Knowledge translation training opportunities: Global scoping study insights

INTRODUCTION

This brief provides an overview of currently available knowledge translation (KT) and / or research communication training opportunities in post-secondary education curricula worldwide.

> **What do we mean by KT?**
>
> There is a growing array of terminologies that refer to the process of putting knowledge into action. For the purpose of the scoping study, the term "knowledge translation" (KT) was used to refer to *the exchange of knowledge between knowledge producers and users in the form of products and tools, relationships, and the application of knowledge into organizational and systems change.*

The overall goal of the scoping exercise was to help inform the development of KT course materials or programs for health research, policy and management degree programs in East Africa. The study focused on certificate, diploma and post-graduate level KT courses and programs and generated an inventory of those offered in various countries and contexts. In addition, the study considered key advantages and challenges associated with developing KT curricula in low and middle income countries (LMICs), and provided suggestions for enhancement of the global KT curriculum inventory that accompanies this brief.

METHODS

The scoping team invited six KT experts to guide and support the exercise and conducted internet searches using English and French keyword terms. Additionally, they emailed sixty-nine individuals, including KT leaders from LMICs, requesting further discussion. Specific email targeting and follow-up efforts yielded a 29% response rate. Methodological limitations included the fact that none of the experts consulted worked exclusively or resided in LMICs. The limited timeframe of the project was an additional constraint.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Geographic and institutional diversity of KT curricula

Of 123 educational opportunities identified, the majority are from North America and are prepared by and / or for upper income countries (UICs).

Number of curricula by country income group	
LMIC	17
UIC	106

Origin and target region	
For UIC by UIC	106
For LMIC by LMIC	6
For LMIC by or in partnership with UIC	11

Geographic distribution	
Africa	5
Asia	2
Europe	10
Middle East	1
North America	(Canada: 64, USA: 17, Mexico: 1) 82
Oceania	(all Australia) 23

Location of curricula	
Based at a University	75
Not based at a University	48

For more detailed results, please see Annex 1.

2. KT curricula particulars

Of the 123 curricula, most "full course" offerings are targeted at trainees of KT research, whereas "short courses", "modules" and "seminars" are geared more toward health care providers or decision makers. The mode of delivery is primarily residential (in-person).

Curricula format	
Full course	54
Short course	19
Module(s)	22
Seminar	7
Workshop	6
Mixed method program	14
KT resource (including presentation material)[1]	10
Unknown	1

Mode of instruction	
Residential	106
Distance (e-based/virtual)	5
Both	11
Unknown	1

Level at which curricula offered	
Masters/PhD	60
Post Doctoral (Of which 1 also offered to Masters/PhD)	2
Certificate/Diploma	30
Continuing Education (Of which 8 also offered to Masters/PhD)	27
Other (clinical fellowship, intern program, visiting scholars program)	4

3. Focus on KT and knowledge cycle content

About half of curricula offerings dealt with both the science and practice of KT, while the other half dealt with either the science or the practice.

Primary focus	
Science of KT	28
Practice of KT	33
Both	62

Content specifics	
Creation of knowledge	18
Process or mechanisms of KT	18
Use of knowledge	40
More than one focus	47

4. Target audiences

A large proportion of the KT curricula identified are targeted at "trainees of KT research"; specifically, to masters and PhD students and post-doctoral fellows.

Target audience	
Trainees of KT research	52
Researchers interested in KT basics	8
Practitioners and decision makers interested in KT basics	27
More than one audience	36

[1] This is the only place KT resources are reported on in this document. As a result, the total in this table is 10 items larger than the set of 123 KT curricula offerings. KT resources are networks and tools such as websites, publications, systematic reviews, toolkits, databases or presentations that address KT. Please see the study inventory for a detailed list.

RESULTS AT-A-GLANCE

123
KT educational opportunities worldwide identified

5%
Of KT curricula are created by LMICs for LMICs

14%
Of KT educational opportunities are in LMICs

7%
Of curricula are targeted at researchers interested in KT basics

4%
Of KT educational opportunities are in Africa

61%
Of KT educational opportunities are university-based

DISCUSSION

Key advantages for KT curriculum development in LMICs

• **"What is KT?"** The key messages for educational KT curricula already exist and are well documented in the literature and online.

• **"How do we do KT?"** Many generic KT tools and techniques are freely available for adapting/importing into local educational contexts.

• **"How do we teach KT?"** The inventory in this study can inform educational approaches contextualized to local situations.

Key challenges

- Understanding the contextual differences between UICs and LMICs.
- Identifying specific settings in Africa that most need to be developed.
- Grappling with contextual factors such as political will, available resources and environments.
- Overcoming the existing incentive systems at universities (e.g. the publish-or-perish paradigm) and other systems-level factors.
- Prioritizing the contextual factors that require the greatest consideration.
- Assessing which teaching methods work best for various settings / cultures and for diverse target audiences (e.g. students, policymakers, etc).

IDEAS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Recommendations for KT educators, researchers and practitioners with the goal of informing the development of KT capacity building within academia:

- Continue searching for existing KT curricula, particularly in LMICs.

- Review promising curricula to determine how well they integrate KT fundamental principals.

- Review promising curricula to determine resources required by each.

- Assess whether promising curricula have been evaluated.

- Synthesize evaluative data on existing programs to identify critical success factors for KT curricula.

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The curricula and resource inventory generated by this scoping study is by no means an exhaustive list of opportunities, and more may continue to be identified. Readers are encouraged to contact us if with suggestions for additional listings that could be included in the inventory that accompanies this document.

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Annex 1: Additional results from the KT training opportunities global scoping study

KT curricula created with, by or for LMICs (n=17)

Region	Country	Course titles	Institution	Academic level	Curricula format	Uni. based
Africa	Kenya	• Leadership and Organizational Learning✦	Centre for African Family Studies	Con't Ed.	Short course	
		• Developing and Implementing an Effective Knowledge Management Strategy✦	Centre for African Family Studies	Con't Ed.	Short course	
		• REACH-Strengthening regional capacity for KT *✦	East African Health Research Council	Con't Ed.	Mixed method	
	Tanzania	• REACH-Strengthening regional capacity for KT *✦	East African Health Research Council	Con't Ed.	Mixed method	
	Zambia	• Zambia Fellowship Program: KT Curriculum	ZAMFOHR/CCGHR	Con't Ed.	Module(s)	
		• LEARN, SHARE, NETWORK conference✦	ZAMFOHR	Con't Ed.	Mixed method	
Asia	Pakistan	• LEADership Development Programme✦	Leadership for Environment and Development	Diploma	Full course	
	Japan	• UN System: Pressing Issues and Sustainable Solutions	UN University Institute for Sustainability and Peace	Postdoc	Full course	
Middle East	Iran	• Knowledge Transfer Workshop♦✦	Tehran University of Medical Sciences	Con't Ed.	Workshop	✓
North America	Canada	• Health Promotion	Simon Fraser University	Masters	Full course	✓
		• Summer Institute for New Global Health Researchers	Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research	Masters	Seminar	
		• CSIH Conference on Global Health	Canadian Society for International Health	Con't Ed.	Workshop	
	Mexico	• Graduate Leadership in Public Health Research	National Institute of Public Health	Diploma	Module(s)	
Europe	Switzerland	• Good Practices and Tools on Disaster Risk Reduction in Education	UNICEF – Cee/CIS	Diploma	Full course	
	U.K.	• Knowledge Transfer Workshop	Global Innovation Network	Con't Ed.	Seminar	
Oceania	Australia	• Principles and practice of public health • Health Communication and Training • International Health Policy	Monash University Monash University University of Queensland	Masters	Full course	✓

* this course is offered in both Kenya and Tanzania
✦ this course created 'by' a LMIC

KT curricula created by UICs (n= 106)

Region	Country	Totals		Academic Level		Method of instruction	University based
Europe	Netherlands	1	1	Master	1	Full course	1
	UK	7	3	Master	5	Module(s)	3
			1	Continuing education	1	Seminar	
			3	Certificate	1	Workshop	
North America	Canada	61	43	Master or PhD	32	Full course	46
			10	Continuing education	1	Short course	
			8	Diploma	15	Module(s)	
					4	Seminar	
					3	Workshop	
					5	Mixed method	
					1	unknown	
	USA	17	16	Certificate/Diploma	24	Full course	0
			1	other	3	Short course	
Oceania	Australia	20	9	Master or PhD	13	Short course	20
			1	Postdoctoral	7	Mixed method	
			7	Continuing education			
			3	other			