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IKT for Research Stage 8

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An Integrated Knowledge Translation
Toolkit for Open Research

IKT for Research Stage 8: Dissemination



IKT for Research Stage 8: Dissemination

Background

In 2020, the University of Dundee initiated the development of an Open Research strategy. As part of this initiative, in February 2021 the University's Library and Learning Centre together with Open Research Champions from the Schools of Health Sciences and Dentistry, formed an Open Research Working group. To build on the University's open research policy and infrastructure, the purpose of the group was to facilitate ongoing research and development of best practice approaches for our interdisciplinary environment to make outputs, data and other products of our research publicly available, building on University of Dundee's Open Research policy and infrastructure.

Through informal consultations with academic staff and students, the Open Research Working Group found that:

- access and reach of research findings can be amplified through effective knowledge mobilisation, and stakeholder and patient and public involvement; and
- there was a need for guidance and resources on how-to implement knowledge mobilisation activities with and for stakeholders throughout the entire research process - *from proposal development to project completion*.

In June 2021, the Open Research working group, in partnership with Simon Fraser University's Knowledge Mobilization Hub began the development of an Integrated Knowledge Translation (IKT) Toolkit, with funding support from the University of Dundee's Doctoral Academy and Organisational Professional Development. IKT is an approach to knowledge translation that emphasises working in an engaged and collaborative partnership with stakeholders throughout the research cycle in order to have positive impact.

The aim was to co-produce evidence-informed, best practice learning materials on how-to:

- maintain ongoing relationships between researchers, community stakeholders and decision-makers in research development and implementation; and
- facilitate an integrated, participatory way of knowledge production whereby researchers, practitioners and other knowledge users can collaborate to co-generate new and accessible knowledge that can be utilised in contexts ranging from supporting community development to policy guidance for practice.

The IKT Toolkit was informed by a focused evidence review and synthesis of published peer-reviewed and grey literature and consists of 8 knowledge briefs and a slide deck co-produced for use in any discipline or sector. Each knowledge brief provides practical guidance and resources to support an IKT process in each of eight key research stages: (i) Partnership Building; (ii) Generating Priorities and Ideas; (iii) Proposal development; (iv) Study Design; (v) Data Collection; (vi) Data Analysis; (vii) Reporting and (viii) Dissemination.

The current knowledge brief provides IKT guidance on Research Stage 8: Dissemination.

What is 'dissemination' in relation to IKT in research?

Stage 8 of IKT informed research is about sharing research findings with relevant audiences. All research projects need a dissemination plan and associated outputs and activities. Nevertheless, even if you have taken an IKT approach throughout the project, a strategic dissemination plan is an important part of developing a pathway to impact in order to engage beyond the team to have an impact on society (Simeonov et al., 2021). Dissemination may come in traditional (journal publications) or non-traditional forms (social media campaign) (Barwick, Dubrowski & Petricca, 2020). How you choose to disseminate, will depend on what is being shared, why it is being shared, and who needs to hear it (Ward, 2017). Determining the answers to all of these questions is best done in collaboration with stakeholders (Gainsforth et al., 2021). Once determined, stakeholders are invaluable in developing, informing, conducting, distributing, and amplifying those dissemination outputs and activities (Hoekstra et al., 2020). Boxes 1 and 2 present key principles and a checklist for how to do effective IKT in Research Stage 8: Dissemination.

BOX 1: IKT Principles for Research Stage 8 - Dissemination

- 1 People who live and work in the community (i.e., partners) are involved in the dissemination process, including developing messaging, identifying opportunities, and being involved in any or all aspects of dissemination that they feel interested in engaging with (Ward, 2017).
- 2 Consider partners' interest, time, and resources, as well as the scope and resources of the project to support their engagement (Hoekstra et al., 2020).
- 3 Address the key questions in the dissemination plan together with the partners (Powell et al., 2015):
 - a. What are the key messages, what is the scope of the findings?
 - b. Why do the findings need to be shared, identify the purpose or goal of dissemination?
 - c. Who is the audience that needs to hear the messages to achieve the goal?
 - d. How best can you connect with the audience to achieve the goal?
 - e. How will you know that you achieved the dissemination goal?
- 4 Use evidence informed strategies for dissemination when possible (Estabrooks et al., 2018).
- 5 Leverage the talent and expertise of the academic team and the whole team, including the partners (Grigorovich et al., 2019).
- 6 In IKT projects, it is not sufficient to produce only a journal publication and/or conference presentation, dissemination must include accessible and useful outputs and activities for partners, which might require creative and unconventional approaches (Powell et al., 2015).

BOX 2: IKT Checklist for Research Stage 8 - Dissemination

- | | | | |
|---|---|-----|----|
| 1 | Have you engaged the non-academic partners to develop your dissemination plan and associated outputs? | Yes | No |
| 2 | Have you considered the voices of all partners in ensuring effective dissemination? Have you missed anyone? | Yes | No |
| 3 | Have you ensured that the messages and findings you are sharing were reviewed and approved by all partners? | Yes | No |
| 4 | Have you created dissemination outputs and distribution strategies that are tailored, accessible, and useful for the relevant audience(s)? | Yes | No |
| 5 | Are you using channels or formats that are considered trusted by your audience? | Yes | No |
| 6 | Have you considered what is happening in the context within which you are sharing this work (i.e., competing priorities, current events, access to materials, accessibility, power and other issues that might be barriers or facilitators to dissemination)? | Yes | No |
| 7 | Is your dissemination strategy aligned with the scope of the project? | Yes | No |
| 8 | Have you built in mechanisms to ensure that your message has been communicated successfully? | Yes | No |
| 9 | Have you built in mechanisms to allow for your audience to provide feedback and shape the content? | Yes | No |



How can 'dissemination' be enhanced by applying IKT mechanisms and activities?

Stakeholders, partners and community members, are likely members of the audience you need to reach. With their contributions to the planning, development, and distribution of your dissemination outputs you will increase the potential for achieving your dissemination goals. At this stage, through the active involvement of the partners, research findings will have already circulated back to their networks – some refer to this as a key benefit of the IKT process. The project dissemination phase can build on the groundwork laid of involving partners throughout the research process and can ultimately lead to applications of findings in practice, while the impact of the outputs that were shared can lead to further funding and project development opportunities for the partners. Boxes 3 and 4 offer case examples of effective IKT implementation in Research Stage 8: Dissemination. Key messages from each case example are highlighted in bold.

BOX 3: Case Example 1 – Knowledge Exchange events

Nixon and colleagues' (2013) conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of an HIV prevention programme administered to learners attending schools in a peri-urban, poor neighbourhood in South Africa. The project was a partnered initiative between Canadian and African-based researchers and a South African community organisation. Surveys were completed by youth at the schools involved in the study and focus groups were conducted with parents, teachers, learners and programme facilitators to explore their perspectives on whether the HIV programme had contributed to HIV prevention. The team returned to the schools that participated to share the findings. They utilised a knowledge exchange strategy which not only helped to share the findings, but also included addressing some of the myths or misunderstandings about HIV which were evidenced by the findings. The team worked closely with school administrators and teachers to develop and plan the knowledge exchange sessions at each school. This included prioritising key messages to be delivered based on the study results and finding effective mechanisms for conveying this information. They used interactive sessions with the students that included games related to key findings from the survey in order to engage the learners in discussion. The interactive sessions were facilitated by local field researchers who had been involved in data collection and were conducted in the language spoken in the school. The field researchers were trained to be aware of and address issues of power, stigma, and discomfort around sensitive topics. These interactive sessions were complimented by information booklets and posters that included tailored HIV information to address gaps identified during the research process. **Through the interactive process which had involved multiple stakeholders in the design and delivery of core messaging, the messages were shaped to address the relevant issues in ways that were appropriate, accessible and avoided stigma. This would not have been possible without the interactive engagement of the different community stakeholders.**

BOX 4: Case Example 2 – Creative and collaborative dissemination

Loutfy and colleagues (2017) researched social justice and sexual and reproductive health and rights of women living with HIV. Their collaborative research led to the co-production of a film, "HIV made me fabulous" that was released on World Aids Day (December 1) 2021 (see Resources below). The 10-minute film was written and narrated by Juno Roche, a writer, activist and trans woman living with HIV. The film was directed by dancer and filmmaker Edmond Kilpatrick. **The film is intended to provide hope and celebrate resilience. For the researchers, the film is also a knowledge exchange tool to promote awareness about the state of HIV research, such as "Undetectable equals Untransmittable" messaging and also as a tool to address stigma and build empathy in the broader community. The film is part of the community Life and Love with HIV – a website, network and blogsite for women living with HIV to share their stories and experiences and learn and connect with each other.** This community was established through a collaboration of researchers and community members who were working on a study on the sexual health and rights of women living with HIV. The group is currently mobilising evidence (through the website, the film, and more) and informing research priorities, questions, and discourse to move beyond risk and transmission. The site is full of real-life stories from women living with HIV and complimented by evidence-based resources and facts providing by the affiliated researchers. The website and community created by this truly collaborative group is a great example of the possibility of integrated knowledge translation.

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Resources

- 1 SickKids Knowledge Translation Program
sickkids.ca/en/learning/our-programs/knowledge-translation-program
- 2 Knowledge Translation: The Rise of Implementation
ktdrr.org/products/kt-implementation
- 3 'HIV Made Me Fabulous' film relies on science and embodied storytelling to counter stigma and discrimination. theconversation.com/hiv-made-me-fabulous-film-relies-on-science-and-embodied-storytelling-to-counter-stigma-and-discrimination-172945 Link to film: lifeandlovewithhiv.ca/film/
- 4 UNESCO on Open Access. en.unesco.org/open-access/what-open-access

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Further information

For more information about the IKT Toolkit and University of Dundee's Open Research Working Group please contact Dr Mei Fang at mlfang@dundee.ac.uk

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