

Knowledge Sharing in International Development NGOs and Partnerships: Towards Addressing the Inefficiencies

John Lannon (UL)
John Walsh (UL)
Elizabeth Kennedy (Trocaire)
Karen Kennedy (Trocaire)



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OILSCOIL LUIMNIGH



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

Trocaire

Setting the Scene

Knowledge is going to be the new inequality – where does it fit in the SDGs?

Gregson et al (2015)

- NGOs need to reinvent themselves in light of contextual changes and increasing challenges (Elbers and Schulpen, 2015).
- Organisational learning (Kwon, 2012) – linked to evaluation and accountability (Ebrahim, 2003)
- Knowledge management: organisational practices that facilitate and structure knowledge sharing and learning (Ferguson et al., 2010).
- Practices never fixed or even self-evident (Corfield et al., 2013)
- Prioritisation of policy-related learning over field-based learning (Hovland, 2003)
- Successful development interventions depend on the availability and application of context-relevant knowledge (Powell, 2006; Ferguson et al., 2010; Ferguson, 2016).

Our Research Study

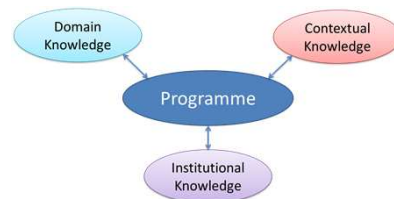
Aim: To informing the development and implementation of an effective knowledge management strategy in an international development NGO [Trócaire]

Objectives

- Understand how knowledge is shared in practice in Trócaire
- Outline potential to improve how knowledge can be shared more effectively in the context of a partnership approach to development
- Identify opportunities for improved knowledge sharing across the sector

Methodology

- Sectoral Perspective
 - Workshop, June 2016
- In-depth engagement with NGO:
 - Headquarters
 - Field perspective



Research informed by ...

- Types of knowledge: General / specific (contextual) (Zack, 1999; Choudhury and Sabherwal, 2001) ... Declarative / procedural (Moorman and Miner, 1998) ... Rationale / analytic (Markus, 2001) ... Process / domain / institutional (Reich, 2008) ...
- Kontinen (2016) - “vocabularies of practice”: project management, facilitation, community, bureaucracy, enterprise, friendship, faith, science
- Knowledge as an ongoing social accomplishment (Orlikowski, 2002)

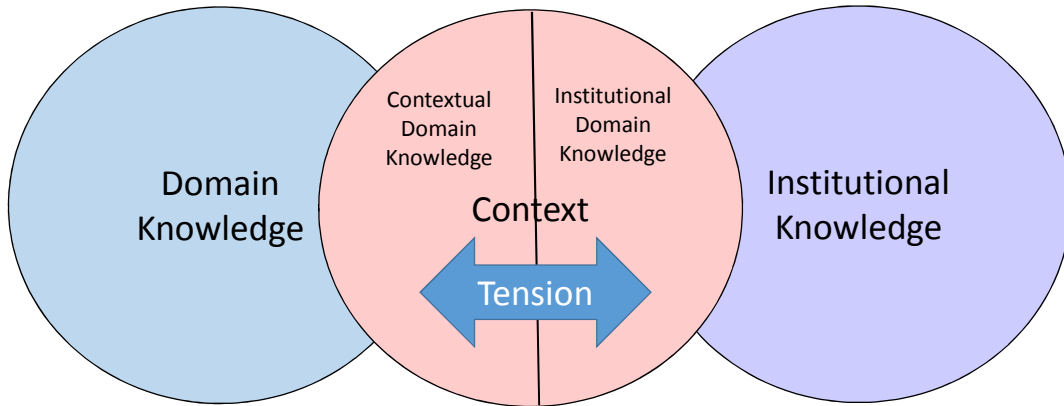
The Sectoral Perspective: Gaps

- Learning at the individual level
 - Staff turnover
- Overcoming silos of knowledge
- Dominance of organisational culture
- Facilitating adaptive programmes
- Identifying/Prioritising what knowledge needs to be shared
- Linking/Connecting to knowledge at the right time
- Lack of reflection and reflective spaces
- Knowledge co-creation

The Sectoral Perspective: Investment

- Learning events
- Peer learning
- Targeted knowledge sharing
- Building the right systems to identify and connect people
- Making Knowledge consumable
- Knowledge sharing advocates
- Trial, Learn, Adapt

Context is critical ...



Towards Effective Knowledge Sharing [NGO]

Stages

