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The Knowledge Partnering Handbook

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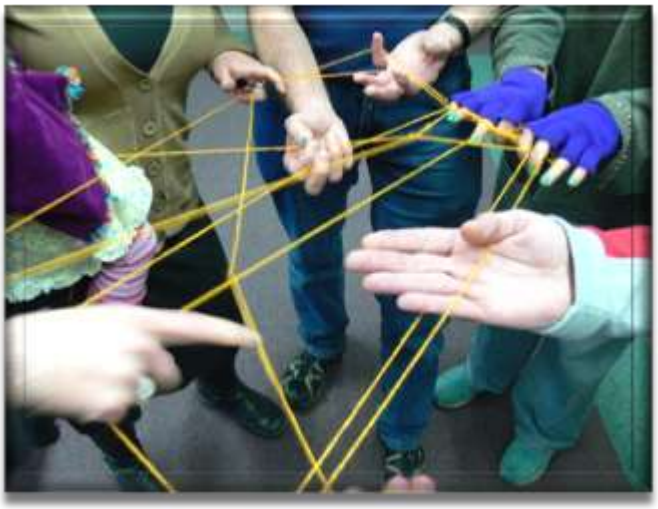

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Table of Contents

About this book

What is Knowledge Partnering?

Knowledge Partnering (KP) is a methodology for regional and community development. It is a way of working with communities in particular places to catalyse innovative solutions to development issues. The KP approach enables place-based, community-driven change by intentionally combining and dialoguing different forms of knowledge.

Knowledge Partnering is based on both academic and practice insights about how to work with communities and regions on development issues. It doesn't matter whether the issue is about employment or education, parks or productivity, health or housing. KP can be used to address any issue that is important to local people and organisations.

The basic proposition of Knowledge Partnering is that knowledge is central to development processes. Multiple forms of knowledge – including place-based, local, cultural, technical, and experiential knowledges – give different insights on development issues. The KP methodology is about bringing different kinds of knowledge together to enable new and innovative development solutions to emerge from the ground up.

Knowledge Partnering has been developed by the University of Tasmania's Institute for Regional Development (IRD) through its work in Tasmania's Cradle Coast region. The IRD's mandate is to work as a university presence that can *grow the capability of people, communities and organisations to articulate and realise their own development goals*. KP is the methodology that we use to do this.

Who is This Book For?

The *Knowledge Partnering Handbook* is a book for people and organisations interested in catalysing change at the local level. This includes local leaders, community organisers, development professionals, social and economic planners, project officers, extensionists, applied development researchers, research students and development organisations.

Knowledge Partnering has been designed to bridge the gap between research and development practice. It is about mobilising knowledge to support on-the-ground development processes. For development professionals and community leaders, KP offers a way to support social and economic development in particular places. Equally, for universities and applied academics, KP is useful for those who want to ensure that their research creates real benefits for communities and regions.

The KP methodology can be used by anyone seeking to catalyse on-the-ground change: individuals, groups, communities, organisations, or agencies. If you work in community development, local economic development, regional development, or any aspect of development policy or practice; if you are interested in capacity development, participatory development processes, or how to catalyse innovation in communities and regions – then the *Knowledge Partnering Handbook* is for you.

When Would I Use Knowledge Partnering?

The Knowledge Partnering regional and community development methodology is used when the aim is to:

- Understand a particular development issue or problem and develop strategies to address it;
- Grow the capability of communities and target groups to define, deliver, and evaluate development outcomes; and/or
- Encourage social and/or economic innovation in disadvantaged places.

Knowledge Partnering is particularly useful for tackling development issues at a local or regional scale. This is because development processes are often 'grounded' in particular geographic places and particular geographic communities. KP is well suited as an approach to such place-based development work.

Knowledge Partnering mobilises multiple forms of knowledge to catalyse development solutions from the ground up. Thus, KP is best used from the beginning of a project or program cycle, as an overall framework for scoping, implementing and evaluating participatory or multi-stakeholder development initiatives. KP can also be used as a methodology for participatory applied research projects focusing on regional or local issues, and for the collaborative evaluation of development projects or programs.

Why Would I Use Knowledge Partnering?

Knowledge Partnering is a structured approach to working with communities and organisations on development issues. It is not a single tool or method, but rather, a way of working with a range of social actors at the coalface to collectively understand and respond to development issues and opportunities.

The KP methodology provides practical guidance on how to **build capability**, **catalyse innovation** and create more **inclusive development outcomes** in particular contexts. As a capability development approach, KP is based on a deep understanding of the wealth of pre-existing community capability. Equally, as an applied research methodology, KP recognises the value of different kinds of knowledge in understanding development processes. As a participatory development approach, KP provides a structure for including multiple stakeholders, including less-advantaged groups, in development planning. And, as an approach for catalysing innovation, KP highlights the role of knowledge in innovation processes and how to mobilise these insights to create change.

Knowledge Partnering thus brings together the 'social' and 'economic' aspects of development processes into a single overarching framework. It posits that social inclusion and economic innovation are mutually reinforcing processes. And it provides practical guidance for those who want to understand what they can do, on the ground, to make a difference.

How Should I Use this Book?

This *Handbook* is divided into five chapters. The first chapter, *About Knowledge Partnering*, presents some of the theoretical ideas that underpin the Knowledge Partnering approach. The next two chapters describe how to use KP on the ground in development practice and/or in applied development research.

Chapter Four then presents a suite of practical *Knowledge Partnering Tools*. These tools are intended to be mixed and matched according to the needs of particular projects and initiatives. Some will be relevant for you, and some will not.

Chapter Five provides reflections on future directions for Knowledge Partnering, as well as additional resources for practitioners and researchers who use Knowledge Partnering in their work. Overall, this *Handbook* is intended to provide a starting point for sharing our experiences and exploring, together, the effectiveness of KP as a methodology for regional and community development.

Chapter One: About Knowledge Partnering

What is Local Knowledge?

The Knowledge Partnering approach proposes that 'local' or place-based knowledges are a key ingredient in development processes. But what is local knowledge, and why does it matter?

Local knowledge is knowledge that is associated with particular geographic places or communities. Local knowledge is epistemologically 'grounded'. This knowledge is possessed and/or practiced by groups of people who share a history and have an association with a particular place. Sometimes it is referred to as 'local community' knowledge, 'indigenous' knowledge, or 'place-based' knowledge. Local knowledge may be knowledge about the landscape, about shared local heritage, about a local industry or set of cultural norms. The common thread is that this kind of knowledge has a tie to particular geographical and social places.

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that local knowledge is important in development processes. Anthropologists of development, in particular, have documented the importance of indigenous technical and cultural knowledges in local economies and societies. Their work has shown how externally driven development efforts often fail to understand the complexity of local environments, industries, and social arrangements. A lack of local knowledge has therefore led to the failure of many well intentioned development efforts on the ground.

Regional development researchers have also taken an interest in local knowledge: in this case, to help understand regional economic development success. Their work suggests that localities and regions may have unique sources of knowledge – knowledge that is distinctively theirs – and that this knowledge is an important development resource. For instance, traditional artisan production skills and techniques can create market advantage for particular products. Local knowledge is one kind of regional resource, and one that other people in other places cannot easily copy.

Local knowledge is therefore of considerable interest in development processes. Yet in practice, local knowledge can be hard to see. Outside experts, development organisations and policy makers often fail to recognize the existence of local knowledge, particularly when the local people in question are 'uneducated', rural, and/or poor. Even when outsiders observe that local knowledge exists, they may fail to recognise its value: it may not be written down, quantified, credentialed, or

appear 'scientific' enough in its content or presentation. Usually only those development professional who have a longstanding relationship with local communities are in a position to recognise local knowledge and understand its value.

Local knowledge is place-based, but it *not* place-bounded. It may diffuse from one group to another: for instance via personal or professional networks, or formal study visits in which local knowledge is shared. Diasporas may maintain a shared 'local' knowledge from their place of origin despite their physical locations in far-flung parts of the globe. Local knowledge should therefore not be seen as something static, bounded or existing in isolation. Rather, it is continually influenced by other forms of knowledge: other local knowledges, as well as abstract knowledge that transcends place.

What is Abstract Knowledge?

Abstract knowledge is the 'mainstream' knowledge that we are most familiar with. It is knowledge that can be seen to be true across many different places, contexts, and social settings. The key feature of abstract knowledge is that it is generalisable across contexts. This generalisability means that abstract knowledge is not tied to the contextual characteristics of particular places or communities within them. Rather, abstract knowledge can be applied across and beyond local contexts with no distinction. In the language of science, it is objective knowledge.

Abstract knowledge is the stock in trade of knowledge institutions: it is found in textbooks, credentialed in degree programs, and promulgated by subject experts. Many forms of abstract knowledge are an elite commodity: acquired through formal study and research, possessed by some and not by others. When policy makers talk about growing the knowledge capabilities of communities and regions, or responding to the imperatives of the knowledge economy, they are usually referring to abstract knowledge: knowledge that is singular rather than multiple, homogenous rather than diverse, and which can be measured, credentialed and ultimately possessed.

Abstract knowledge therefore is generalisable and generalising, while local knowledge is specific to a given context. This is the great strength of abstract knowledge – as well as its key weakness. Abstract knowledge proposes that some things are objectively true across all places. Our Western traditions of positivism and empiricism go on to suggest that these objective facts can be stated, empirically tested, and ultimately proven as fact. Variation, equally, can be predicted and generalised. In a positivist paradigm, objectively real 'knowledge' must, by definition, undergo

testing and proof in multiple contexts. The assumption here is that real knowledge is always abstract.

Yet abstract knowledge by definition generalises. It is useful for understanding how the world works in general: it enables consistent patterns to be identified and predicted. At the same time, it downplays diversity: the non-patterns, the outliers, the specific local situations. Abstract knowledge is incredibly useful for macro-scale analysis, but of limited help for micro-scale understanding. This, arguably, is why so many social scientists have, in recent years, rejected the positivist paradigms of Western science and gone seeking local, indigenous and community-based perspectives. Not everything can be generalised, and generalisations are not necessarily value-free. Other forms of knowledge matter too.

Why Does Local Knowledge Matter?

Naming and addressing development challenges requires multiple forms of knowledge. Development challenges are complex; thus, understanding them requires moving beyond a single discipline, content area, or perspective, to include multiple disciplines and perspectives. Development challenges are also grounded in real places and real communities. Addressing these challenges therefore requires not just abstract knowledge that shows how the world works in general, but also the local knowledge of particular communities that shows how things work in particular places.

Knowledge Partnering was developed in response to the observation that local knowledge is often an important ingredient in development processes, but that it is overlooked in favour of mainstream abstract knowledge. Abstract knowledge is scientifically credible: it has been tested and proven. Local knowledge, on the other hand, is not generalisable and cannot be 'proven', nevertheless, it may be possessed, practiced, and shared within and among places to create networked knowledge. Nor does local knowledge presuppose any external categories of analysis. Rather, it may suggest new concepts, categories and frameworks that have been developed in particular social settings in response to particular environments and opportunities. 'Grounded' or 'ethnographic' concepts, categories and frameworks are not only locally relevant; they may suggest new ways to see issues and new kinds of solutions.

Knowledge Partnering is based on the proposition that both abstract and local knowledge matter in development processes, and that the 'knowledge economy' is about many different kinds of knowledge. This challenges the assumption that the relevant knowledge is always abstract and

generalisable. Typically conceived, the 'knowledge infrastructure' of a region or locality consists of universities, public sector research organisations, intermediary agencies, research and development arms of firms, professional consultancies, etc. This range of traditional knowledge institutions are represented in policy documents as the key drivers of the knowledge economy of regions and nations. Yet by definition, these visible knowledge institutions have a strong bias toward abstract, codified knowledge, and little or no interest in local or 'tacit' knowledge.

Interest in local knowledge is, however, growing. In discussions about learning and innovation, it is most often expressed as an interest in the role of practical, hands-on, 'tacit' forms of knowledge and 'know-how' in on-the-ground settings such as workplaces. In recent years, universities and other training institutions have expressed strong interest in workplace-based and on-the-job learning, recognising that not all relevant knowledge can be learned in a classroom. The term tacit knowledge is often used to describe this kind of hands-on knowledge that is learned through doing.

The distinction between tacit and codified knowledge simply indicates the degree to which knowledge is consciously possessed and formally documented (codified), as opposed to being unconsciously practiced (tacit). The tacit/ codified dimension of knowledge is important, but in itself this distinction tells us very little about the social contexts in which different kinds of knowledge are created, learned, practiced, and exchanged. Workplace and other tacit forms of knowledge are invariably created and practiced in specific physical and social contexts, such as workplaces. Much of this knowledge is therefore deeply 'local'.

Recognising that many kinds of knowledge are created locally – in communities, workplaces, or regions – opens a door to a broader view of knowledge. The traditional knowledge institutions are important, but knowledge can also be found in less expected places: on the shop floor, in the local community. And this local knowledge is important, not only for understanding how things work in particular places, but also for finding new ways of thinking about and solving problems – which, in turn, can be shared with others.

Types of Local Knowledge

Many forms of knowledge are created in specific, localised social contexts. These may be knowledges about a particular workplace or industry, about a local environment, or about any of a range of particular topics or domains of interest. Looking across the academic literature, these ideas are expressed in different ways. Christopher Antweiler, an anthropologist of development, provides a useful overview of the many ways the literature talks about 'local' 'indigenous' or 'community'

knowledge: from 'people's knowledge' and 'know-how' to 'ethnoscience' and 'endogenous knowledge'.[1] The overall impression is that while 'local' knowledge and its variants are clearly of interest, there is a lot of conceptual fuzziness about the types of knowledge we are talking about. Is it technical knowledge or popular knowledge? Does it belong to particular groups or to everyone? Is it only relevant with reference to particular social groupings (e.g. indigenous peoples, rural communities) or more generally?

To clarify this conceptual fuzziness, it is useful to think of local knowledges as existing across three broad domains: technical, cultural, and experiential knowledge. These domains refer broadly to the kind of knowledge we are talking about; in turn, each kind of knowledge may be further explained according to a number of other dimensions – for instance, the extent to which the knowledge is tacit or codified. A suggested typology is presented in Table Two.

Technical knowledge is knowledge about how to make and do things. Local technical knowledge is technical knowledge with a specific link to the landscape and/or cultural practices of a particular place. Traditional indigenous agricultural practices, local handicraft traditions, artisan production techniques such as those captured in the EU's Protected Designation of Origin, and knowledge that is shared among firms in local industrial districts are all examples of local technical knowledges. Local technical knowledges are always born from specific local contexts, generated in particular physical or cultural settings. They may or may not be potentially generalisable: for instance, Indonesian batik or Andean terrace farming are examples of local technical knowledge gone global.

Cultural knowledge is symbolic, social and organisational knowledge. Local cultural knowledge is knowledge about how communities work in a particular place. This includes knowing about the range of different social groups and communities in that place, their values, guiding ideas and frameworks, and their modes of organisation: including why certain things are done or not done, who does what, and how to get things done. Local cultural knowledge is nearly always tacit – it is often hard for people to explain what they know or how they know it. Equally, different locals may possess and practice different kinds of cultural knowledge: from the 'cultural capital' of the elite, to local 'common sense' that everyone – except perhaps outsiders! – shares. As cultural knowledge

[1] See Antweiler, C. (2004) 'Local Knowledge Theory and Methods: An Urban Model from Indonesia' in Bicker, A, P Sillitoe and J Pottier (eds), *Investigating Local Knowledge – New directions, new approaches.* Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

evolves through the interaction of people over time, cultural knowledge nearly always originates in specific local contexts.[2] At the same time, cultural ideas can diffuse quickly, particularly in an era of mass media; and many cultural symbols and knowledges now have a global presence.

Finally, experiential knowledge refers to knowledge that is gained from the personal experiences of individuals or groups. Local experiential knowledge is knowledge from experience grounded in specific geographic and social settings. Local experiential knowledge is the knowledge that people in a particular place have from their experiences in that place: experiences that may be deeply personal ('the town where I grew up'), or broadly shared ('like we did in the flood of '93'). Technical and cultural knowledge are also ultimately gained from experience. However, the domain of experiential knowledge is relevant in its own right, as it embraces the broader 'first hand' aspects of local knowledge (*What it is really like here*) as well as the history of 'accumulated wisdom' (or, indeed, 'path dependence') in a particular place. Experiential knowledge is particularly relevant to development processes where first-hand experiences of previous development failures (or successes) can influence understandings of future possibilities; and where current experiences of suffering or deprivation are directly relevant to understanding what is possible or desirable development action.

The matrix in Table One attempts to describe these three domains of local knowledge – technical, cultural, and experiential – with reference to how they vary across five dimensions of knowledge frequently discussed in the academic literature: specifically, whether the knowledge is tacit or codified; whether it is general ('people's knowledge') or specialist ('expert knowledge'); whether it is simple/declarative or complex knowledge; whether it is knowledge of low or high legitimacy; and whether it is historical or current. Each cell in the matrix gives examples of kinds of local knowledge in each category. These serve to illustrate the diversity of local knowledges – in the plural – and how to make sense of the different kinds of local knowledge we encounter in the literature and in practice.

[2] The obvious exception is in the culture of 'virtual' communities.

Table One: Typology of Local Knowledges

Domain	Codification?		Specialisation?		Complexity?		Legitimacy?		Contemporaneity?	
	Tacit	***Codified***	***General knowledge***	***Specialised knowledge***	***Simple/ declarative***	***Complex/ mêtis***	***Low legitimacy***	***High legitimacy***	***Historical***	***Current***
Technical (Synthetic, Analytic, Practical)	Local 'know how', farmer knowledge, indigenous technical knowledge (ITK)	EU Protected Designation of Origin documentation, ethnographic accounts of ITK	Common knowledge, common sense, local know-how	Local expert, specialised worker, community-based professional	Facts, typologies, etc. : local soil types, preferred varieties etc.	Adaptive/ creative problem solving (synthetic), local 'people's' science (analytic)	Workers' knowledge, peasants' knowledge, non-credentialed knowledge	Technical expert, local guru, local entrepreneur	Traditional practice, traditional local process, traditional technical knowledge	Current local practice
Cultural (Symbolic, Social, Organisational)	'Know who'/ 'Know why', 'Informal institutions', Appropriate behaviour, assumptions, shared values, ways of doing	Ethnographic studies of local cultures, vision and mission statements of organisations, futuring statements of towns	Generic Know who'/ 'Know why', 'Informal institutions', Appropriate behaviour, etc.	Cultural capital, elite knowledge, professional subcultures, organisational subcultures	Easily explainable aspects of cultural practice	Unconscious mental models, systems of thought and action: 'the economy', 'how things work here'.	Marginal sub-cultures ('bogans'), knowledge of low-status groups, outsiders/ 'blow-ins'	Knowledge of high status groups, opinion leaders, 'movers and shakers', 'old families'	Traditional culture, 'how it used to be', cultural roots	Contemporary culture, current practice, 'how we do things now'
Experiential (Grounded in personal/ group experience)	Embodied knowledge/ 'Know what it is like', 'know what it feels like'	Life histories, organisational histories, journals/ reflective logs	'What it's like here', major events, shared experiences	Personal experience, unique experience, someone who has 'done that' or 'lived through that'	Five senses, specific bounded experiences, 'the time we…'	Life experience, sixth sense, wisdom from experience	Bodily experience, emotion, negative experience	Local success story, major historical narrative, marketable 'experience'	Memory, oral history, historical documents, historical narratives	What is happening now, current events, lived experience.

Bringing Knowledges Together

Local knowledge (technical, cultural, and experiential) can play an important role in development processes. Yet local knowledge alone is not enough.

Local knowledge is clearly important, but expecting communities to solve local issues by relying only on their local knowledge is dangerous: indeed, the height of provincialism. Ignoring the importance of other forms of knowledge is akin to expecting communities to function in a vacuum, sealed off from other knowledge that can help them reach their goals.

Knowledge Partnering does not simply recognise the value of local knowledge. It goes further, to recognise the opportunity to leverage and grow local knowledge assets in dialogue with other kinds of knowledge. Knowledge Partnering is about bringing different kinds of knowledge together. This distinguishes it from so-called 'populist' development approaches that focus only on the value of local knowledge. While populist development approaches encourage us to pay closer attention to local knowledge, they in turn often downplay the value of abstract and scientific knowledge.

Increasingly, however, the bringing-together of different knowledges is being recognised as the key challenge of development practice. Development issues are complex and require multiple forms of knowledge. There is a need to recognise and value local knowledges – in the plural – and bring these into authentic dialogue with expert and scientific knowledges – also, frequently, in the plural. Words like *cross-disciplinary*, multi-stakeholder and *partnerships* pervade the literature. It is broadly recognised that different development actors need to work together to achieve effective and inclusive results. Yet the literature of development is largely silent on how to enable the meeting points of different kinds of knowledge.

Two notable exceptions are, however, worth mentioning here. First, are the various participatory development research and planning methods, including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). These are relatively low-cost methods for integrating local insights about the local context and key issues for development planning. The focus of PRA methods has been primarily on finding ways for local people to articulate and share their local knowledge with outside development professionals. A somewhat more two-way approach to knowledge sharing has been trialled in various efforts at Farmers' Participatory Research (FPR). Farmers' participatory research brings farmers and agricultural scientists together to share knowledge about the local farming environment and trial solutions to local agricultural problems. In this example, farmers as practical experts share their

local knowledge with scientific experts, and scientific experts share their abstract knowledge with farmers.[3]

Knowledge Partnering starts from this insight about the value of bringing abstract and local knowledge together. The principle of bringing different kinds of knowledge together is applicable well beyond agriculture, and well beyond a simple scientific–local knowledge dichotomy. Knowledge Partnering proposes that knowledge sharing can be not only two-way but multi-directional. In complex development situations, with multiple stakeholders and multiple perspectives, this bringing-together of different kinds of knowledges is necessary to ensure effective and inclusive development outcomes.

This process of bringing together different knowledges can happen at three levels:

- At the local level: recognising that there is not one single shared 'local knowledge'. By bringing together the knowledges of different communities, organisations and groups within the same locality, local people can address issues of common interest.
- Across localities: recognising that local knowledge can be shared across places. By bringing together knowledge about the same issue from different local contexts, people from different places can share and compare experiences and lessons learned and create networked knowledge.
- At the interface of abstract and local knowledge: recognising that each gives a different kind of insight on development issues. By bringing together generalisable fact and locally specific knowledge, people can deepen their understanding of local phenomena and broader patterns. An example is when agricultural scientists work with local farmers, or medical doctors work with traditional healers.

At each level, bringing knowledges together can lead to mutual learning and ultimately, the co-creation of new knowledge. When the concern is to address development problems or opportunities, bringing knowledge together within, across, or beyond the local area can stimulate the creation of innovative solutions.

[3] Hiruy and Eversole (2012) have also documented a similar collaboration between pastoralists and veterinarians on animal health in Africa.

How Does Knowledge Partnering Work?

Knowledge Partnering is a methodology for regional and community development – a way of working with individuals, groups, communities and organisations to address development challenges and opportunities.

Knowledge Partnering is a way of intentionally bringing different kinds of knowledge together to address development issues. It does not matter whether the specific issue is about health or agriculture, economic development or social inclusion, education or environmental improvement. If we define 'development' as intentional efforts to create positive social and economic change, then the Knowledge Partnering approach can be used by anyone to help catalyse development.

Knowledge Partnering is based on four core understandings about development:

- First, development is ultimately a social process. Regardless of the kind of change that is desired (economic, social, or environmental), individuals, groups, communities and organisations ultimately drive change. Some may work at the local level; while others may have a broader influence on resources or policy at regional, national or international scales. Some may act alone; others as part of complex firms or agencies. Some are more 'powerful' – more able to mobilise resources and influence to get things done – while others are less powerful, or are powerful in different spheres. Yet ultimately, people make the decisions that drive development. Knowledge Partnering starts from an 'actor oriented' development approach: it focuses on individuals, groups, communities and organisations and how they affect development processes.
- Second, local knowledge, including the knowledge of 'poor' and 'disadvantaged' groups, is deeply important to achieving effective and inclusive development processes. Development initiatives ignore local knowledge at their peril. Yet it can be difficult for development professionals or formal organisations to recognise local knowledge or understand its relevance to development policy and practice. Knowledge Partnering provides a framework for professionals to identify where local knowledge is needed and how to integrate key knowledge partnerships into the design of development initiatives.
- Third, external knowledge sources, relationships and partnerships are necessary for effective locally driven development. Knowledge Partnering

recognises that no 'local community' exists in a vacuum, and that local knowledge alone is often not enough to solve development issues. Expecting local communities to solve their own problems without outside resources is not a valid recipe for development. It ignores the entrenched structural obstacles to change that many communities and groups face. Particularly for those that are 'poor' or 'disadvantaged' in some way, external knowledge sources, relationships and partnerships are key resources. Knowledge Partnering provides a framework for local communities and groups to identify and engage with the external resources they need, on their own terms.

- Fourth, innovation occurs when different kinds of knowledge come together. This is a key insight from the literature on innovation: that innovation often happens at the meeting point of different knowledges. This insight, originally focused on the functioning of firms and industries, is also very relevant to development processes. Solving development problems and identifying development opportunities are ultimately a search for innovation. Knowledge Partnering provides a framework for bringing different kinds of knowledge together: thus encouraging not only more inclusive development processes, but also more innovative ideas and solutions.

Knowledge Partnering provides an answer to two of the core preoccupations of development practice: on the one hand, how to do a better job of engaging and working with local communities in an inclusive and empowering way, and on the other, how to tackle development issues effectively and innovatively. One question focuses on 'social inclusion', the other focuses on 'development innovation', but the answer to both questions is the same: by including and empowering, solutions emerge. When service providers listen to clients, when local people are able to correct the assumptions of outside helpers, when an outsider's perspective throws an old problem into a new light, their ideas can spark new and better ways of doing things. Knowledge Partnering works because – as many development practitioners can attest from their experience – solutions emerge when you bring different kinds of knowledge together.

Chapter Two: Knowledge Partnering in Practice

Knowledge Partnering Principles

Knowledge Partnering is not a 'development solution'; rather, it is a way of understanding development processes in order to generate better solutions.

Knowledge Partnering does not provide answers to development issues; rather, it provides a way of going about finding answers. As a methodology for regional and community development, Knowledge Partnering starts from a certain way of understanding development (theory), and applies these ideas to catalyse development on the ground, in practice.

Knowledge Partnering starts with the insights about development articulated in Chapter One. These provide the three basic principles that underpin Knowledge Partnering:

1) Development is a social process, one that anyone can influence. Anyone can be a development actor.
2) Everyone's knowledge matters in tackling development issues. This includes the knowledges of both 'powerful' and 'powerless' groups. Local development actors need to be able to source knowledge from within and beyond their locality to drive effective development solutions. Equally, external development actors need to work with local actors to achieve effective local development.
3) Bringing different kinds of knowledge together is a way to create both inclusive and innovative development solutions.

When applying Knowledge Partnering principles in on-the-ground development situations, the typical starting-point is with one or more development actors – individuals, groups, communities or organisations – and a development situation that they want to address. Knowledge Partnering thus starts with one or more 'Proponents' and an issue that they propose needs to be addressed for a particular community and/or locality.

The Proponent

Knowledge Partnering can start with a single person, a small group, or an organisation – anyone with a mandate or desire to drive change. In the Knowledge Partnering process, this person or organisation is called the 'Proponent' – the one who proposes the issue to be addressed: for instance, food security, or road safety, or enterprise productivity – whatever issue they identify as a concern for a particular community or locality.

The proponent may be an 'insider' or 'outsider' to that community or locality – or a bit of both. Equally, the proponent may be an 'insider' or 'outsider' to the formal organisations charged with looking after the economic and social development of a particular region or community. The proponent may be particularly focused on the concerns of business, government, community, or some combination of these, and may identify with one or more (or none) of those sectors. Proponents may be paid or unpaid, and their projects may be funded, unfunded or seeking funding. Regardless of their positioning in the broader development landscape, what development actors have in common is a desire to create or catalyse change.

Arguably, all development initiatives start with a proponent. The proponent may be a government minister, a local councillor, a bureaucrat, a board member, or a manager in an aid agency or NGO. Equally, a proponent may be a local service club, a resident's association, a grassroots social movement, or a passionate individual seeking to improve his or her community. A proponent may be an economic development manager whose job is all about generating development outcomes, or a volunteer in a community organisation trying to push an agenda for change. Anyone can be a development proponent.

The Development Issue

Development issues are areas where some kind of change is desired.

Sometimes development issues are framed as problems or challenges: unemployment, homelessness, financial exclusion, environmental degradation. Sometimes they are framed as aspirations: industry growth, liveability, skills development, healthy communities. Regardless of framing – as problem or opportunity – or who is doing the framing, each development issue has three basic components:

- Concept: what is the issue about;
- Scope: who and where is the issue about; and
- Agenda: why does this issue matter?

Concepts sit at the core of development issues. For this reason, well-used development concepts like poverty and sustainability have generated reams of academic debate about what they mean and how they are used. Many core development concepts – like housing, health, employment, education, and the environment – attract such a lot of activity that they become sectors in their own right. Numerous organisations spring up to deliver development outcomes in key sectors like 'housing' or 'health', but before these were sectors, they were concepts. What do these concepts mean, and how might they mean different things to different development actors?

Scope refers to the focus of a development issue. While arguably some issues are universal, they always play out on the ground in particular contexts. Regional and community development work attends to these contexts. Sometimes a proponent explicitly states the scope of an issue: employment in this municipality, educational attainment in this region, skills development for these organisations. However, indicators of scope are often unclear: if the focus is disadvantaged communities, for instance, how is disadvantage defined? Are communities defined geographically, relationally, or in some other way? Scope is often expressed in terms of a 'target group' (e.g. 'migrant women', 'indigenous youth', 'rural entrepreneurs'), which may or may not be clearly defined.

Agendas provide the larger backdrop for development issues. Agendas are often hard to see, and proponents may or may not be conscious of the larger agenda that drives their interest in a particular development issue such as education or industry development. Traditionally, a lot of development work had a modernisation agenda: the development of 'underdeveloped' places by replacing traditional housing, transport, services and production processes with more modern ones, often those from Western European or North American contexts. Modernisation agendas were not always articulated, and seldom questioned, even when they created considerable damage. Other development agendas include 'economic growth', 'human development', 'social equity', and 'ecologically sustainable development'. All development action is underpinned by some kind of change agenda. Why does this issue matter, and what agenda or agendas underpin it?

From Issue to Action?

When a proponent identifies a development issue, what happens next?

Sometimes, they do nothing: it is too hard, or they do not know what they can do. 'Powerless' or 'disadvantaged' people are not a defined group; these are just the words we use to describe what happens when people do not feel in a position to change their situation. Perhaps they do not feel capable or don't even know where to start; perhaps they don't have the resources they need – time, money, support. Perhaps they know that pushing a change agenda will be difficult or even dangerous. The result is many people with good development ideas never do anything about them, or try for a while and then stop.

Other people see an issue and do feel in a position where they can do something. They may discuss the issue with others and form an idea about what could be done. They may try out a new idea, alone or with others, or encourage someone else to try it out. Often, if they are in a formal organisational context, they may design a project or initiative. Sometimes, one of these takes off. It acquires the label of an innovation, because it solves a problem or generates some other kind of value that wasn't there before. Most times, however, that isn't what happens.

On the ground, there are lots of ideas, lots of projects, lots of initiatives. Many duplicate each other. Some don't work very well. Some don't entirely understand the core concepts they are attempting to address, and some are not clear about their scope. Many miss opportunities. Very few have a good understanding of the development landscape –the range of other organisations and groups that are engaged with similar or related issues. Even those that do some things well, typically have areas where they could benefit from more support. They seldom know how to get it.

Effective development action requires a good understanding of the specific issue and of the larger development landscape. A typical local-level development landscape is an entanglement of agencies, organisations, departments and community groups working at various scales (neighbourhood, municipality, region, state, national, international) on various issues (health, housing, enterprise, training, education) scoped for a range of target groups (indigenous, youth, the aged, unemployed, women, families) and driven by a number of stated and unstated development agendas – which may or may not use the language of 'development'.

The local development landscape contains many resources that can be mobilised to address development issues. Nevertheless, collaboration is not automatic. Different organisations and groups may have vastly different understanding of development issues. They may have very different ideas about what needs to be changed and why. They may not know about each other, not

trust each other, or not see any benefit to be gained from working together. As a result, a lot of development action is fragmented, under resourced, and not as effective as it could be.

Knowledge Partnering principles suggest a different approach: to design development action with reference to all available knowledge: that of local communities, clients, practitioners and organisations as well as the knowledge of researchers and thought leaders. Rather than a choice between doing nothing about a development issue or 'doing something' based on limited understanding, the emphasis is on informed action based on Knowledge Partnering principles. Bringing together the range of understandings and practices around a particular development issue goes well beyond developing an 'evidence-base' for practice. Rather, the on-the-ground Knowledge Partnering process aims to create shared knowledge platforms for future collaboration and innovation.

The Knowledge Partnering Process

The Knowledge Partnering process (KP process) is a structured way to apply Knowledge Partnering principles to on-the-ground development work.

The KP process is a five-step process that revolves around a 'development issue' that matters to the proponents. It is most effectively used at the pre-design stage of a development initiative. The KP Process starts where most development action starts: with a development issue, however defined, and one or more proponents.

The KP Process asks the proponents to define:

- What exactly is the development issue – with attention to core concepts, scope and larger agenda – and what needs to be understood in order to develop a response (Issue Scoping).
- What do the proponents already know about this issue – through their lived experience, professional practice, research, training, etc. – and what do they need to find out from others? Who are these others? (Knowledge Scan).
- How might the proponents approach others to gain a more complete understanding of the issue and opportunities for action? (Knowledge Plan).
- What are the key messages that come out of this knowledge-sharing process and how can they be represented and shared in an engaging way? (Knowledge Map).

- What are the next steps from here? Are there clear opportunities or needs? What are the key resources, and who will do what? (Action Plan).

Figure One illustrates the KP process.

Figure One: The KP Process

The KP process can be used to understand complex development issues and 'what needs to be done'. It can be used whenever a person, group or organisation is aiming to address a development issue – something that matters to them. Recognising that no single person, group or organisation has all the knowledge that is needed to create effective solutions to development issues, the KP process brings different kinds of knowledge together to inform development action.

The KP process allows proponents to tap into their own personal, organisational or community knowledge bases and then strategically link them up with the knowledge of others. Proponents can use the KP process to work through what they know about an issue, what they need to know, and how to work with others to fill the gaps. Before writing a grant proposal, before investing in a pilot project, or before deciding that there is really nothing they can do, proponents can use the KP process to develop a better- informed and better-resourced action plan.

Overall, the KP process aims to create a shared understanding of issues and opportunities. Through the process, the network of knowledge partners expands as the initial proponents seek out others to

deepen their understanding of their development issue and what can be done about it. The process of knowledge partnering identifies resources and synergies as well as conflicts and tensions. It creates a shared knowledge base about the issue: one which can be communicated and continually refined, providing a launching point for cooperation and potentially new collaborative arrangements.

Brokering Knowledge Partnerships

Knowledge Partnering principles can, however, be challenging in practice.

They represent a different way of thinking about and doing development: one that is not necessarily driven by formal 'development organisations', and one that does not exclusively rely on the expert knowledge of consultants, researchers, or other professionals. Knowledge Partnering's focus on valuing multiple forms of knowledge flies contrary to those who define knowledge as only knowledge that is abstract and generalisable. Its focus on bringing different kinds of knowledge together may sit uncomfortably with those who are content with received wisdom and their current views of the world. *Why*, they may ask, *would we listen to them? What can they teach us?*

Knowledge Partnering with others requires respect, and it requires listening. Neither necessarily come naturally: either to busy professionals, or to disenchanted groups on the margins of power. Many development processes call for dialogue to overcome conflict, but dialogue is of little use without respect and listening. Good dialogue may reveal, as one participant reflected recently, that between two apparently polarised interest groups, they agreed on 90% of things, it was only the 10% they could not agree on. Conflicts – about resource use, about development priorities, about what should be done – are inevitable, but many are potentially avoidable. Martin Luther King once remarked that riots are simply the language of the unheard. How many conflicts could be resolved by sharing what we know?

Nevertheless, listening and respect do not come easily to everyone, and less so the busier, or angrier, or more desperate we are. In addition, there are differences of personality and culture. Some people find it easy to think laterally and take other perspectives on board; others find it incredibly difficult. Some people have deeply etched mental maps that have never been questioned; others question continually. Some are expected to wear the mantle of expert and do so with flair, while others are unsure if they know anything worth saying at all. For all of these reasons and more, Knowledge Partnering often requires a facilitator or broker.

A Knowledge Partnering broker (KP broker) is someone with a particular knowledge-set around how to work with people to enable communication across boundaries. These may be boundaries of class, culture, gender, profession, and/ or personality. The may be boundaries created by history (we know what happened the last time) or divergent interests, real or perceived (what is good for them will not be good for us). Even unfamiliarity can create a boundary that discourages dialogue and knowledge-sharing. A KP broker understands the development benefits that can be generated by helping people and organisations to move across these boundaries. He or she also has the skills to recognise the obstacles and create a safe environment for people to meet and share knowledge about development issues of common concern.

KP brokers are often the 'boundary spanners' in organisations and the 'translation agents' in community development work. They may be situated in any community or organisational context; what they have in common is the ability to act as a go-between, to gain trust and build bridges, to put things in people's own language and understand and respond to where they are coming from. The 'development broker' has long played a role in mediating between external development organisations and local communities – often despite little attention to the key importance of this role.[4] The KP broker has a broader role: mediating between and among a range of development actors, with a specific focus on enabling knowledge sharing toward the development of shared knowledge platforms for collaborative action.

[4] For an insightful reflection on development brokers see D Lewis and D Mosse (2006) *Development Brokers and Translators – The Ethnography of Aid and Agencies*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Chapter Three: Knowledge Partnering in Applied Research and Evaluation

Knowledge Partnering in Applied Research

Knowledge Partnering is not only a way of doing development; it can also be a way of doing research – especially applied research on development issues.

The theory and principles underpinning Knowledge Partnering are very relevant to informing research on development issues, particularly when the research focuses on development in specific local communities and regions. Thus, while Knowledge Partnering is a practical development methodology, it can also be used as a methodology for applied research on development issues.

Applied researchers typically aim to respond to a real-world question or issue and generate understandings, recommendations and models to improve policy or practice. Typically, applied researchers on development issues have few methodological resources at their disposal beyond those available to mainstream social researchers. Knowledge Partnering on the other hand, embeds a set of theoretical insights about development as a social process to create a tailored methodology for applied development research.

In Knowledge Partnering research (KP research), the researcher takes the role of proponent: it is he or she who names and seeks an answer to a development issue. This may be an issue that he or she has previously observed, experienced, or read about. KP research focuses on the early stages of the KP process described above (scoping, knowledge scan, knowledge plan and knowledge mapping), with a stronger attention to the scholarly literature at the Knowledge Scan stage as well as a continued commitment to include multiple forms of knowledge. As research, the project does not typically proceed to Action Plan stage, but it would typically generate recommendations for action. In some cases, action-research pilots are included in the design of KP research.

As an applied research methodology, Knowledge Partnering provides an explicit framework for taking into account different kinds of knowledges, including local and cultural knowledges, in understanding development issues and processes. Epistemologically, Knowledge Partnering is not only highly participatory, but it is based on a particular set of understandings about development (as a social process), the development landscape (comprised of multiple actors) and a theoretical framework that proposes that multiple knowledges (including cultural and experiential knowledges)

are relevant to regional and community development processes. It thus provides a very different framing for applied development research than research that takes as its starting-point the imperatives of regional planning or policy development, or the assumptions of traditional sociological theory.

For applied researchers sympathetic with the theoretical underpinnings and participatory focus of Knowledge Partnering, there is thus a strong argument for explicitly adopting Knowledge Partnering as a research methodology. In the Institute for Regional Development, this is our standard methodology for all partnership-based projects. Nevertheless, a KP research methodology must be chosen with care. First, Knowledge Partnering is ultimately oriented toward action. Researchers and research organisations are often not in a position to generate direct, on the ground action for change; it is therefore most appropriate for them to partner with an action-focused organisation as co-proponent.

A second caution is that most research organisations are also still strongly tied to a traditional paradigm of research practice: one in which researchers, as experts, extract data to generate new knowledge, which they then own. In Knowledge Partnering research, the paradigm is different: research data is neither extracted nor owned. It is shared for the purposes of growing shared knowledge. The terms and conditions under which it is shared may vary from context to context, but it is inappropriate for a research organisation to wholly own either the process or the outcomes of a Knowledge Partnering process.

Knowledge Partnering for Evaluation

While Knowledge Partnering can be used to design development initiatives, it can also be used as a methodology for project or program evaluation. The core methodology is the same: to value and bring together different kinds of knowledge. As an evaluation approach, Knowledge Partnering evaluation (KP Evaluation) emphasises the value of practitioner knowledge and research capacity, as well as the need to incorporate multiple perspectives on 'impact' into the design of evaluation tools. KP Evaluation always commences at the beginning of a project or program (ideally, before) and 'accompanies' it from beginning to end.

As with all good evaluation approaches, KP Evaluation starts with the project logic or theory of change: what change the project or program aims to generate, and how it is proposed to do this. KP Evaluation focuses on a series of key questions about both the project or program processes (what was done, how it was done, what worked and what didn't) and the outcomes (what was achieved).

It thus combines process evaluation with impact evaluation. Finally, as per Knowledge Partnering principles, KP Evaluation places a strong emphasis on including multiple forms of knowledge in both the design stage of the evaluation and in the later data collection and analysis stages.

The design stage is of first importance: it is at this stage that key stakeholders (particularly funders, practitioners, and where possible clients) articulate what they are aiming to achieve with their initiative and the key questions that they hope the evaluation will answer. Typically, some are questions about the effectiveness of the project or program as a process, and some about outcomes or impacts that it aims to generate. Different stakeholders have different questions and different ideas about the kinds of indicators that would prove successful impact. Equally, bringing together different kinds of knowledge at the evaluation design stage enables the identification of the least invasive and most reliable data collection methods: often, methods that can be implemented as part of day-to-day project activities. The key question, indicators and fit-to-purpose data collection methods are captured in a KP Evaluation Design Matrix (see Chapter Four).

The implementation of a KP evaluation aims to embed itself as much as possible into the internal processes of the project or initiative to be evaluated. Evaluation becomes not an external add-on, but part of an ongoing process of data collection, analysis and action learning. This minimises the potential disruptiveness of data collection, and embeds evaluation within development activities as a low-cost strategy for evidence-based reporting and continual improvement. While busy practitioners with little or no research experience may require assistance to set up data collection systems and pull together results, their close involvement in the process means that they are learning how to do evaluation and taking on board its findings even as they are feeding their own insights and reflections into the process. Moreover, depending on the evaluation questions, findings can also go back to clients or other stakeholders at different stages to gain their interpretations and insights.

The KP evaluation approach thus differs significantly from typical off-the-shelf evaluation approaches designed and delivered by external experts. Both the design and the implementation stages of KP evaluation draw on multiple forms of knowledge: with an emphasis on the different knowledges of practitioners, managers, client groups, volunteers and other key stakeholders. All stages of the evaluation process are embedded as much as possible into the day-to-day workings of the initiative, and project actors take carriage of data collection and analysis. The evaluator, as knowledge partner, facilitates these processes, provides advice on methods and an external check on their rigour. However, the ultimate aim is to embed evaluation capability and action learning within the initiative or organisation itself, and among the key development actors involved.

Chapter Four: Knowledge Partnering Tools

A KP Toolbox

Knowledge Partnering is an overall approach for regional and community development planning, research and evaluation. Within this overarching approach, various methods or tools can be used to collect and share knowledge.

This chapter present a number of tools which have been developed to date to support the Knowledge Partnering process (KP process), KP research and KP evaluation. In addition to the tools included here, there are a number of other tools and methods that are widely available and used in development and/or research processes. Many of these are useful at different stages of development processes (e.g. tools for identifying issues, tools for managing projects). Equally, a number of established participatory research methods can be easily adapted for use in KP research.

Recall the KP process described in Chapter Two: it is the process of moving from a key issue (the typical output of participatory assessment exercises) to action. When a proponent identifies a development issue of concern, the first stage is to scope the issue. This is followed by a structured, multi-stakeholder knowledge-gathering process: the Knowledge Scan and Knowledge Plan, culminating in a Knowledge Map. Discussion and interpretation of this Knowledge Map then enables the proponent, often in conversation with others, to arrive at an Action Plan: which may be a project, proposal, initiative, partnership, or something else.

Specific tools can be used to facilitate these processes. This section includes the Issue Scoping Tool, Knowledge Scan Tool, Knowledge Plan Tool, and Knowledge Map Tool. It also includes an Intervention Mapping Tool, which is specifically designed to be used at the Knowledge Scan stage to collect information about other development interventions currently underway in an area. The tools in this chapter will assist proponents to move through the stages of the KP process from development issue to development action. Equally, these tools can assist KP brokers as they facilitate these processes for others. Finally, the chapter also includes two tools that have been developed to support Knowledge Partnering research and evaluation: the Research Scoping Tool and the KP Evaluation Design Tool.

Issue Scoping Tool

Issue Scoping is a process of 'unpacking' a development issue, defining key concepts, scope, and underlying agendas and assumptions, and then focusing on the questions that need to be answered to inform action. Individuals, small groups or teams can work through the process of issue scoping using the simple KP Issue Scoping Tool.

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Issue Scoping Tool

Regional development issues are often complex.

Issue Scoping takes an issue and breaks it down to identify the key questions that can inform action.

What is the ISSUE we are seeking to address?

Describe the issue. Focus it as specifically as possible.

WHY does it matter?

Think about why we have identified this issue as significant. There may be more than one reason.

TO WHOM does it matter? WHY does it matter TO THEM?

Certain people, organisations and interest groups will have a particular interest or stake in this issue. Who are they? Does the issue matter differently to different people?

What are the key UNKNOWNS?

Thinking about the issue from our own perspective, what don't we know? Where are the knowledge gaps that prevent us from being able to make informed decisions?

What do we NEED TO KNOW?

_____

_____

_____

_____

State, as succinctly as possible, what we <u>most</u> need to know at this stage in order to address our issue.

The KEY QUESTION(S)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Phrase what we want to know as a question or series of related questions. (Use question words like Does, What, Who, How Many, Why…). Avoid questions that start with 'Will': They require a crystal ball!

REFINE the QUESTION(S)

Terms: What are the central words and concepts?

_____ _____ _____

What do these words actually mean?

*Define*_____

_____

Do they mean different things to different people, or in different contexts?

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*

Do we need to re-word the question(s) for clarity?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Reword: _____

_____

Assumptions: Are there any hidden assumptions in the question(s)?

☐ Value Assumption: *Assumption that something is good (or bad)*

☐ Goal Assumption: *Assumption that something is definitely what we want*

☐ Causality Asumption: *Assumption that something always causes something else*

☐ Situation Assumption: *Assumption that things are a certain way*

☐ Parity Assumption: *Assumption that something is the same as something else*

Do we need to re-word the question(s) to deal with these assumptions?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Reword: _____

_____

*Assumptions can be: acknowledged (*Assuming this….*), clarified (*Recognising this…*), or directly interrogated via a new or significantly re-worded question.*

Scope: Is the scope or focus of the question(s) clear?

☐ Time scope *(now, the past, the future, trends over time)*

☐ Geographical scope *(specific locality, town, region, state, country, world)*

☐ Social scope *(specific cohort or group of people…defined how?)*

☐ Organisational scope *(specific cohort or group of organisations… defined how?)*

Do we need to re-word the question(s) to clarify the scope?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Reword: _____

_____

Bias: Is the question(s) biased to a particular desired angenda, answer or outcome?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Is this bias likely to cause us to overlook key information or misrepresent what is actually the case?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Can we reword the question to explicitly acknowledge or eliminate bias?

Reword: _____

_____

REVIEW the REVISED QUESTION(S)

Key Question(s):

_____

_____

_____

This is the question or questions that we will answer using the KP Process. It's time for a final check:

☐ ***Terms clear?***

☐ ***Assumptions explicit?***

☐ ***Scope clear?***

☐ ***Bias acknowledged or eliminated?***

Now…. Imagine having the answer(s)!

What might the answer(s) look like?

What might it tell us?

_____

_____

Will it help us to understand our issue better?

_____

_____

Will it help us to make a decision or take action?

_____

_____

What will we need to be able to do with the answer when we get it?

_____

_____

Could the answer be misunderstood…or misused?
If so, how could we prevent this?

_____

_____

Who else might be interested in the answer?

_____

_____

Knowledge Scan Tool

The Knowledge Scan focuses on what knowledge is needed to answer the question or questions identified in the scoping stage. To move forward, what do we need to know? The Knowledge Scan identifies what proponents already know, as well as what they don't know – and where they can go to find out. It aims to identify potential knowledge partners who can inform a deeper understanding of development issues and avenues for action.

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What do we need to know to inform action?

Where can we find data to help us?

Key question: _____

_____

_____

What do we already know that can help answer our question? Is it formally documented (e.g. reports, papers, datasets) or 'in our heads'?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do other people know, or are likely to know, that can help answer our question? Who are they? Is this knowledge formally documented (e.g. reports, papers) or 'in their heads'?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do WE KNOW ALREADY?	
From the academic literature (books, journal articles, etc.)	
From the practitioner literature (reports, policy documents, etc.)	
From personal experience	
Other sources…	

Not everything we know is formally documented. Sometimes we 'know' things but can't 'prove' them with academic rigour. Research can help test whether what we know is true for others!

What do WE NEED TO KNOW?		
What we need to know *(As specifically as possible)*	**Type of Data** *(See below)*	**Potential Sources** *(See below)*

WHAT TYPE OF DATA do I need?

- ☐ **Numbers and quantities (*how many, how much*)** *QUANTITATIVE DATA*
- ☐ **Experiences and knowledge from experience (current practice, best practice, insight, understanding)** *QUALITATIVE DATA*
- ☐ **Attitudes, opinions, desires, needs, values, preferences, etc.** *QUALITATIVE DATA*
- ☐ **Relationships, causal factors, connections** *QUANTITATIVE OR QUALITATIVE DATA*
- ☐ **Other…?** _____

POTENTIAL SOURCES: Published data

Which ones can we use?

- ☐ **Published documents and reports**
- ☐ **Scholarly papers and articles**
- ☐ **Press articles**
- ☐ **Books**
- ☐ **Published datasets (e.g. ABS)**
- ☐ **Web sites**
- ☐ **Paper or film archives**
- ☐ **Other** _____

List key data sources _____

_____

_____

POTENTIAL SOURCES: Primary and Unpublished Data

Which ones can we use?

Documented primary data: such as internal reports, documents and datasets.

List organisations and other groups that may have relevant material:

_____

_____

_____

_____

How easy or difficult is this likely to be to access? _____

Undocumented data: such as local expert knowledge, knowledge from experience, etc.

List group/ organizations or other key people that may have relevant knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

How easy or difficult is this likely to be to access? _____

Given time constraints (ours and theirs), location, cultural preferences and the kind of information needed, how could we best access the information that other people have 'in their heads'?

- ☐ **Talk with them individually**
- ☐ **Talk with them as a group**
- ☐ **Ask them for input in writing (e.g. survey, submission)** _____
- ☐ **Ask for other forms of input (e.g. public polling, art, talkback, etc)** _____

_____

- ☐ **Visit them/ see how they work/ what they do**
- ☐ **Work with them / do something together**
- ☐ **Hire them to do something for us (e.g. consultancy, advisor role)**
- ☐ **Other** _____

_____

To what extent are these organisations, groups and individuals likely to be interested in our question?

Might they have their own questions as well?

Might we have some information they would be interested in?

Of the information we need, is any of it potentially sensitive or confidential?

How could we and others benefit from sharing knowledge? Is there potential to form a knowledge partnership with others?

For sensitive or confidential information, what limits or safeguards may need to be in place?

Intervention Mapping Tool

The Intervention Mapping Tool can be used as part of the Knowledge Scan to identify what organisations, services, projects or community groups are already working to address an issue in a given community, locality or region. Intervention Mapping is a type of asset mapping that focuses around a particular development issue and related interventions. The Intervention Map identifies potential knowledge partners who already have understanding and experience of the development issue and potentially resources to assist in addressing it.

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Intervention Mapping Tool

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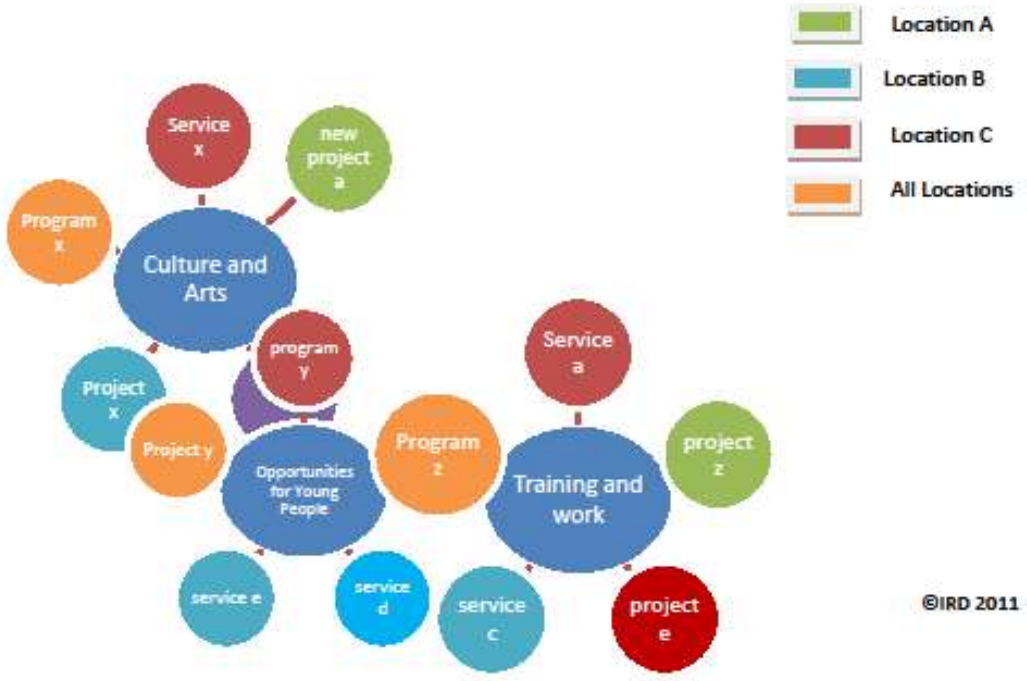
Regional and community development are place-based development approaches. They require a baseline understanding of the current 'landscape' of community assets, issues and interventions, in order to build on and leverage what is already there, identify gaps, and avoid duplication.

The methodology of assets mapping was developed in the 1990s by Kretzmann and McKnight as part of Asset Based Community Development. Traditional asset mapping resembles a network map, in that it lists a range of potential 'assets' (human, built, institutional, natural) in an area and attempts broadly to show the relationships among them.

Intervention Mapping (IM) is a variant of asset mapping developed by the Institute for Regional Development as part of our Knowledge Partnering approach to regional and community development. IM provides an initial scan of the landscape of current interventions or 'development actions' associated with particular economic and social issues or opportunities in particular places.

'Interventions' are defined as *services* (ongoing), *programs* (ongoing or fixed-term), and *projects* (fixed term) run by organisations or partnerships of organisations (public sector, private sector, not-for-profit sector and/or social enterprise) to address specific development issues or opportunities in a specific geographic locality. The organisations in question may or may not be based in that locality, and may or may not work in other localities. Their defining feature is that they provide resources or support into that locality.

Depending on the number and complexity of interventions, Intervention Maps can be single-issue or multi issue, and may cover one or more localities within a region.



Organisational Matrix

	Interventions	Administering Office	Contact
Organisation A	Program x, program y	Town A	
Organisation B	Service c	Town A	
Organisation C	Service d,e, x	Town B	
Organisation D	Etc.		
Partnership A			
Partnership B			

Process for Constructing an Intervention Map:

1. **Scoping**

Conduct an Issue Scoping to define the issue/ topic of interest and the geographical scope of the Intervention Mapping exercise

2. **Intervention Stocktake**

Conduct a desktop audit and speak with key organisational actors in place to identify key service, programs and projects in scope. For each ascertain:

- Name of the activity
- Category (project, program, service, other activity)
- Location(s)
- Sponsoring organisation(s)
- Core issue(s) addressed
- Short description of the aims of the activity
- Administering office location and contact

3. **Intervention Map**

Create a visual representation of interventions as per above, categorising interventions by:

- key issue(s) addressed, and location

4. **Organisational Matrix**

Create an organisational matrix to accompany the Intervention Map to demonstrate the key organisations and contact people associated with the activities in question

5. **Next Steps**

The visual representation of key interventions can be used at various stages within a Knowledge Partnering process:

- As a starting-point for scoping issues and identifying knowledge needs
- As a discussion document for identifying service gaps
- As a starting point for new project scoping
- As a resource document for identifying sources of local knowledge

Knowledge Plan Tool

The Knowledge Plan stage is about gaining access to knowledge sources and prospective knowledge partners that were identified in the Knowledge Scan. The Knowledge Plan Tool suggests a number of processes and methods that can be used, guidance as to when they are most appropriate, and principles to follow when approaching others for information or insights. Relevant tools and methods include Desktop Research, Expert Consultation, Participatory Assessments, Workshops, Surveys, and Action Research.

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Knowledge Plan Tool

How do we find out what we need to know?

The Knowledge Scan identified our knowledge gaps – what we need to know to move forward.

To do fill these gaps, there are a number of methods that can be used.

Key question: _____

_____

What We Need to Know	Type of Data *(Qualitative or Quantitative)*	Potential Sources *(Published or unpublished; from whom or where)*

METHODS for filling knowledge gaps

Desktop Research is suitable for gathering and learning from both **qualitative** and **quantitative** data from **published** data sources such as reports, books, articles, web sites, or published data sets. It is also suitable for learning from data that is available in **unpublished documents or datasets**, if the authors or owners of the data give permission for it to be used.

Desktop Research involves:

- Identifying and accessing relevant documents;
- Assessing key messages from each document(data, insights, conclusions);

- Assembling and summarizing key messages, referenced to source
- Constructing a bibliography of all references.

Consider:

Desktop research can take time to do well. Can we do this desktop research on our own? Or do we need help from others – for instance, subject experts or those skilled in particular kinds of analysis?

Expert Consultation

Expert Consultation is most suitable for **qualitative, unpublished data** – data that is not available in published form, but rather exists as knowledge 'in people's heads.'

Expert consultation involves:

- Identifying people or groups who can provide insights into what we need to know. These may be experts because of their life or work experience, professional/ technical knowledge, or knowledge of a particular organization or community.
- Requesting an opportunity to speak with them, explaining the purpose and what we are trying to find out or understand better.
- Meeting with them at a mutually convenient time and place (by phone, Skype or face to face).
- Taking notes of key points or asking permission to record the conversation for reference later.
- Providing a brief summary of key messages back to them for checking to ensure we 'got it right.'

Consider:

Expert consultation is an incredibly useful tool, but it needs to be used sensitively. People are often happy to share their knowledge with others, but need to know how their information and insights will be used. Some people want to be quoted while others want their comments to remain confidential. Be clear which they prefer, and treat experts with respect. Some may keep working with us over the long term!

Variations on Expert Consultation

These variations provide alternative formats for expert consultation:

- **Participatory Assessments** A number of tools are available to help local experts express what they know in drawings, maps or other knowledge-sharing activities. A good starting point is Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).
- **Written Submissions** Rather than taking the time to speak directly with experts, some processes ask knowledgeable people to put what they know in writing. Again, there needs to be clarity about how the knowledge will be used and who will have access to it.
- **Surveys** Surveys are appropriate for collecting data from a large number of experts who know something about the issue. Unlike other expert consultation approaches, surveys can be used effectively to collect **quantitative** data that is only available 'in people's heads'. Surveys need to be carefully designed – ask someone with experience!

- **Workshops** Workshops are useful for bringing groups of experts together to discuss an issue. Workshops should have a clear aim and the key messages from participants should always be documented and circulated to everyone involved.

- **Focus Groups** Focus groups are like workshops in miniature. Traditionally, they were used for pure data collection rather than generating group outcomes. However, focus groups are a useful format for small groups of around 4-6 people to conduct a focused discussion about an issue that concerns them. As with workshops, key messages should be

Consider: *How many* experts do we need to reach (direct consultation vs. workshop or survey)? *How easy* is it for them to articulate what they know (direct consultation vs. survey or participatory assessment)? *How useful* might it be to bring a number of experts together in discussion (direct consultation vs participatory assessment or workshop)?

Action Research Logs are a useful tool for documenting and reflecting on 'lessons learned' from a particular activity. Action Research is suitable for learning from the experience of a project or initiative.

Action research logs involve:

- Defining the project or initiative and who will be involved in the action research process
- Keeping individual or group logs of activities and reflections
- Drawing together key messages and lessons.

Consider: Are all members of the team committed to an action research process? Has a safe environment been created where team members are able to share problems and failures honestly?

Action Research Log Tool:

Date:
Project Activity
(What I did, where, with whom):
Experience
(My observations, what was said)
Reflections
(What I felt about it, what I thought it meant)
Outcomes
(What I learned, what I need to do now)

Research Help Some data needs are complex and may require professional research support. If this is the case – consider a knowledge partnership with a professional researcher!

OUR KNOWLEDGE PLAN

Considering these methods, what will work best for us?

Decide what to do – and complete the Knowledge Plan

What We Need to Know	Sources of Data/ Insight	What Method will we use?	When and Who Will Do it?	Resources Required?

How will we ask others to share knowledge with us? Are the methods we have chosen likely to suit them? Are we likely to find out what we need to know?

_____

_____

_____

What if the answers aren't what we expect? Are we able to change how we think about an issue? Are we able to share knowledge in return?

_____

_____

_____

The Knowledge Map

The Knowledge Map stage summarises the key findings of Stage Three. The Knowledge Map is not simply a jumble of data and information but rather a summary of the key messages or 'findings' in plain language that respond to the question or questions identified in Stage One. Knowledge Mapping provides a simple format for visually representing key messages and insights about the development issue, as well as areas of alignment and conflict among different development actors, different sectors, or different physical places. It thus provides a structure for sharing knowledge among diverse actors, laying the groundwork for a shared knowledge-base about the development issue in question.

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Knowledge Partners (KP)

Knowledge Map Tool

Knowledge Mapping is a format for documenting and sharing 'key message' from a number of sources. A Knowledge Map is a visual representation of 'what we found out' that can help to answer the original question.

Key question: _____

_____

What we found out

Each method used in Knowledge Partnering will give us some key messages or findings. These can be summarised as a set of statements ***referred to*** source. ***For instance:***

- ***According to*** _(source)_, (statement).

The source ***may be a published document (the strategic plan), an identified individual or group (the CEO of organization X), a data set (e.g. from the Australian Bureau of Statistics), or an unidentified individual or group (a local female resident). Individual sources should not be identified by name or position unless they have given permission to be quoted. However, they can be identified by generic demographic identifiers that do not compromise confidentiality.***

The statement ***may be a confirmed or unconfirmed fact , opinion, experience or insight. Because Knowledge Partnering accepts the validity of many different kind of knowledges, it is important to include all statements from all sources, even those believed to be mistaken, misinformed or missing the point. Statements should be contextualised and use original wording when possible, as a different word choice or missing context can change the meaning of a statement.***

The series of statements ***referred to*** source ***are the raw material for the*** Knowledge Map.

Key messages

The list of statements referred to source may be short or long depending on the complexity of the question and the number of knowledge sources consulted.

The next step is to convert these statements into key messages. To do this, we distil the various statements into groups.

Statements in a group may share any of a number of commonalities: for instance, all emphasise a particular issue, provide a particular type of information, or favour a particular kind of solution. In some cases the most logical grouping is according to source, or geographic origin, or organizational

perspective. The basis of the grouping will vary. But each grouping represents a key message or finding.

The Key Messages should be stated in a way that is balanced, contextualised, and true to original wording where possible.

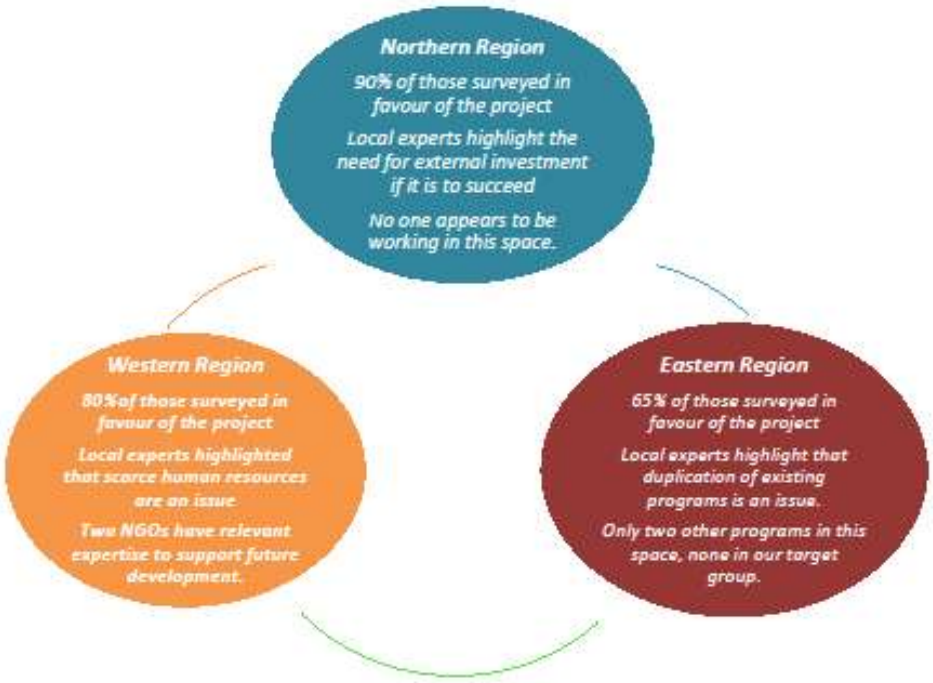
Visualising and sharing

The aim of the Knowledge Map is to visualise and share Key Messages.

Review the Key Messages and think how we can represent them visually. The visual representation of the key messages can be based around the messages from particular stakeholder groups (LOCAL RESIDENTS, GOVERNMENT, NGO etc.), geographic areas, positions or arguments (e.g. FOR, AGAINST, NEUTRAL), and/or themes that repeat across the key messages.

There is no limit to how a Knowledge Map can be organised, as long as it clearly communicates key messages in a way that is understandable by multiple audiences.

Here are some examples:



Key Messages	*International experiences*	*National experiences*	*Local experiences*
Mentoring programs tend to be 'effective' at tackling this issue.	*(Smith 2002, Jones 1999)*	*(White 2006)*	-
Mentoring programs need substantial resources to be effective.	*(Jones 1999)*	-	*(former volunteer)*
Mentoring programs are not a substitute for formal training	-	-	*X (local NGO)*
Mentoring programs need to set up realistic expectations with stakeholders	-	*X (White 2006)*	*(current mentor)*

Using the Knowledge Map

Whatever the format, a Knowledge Map is a tool for documenting and sharing key messages among different development actors.

The Knowledge Map may highlight areas of contradiction that need to be clarified, or areas of alignment where there are opportunities to develop partnerships.

It may be used in a range of venues including workshops, planning meetings, and negotiations with potential partners.

Analysis and interpretation of the Knowledge Map with other development actors should result in an action plan, whether in the immediate or longer term. The ultimate aim is to facilitate collaborative action based on a shared understanding of development issues.

From Knowledge to Action

The findings of the KP Process provide multiple knowledges and insights on the development issue in question. These in turn provide the basis for identifying actions that can be taken by one or more development actors to respond to the development issue. The operative questions for the Action Plan stage are '*What can be done?*' and '*Who is best positioned to do it?*' – individually, or in collaboration. Shared aims and potential connections can emerge in unexpected places, and the intersection of different kinds of knowledge creates the sparks of innovation.

A KP Process may lead to the proposal for a project, a new or improved product or process, a policy recommendation, or an idea for a social enterprise. Equally, the KP process may not generate a concrete initiative, but it may still lead to closer working relationships between key organisations on an issue of common concern. Finally, a KP process may also instigate further processes of fact-finding, research, learning, and alliance-building before the direction for action is clear. A KP process may therefore lead on to the establishment of a working group, an information-sharing network, an applied research project, or a community of practice.

Regardless of the form of action that results, the KP process is ultimately oriented toward action: informed by a clear understanding of the development issue and the potential partners and resources available on the development landscape. The proponent moves from concern about a development issue to a clearer understanding of it: one that incorporates knowledge from others and a more grounded understanding of what is present, what is lacking, and what is possible.

Research Scoping Tool

The Research Scoping Tool combines aspects of the early stages of the KP process into a tool that applied researchers can use to scope a potential research topic and determine whether Knowledge Partnering is a feasible methodology for their project.

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Knowledge Partnering (KP)

Research Scoping Tool

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1. Defining the Research Question

Research is, put simply, about finding answers to questions.
What are the question or questions that need answering, and why?

What ISSUE or TOPIC do I want to explore or find out about?

_____

_____

The ISSUE or TOPIC is not a research question, but it is the most typical starting-point for research: what is your project about?

WHY am I interested in this?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Think about what drives your research interest. This is part of the researcher's 'positioning'. It can also help you see if there are particular 'paradigms' that are influencing how you are seeing the issue or defining the research question.

What do I WANT TO KNOW about this topic/issue? What is IMPORTANT to KNOW?

_____

_____

_____

Think about your personal interest, as well as what you have read about this topic or issue. What have other researchers found out? Where are the knowledge gaps?

Phrase this as a RESEARCH QUESTION:

_____

_____

_____

Phrase what we you want to know as a question or series of related questions. (Use question words like Does, What, Who, How Many, Why…).

Now REFINE the Question:

Terms: What are the key words and concepts in my research question?

_____ _____ _____

What do these words actually mean?

Define _____

_____

Do they mean different things to different people, or in different contexts?

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*

Do we need to re-word the question(s) for clarity?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Reword: _____

_____

Assumptions: Are there any hidden assumptions in the question(s)?

☐ Value Assumption: *Assumption that something is good (or bad)*

☐ Goal Assumption: *Assumption that something is definitely what we want*

☐ Causality Asumption: *Assumption that something always causes something else*

☐ Situation Assumption: *Assumption that things are a certain way*

☐ Parity Assumption: *Assumption that something is the same as something else*

Do we need to re-word the question(s) to deal with these assumptions?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Reword: _____

_____

*Assumptions can be: acknowledged (*assuming this….*), clarified (*recognising this…*), or directly interrogated via a new or significantly re-worded question.*

Scope: Is the scope or focus of the question(s) clear?

☐ Time scope *(now, the past, the future, trends over time)*

☐ Geographical scope *(specific locality, town, region, state, country, world)*

☐ Social scope *(specific cohort or group of people…defined how?)*

☐ Organisational scope *(specific cohort or group of organisations… defined how?)*

Do we need to re-word the question(s) to clarify the scope?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Reword: _____

_____

Bias: Is the question(s) biased to a particular desired angenda, answer or outcome?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Is this bias likely to cause us to overlook key information or misrepresent what is actually the case?

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

Can we reword the question to explicitly acknowledge or eliminate bias?

Reword: _____

_____

Your Revised RESEARCH QUESTION(S)

_____

_____

_____

It's time for a final check:

☐ ***Terms clear?***

☐ ***Assumptions explicit?***

☐ ***Scope clear?***

☐ ***Bias acknowledged or eliminated?***

What kind of Question is it?

'Why', 'who', 'what', 'where' and 'how' questions are typically exploratory questions (inductive). They are designed to find out more: e.g. *'Where are the region's fastest growing businesses located?' 'What are the expectations of community organisations for the NBN?'*

'Is', 'are, 'do' and 'does' questions are generally testing questions (deductive). They are designed to test a hypothesis to see whether or not it is true: *'Do smaller businesses have higher worker turnover than larger businesses?'*

Review your research question. Imagine having the answer!

What might that answer look like?

_____

_____

_____

What might it tell you?
Who would be interested in the answer (the audience)?

_____

_____

Could the answer be misunderstood…or misused?
If so, how could you prevent this?

_____

_____

How might the answer change people's ideas or understanding of an issue?
(THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE)

_____

_____

How might it help make a decision, improvement, or solve a problem?
(PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE)

_____

_____

KP Evaluation Design Tool

As discussed in Chapter Three, KP evaluation involves embedding evaluation into the design and delivery of projects or programs, working closely with practitioners on the ground. The first stage of KP evaluation involves a meeting or meetings with the project team to determine the key aims of the project or program, evaluation questions, and potential indicators. Where possible, this process is repeated with other project stakeholders (e.g. clients, funders, volunteers) as appropriate.

The result of this process is a KP evaluation design matrix populated with key questions, indicators, data sources and analysis methods. The evaluation matrix is then workshopped with the project team to ensure that it is clear, meets the overall aims of the evaluation, and is feasible to implement in practice. Once the matrix is populated and finalised, the evaluation proceeds according to allocated tasks, timelines, and agreed deliverables. Data gathering is typically done by practitioners, with the evaluation partner often taking a role in ongoing mentoring and assistance with data analysis as required.

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Knowledge Partnering (KP)

Evaluation Design Tool

Evaluation of development initiatives is important to capture impacts and lessons learned. In the past, project funders have often favoured 'unbiased' external evaluation; however, there is growing recognition that rigorous and useful evaluations can be conducted by those who are directly involved in project or program delivery – provided that the methodology is clear and unbiased.

Approaching Evaluation

Evaluations ask broadly: 'Does this project or initiative work'? But what does that question really mean? Are we interested in the 'workings' of the project – how it works, how well it works? Or are we interested in the 'impact' of the project – whether it 'works' to produce desired outcomes?

The choice of evaluation approach depends upon the questions being asked.

1. **If your questions are about how or why the project works (or fails to work), what is being learned by doing the project, and/or what can be improved to make it work better in future – then you will conduct a PROCESS EVALUATION.**

2. **If your questions are about the project's impact – whether or not, and to what extent, the project created a change for a target group or situation – then you will conduct an IMPACT EVALUATION.**

3. **If you are interested in both the process and impact of a project, then you may conduct an evaluation that asks BOTH kinds of questions.**

I'm interested in :

- ☐ **Process evaluation – understanding, documenting and improving the processes involved in conducting this initiative**
- ☐ **Impact evaluation – understanding and documenting the outcomes and ultimate impacts of this initiative.**
- ☐ **Both a process and impact evaluation**

Consider: WHAT THE PROJECT OR INITIATIVE IS AIMING TO ACHIEVE? HOW IT IS AIMING TO ACHIEVE IT (the project's theory of change)? and: HOW WE WILL KNOW IF THE PROJECT IS SUCCESSFUL? Also consider the audience for the evaluation.

Aims and Indicators

Key Aim of the Project or Initiative:

_____

_____

Do different stakeholders have different understandings of the key aim of the project? Are there other aims as well:

_____

_____

What do we expect will change and how? What are the key activities and why do we believe they will work? Is there a project or program logic for this initiative?

_____

_____

_____

What do we need the evaluation to tell us? What are the key question(s) for evaluation?:

_____

_____

Can we identify indicators (either process or outcomes indicators) that will tell us if we are achieving our aim? What are they?

_____

_____

How might we collect data on these indicators over the course of the project?

At the beginning… during the project… at the end?:

_____

_____

_____

Key audiences for the evaluation results:

☐ Our team	☐ Our current funders	☐ Our clients
☐ Our organisation	☐ Our future funders	☐ Other practitioners
☐ Other organisations	☐ Policy makers	☐ Other _____

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Knowledge Partnering Evaluation Matrix

This evaluation matrix has been designed as an outcome of a meeting on _____ with key players in the _____ program and Institute for Regional Development staff, and follow up refining. This matrix uses the Knowledge Partnering approach to evaluating regional and community development projects.

Overarching Evaluation Question: _____

Key Aim (What we want the program to accomplish) ***Proponents/ funders***	**Key Aim (What we want to program to accomplish)** ***Participants***	**Key Question for Evaluation**	**Indicator (How we will know if we've accomplished our aim/ created a change?)**	**Data Collection Method (How do we gather evidence for these indicators? From whom?)**	**Data Analysis Method (How do we make sense of what we've found out?)**

In analysing each indicator and related data, ask:

1) What impacts have we documented? (*impact evaluation*) 2) What have we learned that will enable to improve the program? (*process evaluation*)

Chapter Five: Knowledge Partnering into the Future

KP at the Institute for Regional Development (IRD)

In the IRD, our vision is: To grow the capability of people, communities and organisations to articulate and realise their own development goals.

As a teaching and research institute that is both regionally based and university based, we use KP to bring regional and university knowledge together. Our teaching and learning activities embed KP principles, recognising the various knowledges that students – often adults with years of practical experience – bring into the classroom. We were delighted that in 2012, TEQSA – the Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency – commended our Knowledge Partnering approach as a successful way of meeting the learning needs of regional communities.[5] Equally, in our applied research partnerships, we work closely with practitioners to help them 'ask and answer the questions that matter' in order to tackle development issues that matter to them and to their region.

Our experiences in the Institute for Regional Development have demonstrated that a regional university campus, as a knowledge institution, can play an important role in catalysing regional and local innovation.[6] In and out of the classroom, learning experiences become multi-way dialogues that bring together different forms of local and scholarly knowledge to generate new insights. We recognise that when it comes to tackling development issues – from local economic development to creating opportunities for learning – we as a university do not have all the answers. Nor do the on-the-ground organisations we work with, though they often know many things that we do not. We have learned how much more we can do by working in partnership, each taking the other's knowledge seriously. For us, Knowledge Partnering became a strategy for us to tackle the development issues that concerned us, and for us to help other proponents address their issues too.

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[5] TEQSA (2012) Report of an audit of the University of Tasmania, March 2012, p. 33.

[6] See Allison, J and R Eversole (2008) 'A New Direction for Regional University Campuses: Catalysing Innovation in Place', *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 21(2):95-109.

Knowledge Partnering as a Development Methodology

In many ways, Knowledge Partnering represents a 'common sense' approach: it is what many good development professionals and applied academics do naturally: respect, listen, value, and bring different knowledges and perspectives together to create solutions. We do this because it works. We do this because we learn from each other's insights. We benefit from the 'twist' that others give to what seemed – to us – an intractable problem. Seen from a different angle, illuminated by different knowledge, the issue – and the way forward – are much clearer.

Knowledge Partnering is ultimately about bringing different kinds of knowledge together to inform solutions to development issues. Many people and organisations do this already: intentionally seeking out the knowledge of others and bringing key stakeholders into dialogue to inform better outcomes. But this process has lacked a name, or a framework to explain how and why it works. Most importantly, it has lacked an explicit identity as a methodology for applied development research and practice.

There are innumerable organisations and groups working in the world today to create development outcomes of various kinds. Yet there are few methodologies or approaches available to guide this work. On-the-ground action and higher-level policy tend to be cobbled together from immediate necessity, opportunity, and odd scraps of theory, with a hefty dose of 'this seemed to work well elsewhere.' Governments and development agencies fly in experts hoping for solutions, while too often ignoring the knowledge present on the ground. Those who wish to challenge the status quo have limited ammunition. What approach do they suggest instead?

Knowledge Partnering aims to provide this alternative approach. As a methodology for development practice, it is grounded in the three key principles mentioned above, each with a strong theoretical base:

1) Development is a social process, one that anyone can influence. Anyone can be a development actor.
2) Everyone's knowledge matters in tackling development issues. This includes the knowledges of both 'powerful' and 'powerless' groups. Local development actors need to be able to source knowledge from within and beyond their locality to drive effective development solutions. Equally, external development actors need to work with local actors to achieve effective local development.

3) Bringing different kinds of knowledge together is desirable as a way to create both inclusive and innovative development solutions.

Knowledge Partnering is a methodology – a theoretically informed approach – for catalysing social and economic change in communities and regions. It is a specific way of 'doing' development, regardless of the issue or sector of concern or the nature of the proponent(s). Community groups, NGOs, research institutes, government departments, practitioner networks or individual leaders or researchers may take the role of proponent, identifying a development issue of importance to them. The Knowledge Partnering process helps them move from issue to action through a process of sharing and exchanging knowledge with others.

Knowledge Partnering and the Future of Social Research

Reflections continue within and beyond the university on the changing nature and role of social research. On the one hand are questions about the relevance of social research – as policy and practice seem slow to take on insights from research, and researchers struggle to frame their work in a format suitable to policy or practice. On the other hand, we see questions about the role of social researchers: as those who traditionally did research 'on' or about' others, but are under increasing pressure to do research 'with' and 'for' them.

Arguably, current research institutions and paradigms are ill-equipped to respond to these challenges. Many research institutions remain locked into a positivist framing of the 'social sciences', in which the myth of the unbiased expert researcher persists, and where extracting knowledge from others for academic ends is the normal way of working – albeit one increasingly hemmed in by rafts of legal paperwork and calls for on-the-ground evidence of impact. Others seek to explore the potential of more 'participatory' research approaches, and how these may question dominant paradigms and enable new voices to be heard; yet they are left reflecting uncomfortably on the fact that as researchers they are neither fish nor fowl: neither true 'members' of the community they study (not, at least, while they are wearing their 'research' hat), nor true objective scientists completely accepted by the academy. Moreover, while findings may be more grounded, they are not necessarily any closer to impacting policy or practice.

Will social research continue to struggle and accommodate itself between the poles of social 'science' and social 'participation', or will it find new ways to work that are capable of generating both knowledge and impact? Knowledge Partnering is a methodology for applied research, but it is

one that nevertheless stretches the definition of 'research'. The proponent who undertakes a KP process may or may not be a professional researcher, and may or may not start from a good understanding of theory. The focus of the research process is on knowledge-sharing rather than objective data gathering and analysis (though structured data collection and analysis may form part of the larger process, as may a review of theory). While researchers and research organisations are valuable knowledge partners, in Knowledge Partnering they do not own the research process or its results. Yet the result of Knowledge Partnering is still knowledge: to inform practice, and more often than not, to inform theory as well.

Can Knowledge Partnering provide a way to connect research and practice in more direct and creative ways? Our experience to date in the Institute for Regional Development suggests that it can. However, Knowledge Partnering requires commitment from both research and practice organisations to work together, and to see the value for both in a closer link between knowledge and practice. For universities, this requires thinking of research beyond the traditional frames of 'research grant' and 'consultancy' and placing their knowledge-generating work into new institutional frameworks. In the Institute for Regional Development, we have developed the Applied Research Partnership (ARP) as a structure for undertaking a university-recognised research project within a framework that accommodates multiple proponents, multiple investments, and a Knowledge Partnering methodology.

Running a KP Pilot

To date Knowledge Partnering has only been trialled and documented in the Tasmanian context. To continue improving the Knowledge Partnering methodology, the Institute for Regional Development is eager to work with other organisations with an interest in local and regional development, to conduct Knowledge Partnering pilot projects in other local contexts in Australia and internationally.

Knowledge Partnering pilot projects have a place-based focus, and can be implemented starting from inside and/or outside a local area. They typically start with an identified development issue, albeit one which may be poorly understood. Proponents may be NGOs, research institutes, government departments, individuals – anyone concerned with a development issue in a given place, and interested in working with and learning from others to catalyse on-the-ground solutions.

Please contact us if you are interested in trialling a Knowledge Partnering project, or if you are already involved in processes or initiatives that are similar to Knowledge Partnering. We are open to

exploring the range of ways that we can work with other organisations and communities who are seeking to catalyse innovative development outcomes on the ground.

Knowledge Partnering Blog

To facilitate knowledge sharing among practitioners and researchers using Knowledge Partnering, the Institute for Regional Development has established a Knowledge Partnering blog (KP Blog) to share information about on-the-ground experiences with Knowledge Partnering. Here, we aim to present case studies of Knowledge Partnering pilots, new and refined tools for Knowledge Partnering, and ongoing reflection and conversations about regional and community development, applied development research and the role of knowledge in development processes. The KP Blog can be viewed at: http://knowledgepartnering.blogspot.com.au/

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