. In the international development sector, the location in which a staff member works (for example, head office, country office), and what kind of technical expertise they hold (for example, technical skills versus local, contextual knowledge) "both reflects and determines what influence one holds in the larger organisation" (Peters, 2020, p.20). This dynamic was exemplified by one country manager saying that head office should listen "to the voice of the country office, and *even* to ground staff" (Maya, country manager, 24/05/2019, my emphasis). Within the international development sector, the work of local in-country staff is often unseen and undervalued or hidden (Sundberg, 2020). A study by Kumi and Kamruzzaman (2021) shows how local in-country staff who play key roles in development due to their local contextual knowledge and boundary spanning abilities, are nevertheless relegated to lower levels within the organisation.

This is a consistent problem in international development – firstly the content of local, contextual knowledge is not valued; and secondly, the work of local staff is not valued. These are forms of epistemic injustice. This non-valuing is not necessarily deliberate or pre-meditated, but it is a reflection of the current practice and discourse of development and 'ways of knowing', reinforcing the prevailing epistemic hierarchies of development. Peters (2020), describes international development implementation work as "consistently misrecognised and undervalued by the development industry as 'mere' practice – formulaic, rote and mechanical – rather than as the delicately social, political, and intellectual work that it is" (p.6). To further explain why knowledge translation is invisible within the INGO, it is important to look at another factor, managerialism, and how it shapes practices related to knowledge translation in particular ways.

6.2: Managerialism and its effects on knowledge translation

Managerialism is a belief or assumption that an organisation will be improved by the increased use of management tools and techniques (Klikauer, 2015, Girei, 2016, Joachim and Schneiker, 2018). In the international development sector, this translates into the idea that development interventions can have successful outcomes if it is managed through these tools and techniques (Lewis, 2014). Managerialism implies that the rules devised for business are a “neutral and objective science” and thus are generalisable to INGOs (Girei, 2016, p.193, Klikauer, 2015). The underlying assumption is that organisations “have more similarities than differences” and that managerial practices will provide predictability and control (Klikauer, 2015, p.1104, Lewis, 2014).

Some of the reasons why managerialism is increasingly becoming common practice in INGOs, have been described by Eagleton-Pierce (2020). One is the desire for growth. The “ascent of the big-budget NGO” (p.976) and related increases in complexity, fundraising, and the growing influence of major donors has focused attention on value for money. Secondly, wider social and political trends towards accountability have led to managerialism being seen as a solution, and that “accountability is a normatively good value, thus the more accountability the better” (p.978). However, the rise of managerialism in INGOs has raised concerns about how this ethic has become so prominent within the sector. For example, the Chief Executive Officer of Oxfam Great Britain recently criticised the increasing corporatisation of international development agencies, saying that they are “mimicking some of the worst practices of the corporate world”, and “focusing too much on the organisations themselves and less on impact, worried only about self-preservation, competing with each other, and replicating the internal bureaucracies and hierarchies of other corporate formations” (Cipriani, 2020).

Recent research has argued that managerialism affects how the social and relational work of development implementation is valued and how local and contextual knowledge is captured (Honig, 2019, Peters, 2020). My research has shown that managerialism stifles knowledge work within the INGO, particularly the knowledge work at boundaries performed by country office staff. At the time of interviews, there had been rapid growth of the INGO over the previous decade, both in revenue and size of the organisation, and alongside this growth, practices had emerged that could be described being based on a managerialist ethic. Both country office staff and technical advisors believed that the increase in what they described as “corporatisation” of the INGO has had a detrimental effect on knowledge processes. This section discusses staff perceptions on the impact of managerial practices on knowledge translation work, particularly that at boundaries.

The time factor

One of the ways in which managerialism affects country office staff’s work is by taking up staff time that could otherwise be spent on knowledge work but instead, needs to be spent on what is presented to be essential or urgent compliance work. Country office staff were concerned with the introduction of an increasing number of systems and processes that that did not seem to necessarily link to one another and therefore took excessive time to navigate. They were also concerned about the increase in number of staff and new teams in head office, each coming with their own new processes that country offices had to comply with. Of particular concern was the introduction of new systems that were rolled out and "did not work properly" (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019), causing double-up of work and more lost time. Biyu explains that time is lost when country office staff need to grapple with operational systems that are not quite right, resulting in the need for a paper version of the same work, effectively doubling the workload for one task:

> *Don't roll out systems that aren't fully developed, because I tell you this week the whole of the program team has spent on [program management system], things that were due and were not working, and only one person can work it at a time. Roll out fully developed systems, so that staff don't have to spend a lot of time. Roll out systems that make meaningful change. There are too many systems that are rolled out where still you do the paperwork but still you have to do the system thing. So, this space for me is where a lot of time is spent, which people could be spending on other things, like literature, learning, networks, all of those things.* (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019)

Many of these systems and processes were perceived by staff as not necessarily for the benefit of accountability to donors or higher quality implementation or development effectiveness (as per the results-based management argument), but as a result of the rapid growth in teams and staff numbers in head office.

The issue of new systems and processes that may not work properly also increased the complications of work at the boundary between the INGO and in-country partners. They had to explain new and complex operating systems to implementing partners who, as country office staff were well aware, were often having to satisfy various donors with their own operational requests. This meant that reputational work also needed to be done at the same time in order to smooth the transition to a new system without damaging relationships. This increase in the complexity of boundary work created by managerialism seemed of more concern to country office staff than perhaps the work of compliance and accountability itself.

Country office staff described how, over the previous several years, the time available to carry out knowledge work had diminished to the point that they felt that programming effectiveness may be compromised. Rachel, a technical advisor, described the opportunity cost of increasing compliance demands on country teams, and connects this to a decrease in quality of programming:

From what I see, we are increasing our compliance demands, and we may not have a choice about that, but we don't seem to be increasing the resourcing that we are providing to our country teams and I think we are also expecting continuing high outputs and coordination with implementing partners. And I just don't think there's enough time in the day to do everything that is asked of them. We talk a lot about improving quality of programming, but I can see that quality would be immediately diminished if you're being asked a million different things to a million different people. There's not time to devote to that. And compliance and reporting, those tasks always seem to bump off any other priorities on your to-do list … and I think unless we resource country offices properly so that they are supported to complete the compliance requirements but also focus on their core work, I imagine that's going to a be a problem going forward. (Rachel, technical advisor, 07/08/2019)

Country office staff pointed out that a lack of human resources and time affected their ability to spend time with in-country partners and gain local, contextual knowledge.

Staffing is very limited, we really want time to spend with partners, but there is no time to do this and learn from the field. We learn so much from the field, we can learn many things. (Ashok, program officer, 08/05/2019)

The issue of limited numbers of staff in country offices, who are stretched between compliance-related tasks and relational work with partners, was raised by several country office staff and technical advisors. Increasing operational, compliance and accountability requirements, and requests to codify information, with no increase in human resources at the country level, had taken its toll on country teams. The compliance or operational work always took precedence because it often came with a deadline and was a discrete, measurable task with consequences for not doing it, unlike the social, relational work with partners which did not necessarily have these clear features. Furthermore, relational and interpretive boundary work takes time, it is the "slow work" with partners (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019). It is not just time, but also energy that is required to build relations and knowledge over time, as described by Jason, a technical advisor:

Knowledge is something that accrues gradually, and being so busy with compliance, people are exhausted and less receptive for picking up on information. (Jason, technical advisor, 12/08/2019)

Other important knowledge translation processes such as internal reflection activities, reading and researching, synthesising, properly using research results, and searching the organisational Intranet, were activities that staff wanted to do, but did not have enough time for. At the program officer level, less time to read and utilise various types of knowledge meant that "things need to be easy to digest, because we are so busy on operational matters, so less time to read" (Faizan, program officer 17/05/2019).

Clash of mindsets

Managerialism affected the mindset and values of the INGO, shifting it from that of one that was concerned with the realities of working on the ground and implementation - a development mindset - to being more concerned about systems and processes and accountability - a managerial mindset. The following quote captures this sentiment well:

> *When I first started working here, at that time local context and local knowledge was being valued very high, and people [senior management at head office] used to respect the opinion of country teams and they always used to talk to country teams before making or taking any decisions. But with the passage of time and a lot of changes within the organisation, I am now feeling that the local context is not really being valued. Before these changes started to happen, there was a lot of focus on the implementation work. But slowly and gradually we are moving towards more a kind of documentation and desk work rather than focusing on the implementation side. And that is really a point of concern at least for me.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019).

Sanaya links the declining attention of the INGO to local contextual knowledge and the opinion of country teams, to a change in mindset that now values managerialist practices, which suggests they cannot happily co-exist within the INGO. Another country manager with a long history working with the INGO confirms this view:

> *Over three years, from a country level perspective, we see that the head office is growing rapidly and suddenly there is so many divisions in head office. Sometimes we don't know who is doing what in head office. From time to time, we receive email from new people, asking something new. And this all adds up to the country office workload. For example, before, 80% of our effort is focused on work at country level ensuring good quality of our grants programs, but now it's reduced to 60%, and the rest of 40% of the time we need to respond to different requests, or new requirements for different departments and divisions in head office.* (Naserian, country manager, 13/06/2019)

Naserian perceives a chasm between head office and country offices, which no longer feel connected, with country offices staff being required to spend an increasing amount of time carrying out tasks to satisfy head office. In her estimation, this has resulted in a 20% decrease in the amount of time being spent on country level work ensuring quality program implementation. These challenges were seen to be created by an increasingly complicated and diffuse organisational structure with many different teams and unclear channels of communication.

The decreased organisational focus on implementation was seen by country office staff to affect the INGO's reputation with country-level partners. Sanaya described how, over time, the INGO had moved away from an ethos of being in-touch with the local level field work and working closely with implementing partners:

> *People would say that we used to work alongside partners and focus a lot on implementation – this was really our hallmark. People used to compare us to other organisations [that] never bothered about the field work and implementation work. But whenever [our organisation] comes along, they go deep into the field, they work with partners, they work with beneficiaries, they take feedback and act upon that feedback and tried to improve things over there. And other organisations really don't bother. But with the passage of time, we are also going in that direction. We are unable to really focus on field work, we are just focusing on systems and processes, then policies and documentation. Although I personally understand that all of these things are very, very important. But, as an organisation, we need to make some decisions and some understanding that this is something, this is the minimum criteria that we would follow, and other than that we would go and continue our focus on field work. So that we can ensure that whatever support is being channelled from [the organisation], that is really going into the beneficiaries.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

While Sanaya appreciated the importance of the compliance work, she felt that it needed to be balanced with the relational and reputational work and connection to the field in order to maintain the INGO's reputation. Loss of reputation means that working with partners becomes more difficult, and therefore the boundary work of knowledge translation becomes more difficult. The INGO had relied for many years on its reputation of delivering on what has been agreed, and this has built trust among local partners and helped encourage and advocate for innovative approaches. According to one country manager:

> *As [the INGO] is known well, we do what we say we promise to do. That has really worked out for us whenever we are doing advocacy, our experience as a foundation in this country. They say, we have heard about the work that you are doing.* (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019)

Compliance work also extends to in-country implementing partners, affecting the way they need to operate, further affecting the INGO's reputation, and increasing the complexity of the boundary work of country office staff. This was described in detail by Naserian:

> *One thing I strongly feel is that we have more policies and regulations that not only affect our internal staff, but also our partners and external stakeholders who need to comply with this. Sometimes, it takes time for us to communicate with our partners and get their understanding and buy-in. I think this is something we have to comply with as an international organisation. But I just hope we can reduce the repeating communication, paperwork and reporting and many layers of reporting lines. So, now the communication line … [is] we get the original information from partners, to project officer, to program managers, to country manager, to regional program coordinator, to regional associate director, to technical advisor in head office. It's really very, very long and tiring and can take time, and sometimes miscommunications can happen in these different layers.* (Naserian, country manager 13/06/2019)

Naserian draws attention to the number of layers of management that a piece of information must go through before action can happen. She shows how this creates confusion, frustration and wasted time for both country office staff and in-country partners.

Technical advisors, viewing the situation from head office, were also aware of these demands on country office staff, the "waterfall of requests and demands" (Claire, technical advisor, 02/08/2019), and the potential implications on partners and knowledge work. This led some technical advisors to question whether the organisation is "forgetting what our core business is and the reality of the work that we do" (Rachel, technical advisor, 07/08/2019). Technical advisors also realised that this affected the quality of knowledge that was available from and through country teams, such as knowledge from learning, engagement with partners and primary stakeholders, experiential knowledge, and knowledge that comes from reflection. They were aware that this soft knowledge was needed to achieve quality development work.

> *They get so caught up in these conversations around outputs. So, there's not much scope for strategic thinking and learning and knowledge when you're so focused on counting outputs and Excel issues. And then I think for programs, when there is so much emphasis on the performance indicators against budget, and what are your outputs against targets, that emphasis doesn't seem to me to encourage any deep reflective learning about 'Are we doing the right thing in this context, and how do we know?' It just seems to encourage 'Let's do as much as we can, in the short term to get the money out the door, and we make sure that stuff happen'. But not necessarily 'Are we doing the right stuff in the right way to make sustainable change?'.* (Donna, technical advisor, 22/08/2019)

Donna refers to the INGO's focus on indicators of success, rather than indicators that reflect experience and learning (Eyben and Guijt, 2015, Rovaniemi, 2015). This reflects the managerialist practice of the "irrational quest for perpetual productivity and growth" (Klikauer, 2015, p.1110). Increased managerialism implicitly puts a higher value on certain types and forms of knowledge within the organisation (such as results-based knowledge), while de-valuing others. As well as taking away from time with partners and other kinds of knowledge work, compliance issues also take away from a learning culture. Here, Rachel is linking the risk and compliance with a decrease in appreciation for local, contextual knowledge:

> *We often talk about things like risk and compliance, but I often feel that we are not appreciating the realities of the local context.* (Rachel, technical advisor, 07/08/2019)

Some technical advisors took a step back and related these issues relating to managerialist practices with a perceived overall organisational philosophy of 'growth for growth's sake':

> *For a good NGO, it's almost counter-productive to be too big. It changes the role of the organisation a lot. I've been listening to people wanting to build [the organisation] up, talking about expansion into other countries … expansion to become the biggest [medical] NGO, or the richest [medical] NGO, or the most influential [medical] NGO. But it becomes a bit of a behemoth, a sort of bloody great whale, where nobody knows really who's doing what. And for the country offices, it's even worse because they feel like a little cog in a big machine. And they are being driven by Australia to do this, that and the other. And yet quite rightly, they know that in Australia, we don't know the ins and outs, the day-to-day goings on, in their countries.* (Jason, technical advisor. 12/08/2019)

According to Jason, the desire for growth in size and scope has led to confusion among staff about the INGO's purpose and the work that they are supposed to be doing. Furthermore, organisational growth has increased the distance between head office and country offices, which see themselves as a "little cog in a big machine". As the next section shows, this feeling of disconnection is exacerbated by the changes in the professional make-up of the organisation.

Professional background of staff members

Both country office staff and technical advisors spoke of the "corporatisation" of the organisation as part of increasing managerialism. One element of this corporatisation was a perceived increase in the number of staff with a corporate professional background, rather than an international development background. This increased the complexity of the boundary work between country office staff and head office staff, due to foundational differences in understanding development work and associated difficulties forming trusting relationships. As more staff with a corporate background enter the INGO, there are less people in head office that truly understand the work of country offices, and therefore the complexity of their boundary work increases.

The increasing introduction of management staff from the private sector has been described as a feature of managerialism in not-for-profits generally (Crewe and Mowles, 2021). Country office staff felt that these staff were less likely to understand the country context and therefore may make decisions that would be to the detriment of in-country programming. They also felt that they would be less likely able to build trusting relationships with these staff, which would impact on the level and quality of knowledge exchange between country offices and head office.

> *At the head office level, new and new people are coming in. Most of the time they are not really coming from the development sector, so they sometimes create those waves within the organisation that are not really good. Because our sector is completely different from the corporate sector. Secondly, we work with partners and the change that we want to really bring in, that's a very slow process. We need to understand that. If we go and we just follow the corporate sector, that 'Here you made a decision and here the result would come', that is not really good for an organisation like us.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Sanaya describes how the "slow" work of development (in particular, working with partners) clashes with the faster pace of a managerialist culture. Annie, a technical advisor, reflected Sanaya's observation that development is a "long game" influencing change, and expresses the same frustration about the expectation that development work happens in a linear, straight-forward fashion:

> *There's a lot of people in the organisation who don't have a community development background. They don't understand why things just can't happen. Like, they'll say 'Why can't you just do this?', or 'Why can't projects just go smoothly?', or 'Why can't you just give us all of this information?' It is that long game that what we are actually trying to do is influence individuals to make change happen.* (Annie, technical advisor, 30/08/2019)

Similarly, Ravi felt that a corporate mentality did not fit in with the original philosophy of the INGO, and went on to outline the qualities head office staff need in order to work effectively with country offices:

> *The person must have cultural context of the region and the country. Secondly, the person must be open-minded. If confined to old thinking, it will never work. And third, this is one of the most important I feel. This is a not-for-profit organisation, it's [the founder]'s vision, an INGO, charity, you cannot have people from a corporate background or a financing background, who is thinking about productivity, it has to be an NGO mentality … There are good things about corporate and good things about NGO. Blend together. Blending is not done. It's more moving towards a corporate style, and that was not [the founder's] vision.* (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019)

Several country office staff and technical advisors, like Ravi above, appreciated the need to ensure accountability. However, they feared that a balance was not currently achieved, and that the organisation was increasingly "moving towards a corporate style" (Ravi, country manager, 19/05/2019). This seemed to produce "a bit of a weird culture around what we do. It's a bit of a weird mix between, are we still an NGO or are we some corporate entity?" (Rachel, technical advisor, 07/08/2019).

Overall, these interviews provide convincing evidence that managerialism negatively affects knowledge translation work at the boundaries by increasing the complexity of this work for middle figures. Managerialism in this INGO contributes to the invisibility of the boundary work of country office staff, and diminishes trust and relationships within the INGO as well as with partners. Interviewees agreed that some level of managerialism in INGOs was impossible to avoid, as they need to demonstrate accountability and effectiveness in order to secure funds, which is becoming an increasingly a competitive process (Crewe and Mowles, 2021, Mosse, 2011). Managerialism is linked to power and knowledge as it is an ideology that assigns corporate or senior positions a superior form of knowledge (Klikauer, 2015). This means that staff, such as country office staff, who carry out some of core work of the INGO, become subordinated, their knowledge devalued, and their power to make judgements diminished (Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021, Honig and Gulrajani, 2018). The rationalised models of work favoured by managerialist models conceals boundary work, diminishes trust and affects relationships with partners (Joachim and Schneiker, 2018). This leads to what Mosse (2011) describes as a vicious circle of managerialism whereby INGOs over-manage in order to gain support and funding, which in turn creates problems in-country that then requires further management. Managerialism in this context provides a clear example of the epistemic injustices that can occur in international development, where certain knowledge epistemologies are valued over others.

6.3: Improving knowledge translation at the boundaries

In this section I take up the question: *What would it take to improve knowledge translation processes within the INGO?* by examining staff views on how knowledge translation processes could be improved. In doing this, I apply the concept of boundary objects, again drawing on the work of Star (Star, 2010, Star and Griesemer, 1989) as a way to examine these processes. Boundary objects are tangible or intangible tools that enable communication and sharing of information and understanding between individuals and groups from different social worlds, effectively enabling the building of knowledge across boundaries (Jones et al., 2012, Star and Griesemer, 1989). They can be explicit (such as a map, report or picture) but can also be an abstract concept such as space and time (Jones et al., 2012). They can be "material objects, organisational forms, conceptual spaces or procedures" (Lamont and Molnár, 2002, p.180). Some of the traditional boundary objects of international development, often referred to as tools or artefacts, include templates, logframes, budgets, timelines, frameworks, targets and visual representations (Eyben and Guijt, 2015, Green, 2010). In this section, I examine some of the boundary objects used in the case study INGO and how they operate in terms of knowledge translation. I then outline alternative approaches suggested by staff to further facilitate knowledge translation across the boundaries of the INGO.

Organisational boundary objects

Staff described a number of organisational objects, processes, tools and structures that relate to the facilitation of knowledge exchange, both in the context of explaining how knowledge was used within the INGO, or as suggestions for improvement of knowledge flow. These boundary objects "inhabit several intersecting social world … *and* satisfy the informational requirements of each of them" (Star and Griesemer, 1989, p.393), or enable people from different social worlds to work together, creating a common understanding without losing their own diversity (Dar, 2018, Star, 2010). It is important to examine or interrogate boundary objects and how they are actually used in practice, as "not all boundary objects are created equal" (McKnight and Zietsma, 2007, p.689). For example, some boundary objects may act as both an enabler and inhibitor of knowledge exchange, depending on what point of time or specific conditions in a project it is used (McKnight and Zietsma, 2007, Oborn et al., 2013). Some boundary objects may also privilege a particular type of knowledge over others, and in the international development context, boundary objects have been criticised for being top-down and not valuing all stakeholders (Green, 2010, Oborn et al., 2013). In this study, boundary objects in the INGO were identified as explicit objects such as tools, templates and synthesised information, as well as conceptual processes or spaces such as those that allowed networking, sharing and relationship-building spaces, and organisational structure. The following is an analysis of some of the boundary objects described by staff.

Knowledge management repositories

One of the most obvious boundary objects for knowledge translation within an organisation are its knowledge management tools, which are the systems and structures for the storage and dissemination of knowledge. These boundary objects are in the form of a "repository" which is a common type of organisational boundary object (Star, 2010, p.603). The repositories described by staff included document filing systems, organisational knowledge storage and sharing platforms (including the Intranet), project management and other data systems, and processes for searching for and sharing organisational information. There was agreement amongst staff that these structures and systems within the INGO are vital but not always easy to access, and of varying usefulness as boundary objects. For example, the organisational Intranet is considered a rich source of information, but staff found it difficult to locate specific documents and therefore did not trust it. Country office teams and technical advisors were frustrated with the current organisational document filing system, and wanted a simple, streamlined system where documents could be easily found. Two informants, Ashok and Teresa, describe these frustrations:

> *We need common folders to research each and every topic and a common access folder, such as for equity, disability, so that people can search and easily find. We need a folder regarding community practices, what other organisations are doing.* (Ashok, program officer, 08/05/2019)

> *It never seemed like there was one collective source of truth of information, so being able to find out about past projects or existing projects, like where do you even begin*

to go looking for things like that, for the final version. (Teresa, technical advisor, 16/08/2019)

What emerges from these remarks is a desire for management tools that enable knowledge and information to be shared by all parts of the INGO and facilitate institutional learning from past projects.

Synthesised knowledge

Synthesised versions of research, evaluations and similar reports were valued highly by country office staff, as described in Chapter 5. Synthesised knowledge not only enables conversations and knowledge exchange with in-country partners and the wider INGO, but also helps staff to assess the relevance and accuracy of the information:

> *Most of the time when these big reports come in, it is highly unlikely that people read it from page one to the last. And even if somebody tried to read that, it becomes really difficult to understand the context and whether that information is right, wrong, what is actually that information telling you. It is really difficult. When these reports are synthesised and action points are taken out, you can clearly understand from one or two pages what is in that report and is there any point that you can benefit from, or you can take out.* (Sanaya, country manager, 01/05/2019)

Synthesised information enabled current technical and scientific information to be incorporated into program design. Luca, a technical advisor, pointed out that country teams were eager for current knowledge, but did not have the time or expertise to sift through journal articles for relevant technical content. In particular, there was a high demand for direct evidence that shows what works.

> *That sort of evidence on what is actually effective, in what settings and why, is actually something that is in high demand, and we don't synthesise enough.* (Luca, technical advisor, 14/08/2019)

The following example demonstrates how synthesised information is useful not only to country office staff but also local partners:

> *From head office there is more than 300 people, and sitting from the country office, I have not met in person many people. I know [a certain technical advisor], who sent updated country statistics in 2-3 pages, in early 2018. So, as he shared [this], I remembered his name and his work. Why? Because he shared knowledge and information, which is very vital to us. I took the prints to partners who could not*

access email. It was very comprehensive information with the resources from where this information was taken. I shared with partner hospitals and [provincial health facility] so that they can quote this information into their discussions or research if they want to. That piece of information was really easy to understand and easy to communicate and share. (Faizan, program officer, 17/05/2019)

In this quote, program officer Faizan highlights how knowledge sharing across and beyond the INGO builds connections. Faizan remembered the name of this technical advisor in an apparent sea of head office staff through the technical advisor's country statistics summary, a boundary object. The connection opens up the opportunity for Faizan to feel more comfortable about approaching this technical advisor in the future. Being able to share this boundary object with in-country partners at various health facilities helped to strengthen relations between these partners and the country office. Important for the quality and utility of this boundary object, according to Faizan, was the inclusion of source information of the synthesised data. It was important for country offices to see original sources of knowledge about their own countries, and be able to trace them back if needed, further described by Tara:

> *By the time it gets to the team it is fully synthesised, and teams are asked to reflect back on the numbers and see it's all correct. And then country teams are surprised by this information. 'Where did this information come from? I don't even have access to this information. Where did they get this information, it's about my country'.* (Tara, regional office staff, 31/07/2019)

Another type of report that was identified as a useful boundary object was trip reports that are completed by head office staff after visiting country offices. These are rich sources of contextual information about the in-country context that have great potential in terms of knowledge exchange with other head office staff. They contain:

> *… really good bits of information … about that relationship building, that kind of knowledge about observation, that kind of cross-cultural observation. Literally, technical staff going into country offices, and what are the things that they notice. And it's largely because they came in with a different set of eyes and expectations.* (Claire, technical advisor, 02/08/2019)

This is an example of a boundary object that can help to navigate knowledge across cultural boundaries and break down barriers between different layers in the INGO. The report template is deemed appropriate by technical advisors to collect relevant insights and observations about the country office that the head office staff member notices through observation or talking to the country teams.

Social media

The Internet is also used as a boundary object, through which different social worlds can interact. The following example describes how social media is used to exchange technical and research information to clinicians in remote areas:

> *We have some What's App groups and email groups, for [medical specialists] and whenever we have new things popping out from Twitter, from [peak bodies], whenever they have a new innovation approach, I share the learnings, case studies, new technologies to these groups. This is also a way to share/transfer knowledge to partners. For example, in District [name], there is a [medical specialist] sitting in a secondary level hospital. They don't have time to go into a laptop and get access and search for what's going on for [medical conditions]. So, in one click, if I get any notification from Twitter or any source, I can easily share this information to them. Usually they are responding, saying thank you so much, through this information, we learnt new things or came to know what's happening in other parts of the world.* (Faizan, program officer, 17/05/2019)

Within the INGO, the internal 'Yammer' social media application is a boundary object used by staff to share information within the organisation. However, some staff reported finding it difficult to distinguish useful information from other postings, for example, to celebrate an achievement. This meant that staff would not use this platform to conduct a search for information. Sean, a program officer described Yammer as a space where potentially useful information got lost:

> *Sometimes what I see is that some good pieces can be presented, but it dies along the way. If we had some way of scaling up things to the level of recommendations, and then sharing back. Something well-packaged and shared back to people, that can help.* (Sean, program officer, 25/07/2019)

Sean suggests that Yammer, as a boundary object, could be modified to allow information to be moved into something that can be actioned. Although more formal organisational templates could facilitate this, they often fail to do so, as shown below.

Program management tools

Many of the existing organisational tools and templates were viewed as not particularly useful for work across boundaries, or for knowledge work. Country office staff, in some cases, saw these tools as useful only for fulfilling head office requirements, or writing donor proposals or reports, rather than for improving the flow of knowledge between different parties. The following comment by a country manager draws a distinction between templates designed for a "vertical" flow of knowledge, and the capturing of "horizontal" information between in-country organisations that she deems more useful to her work:

> *The information that we need to put into our project design is more vertical, instead of horizontal information. So, we need to look at what [the organisation] is doing, what's being done in other countries, what were lessons in our past projects. It asks us to look at lessons from other countries, look at lessons learned from research about what's already been done, what the Department of Health is saying. So all of that's in our design document. So when we are drafting the workplan, it's all based on that information, rather than practical information with fellow NGOs, for them to say, no don't do this information because it doesn't work, for example.* (Anjelica, country manager, 31/05/2019)

Technical advisors also lamented the limitations of such tools and templates:

> *What would be good if someone could just sit with [the country manager], ask questions and just write it up. Because a lot of our country teams don't function well with writing reports and having to document things. They function much better orally.* (Luca, technical advisor, 14/08/2019)

Luca's suggestion to capture the country level knowledge through an interview acknowledges that richer and more nuanced information could be generated through oral storytelling. This could overcome the problem of stripping information from its real-life connections, what she called "death by report", through the INGO's templates.

Organisational structure

Aspects of organisational structure can also act as boundary objects, facilitating or hindering the movement of knowledge across organisational boundaries. A number of informants described the structure of the INGO at the time of the interviews as 'siloed' with limited communication between different teams in head office. Technical advisors perceived that this siloing hindered the exchange of knowledge that they relied on. For country office staff, the effect of siloing at head office meant that communication channels became confused and inefficient. The following quotes capture the effects of silos:

> *We all have different workplans, so there is a lot of silos that happen, even across divisions and head office. There's just not enough conversations about knowledge in all kind of sorts – who we are working with, what kind of relationships are being built, what worked before, what didn't, what projects are there, how are they being designed, why are they being designed, who's involved, why certain decisions were made. So, yeah, there's this siloing that happens. And that makes it a bit difficult as well, in terms of knowledge translation.* (Claire, technical advisor, 02/08/2019)

> *Just in terms of general information, the different divisions are not very good at sharing what they are doing, and then we end up with duplication of work and information.* (Annie, technical advisor, 30/08/2019)

For country teams, silos complicated the flows of communications with different people at head office. Naserian describes some of the communication challenges that this causes, and how this can negatively affect relations between different parts of the INGO:

> *I think the most struggle part is the communication. For example, sometimes when we unintentionally have direct communication with head office, lately the regional office finds out and 'Oh, you were having communication about this'. So, it's double-work, we have to go back to the very beginning and explain what has happened. These miscommunications happened unintentionally, we didn't mean to exclude the regional team.* (Naserian, country manager, 13/06/2019)

Although the aim of boundary objects is to allow the exchange of knowledge across boundaries, at times they can prove to be a detriment to development outcomes. In some cases, the tools of development such as logframes or monitoring and evaluation tools, which act as boundary objects, have been criticised for assigning value to certain types of knowledge over others, and creating or reproducing social hierarchies (Eyben and Guijt, 2015, Dar, 2018, Green, 2010, Peters, 2020). The following section describes some alternative approaches to boundary objects, and knowledge translation more generally, that were discussed by staff.

Alternative approaches to knowledge translation processes

The interviews revealed a strong desire for knowledge translation approaches that allowed time and safe spaces for knowledge process to occur. These included those based on dialogical approaches and investing time in relationships with partners and other staff members. Internal learning exchange forums on specific topic areas, regular all-of-staff presentations from different staff members, and training events that allowed staff to get together and exchange knowledge were identified as ways to create such spaces. As explained by one country manager, the all-of-staff presentations are “very, very good, a medium through which we get new developments, what is being tried where” (Biyu, country manager, 25/07/2019). The characteristics of these exchanges that people valued were being in a group with peers, listening to other teams’ experience, and having the opportunity to hold discussions with peers.

Country office staff were looking for opportunities to better engage in-country partners in decision-making and taking more advantage of their expertise, as well as opportunities to feed back more project-related information to them. They wanted ways in which to capture the expertise of their partners and share it. This sometimes happened through in-country research translation workshops with a trusted facilitator, where the INGO’s own research projects could be turned into usable boundary objects such as synthesised pieces of information or technical advice. Country office staff called for opportunities and spaces to be created for peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge, particularly in-person exchanges such as regional or country meetings:

> *Between project officers asking each other questions, that is when it’s helpful. I hope [we] can push for a budget for more meetings between project officers, these are good I think.* (Anjelica, country manager, 31/05/2019)

Opportunities for co-research or co-evaluation process where country office staff work together with a research or evaluation consultant was described by some staff as having the ability to enhance learning and support the translation of research evidence into improved practice. One country manager suggested that different country offices working on the similar programs could compare their “different models and different evidence, and then all of the evidence collectively may give a stronger information that we can use both at the country level and also the global level” (Naserian, country manager, 13/06/2019).

Looking at ways to work more effectively across organisational divisions was also advised by several staff, as described by a technical advisor:

> *Cut down on different and multiple channels of information sharing that just overloads people, particularly country teams. So having a coordinated approach and a more consistent approach across divisions, would be useful.* (Luca, technical advisor, 14/08/2019)

Most of these suggestions relate to creating better ways to work across boundaries. One way to facilitate effective boundaries is through “creating space for action, observation and reflection” (Qureshi et al., 2018, p.1575). It is this space where knowledge processes can occur. Participatory and decolonising boundary objects are increasingly noted in the literature as enabling more effective collaborations between divergent stakeholders (Green, 2010). Such tools work to lessen existing power imbalances and ensure that certain types of knowledge are not necessarily elevated other others (Green, 2010, Dar, 2018). These approaches value and allow time for the social and relational processes of knowledge translation to occur. Recent research suggests ways to overcome some of these issues, through the use of decolonising boundary objects. For example, Zurba et al. (2019) describes working with Indigenous communities to co-create boundary objects, which allowed the communication of “knowledge, values and aspirations across social and political boundaries” (p.1020). Dar (2018) emphasises the importance of creating spaces and highlights processes based on communicative techniques such as storytelling, to bring forth knowledge that is “silenced in the formal report” (p.581). Smith et al. (2019) describe a protocol for a decolonising approach to research translation. Malavisi (2019) describes the importance of approaches that facilitate epistemic justice, including increasing the visibility of pluralist forms of knowledge and shared inquiry, listening, learning from others, and ‘epistemic humility’. These recent approaches described in the literature align with the desired direction of knowledge translation by staff of this INGO.

6.4: Summary

This chapter has shown that the important knowledge translation work that occurs at boundaries is often hidden or unseen by the broader INGO. My research confirms recent research on the local staff of INGOs whose work implementing programs in-country involves highly technical and relational work that largely goes unseen by the broader organisation and the development sector as a whole (Peters, 2020). The non-valuing of the knowledge translation work of middle figures within the case study INGO was depicted in several ways through this research. This included misunderstandings by head office of the importance of the time, space and budget required to build and maintain relationships and reputation in-country; the sidelining of country office staff in terms of access to important information; the lack of opportunities for country office staff to participate in networking opportunities; the valuing of codified knowledge over tacit knowledge; and the promotion of managerialist practices. I have also shown that there is a link between the invisibility of this work and the invisibility of local, contextual knowledge, perhaps because of the shared attributes of being tacit, relational, not codified, and not within the organisational rational model of intervention. These findings link the invisibility of this type of work with development epistemologies.

One of the key influences on knowledge translation work at boundaries was shown to be the perceived increasing managerialism of the INGO. Managerialism stifles and complicates knowledge translation work in the INGO in several ways. Firstly, it takes up an increasing amount of staff time on urgent compliance, operational and systems work, meaning that boundary work and the social, relational work of knowledge translation was significantly decreased. Secondly, there was a clash between the development and corporate mindsets of staff, meaning that the slow work of development did not align with organisational expectations, and trust and relationships between internal staff was affected. Lastly, it valued codified forms of knowledge over tacit, meaning that local, contextual knowledge was once again sidelined. There is concern in the international development sector about the “uncritically adopted ideas and practices from the administrative sciences that mis-characterise the social, relational aspects of both implementation and policy making” (Peters, 2020, p.17). I extend this argument by suggesting that managerialism erodes relational elements such as trust and relationship building, due to differences in staff’s fundamental understandings of development, reflected by their professional background and current role in the INGO. Conversely, I have shown that increased levels of trust and strong relationships between country offices and head office staff can increase the recognition of, and *reveal* (as opposed to conceal), the boundary work of country office staff.

A number of boundary objects that either facilitated or disrupted the flow of knowledge across boundaries were identified by staff and they were described as having varied levels of effectiveness within the INGO. Staff were interested in knowledge translation processes and boundary objects that support the social and relational aspects of knowledge translation and allow the space and time for effective boundary work. Examples included increased opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, participation in learning networks, co-creation of research and evaluations, and enough time for reflection activities in a safe space. This aligns with participatory and decolonising approaches to knowledge translation and boundary work, and with ways of working that promote epistemic justice (Malavisi, 2019). Dar (2018, p.581) asserts an “urgent needs to protect and expand spaces” where different forms of knowledge may enter development discourse, and suggests other communicative techniques such as storytelling and the use of social media. Examining how different boundary objects are used and what impact this has at the organisational level helps to understand the “complex politics underlining knowledge production among development stakeholders” (Dar, 2018, p.581). Alternative approaches to knowledge processes such as these are part of the current debate around knowledge in development (Smith et al., 2019, Cummings, 2020, Crewe, 2014, Istratii, 2021).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis seeks to contribute to a better understanding of knowledge translation within INGOs. Through this research, I explored the dynamics of knowledge translation within one public health-focused INGO and examined how different types of knowledge are valued and utilised, and the organisational and broader contextual factors that influence these processes. INGOs are key players in development practice and important sites of research into how knowledge processes work in the sector. The purpose of this chapter is to draw conclusions from my research findings and present the implications of these conclusions.

The review of knowledge translation in low- and middle-income countries in Chapter 2 provided a background to my research. It contributed to the framing of my research questions, and the themes from this review provided a lens through which to review a narrower scope of literature on the role of INGOs in knowledge translation in Chapter 3. These themes recurred throughout both the literature in Chapter 3, and in my research findings. Of note was the link between knowledge and power, the structural factors that influence which forms of knowledge are prioritised, what kinds of knowledge are valued by decision-makers and other stakeholders, and how trust and relationships play a key role in how this knowledge is translated, valued and used.

The setting for my empirical research was a single public health-focused INGO, with head office located in Australia and 14 country offices. The overarching research question was: How does knowledge translation occur in a public health INGO? I investigated a series of sub-questions including: 1) What knowledge is important at different levels of the INGO, and what are the characteristics of this knowledge, 2) What are the existing knowledge translation processes of the INGO, including between different stakeholders across the global structure, 3) What are the contextual factors that influence knowledge translation at different levels of the INGO, and 4) What would it take to improve knowledge translation processes within the INGO? I examined these questions by focusing on two groups of staff – country office staff (local staff based in-country) and technical advisors located in head office. These staff worked in programming and/or advocacy roles. The aim of this research was to explore knowledge translation in development in depth, and to disentangle some of the intricacies of knowledge use in an INGO setting.

It became apparent early on in my field work that country office staff carried out knowledge work at the interface between head office and in-country partners and communities, that is, between the local and the global. As 'middle figures' in international development, they carry out important but often invisible work, that allows the actual implementation of development to occur (Peters, 2020).

Drawing on the scholarship of Star and colleagues (Star, 1995, Griesemer, 2015), I demonstrated that the knowledge translation 'work' in this INGO is often hidden and unacknowledged, and occurs at the boundaries of the organisation. Throughout this research, I have conceptualised boundaries as a shared space that can be conducive to the exchange of knowledge between different knowledge cultures (Timmermans, 2015, Star and Griesemer, 1989). This premise allows an imagining of the boundary as a place where heterogenous knowledges can be integrated, co-created, and shared across social worlds (Brown et al., 2013, Cummings et al., 2019, Ferguson, 2016). It also describes a space where the work of local in-country staff of the development sector generally, 'national development experts' (Kamruzzaman, 2017), carry out the vital but under-researched work that builds trust and relationships in order to do the work of development itself (Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021).

In using the concept of 'work' to closely examine what happens in these knowledge boundaries, and the role played by country office staff as middle figures, my research is an attempt to "disembed what has previously been deeply embedded" (Griesemer, 2015, p.362), making some of the invisible work of knowledge translation more visible. Conducting a "subtle and thorough analysis of the politics and culture of the work" (Star and Strauss, 1999, p.10) that country office staff carry out has produced a detailed picture of what this work entails, and contributes to the small body of literature on the work of local staff in international development (Ward, 2020, Sundberg, 2020). This study of knowledge translation work may be useful beyond the development sector, as a way to better examine and articulate the work of knowledge translation in other settings, particularly its' hidden, social and relational aspects. This can contribute to broadening the scope of the terms 'knowledge' and 'translation' to incorporate the social, political, human, dynamic and contextual factors that characterise it (Greenhalgh and Wieringa, 2011, McWilliam et al., 2009).

Below, I draw the four main conclusions from this research, followed by a discussion of the implications of the research. I then provide some reflections on the process of conducting this research and some considerations for practice and further research.

7.1: Conclusions

In response to the research questions, I present an overview of knowledge translation in the case study INGO, with a focus on the work of country office staff, and draw four main conclusions:

1) **The knowledge translation work of country office staff involves the merging of heterogenous knowledges and is highly social, relational, and contextual.**

The practice of international development relies on a range of heterogenous knowledges from various sources, that are often dynamic and shifting. Knowledge ranging from the local to the global, from highly technical to tacit and contextual, is required for development practice to be adaptive and effective (Ferguson et al., 2010). My research found that country office staff, located at the interface between head office and in-country partner organisations, play a very particular role in the knowledge translation work of the organisation. This is the work of merging heterogeneous knowledges. This merging allows these diverse knowledges to be used effectively for programming and advocacy, ultimately allowing the purpose of the INGO to be fulfilled. By integrating these different types of knowledge for specific purposes, country office staff contribute to fifth generation knowledge management, which refers to the negotiation, integration, co-creation and valuing of the existence of multiple knowledges (Cummings et al., 2013, Brown, 2010, Brown et al., 2013).

This work of merging heterogenous knowledges cannot be separated from the social and relational work of knowledge translation. The relationship work that country office staff undertake as part of knowledge translation is complex, cultural, contextual, dynamic, nuanced, and takes time. Their knowledge translation work in this setting relies on trust, reputation and relationships that have built over time, as well as the navigation of power and politics between a range of varied stakeholders. This builds on the work of Peters, who argues that the social and relational work of development is what actually holds industry together, despite perhaps appearing "seemingly small and inconsequential" (Peters, 2020, p.6).

Star's concept of examining the "work behind the work" (Timmermans, 2015, p.1) draws attention to the complex, delicate, interpretive, articulation and assimilation work of country office staff (Star, 1995, see also Peters, 2020, Graeber, 2012, Lewis and Mosse, 2006). This work connects the local with the global, forming "epistemic bridges" (Fouksman, 2017, p.1847). This research confirms other studies on the work of local staff in INGOs and their critical role in "negotiating the meaning and goals of international development projects" (Tesseur and Crack, 2020, p.38). The knowledge translation work that country office staff within this INGO carry out is imperative to effective implementation, and therefore, the overall work and purpose of the INGO.

2) **Country office staff's knowledge translation work as middle figures is largely unseen and under-valued.**

Country office staff, as middle figures, carry out the work of merging heterogeneous knowledges by creating a space that enables communication and coherence across boundaries (see Star and Griesemer, 1989). However, a key finding of my research is that this work is largely unseen and undervalued by the broader INGO. In arguing this, I draw on Star and colleagues' work on the invisibility of some forms of 'work', particularly that carried out at boundaries (Star and Strauss, 1999). This invisible work is often articulation and interpretation work, including the "invisible and emotional work of negotiating" (Griesemer, 2015, p.366), which can be easily overlooked in the workplace. The boundary work of country office staff is unrecognised because it is un-named and not formally developed as a set of tasks, and it does not fit in with a rationalised model of work. More broadly, the work of the local staff of international development, is also largely unseen, despite being so important to the functioning of INGOs (Kamruzzaman, 2017). This also links to the hidden nature of knowledge translation work itself (Hardwick et al., 2015).

At the same time, however, there is concern amongst country office staff that codifying or explaining this knowledge translation work may lead to it being seen as 'not work' by the broader INGO (as per Star and Griesemer, 1989). Indeed, Star and Griesemer (1989) emphasise that there is a trade-off in making this type of invisible work more visible – including increased surveillance and paperwork, loss of discretion, and difficulties in capturing what the work actually is. For the country office staff in my research, codifying this information would possibly risk relationships and make boundary work harder, but also would risk losing the essence and true meaning of the knowledge, making it less useful.

Alongside this under-valuing of the boundary work of country office staff, is the under-valuing of local, contextual knowledge itself. The importance of this knowledge for the implementation and adaptation of development work is not valued highly within the INGO, a pattern noted across the international development sector (Honig, 2019, Jackson, 2011, Narayanaswamy, 2017). This non-valuing of the work of country office staff, and of local, contextual knowledge may not be deliberate but it is a reflection of the current practice and discourse of development.

Importantly, my research also found that the value of both the work of country office staff, as well as local, contextual knowledge itself, becomes more visible to head office staff when well-established ongoing relationships and trust have been built between country office and head office staff. This highlights the importance of the social and relational work at boundaries within INGOs.

3) Managerialism hinders and complicates knowledge translation work at boundaries.

My findings showed that managerialism hinders and complicates country office staff's knowledge translation work at boundaries, as well as negatively affects knowledge processes more generally in the INGO. This widespread adoption of management tools and techniques, transferred from the business world to the development sector (Eagleton-Pierce, 2020, Klikauer, 2015), contributes to the non-valuing of country office staff's boundary work, as well as the local, contextual knowledge that is pivotal to successful development interventions.

In the case study INGO, managerialism was seen to be increasing over time. It affected knowledge translation, boundary work and the value of local, contextual knowledge. This occurred through a reduction in time available for knowledge work, the favouring of rationalist approaches to work, an increased pressure on in-country partners, and communication challenges. Relationships within the INGO were affected by a clash between 'development' and 'corporate' mindsets. This eroded relational elements such as trust and contributed to the work of middle figures becoming invisible. Managerialism within an organisation affects whose knowledge counts, and this is related to power structures within the organisation (Klikauer, 2015). This means that the country office staff, and their knowledges, become secondary, a trend that has been observed in other research on local staff in development (Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021).

Due to increasing managerialism of INGOs, staff have less and less time to engage in participatory approaches and collective action (Duval and Gendron, 2020), and this was confirmed by the informants in this study. Crowding out the time of certain staff, particularly those playing the role of middle figure, reduces the time available for work at the boundaries, potentially decreasing the effectiveness of knowledge translation within the INGO.

4) Staff prefer participatory and de-colonising boundary objects.

To examine organisational approaches to knowledge translation, I applied the concept of boundary objects. These are tangible and intangible elements that facilitate the flow of knowledge across boundaries (Star, 2010, Star and Griesemer, 1989). My research found that both country office staff and technical advisors desired boundary objects that allowed time and safe spaces for knowledge processes to occur. Instead of template-driven processes, they preferred approaches that build on the social and relational nature of knowledge in development, and attempt to counter the managerialist mindset. These included dialogical approaches, investing time in relationships with partners and other staff members, and enabling appropriate space for reflection.

These approaches can be said to draw on de-colonising and participatory approaches to knowledge translation (Chambers, 2014b, Dar, 2018, Smith et al., 2019), which are receiving increasing attention in the international development literature. This research has examined how different boundary objects are used and what impact this has at the organisational level. It demonstrated that staff at various levels of the INGO are questioning some of the managerial approaches of the INGO and are searching for better ways to facilitate knowledge across boundaries.

7.2: Implications

Below, I discuss the relevance of this thesis to broader development and knowledge translation studies, with a specific focus on the role of INGOs in development.

Middle figures' knowledge translation work shapes development

Within the international development setting, INGOs are valued for their role in facilitating knowledge flow between stakeholders, connecting the global to the local, and bridging "conceptual divides" (Johnstone, 2003, p.315). My research shows that country office staff, the middle figures who are situated in the boundaries between different knowledge cultures, do much of this boundary work that INGOs are credited for. Therefore, the knowledge translation work of these staff is important not only for the performance of an individual INGO, but in how INGOs shape development itself. This also applies to country office staff's connection to local, contextual knowledge. There is increasing pressure on INGOs to engage better with primary stakeholders, respond to contextual realities, and engage in participatory processes (Honig and Gulrajani, 2018, Lewis et al., 2021). Local, contextual knowledge is crucial to achieving these goals. My research has shown that the middle figures of INGOs play a key role in harnessing and transforming this local, contextual knowledge that effective development is so dependent on. Therefore, their work is crucial to achieving these development goals.

The role of local staff in development

There is limited research on the work of local staff in development and humanitarian contexts, and the literature that does exist calls for more to be done in uncovering the hidden work that they do and to explore why it is hidden (Ward, 2020, Peters, 2020). My research contributes to a better understanding of the varied and complex role that local in-country staff of INGOs play, particularly in navigating "interinstitutional complexity" (Mosse, 2013, p.238). There is some recent literature emerging on how these 'national development experts' (Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021) are crucial to development, building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, and carrying out brokering work (Kamruzzaman, 2017, Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021, Lewis and Mosse, 2006, Peters, 2020, Sundberg, 2020). However, overall, there is limited research around the roles of these staff in international development, their unique position at the intersection between donors and recipients, and their perspectives on development (Sundberg, 2020). Although some scholarship describes the brokerage, relational and reputational work that is done by these staff, there are few studies that put this in the context of knowledge translation (Kontinen and Katsui, 2015). This research, therefore, has contributed to this body of scholarship, exploring local staff's work through the lens of knowledge translation, and providing an insight into how local staff use knowledge and the practical ways in which knowledge is navigated at the country level. In doing so, this research adds to the literature on local staff's contribution to development.

Better understanding the effects of managerialism

Managerialism is a significant and increasing issue within INGOs, creating a level of concern within the international development sector (Cipriani, 2020). My research contributes to these debates through allowing a deeper understanding of the mechanisms by which managerialism impacts knowledge translation work within INGOs. It shows how managerialism negatively affects knowledge translation work at boundaries through under-valuing the social and relational aspects of this work, and thereby increasing the complexity of boundary work. It also erodes trust and relationships between INGO staff, due to fundamental differences in understandings of development between 'corporate' and 'development' mindsets. This erosion of trust reduces the capacity for knowledge translation to occur. At the same time, managerialism conceals boundary work, contributing to the factors that render it invisible within the broader INGO. Conversely, my research found that trust and relationships *reveal* boundary work, making it more visible. Additionally, my research found that managerialism de-values local, contextual knowledge, the very thing that contributes to adaptive development practice and ensures effective development outcomes (Honig and Gulrajani, 2018).

Transforming INGOs

This research contributes to the practice and study of transforming INGOs (Chambers, 2014b). INGOs are currently grappling issues such as increasing requirements for accountability and professionalism, balancing the needs of local communities with that of donor requirements, and with how to respond effectively to a constantly changing environment (Ronalds, 2010, Chambers, 2014a, Lewis et al., 2021). There are opportunities to better utilise INGOs' access to local, contextual knowledge, and their ability to work in the boundaries between stakeholders with different knowledge cultures. My research has shown that paying attention to, and supporting, the work of country office staff at knowledge boundaries will facilitate this. This can occur through applying decolonising and participatory approaches to knowledge, approaches that recognise diverse knowledges, and allow the time and space necessary to bring these knowledges together, and crucially, value and nurture relationships with in-country partners. These approaches align with the recent movements in the decolonisation of knowledge in development (Anderson et al., 2012, Cummings, 2020).

Contributions to the field of knowledge translation

Finally, this research can contribute to the field of knowledge translation generally. Through an in-depth case study, this research provides insight into some of the day-to-day processes and intricacies of how knowledge translation happens in a practical setting. It describes and elucidates some of the complexities of knowledge translation work, including some of the contextual, social and relational aspects of knowledge translation. Additionally, my research provides some analysis of what types of knowledge translation 'work' happens in the knowledge spaces within and across boundaries. It highlights the action of *merging divergent knowledges* as an important step or factor in the process of knowledge translation, and the syncretising effect that this has (Qureshi et al., 2018).

This research thus shows how knowledge translation processes are closely intertwined with, and influenced by, the nature of the knowledge itself. It therefore contributes to the literature on the concept of 'knowledge' used in the term 'knowledge translation' and shows that, in the INGO context, research knowledge alone is rarely used in isolation, but closely interlinked and merged alongside many other different types of knowledge. This builds on the work of others in the knowledge translation field (Kothari et al., 2011, Oborn et al., 2013).

Finally, this research adds to the body of knowledge translation literature that emphasises the importance of the social nature of knowledge and knowledge processes, and the central importance of relationships. It provides insight into some of the "human processes" of knowledge translation, "fraught with all of the challenges of human subjectivity, dynamic interaction, and change within a complex context" (McWilliam et al., 2009, p.2). It also shows that in the organisational context, knowledge translation is more likely to thrive through participatory approaches. It is hoped, therefore, that this work adds to the discussions on different ways of conceptualising knowledge translation.

7.3: Reflections

When analysing my research results, it became clear to me that the most important story coming out of the analysis was that of the country office staff, and that it was their voice that I needed to focus on the most. Therefore, this thesis did not focus in detail on other knowledge translation processes within the organisation, and only touches on the knowledge translation role played by technical advisors. I acknowledge that many other staff within the organisation play key roles in knowledge translation, including those staff that work in non-programmatic roles such as communications, and researching these roles would add to building a more complete picture of knowledge translation in INGOs. This research did not consider the perspective of in-country partner organisation staff, who work alongside the INGO staff in this case study, in knowledge translation work. Research with these staff is important to better understand what happens at these knowledge boundaries, including potential power issues, which were not considered in my research. There is also potential for further in-depth research on the boundary objects of knowledge translation used by INGOs. There is a body of organisational and management studies literature which I chose not to access in depth for this research, and this lens may be another way to analyse the findings of this research. Additionally, this research did not draw deeply on the literature around development theory, which may have added some richness to the analysis. The 'small-N' case study design of this research was useful in studying the concrete case of a single INGO to extend prior understandings of some of the contemporary debates around knowledge and development. It allowed for the elucidation of some of the intricacies of knowledge translation in the sector, and therefore for the research to contribute in this way. Conclusions were not formed from generalisations from the data alone, rather through the analysis of data using theory.

It is hoped that this research potentially offers some practical contributions to INGOs. Some considerations for practice may include: 1) explore decolonising and participatory approaches to knowledge work; 2) examine current and potential organisational boundary objects for how they may or may not allow for effective knowledge flow and transformation of knowledge; 3) explore how local and contextual knowledge is accessed, captured and disseminated and the organisational factors that may impact on this; 4) consider how managerialist practices may be affecting knowledge work, in particular the role of staff working at knowledge boundaries, and also the impact on the collection and utilisation of local, contextual knowledge, and consider whether choices need to be made about the balance between these tensions; and 5) consider how organisational structure may facilitate or inhibit knowledge flows, including an examination of work at knowledge boundaries.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics approval notice Phase 1

Re: 8097 SBREC Final approval notice (5 September 2018)

Dear Catherine,

The Chair of the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) at Flinders University considered your response to conditional approval out of session and your project has now been granted final ethics approval. This means that you now have approval to commence your research. Your ethics final approval notice can be found below.

FINAL APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No.:	**8097**
Project Title:	Knowledge translation in international public health non-government organisations
Principal Researcher:	Ms Catherine Malla
Email:	mall0051@flinders.edu.au

Approval Date:	5 September 2018	Ethics Approval Expiry Date:	**30 June 2022**

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the informatior subsequently provided.

Appendix 2: Ethics approval notice Phase 2

8272 ETHICS final approval notice (25 February 2019)

Dear Catherine,

The Deputy Chair of the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) at Flinders University considered your response to conditional approval out of session and your project has now been granted final ethics approval. Your ethics approval notice can be found below.

APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No.:	**8272**
Project Title:	Knowledge translation in international public health non-government organisations
Principal Researcher:	Ms Catherine Malla
Email:	mall0051@flinders.edu.au

Approval Date:	25 February 2019	Ethics Approval Expiry Date:	**30 June 2022**

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the information subsequently provided.

Appendix 3: Interview guide Phase 1

Introduction: Give a brief overview of the research outline so far and remind participants that this is a consultation interview to help me to develop the kinds of questions and strategies to be able to carry out my research more effectively. It will help me to refine my research questions, to develop interview questions, and to make decisions around the selection of interviewees and how interviews will be conducted. Explain that my research is about knowledge translation - how knowledge or evidence is used in order to make a difference to practice and policy. Ask participant if they have any questions before we begin.

1. This research is about how knowledge and evidence is used during programming and advocacy - what kinds of processes do you think I should be looking at? (For example, knowledge movement from where to where, and by whom to whom?)

2. I'm aware that there are lots of different types of evidence or knowledge that might be important within the organisation. What types of knowledge do you think that I should be looking for? (examples: technical/scientific; knowledge about how to implement programs; contextual knowledge; cultural knowledge; local knowledge)

3. Part of my research will aim to find out how to better facilitate knowledge translation within the organisation. How should I approach trying to answer this question?

4. If I was trying to find out some of the contextual factors influencing how successfully KT occurs within the organisation, what should I be looking at? This may include things that you think are barriers or facilitators to KT.

5. As you know, this is an organisation that works cross-culturally. How do you think I could best find out the influence (if any) that cross-cultural elements might have on the way that research or evidence might be used within the organisation?

6. If you think about the organisation's implementing partners in-country, how do you think we might go about finding out how these needs are met by the organisation? What about the movement of knowledge from the 'ground-up'? How do you think we could go about capturing information around this?

7. How do you think the role of knowledge translation in advocacy, in particular, could be examined further?

8. Are there any particular types of documents that you think would be valuable to analyse for this research? Or anything that should be observed (such as particular meetings?).

9. Who do you think the key players in knowledge translation in the organisation are, or should be?

10. Who should I be interviewing for this research? (specifically). What do you think is the best way to go about approaching and interviewing these people?

11. What kinds of things should I be asking these people?

12. Do you foresee any concerns with any results from this research being disseminated or published, realising that it may be difficult to keep the identity of the organisation confidential?

13. How do you think the organisation can best benefit from the findings of this research? What types of findings do you think might assist the organisation in improving knowledge translation practices?

Closing: Thank the participant for their time. Explain next steps for the research, and how the information that they have provided will be used.

Appendix 4: Interview guide Phase 2

Introduction: This guide will be used as a source of prompt questions. Different prompt questions will be utilised during different interviews, depending on the role that the interviewee has in the organisation, and in which areas the interviewee has particular experience or interest (for example, advocacy). Wording of the prompts will be modified to suit interviewee's role in the organisation (for example, in question 1, technical staff would not "carry out programming and advocacy" so the question would be worded differently).

1. What kinds of knowledge (and knowledge about what) are important for you to carry out programming and advocacy?
2. What knowledge do you think is valued in the organisation, and in the sector generally?
3. How do you access and engage with different types of knowledge? How do you use it practically and make decisions using it?
4. What kinds of things influence the way in which you access and then utilise knowledge?
5. What kind of things might influence how knowledge from in-country programming is captured, transformed, shared and utilised by head office and others?
6. How effectively is knowledge accessed and utilised by implementing in-country partners?
7. What do you think would improve knowledge translation within the organisation?