

KNOWLEDGE BROKERING

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the roles, tasks and activities carried out by knowledge brokers in the context of ISN
- Examine the complementarity of having knowledge brokers and a knowledge brokering team

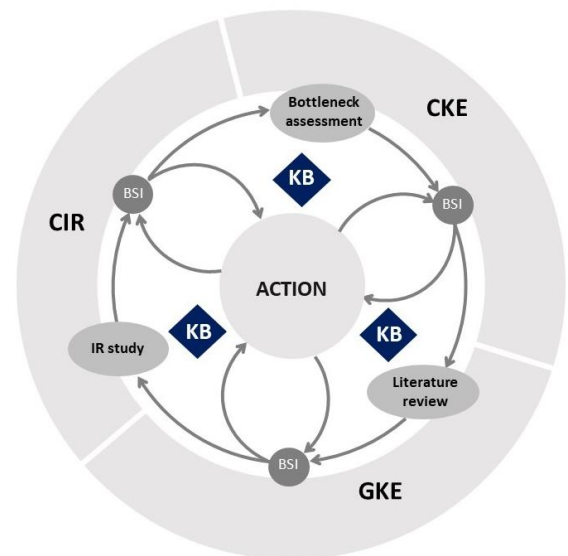
What are the characteristics of knowledge brokers?

In the context of ISN, there is a need to have someone who assumes the leadership for applying the ISS Operational Model to address program bottlenecks in a specific program in a timely and resource-efficient manner. This work fits into the function of a knowledge broker, which has been a core component in ISI. Knowledge brokers are individuals who are specifically tasked with facilitating the access, interpretation, adaptation and utilization of knowledge. Knowledge brokers are key for applying the ISS Operational Model and they can rely on the support of a knowledge brokering team. The box shown highlights the main qualities and skills of knowledge brokers.

A major conclusion from the literature on knowledge brokering is that finding an individual who possess all the qualities necessary to perform knowledge brokering activities appears daunting and unlikely. This has led to the suggestion that knowledge brokers should be undertaken by collectives or teams rather than a single individual. Thus, one innovation in the ISI is to include knowledge brokering as a core component of the work and a second innovation is to use a team rather than individual approach of knowledge broker.

Knowledge brokers and knowledge brokering team

In ISI, the initial vision was that there would be a knowledge brokering team to carry out the various activities required for applying IS. The experience in Kenya and Uganda showed that the project coordinator was key to leading the core team and facilitating the application of IS in country. While several members of the core team were acting as the knowledge brokering team, the project coordinator played the lead role because this person was



Box 5: Qualities and skills of knowledge brokers

- Respect (seniority, reputation, authority)
- Credibility (research, topic/content, government)
- Accessibility, responsiveness and flexibility for knowledge brokering roles and activities
- Reliability
- Self-confidence
- Motivational skills (enthusiastic and creative)
- Interpersonal skills and team builder
- Oral and written communication skills
- Tact, diplomatic and mediator
- Tireless commitment and determination
- Problem-solving skills
- Networking skills and an existing network
- Change management skills

engaged in most if not all activities in the table. Thus, to use the ISS operational model, there seems to be a need for a knowledge broker who can carry out specific tasks that are illustrated in Table 3. Considering this set of activities, there is a need to ensure sufficient time for the project coordinator to carry out the additional work that may be required for applying IS and that involve knowledge brokering activities.

Table 3: Knowledge brokering activities in the context of the ISS Operational Model

Steps of the ISS Operational Model	Knowledge brokering activities
1. Bottleneck assessment (BNA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connect and maintain relationships among stakeholders - gather actors from different levels - gather preliminary data (assess local context) - facilitate the BNA workshop - build capacity around IS/IR - generate buy-in among actors - facilitate discussions - help the actors to prioritize the bottlenecks to be addressed - summarize the findings of the BNA - share and validate the findings of the BNA
2. Bottleneck and solution inventory (BSI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compile the findings of the BNA in the BSI - support actors to use the knowledge (BAR and action parts) - assess and address barriers to using the knowledge (BAR)
3. Action and BSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor, promote and support knowledge use (AAR) - evaluate the outcomes of using the knowledge (AAR) - compile the findings in the BSI
4. Literature review and BSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connect and maintain relationships among stakeholders - coordinate interactions between stakeholders - build capacity around literature review - retrieve, organize and share existing knowledge - compile the findings of the literature review in the BSI - help the actors to prioritize the next actions - support actors to use the knowledge (BAR and action parts) - assess barriers to using the knowledge (BAR)
5. Action and BSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor, promote and support knowledge use (AAR) - evaluate the outcomes of using the knowledge (AAR) - compile the findings in the BSI
6. Implementation Research (IR) study and BSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connect and maintain relationships among stakeholders - facilitate negotiations and decisions about IR purposes and topics - support actors to use the knowledge for IR (tailoring of the research questions, strengthening of a data collection tool, development of an intervention, adaptation of a research method, etc.) - build capacity around IR activities (data collection, research method, etc.) - assess and address future barriers to using the knowledge (BAR)
7. Action and BSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor, promote and support knowledge use (AAR) - evaluate the outcomes of using the knowledge (AAR) - compile the findings in the BSI