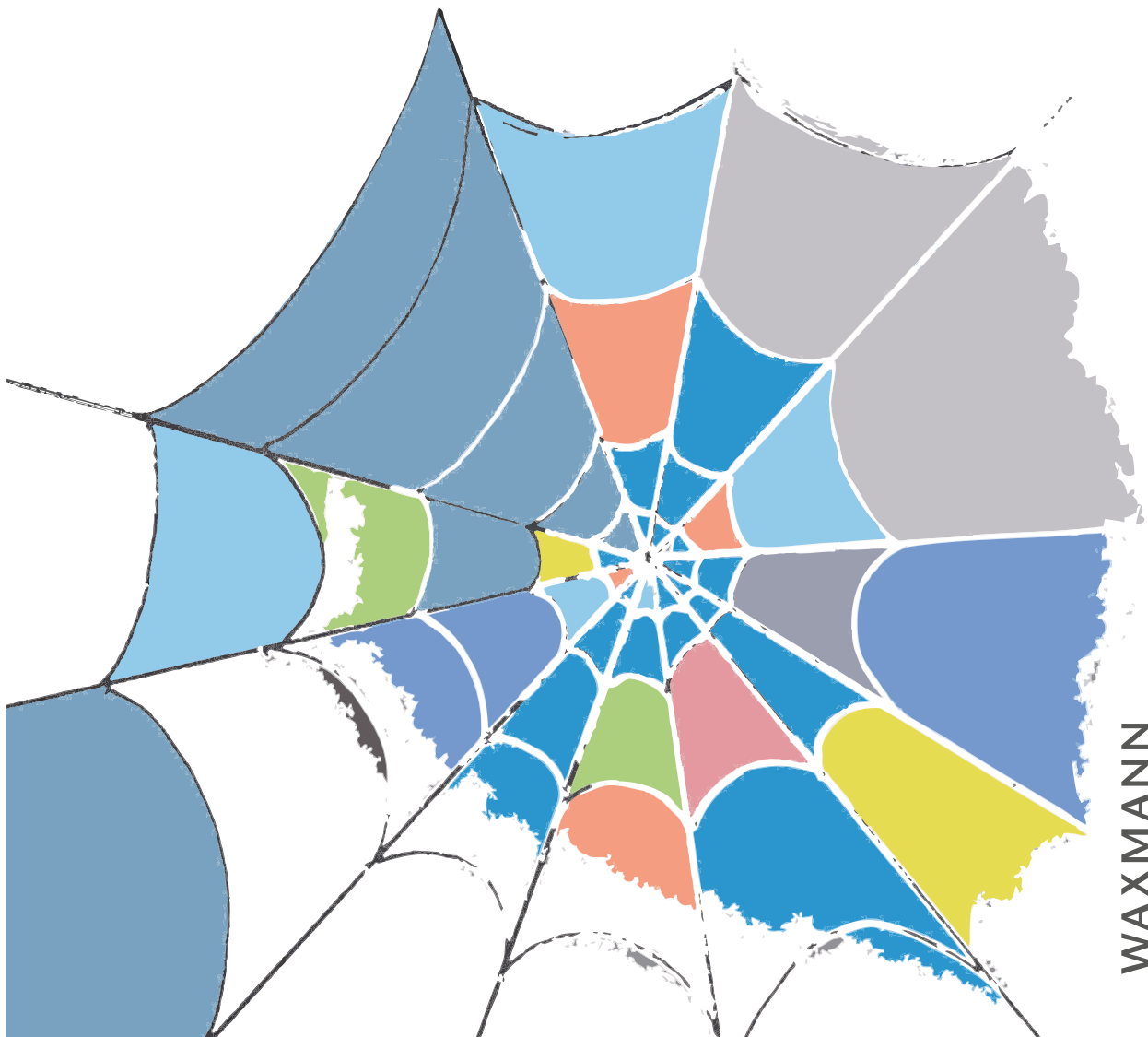


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Wissensmobilisierung und Transfer in der Fluchtforschung

Kommunikation, Beratung und
gemeinsames Forschungshandeln



WAXMANN

Integrated Knowledge Mobilization

Promising Practices from Two Canadian Projects

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Zusammenfassung

Die sog. *Knowledge Mobilization* („Wissensmobilisierung“) entwickelte sich in Kanada in den 1990er Jahren zu einem anerkannten Konzept. Seitdem wird der Begriff als Beschreibung für die Verbreitung von Forschungsergebnissen verwendet, die an den Bedarfen von politischen Entscheidungstragenden, Praktiker*innen und gesellschaftlichen Akteuren ausgerichtet ist. Der Begriff *Knowledge Mobilization* wird nicht einheitlich definiert und konzeptualisiert, aber im Allgemeinen als ein Prozess verstanden, der auf der Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Produzent*innen und den Nutzer*innen von Wissen beruht. Dabei werden Maßnahmen der Wissensvermittlung, der Wissensübersetzung (Translation), des Austauschs und der Ko-Kreation eingesetzt, um Informationen für programmatische und politische Entscheidungen zur Verfügung zu stellen und damit eine Wissensgrundlage für gesellschaftliches Handeln zu schaffen. Bei der sog. Integrierten *Knowledge Translation* („Integrierte Wissensübersetzung“, IKT) wird die traditionelle Unterscheidung zwischen Wissenserzeugenden und Wissensnutzenden aufgeweicht; beide Gruppen gestalten alle Phasen des Forschungszyklus als Gleichberechtigte. In diesem Beitrag werden die integrierten Ansätze von *Knowledge Mobilization* und *Knowledge Translation* am Beispiel zweier Forschungsinitiativen erläutert.

Die Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) ist ein kanadisches Netzwerk von Forschenden, gesellschaftlichen Akteursgruppen und Regierungsbehörden mit dem Ziel, die Integration von geflüchteten Kindern, Jugendlichen und ihren Familien in Kanada zu unterstützen. Dies geschieht in enger Zusammenarbeit der akademischen und nicht-akademischen Projektbeteiligten während aller Phasen des Forschungsprozesses.

Das Sozialunternehmen *Wisdom 2Action* (W2A) mit Kund*innen in Kanada und der ganzen Welt wird als zweites Beispiel vorgestellt. Auf Grundlage der Rahmenkonzeption von *PARiHS* (Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services, „Förderung von Maßnahmen zur Umsetzung von Forschung im Gesundheitswesen“) nimmt W2A die psychische Gesundheit und das Wohlbefinden von Kindern, Jugendlichen und gesellschaftlichen Subsystemen in den Blick. Diese sollen durch Forschung, Evaluationsmaßnahmen, die Förderung des Engagements von Jugendlichen und der Beteiligung von gesellschaftlichen Akteuren unterstützt werden. Der Beitrag von Simone Chia-Kangata, Lisa Lachance und Michael Ungar gibt einen Überblick über einige der Instrumente, die CYRRC und W2A einsetzen, um die Ko-Kreation von Wissen in den von ihnen beforschten Bereichen voranzutreiben.

Der folgende englischsprachige Beitrag ist unter www.bibb.de/vet-repository/000012 in deutscher Übertragung verfügbar.

Introduction

Knowledge mobilization (KMb) emerged as a popular concept in the Canadian education and health sectors in the 1990s (Levin, 2008; Ratkovic et al., 2015). Since then, it has become synonymous with sharing research in ways that are meaningful for policymakers, practitioners, and communities (Atherton, 2006; Bennet & Bennet,

2007). Although there remains some ambiguity around the definition and conceptualization of knowledge mobilization, it is generally understood as a process based on collaboration between knowledge producers and knowledge users, using methods such as knowledge sharing, translation, exchange and co-creation, to inform program and policy decisions or to provide the basis for community-focused action (Bennet and Bennet, 2015; Government of Canada, 2015; Government of Canada, 2019b). In this paper, we briefly describe the knowledge mobilization context in Canada, focusing on a recent shift from knowledge mobilization as a one-directional flow of information, to a more collaborative, partnership-based approach. We then describe knowledge mobilization approaches from two projects in Nova Scotia, Canada. The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) is a pan-Canadian network of researchers, service providers and government partners working together to produce and share research that facilitates the integration of young refugees and their families in Canada and beyond. Wisdom 2Action (W2A) began as a government-funded KMb network and is now a social enterprise that supports research and helps mobilize promising practices for improving the lives of vulnerable young people in Canada and beyond. Both use an integrated knowledge mobilization approach in which knowledge users are engaged as equal partners in all stages of the research process.

Defining an Elusive Concept – What is Knowledge Mobilization?

Despite increasing emphasis on knowledge mobilization in Canada and around the world, there remains ambiguity about what is meant by this concept, due in part to the many terms used to describe it. Implementation science, knowledge transfer, and knowledge mobilization are all terms used to describe the process of moving research into practice, through the engagement of researchers as knowledge producers with knowledge users, including practitioners and other stakeholders such as people with lived experience (Nilsen, 2015; Jull et al., 2017). A 2006 study by Graham et al. found over 29 terms used to describe some form of knowledge to action (Graham et al., 2018). In Canada, the term knowledge transfer has generally been favored within the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and health science sectors while the term knowledge mobilization has been adopted in the social sciences and humanities. This is largely due to the usage of these terms by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), respectively. Throughout this article, we refer primarily to knowledge mobilization (KMb), which SSHRC defines as “an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of activities relating to the production and use of research results, including knowledge synthesis, dissemination, transfer, exchange, and co-creation or co-production by researchers and knowledge users” (Government of Canada, 2019b, paragraph 2).

Just as there are a variety of terms used to describe the process of knowledge to action, there are divergent ideas about the objectives and activities of KMb. A range of KMb theoretical frameworks have been developed that are grounded in concepts

ranging from psychology and sociology to learning and evaluation theory (Harvey & Kitson, 2015b; Nilsen, 2015; Tabak et al., 2012). In primarily academic contexts, KMb is often conceptualized as a one-way transfer of knowledge, with knowledge flowing from knowledge producers (such as researchers and scientists) to knowledge users (those who may be affected by or interested in the research). Research has shown, however, that knowledge generated and shared in this one-way transfer (or “push” model) rarely results in uptake by end-users (Bennet & Jessani, 2011). As a result, this model is increasingly giving way to more collaborative and participatory approaches. In Canada and elsewhere, the concept of integrated knowledge mobilization (also called knowledge co-creation), or integrated knowledge transfer (IKT) is gaining increasing prominence. In integrated knowledge mobilization, the distinction between knowledge creators and knowledge users is blurred. Each group is involved in all stages of the research process from definition of the research question, to data collection, interpretation of findings, dissemination, and uptake. The specific nature of collaboration may vary – in some cases, formal agreements clearly outline roles and responsibilities; while in others, collaboration is less formalized, more fluid, and may be based on existing personal relationships. The underlying premise is that knowledge uptake is facilitated when those able to act on research findings are involved in producing the research. At the same time, research produced using a collaborative approach tends to be more solution-focused and relevant to the needs of policymakers, practitioners and communities. (Greenhalgh et al., 2016; Kothari et al., 2017). With this in mind, we find it useful to think of knowledge mobilization as bringing knowledge, people and action together to create value. KMb goes well beyond one-directional knowledge dissemination. It embeds knowledge creation and use within the core structures that shape how communities and organizations interact (Bennet & Bennet, 2007; Clark & Kelly, 2005).

Integrated knowledge mobilization may be particularly important when undertaking KMb in the community sector, where access to and sharing of promising practices is challenging amongst service providers and community-based non-profit organizations (NPOs). NPOs in Canada have not consistently been part of knowledge translation initiatives and face internal and external barriers, such as lack of capacity and networks, to identify and share what works (Leadbeater, 2010; Mitchell, 2011; Ungar et al., 2015). The next section describes two projects in Nova Scotia, Canada that use integrated knowledge mobilization approaches.

The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC)

The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) is a pan-Canadian network of researchers, service providers, and government partners working together to produce and share research that facilitates the integration of young refugees and their families in Canada and beyond. In 2017, the network was awarded a 5-year SSHRC partnership grant to carry out research and mobilize knowledge to address the

challenges and opportunities that refugee young people experience in four areas: (1) the economic and political contexts that affect them and their families; (2) language, literacy and learning; (3) social integration and human rights; and (4) child, youth and family wellbeing. The network has almost 200 members, including over 30 education and service provider organizations (ESPOs) and government partners. Each year, the network distributes approximately \$ 300,000 in research sub-grants among its member researchers and non-academic partners. To date, the network has provided subgrants for over fifty research projects on economic and social integration, language and literacy, and child, youth and family wellbeing.

CYRRC's integrated KMb approach is guided by SSHRC's emphasis on partnership-based research and knowledge co-creation. Funded through a SSHRC partnership grant, research partnership is core to CYRRC's mandate. Partnership grants are intended to support formal partnership between academic and non-academic collaborators by fostering co-operation and leadership-sharing, with the aim of allowing partners "to innovate, build institutional capacity and mobilize research knowledge in accessible ways" (Government of Canada, 2015b, paragraph 1). SSHRC's emphasis on co-creation is clear; partnership grants are awarded to support research collaboration between academics and non-academics. Also core to SSHRC's partnership grant model is the need for knowledge to be mobilized in *accessible* ways, reflecting SSHRC's ongoing need to demonstrate impact from publicly funded research (Government of Canada, 2019; Wixted & Beaudry, 2012).

Within CYRRC, partnership between academic and non-academic coalition members occurs at three levels: governance, research, and sharing/using knowledge. At the governance level, this has meant the inclusion of non-academic partners on CYRRC's governance committees and power sharing between academic and non-academic partners. At the research level, this entails giving priority to projects involving academic-service provider partnerships and encouraging projects in which non-academic partners are involved in all stages of research. At the level of sharing and using knowledge, partners involved in co-creation are implicitly involved in sharing and using research findings from their projects. Additionally, CYRRC has established a knowledge mobilization working group to guide knowledge mobilization activities for the network, and to share findings with non-academic stakeholders (more information about the working group is available at www.cyrcc.org).

CYRRC – Governance

CYRRC's operational and budgetary decisions are overseen by an eighteen-member Coordination and Operation Committee; additional strategic and technical oversight is provided by a six-member Strategic Advisory Committee. On each committee, power is shared between academic and non-academic members, who are almost equal in number. Below this level, there are four research clusters. Within each cluster, there are two academic and two non-academic leads who jointly determine how research funds are allocated within their cluster. It has been pointed out elsewhere that the

balance of power in SSHRC partnership grants is tipped in favor of those who hold the funds, namely, the academic partners ('The SSHRC Partnership Grant', n.d.). CYRRC has sought to redress this power imbalance by including non-academic partners in its governance structure and ensuring that funding and operational decisions are made jointly.

CYRRC – Research

CYRRC's non-academic partners are increasingly reluctant to be involved in research projects in which they are seen mainly as a conduit to research participants, without input into research design or process. Several service provider partners are developing best practice guidelines and criteria to determine which research projects to participate in based on their degree of involvement. One of the early decisions by CYRRC's Coordination and Operations Committee was that partnership between academics and non-academics should be part of all stages of the research process. Specifically, this meant setting a criterion for projects receiving CYRRC funding to involve at least one academic and one non-academic partner. Though adherence has varied, over 65 % of CYRRC projects have involved partnership between academics and ESPO or government partners. This number rises to over 75 % when focusing on projects funded in the last twelve months (as the focus on partnership continues to be strengthened).

It must be acknowledged that among CYRRC projects, there remains a spectrum when it comes to involvement of non-academic partners. A small number of CYRRC projects continue to be led only by academics. A second group of projects are academic-initiated or led, but with greater levels of involvement by non-academic partners in various stages of the research. A third group more closely aligns with the true co-creation model. In this group, there are projects in which non-academic partners determine the research question before partnering with academics, and other instances in which academics and non-academics collaboratively determine the research question and are jointly involved in various stages of the research.

CYRRC – Sharing and Using Knowledge

CYRRC partners involved in co-creation are implicitly involved in sharing and using research findings from their projects. As discussed above, evidence suggests that this approach is most likely to result in sharing and adoption of new knowledge to inform interventions. At the same time, there is value in sharing research findings with partners who were not involved in co-creating knowledge but who may still benefit from its use. In this context, there is need for a greater emphasis on knowledge dissemination -sharing research by identifying appropriate audiences and tailoring messages to this audience (Government of Canada, 2015). To guide knowledge dissemination, CYRRC established a knowledge mobilization working group comprised of the seven service provider members who sit on the Coordination and Operations Committee. This working group guides knowledge mobilization activities for the network and helps

share findings with non-academic stakeholders. Under the guidance of the working group, several measures to strengthen knowledge mobilization across the network have been introduced. Research proposals to CYRRC must now include a knowledge mobilization plan that identifies KMb goals, target audiences, strategies to reach these audiences and who is responsible for carrying out KMb activities. Applicants must clearly describe KMb products and researchers are expected to produce infographics and plain language research summaries that target non-academic audiences. Peer-reviewed journals, reports and conference presentations remain the preferred products targeted at academic audiences. Research products are shared in a variety of ways including in-person, and online (web and social media) fora.

Wisdom 2 Action (W2A)

In 2010, the Networks of Centres of Excellence, a Canadian federal government research funding organization, launched a new initiative to fund KMb networks. Wisdom 2Action (originally named the Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts Network) was founded in 2012 with a mandate to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and youth in challenging contexts. W2A's mission focused on supporting the youth-serving sector in Canada – namely community-based, non-profit organizations – to increase their use of evidence, evaluation and engagement. W2A used the Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services (PARiHS) framework (Kitson et al., 1998) to conceptualize its KMb work with the key components of gathering the evidence, contextualizing the evidence, and facilitating the uptake of evidence (Harvey et al., 2002; Kitson et al., 1998).

W2A – Gathering the Evidence

Knowledge synthesis is one approach to understanding what evidence exists in support of a particular type of intervention (Kastner et al., 2012). Welch et al. (2012) looked at how to undertake equity-focused systematic reviews by framing questions in terms of equity and inclusion, developing a theory and framework to support this inquiry, using a flexible design, and including grey literature. The W2A knowledge synthesis process incorporated many of these methods, starting with a scoping review to identify the research evidence, followed by a services scan with Network partners to identify practice-based evidence (Wisdom2Action, 2019a). The services scan focused on effective practices identified by Network members, and provided Network researchers access to a great deal of grey literature. From this, promising local practices were highlighted that reflected the research and practice evidence.

Six of seven reports were co-led by academic researchers, service providers and youth (the seventh was led by two academics). An interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral Advisory Committee of academics, service providers and youth provided guidance throughout the research and writing process. Draft reports were reviewed by W2A

partners through consultations and workshops, including youth engagement workshops. Four reports also benefited from a service providers roundtable hosted by a youth services organization that met to confirm the research questions, discuss initial themes, review the final reports and identify recommended KMB products.

W2A – Contextualization

W2A also recognized the need to create ways for knowledge producers and users to contextualize the research and practice evidence within their own experience. This is consistent with research on how to encourage KMB in the community-based sector that values meetings, workshops, and ongoing communications (Camden et al., 2015).

To further this contextualization, in its first year of operations W2A held a knowledge mobilization simulation that brought together service providers, academics, policymakers, and youth to problem-solve different knowledge mobilization challenges (presented as scenarios) in order to explore how knowledge is shared across stakeholder groups, such as youth and government funders.

W2A Event Series

Following this early experience with in-person KMB projects, the Network launched the W2A event series (Wisdom2Action, 2019b). In the first seven years, W2A spearheaded over 20 events, always with a cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary planning team, designed to embed and create dialogue on research and practice evidence, as well as lived experience. Some events were community or regionally focused while others were national in scope and considered specific topics, such as sexual abuse and trauma, and substance use. For each event, W2A conducted post-event surveys at the end of the event along with 6- and 12- month follow-ups. The long-term impacts included new partnerships across sectors and disciplines. For example, in 2014, W2A partnered with the Nunavut government in northern Canada, along with community-based service providers, to host W2A Nunavut (Wisdom2Action, 2014). Sixty service providers, nurses, psychologists, government officials and young people shared their work and heard from service leaders and academics about programs that could inform local solutions in remote communities. Post-event interviews with participants revealed that for some participants W2A Nunavut was the first time they had shared program ideas in a structured way within the territory, either with academics or other service providers.

W2A – Facilitation

The third element of the PARiHS model is facilitation, which focuses on enabling organizations to build their own capacity to implement KMB projects (Harvey et al., 2002). W2A first supported facilitation through a microgrant project called the KMB Innovation Fund. Microgrants are typically small amounts of funding provided to

community partners and can be used to promote health equity (Johnson et al., 2006; Tamminen et al., 2014). A qualitative evaluation of 199 equity-focused microgrant projects in North Carolina, for example, identified important elements for success, including building partnership and connection, gaining new ideas and knowledge, and developing local leadership and expertise. The W2A KMb Innovation Fund demonstrated these factors through ongoing coaching to recipients, linking recipients to other network activities for new knowledge, and focusing on localized projects. The KMb Innovation Fund process and content reflected W2A's commitment to balancing research and practice evidence, as well as lived experience. In total, 15 projects were funded with up to \$7000 over two years, with a split between academic and community partners as recipients.

Mentoring has also been identified as a tool for facilitation to support organizational change (McCormack & Garbett, 2001). Rather than aiming to 'fix things' for the organization, mentors can work with organizations by identifying opportunities for change, allowing them to voice their own opinions and facilitate change for themselves. To promote mentoring in KMb strategies, W2A partnered with three other knowledge mobilization organizations in Canada that also develop KMb tools and provide KMb coaching to the community-based services sector. These included the Ontario Centre of Excellence in Child and Youth Mental Health, Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre and Le centre de liaison sur l'intervention et la prévention psychosociale (now Humanov-is).

Potential mentee organizations were provided access to an online KMb and Evaluation Toolkit and identified a tool they wanted support to use, either implementing an evidence-based practice, and/or an evaluation project or question. Applicants were asked how they were currently meeting their KMb needs, and how they intended to maintain capacity in the targeted area after the mentorship ended in order to assess sustainability. Throughout the program, the Ontario Centre of Excellence and W2A supported mentoring relationships chosen through this process, while the remaining mentees were identified through existing connections with community-based NPOs. From 2016–2019, 24 mentoring projects were completed.

Each project provided a minimum of 100 hours of mentoring support over a one-year period. The mentorship team (i.e., the mentors and mentee organization) tried to meet in-person but generally relied on virtual communication. Together, they developed a shared work plan in which specific goals, actions, timelines, and responsibilities were outlined. Through observation and interviews, the mentors identified gaps and strengths in the mentee organization's use of evidence-based practices. Mentorship work plans were diverse, and activities included the development of logic models and performance measurement frameworks, training and project planning on youth engagement, and the development and implementation of knowledge mobilization strategies.

W2A staff began evaluating the network's mentorship program in May 2017. A literature review of mentoring, facilitation in KMb and evaluation capacity building was undertaken. A total of five interviews with mentees and six interviews with mentors

were completed. Key evaluation findings included the importance of considering context, building relationships, creating and adapting flexible work plans, and maintaining a focus on mentoring despite pressures on mentors to manage or deliver program outcomes.

Discussion

The two projects discussed above outline Kmb approaches from Nova Scotia, Canada. The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC)'s integrated Kmb approach is based on the principle of co-creation inherent in SSHRC's partnership grants program. Wisdom 2Action (W2A) uses the PARiHS framework to structure Kmb with youth serving NPOs. These projects demonstrate that partnership and engagement are key components of knowledge mobilization in the publicly funded research sector in Canada. In both projects, an integrated Kmb approach has blurred the distinction between traditionally-defined "knowledge producers" and "knowledge users", resulted in power sharing between academic and non-academic actors and facilitated the involvement of non-academic partners in the knowledge-to-action cycle. Ongoing evaluations of the projects have identified the need for increased use of facilitation and flexible, adaptable and relationship-based implementation of new knowledge that is context specific. W2A also undertook a participatory evaluation of its youth advisory function, which identified strong benefits of co-production for participants, non-academic and academic partners and the children's services sector more broadly (Canas et al., 2019).

A fulsome discussion of factors that support co-production is beyond the scope of this paper. However, these two projects demonstrate the importance of having leadership that values academic-service provider/NPO partnerships. In both projects, the principal applicant (the academic researcher who was awarded the grant) and other members of the governance committees value a participatory approach and support academic service-provider/NPO involvement in multiple phases of the work and network governance. As non-academic partners continue to strengthen their research capacity and seek to be involved in co-creation, it is likely that integrated Kmb will continue to grow in prevalence across Canada and elsewhere.

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