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External Report for

**Comparator Analysis of Global Education
Knowledge Exchange Initiatives in GPE
Partner Countries**

Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADEA Association for the Development of Education in Africa

CSO Civil Society Organization

EEF Education Endowment Fund

ESSA Education Sub Saharan Africa

FCDO UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Organization

GMT Greenwich Mean Time

GPE Global Partnership for Education

IDRC International Development Research Centre

IPs Implementing Partners

KIX Knowledge and Innovation Exchange

LEG Local Education Group

PRIA Participatory Research in Asia

QA Quality Assurance

RAF Research Assessment Framework

RELI Regional Education Learning Initiative

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

SHARE Supporting Holistic & Actionable Research in Education

TOR Terms of Reference

UKFIET The Education and Development Forum

UKRI United Kingdom Research and Innovation

UND University of Notre Dame

USAID United States Agency for International Development

USD United States Dollar

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Knowledge mobilization is about getting the “right information” to the “right people” in the “right format” at the “right time”¹. Also called knowledge exchange, knowledge mobilization helps make academic research accessible to non-academic audiences and supports collaborations between academic researchers and non-academic partners such as community-based organizations. Knowledge exchange is vital to ensure that policy makers have access to knowledge, ideas and options which allow them to make the best decisions within their respective policy areas. It is just as critical that they learn what is needed, relevant and supported by their communities, and that these communities, including teachers, headteachers and parents, are also empowered to share information of what works for their own individual contexts.

This is a summary of a report written for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX). This report contains a summary of findings for partners who participated in a targeted mapping and analysis for GPE KIX. The methodology of the report included engagement with twenty-five members of organizations engaged in the education research space. For each organization, a document analysis was completed, reviewing websites and published annual reports, policy papers, position statements, etc. Fourteen individuals were interviewed about their organization in relation to guiding questions of the comparator analysis.

Data is presented using the Alliance for Useful Evidence’s *A Practical Guide for Establishing an Evidence Centre*, which highlights five “common ingredients that contribute to successful evidence centres”². These ingredients were frequently mentioned throughout our interviews with GPE KIX stakeholders. The ingredients are: (1) clear objectives; (2) robust organizational development; (3) engaged users; (4) rigorous curation and creation of evidence; (5) and a focus on impact.

A summary matrix of data on organizations reviewed is available in Appendix 1.

¹ Source: Research Impact Canada: <https://researchimpact.ca/resources/>

² Alliance for Useful Evidence, [A Practical Guide for Establishing an Evidence Centre](#).

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Context

The consultancy “Comparator Analysis of Global Education Knowledge Exchange Initiatives in GPE Partner Countries” began on 1 August 2022 as contracted by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Secretariat, through its [Knowledge and Innovation Exchange \(KIX\)](#) initiative.

The Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) is a GPE asset (\$76.5 million USD) through which partner countries share relevant knowledge, experience, and evidence with one another, and which funds applied research on countries’ priority issues, leading to better outcomes for children through more informed policy dialogue and reform processes. KIX was launched in 2019, after a comprehensive design process, comprising consultations with all GPE constituencies, with oversight of the GPE Board. The current phase of KIX runs to mid-2024 and is being implemented by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), an organization headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, who acts as the grant agent and chief implementing partner for KIX.

The duration of this contract was twenty working days, with an initial end date of 29 August 2022. This consultancy was led by Ella Wright (Team Leader) and Catherine Tarimo (Consultant). This final report meets the requirements as set out in the terms of reference (TOR) (see Appendix 1). We note the limited time for data collection and analysis and state clearly that this report is *not a full mapping*, but a targeted, comparator analysis using available information within the scope/scale of this contract.

1.2. Purpose and Scope of the Review

The purpose of this report is a comparator analysis of global education knowledge exchange initiatives relevant to KIX. The KIX initiative is mid-way through implementation (Year 3 of 5), receiving a positive mid-term review in June 2022. Findings of the review noted that KIX has made significant progress in its first two years of operations, is valued by its stakeholders, and is well positioned for impact. The comparator analysis will provide evidence and data to inform

future GPE KIX activities, in light of the midterm review. While a benchmarking exercise and scoping of partner organizations was completed in 2018 as part of the KIX design phase³, this is now out of date. Additionally, since KIX was launched, other initiatives have come online, driven by other agencies working in the fields of education and international development. A targeted mapping and analysis will provide GPE (and KIX partners) with data to inform the future design of KIX. This will support refinement of KIX's value proposition, identify strategic partnership opportunities (including projects by other partners that are in pipeline development phase), and signpost some possible adaptations to KIX in terms of ways of working, engagement and implementation activities.

1.3 Researcher Self-Location and Report Tone

We are two female researchers, one from Canada and one from Tanzania. One of us is a settler to the lands known as Canada and has been working in international development and education for fifteen years, mainly with multilateral and bilateral organizations in the UK and Sub Saharan Africa. The other is a recent graduate with a Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs, with experience in the education and health sectors, namely in Eastern Africa. We are trained as policy professionals and researchers, and have direct experience seeing the benefits of knowledge mobilization and implementation research. Completing this comparator analysis reminded us of the importance of relationships within our work. As aspiring knowledge mobilization practitioners, we will apply evidence of best practice to the format of this report, keeping the tone more personal and informal than standard research reports.

2. Methodology

Inception Phase

For the inception phase, we reviewed the TOR in detail, as well as all background documents. We focussed the inception phase on understanding KIX as deeply as possible, so that we could effectively compare and contrast within our analysis. We also carried out two informal interviews (zoom meetings) with Ian MacPherson, GPE KIX Lead, and Tricia Wind, KIX Program Leader at IDRC.

³ See design blueprint document and analysis document

Data Collection

Overall, we contacted twenty-five members of organizations for this comparator analysis, based on requests from the GPE KIX team, and additional recommendations from partners. For each organization, we completed a document analysis, reviewing websites and published annual reports, policy papers, position statements, etc. We emailed contacts from every organization and asked for additional materials, which were also reviewed. We completed zoom interviews with individuals from ten of the organizations, and connected via whatsapp voice memos for ‘interviews’ with another three organizations. Of the twenty-five individuals contacted, we were unable to connect directly with eight organizations, relying solely on shared documents from other partners, or websites. A table of interviewees can be found in Appendix 3, and a list of all documents reviewed in Appendix 2.

Building on the TOR, we selected the following questions to guide our approach to this work:

- What knowledge exchange and innovation hub initiatives currently exist (or are in the pipeline) which support the education sector, specifically those with a focus on supporting directly-funded research in the global south?
- What are the key attributes of these initiatives? What is their mission, vision and mandate? What are their operating budgets? Do they have established program designs (e.g. theories of change, logic models, etc.)? Where do they operate (tools/methods), and with what partners? What types of initiatives do they fund, and how do these modalities work? What have been some successes, failures and learnings from these initiatives, their implementing partners and funders?
- How are these initiatives supporting Ministries, education partners and communities on the ground in using evidence more systematically? How have the projects been tested and scaled, and what are findings in this regard?
- Do any case studies or innovative examples exist of relevance to KIX which can be used to inform the next phase of KIX design? Are there any learnings on what to avoid, or findings which could challenge the current KIX model?
- Is there a duplication of services, activities and/or scope/scale of other initiatives which KIX should be aware of? Would this help or hinder how KIX could be implemented?

Data Analysis

Detailed notes were kept from all interviews, totalling approximately 100 pages. We employed a comparative-historical method⁴ that allows for the study of educational documents, program structures and design, scientific and education/innovation literature, curricula and syllabi, annual reports and policy papers. Essentially, we created flow charts on giant pieces of paper, noting common findings, ideas, and linkages between our interviews. A summary matrix of data on organizations reviewed is available in Appendix 1.

2.1 Limitations and Challenges

A challenge of this consultancy was the scope and scale of the tasks within the allotted time frame of twenty days. Additionally, July and August were challenging moments for data collection and key informant interviews. We noted that this is not a *complete mapping* of organizations - this would require substantial time to gather extensive documents, complete more rigorous and systematic interviews, and data triangulation. Within the scope of this analysis, we could not triangulate data in such a way. Instead, we had to rely on information that was available online, additional materials shared by some partners, and short one-hour or less conversations to clarify any key questions. The findings in this report would likely be elaborated on by each partner with respect to their own organization, and we hope that this report can signpost avenues for collaboration or further discussion.

We note that the majority of our interviewees were representatives from organizations working at the headquarters or regional levels. The majority of those interviewed lived, worked or studied in what would be called the ‘Global North’. These individuals have benefited greatly from opportunities provided through their positionalities, and their worldviews and experiences are reflected in our conversations. This is not a critique, but we note a limitation of our comparator analysis to include a diverse range of voices (regional, individual, political, economic, etc) - this was not within the scope of our consultancy.

⁴ This study informed our methods: Mukan, N., & Kravets, S. (2015). Methodology of comparative analysis of public-school teachers’ continuing professional development in Great Britain, Canada and the USA. *Comparative Professional Pedagogy*, 5(4), 39-45. <https://doi.org/10.1515/rpp-2015-0063>

3. Findings and Discussion

The following elements were identified as the GPE KIX unique selling proposition (USP):

- Global convening power and reach (36 projects in 70 countries, with more coming - no other partner works at that scale). This includes GPE's wider reach.
- Strong and deep relationships with government partners, and ability to support civil society organization voices (GPE KIX can reach networks and connections in ways that other partners cannot, especially high levels of government)
- Access to a massive range of already-existing evidence, and ability to synthesize this evidence for appropriate use (databases, networks, country partner research, etc)
- Long-term presence of GPE as a whole in countries. GPE KIX can leverage this presence to support development of long-term knowledge mobilization and exchange expertise.
- Significant funding and ability to be nimble and flexible (e.g - GPE KIX could add-on to other initiatives that are underway to maximise opportunities for impact. Modalities could be designed for accelerators so that GPE KIX can move quickly).
- Already well-respected and appreciated, with partners looking to support KIX with its objectives, however they can.
- Ability to support ethical evidence generation alongside researchers in the Global South. There are a number of barriers identified in an Education.org report around education research, and GPE KIX could lead these conversations in new ways with partners, and support a new protocol for non-extractive education research.

The Alliance for Useful Evidence's *A Practical Guide for Establishing an Evidence Centre*, highlights five "common ingredients that contribute to successful evidence centres"⁵.

These ingredients were frequently mentioned throughout our interviews with GPE KIX partners. The ingredients are: (1) clear objectives; (2) robust organizational development; (3) engaged users; (4) rigorous curation and creation of evidence; (5) and a focus on impact.

⁵ This report is a helpful tool to compare GPE KIX. See full report [here](#).

1. Clear Objectives

“Good knowledge of the centre’s intended user group(s) and the context they are working within. Understanding of the current relationship between evidence users and evidence producers and of the drivers that influence users’ decision-making. Clear outcomes to work towards and an evidence-informed theory of change.”

In order to do knowledge exchange well, we have to go back to basics and triple check that our initiative is clear on where it works, how it works, and the engagement process for this work. For example, about half of those interviewed acknowledge how hard it is to have clearly defined objectives with globally defined mandates. Many provided feedback that related to the concept of “we don’t really know what each other is doing.” Partners talked about how it is hard to stay engaged and track all of the smaller details, while remaining focussed on the larger ones. It is important to know from the outset, or create space to get market feedback, and adjust and streamline the scope/scale of the work as the program is implemented.

Indeed, the most commonly cited question in evidence hub research is “What does effective knowledge mobilization look like?”

Of the fifteen evidence hubs and activities we reviewed in detail, the majority had smaller scopes, or defined approaches. Rather than ‘do everything’, after building their program infrastructure, they focused on market assessment and refinement. For example, UKRI noted that with the UK Government’s [What Works Hub](#), the design team originally paid for an evaluation, developed a theory of change, and yet didn’t have a sense of the outcomes they really wanted to achieve. The outcomes were too broad in scope. Then it was impossible to trace the outcomes back to what they were trying to achieve. This had to be adapted over time.

The [Research Schools Network](#), an initiative of the [Education Endowment Fund](#) (EEF), received similar feedback, and adapted its scope to particular themes (teaching and learning specifically for staff and school leaders only). This clear focus made it easier to engage with partners and directed funding more efficiently, preventing duplication with others. EEF’s new £5 million [Global Trials Fund](#) is now underway, with a goal to “build a network of international education evidence hubs” - there is scope to engage by education researcher partners, especially those who are UK-based.

FCDO's "[What Works Hub for Global Education](#)" will be moving into Phase 2 development, identifying 11 countries, with a goal to focus on 3-4. The Phase 1 pilot will run to March 2023, with an implementing partner being contracted for April 2023. As this program is also implementation science focussed, there is scope to engage with the implementing partner, and the FCDO knowledge mobilization advisors from the outset of the program, to identify strategic and catalytic opportunities to work together.

2. Robust Organizational Development

“Commitment to create an independent and sustainable organization with effective governance and the right mix of skills and experience, over a timescale that will be sufficient to make a difference.”

Many partners interviewed spoke about how much effort goes into program design and kick-off, but that it is challenging to keep the momentum to stay on top of governance and follow-through of all activities. Sector coordination remains challenging in almost all development contexts. For example, Local Education Groups, also called Education Sector Working Groups, often meet infrequently, with large agendas and little time to engage in meaningful ways on certain topics. Partners noted that education research is often the bottom of the agenda. Our own experiences as Education Advisors in GPE partner countries is that many of our colleagues (in other organizations, as well as in partner governments) do not have a deep understanding of knowledge mobilization, and therefore buy-in or action from discussions is slow, or stalled.

This highlights the challenges in ensuring that country-level partnerships are strong, so that capability is there to take implementation research to policy, or to scale the work:

- [USAID SHARE](#) recently completed a knowledge mobilization needs assessment to assess competencies among country-level partners. The SHARE team noted there is scope for all partners to engage to map future collaboration opportunities, based on their findings.
- The [Research Schools Network](#) funded academies for ‘on the ground’ users, whereby baseline assessments were done for competencies around knowledge exchange and implementation research. A cohort of teachers and head teachers came together every few months for a 12-24 month period. These academies allowed for teachers and

administrators to discuss evidence-based interventions and innovations which could be used to support their own schools and classrooms. Through the academies, participants designed roadmaps which they attempted to implement over time. The network allowed them to support each other in real time, and their cohorts met frequently (every couple of months) to come together and discuss the challenges they were facing. This relational model of continual engagement over a long period of time, rather than a one-off workshop, proved successful and is being scaled-up, including in the Global South.

3. Engaged Users

“Understanding users’ evidence needs and working collaboratively with them in all aspects of the centre’s work to increase their capability, motivation and opportunity to use evidence in their decision-making. Key areas of work to enable evidence uptake may include: consulting intended users about what evidence is needed; collaborating with users to create new evidence; communicating and interpreting evidence for end users; increasing people’s capabilities to use evidence; and embedding evidence in working culture and practices.”

Five partners spoke about the importance of building linkages to connect the regional work back to the national work, particular within GPE partner countries. They noted that champions come to regional events, but they’re not sure how those champions take their skills/ideas back, and translate this into change. [Schools2030](#), for example, noted that they are successful because they form deep relationships with individuals in Ministries, and they find that working alongside them 1-3 days a week is critical to success.

When we asked about how all programs often engage the same people in-country, who are frequently ‘tapped out’, many partners acknowledged the continual challenge. It seems we all engage the same users ‘competing for their time’, and we wonder whether we subconsciously measure success when a government partner prioritizes us (noting that this is choosing our program over others). [Research Impact Canada](#) and the [Gates Foundation](#) spoke about these challenges and the importance of finding concrete ways to ensure that activities and programs are asked for by developing partner governments (or institutes), and that people who request support have space to take it on, rather than the risk that our programs are seen as externals trying to support with our own preconceived ideas and solutions.

In the last six months, the [EdTech Hub](#) altered its model, moving from part-time positions, to two full-time positions in each of the six countries where they operate (Bangladesh, Ghana, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Pakistan). Within this model, one staff member is National and builds linkages within the country, and the other is International or National, and supports the linkages between existing evidence, and applying it locally. This is also the model that the [Mastercard Foundation](#) uses - they are no longer heavily investing in sending people from “HQ” on postings overseas - instead they invest in long-term, National hubs for knowledge mobilization and innovation exchange. Lastly, the [Research Schools Network](#) funds permanent 0.6 FTE teacher positions in target schools, who are trained on knowledge exchange/mobilization and focus solely on this work. Feedback from the UK Government’s [What Works Hub](#) was that funding local positions was seen as a simple way to invest in on-the-ground impact, rather than investing in more “country leads” or “regional leads” who are not embedded among beneficiaries.

4. Rigorous Curation and Creation of Evidence

“A robust and transparent approach to selecting and generating high-quality evidence for your users. This might include: defining what the centre considers to be ‘evidence’ and deciding what evidence the centre will curate; applying standards of evidence; mapping existing evidence; synthesising useful evidence; filling gaps with primary research; and building sector-wide capacity to create robust evidence.”

The UK Research Assessment Framework (RAF) is a system for assessing the quality of research among UK higher education institutions. In a [2014 RAF analysis](#) of 6,679 impact case studies King’s College found *3,709 unique global pathways to impact*. This highlights the many ways that evidence can be generated, curated, exchanged and mobilized. Strong, long-term relationships are seen as one of the most critical factors to success. Here, we envision fingerprints, imagining that as each of us has a unique fingerprint, there are infinite possibilities for relational engagement among each other, and therefore, infinite possibilities to effectively share and use knowledge. This presents GPE KIX (and others in the knowledge exchange space) with a challenge to be specific, yet broad and nimble enough to allow for organic pathways to emerge.

One way of allowing for connections is through technology. Many partners are working on online knowledge management and digital curation resources. While there is a risk of duplication, there is opportunity to be explicit about the value-add of each hub, initiative or website, directing users to the most appropriate place for their query or challenge. There could be scope for partners to share each other's resources on their webpages, including links and events.

Some examples of databases and websites include: [ESSA](#), with the [Hilton Foundation](#), launched the [African Education Research Database](#), which aims to be a 'one-stop shop' to consolidate the evidence base for policy and practice, and inform future research priorities and partnerships. They also launched the [African Scholarship Hub](#), a search portal for scholarships in higher education (still in beta mode). Additionally, ESSA is focusing on ECD, creating an online mapping of services in target countries across Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda). They aim to provide small grants to agencies to support development and implementation research in ECD and are close to finalizing a grant agreement with the Gates Foundation centred on foundational literacy and numeracy.

Through [RELI](#), [Wellspring Philanthropic Fund](#) is also in development of a "one-stop shop" of projects happening on the ground in various African countries. The EdTEch Hub, What Works in Global Education Hub, Schools 2030 and Education.org all noted the resources on their websites, including plans for searchable databases.. As Research Impact Canada (RAC) noted, "you don't want to bring the evidence upstream to policy makers, start the policy makers downstream *immersed in the evidence*, in co-production with communities or implementing partners." We note that many of these approaches are considered *soft reform* or *radical reform*, making use of already-existing systems, to improve or tweak them for better results.

In terms of evidence creation, we spoke about decentralized funding models with [Research Impact Canada](#) and UKRI, who acknowledged the need to rethink standard approaches. One partner suggested that education programs (especially those engaging in participatory or implementation research) try a few different small-scale funding modalities, and compare/contrast (they tried this with great success). They hypothesized that a program could fund communities directly asking them to contract the CSO, university or researcher partner, rather than fund the researcher/CSO and ask them to 'build linkages' with the community. This flips the accountability line, and allows for more control by the people on the ground. A

knowledge mobilization expert could be funded, for example, a teacher, or government embedded official to support this work.

In conversation with the [Gates Foundation](#), they are currently scoping an investment in implementation research that is meant to be an add-on to large existing programs. They are interested in supporting methodologies for collecting better data on learning outcomes, policy linking and integrating high quality test sets in national assessments. They want for these methodologies to be taken up by donors for every time there is an ADEA project, so that there is a data point from each country. The Gates team highlighted the value of technical assistance support (TA) as being strategic.

In terms of [USAID SHARE](#), the University of Notre Dame (UND) has a [cooperative agreement](#) with USAID to lead the SHARE program, providing them with substantial flexibility in delivery of the program objectives (which are in line with USAID's [5 R's of program delivery](#)). In the next six months, there are plans to bring in partners to develop a Year 3 work plan, to share challenges, positive experiences and agree forward-looking activities. The UND team is still undecided on format for partner engagement, and are open to suggestions or collaborations. For example, they may look at a hybrid-model of exchange, such as some zoom components, face-to-face in regional areas. There is scope for partners to engage now and support cross-over with these activities, especially given that the other on-going SHARE activity is the assessment of competencies, as well as a scoping of knowledge gaps in target countries.

In discussion with Times Higher Education, Phil Baty shared the data and metrics used for the [Impact Rankings 2022: partnerships for the \[SDG\] goals](#) database. They noted their Sustainable Development conference being held in Glasgow from 31 October - 2 November 2022. The theme of this year's conference is *Uniting higher education, governments, industry and society for a sustainable future*. The partner also noted that Times Higher Education has a sophisticated data analytics program, along with ranking capabilities, in addition to engaging in a variety of knowledge mobilization and exchange activities. They welcome further conversations, sharing additional resources in light of questions we ask about the push for higher education rankings with respect to colonial modernity (neoliberalism).

5. A Focus on Impact

“Commitment to learn from your activities, including successes and failures, so that you can increase your effectiveness in achieving your objectives.”

Beginning with the end in mind is one way to ensure that theories of change can be mapped, and that programs focus on specific interventions aligned with project goals. Programs need to be nimble and able to adapt, and this should be built into programs from the outset, alongside robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Knowledge exchange and mobilization experts recommend that programs related to innovation start out with explicit plans for failure. While it is impossible to know what can and will ‘go wrong’, failure is seen not as a mistake, but as an opportunity for growth, to course-correct, and to build deep relationships with partners, centred on trust and reciprocity.

When interviewing knowledge mobilization experts, as well as those leading evidence hubs, partners noted the importance of learning into ‘failures’, creating spaces for real discussion and reflection, rather than add-ons to existing programming. One example of this learning in research spaces is through the use of micro communities, which also build trouble-shooting and ‘failures workshops’ into regional and national events for partners. Micro communities are online spaces of less than thirty participants, with explicit goals and outputs/outcomes. For example, [Mighty Networks](#) hosts a variety of these communities. Research from the University of Michigan, through the [Positive Relationships at Work \(PRW\) Microcommunity](#)), highlights immense benefits in sense-making, trust-building and program outcomes through the use of micro communities in research and knowledge exchange. Additionally, the use of cohort-based models is shown as a productive way for partners on the ground to talk about ‘the good, the bad, the ugly, and the really ugly!’

One partner with strong in-country connections said *“through our small-scale programs, we have a wealth of knowledge about how things are working, how they’re REALLY working. The problem is that people are so often afraid to share. It would be wonderful [if we] could create safe spaces to share and give honest feedback, and to lift each other up when things get hard.”*

Through this feedback, we envisioned a space which includes more informal, light and fun activities. The [Ecoversities Alliance](#) runs incredible conferences and micro-conferences focussed

on relational engagement, connection to nature and fun/humour as creative outlets. Their events have ‘playgrounds’, and clowning activities’ to support people to laugh, feel relaxed and move from their ‘panic zone’ to ‘comfort zone’ to ‘stretch zone’⁶.

UKRI noted five knowledge-brokering practices that are critical for monitoring and evaluating success: build trust; develop capacity; co-construct knowledge; understand the political, social and economic context; and build culture⁷. We included resources called “[Guide of Guides](#)” from UKRI and Research Impact Canada which support organizations to assess their knowledge mobilization efforts, including: theories of change, infographics, social media, etc.

Our literature review found that “there is a proliferation of assessment-driven systems and their associated impact metrics, despite their sizeable and varied costs for researchers and institutions⁸, with few studies have looked elsewhere to approaches garnering success in mission-driven systems⁹”

EdTech Hub, PRIA and other evidence hub partners noted a challenge in growing networks and achieving success at scale. It seems growing large communities had the effect that “it is not always easy to adapt the practices of other members. As such, as a network of diverse institutions, it had become increasingly important that the sharing of “what works” was accompanied by an exposition of *why it worked* in a particular context¹⁰”. In order to build collective efficacy for impact, Research Impact Canada suggested focussing on people and institutions.

⁶ The “comfort-stretch-panic” model is often used to note that optimal learning happens when students are in the ‘comfort’ zone. For communities in ‘high-intensity struggles’, there are higher rates of stressors, which can negatively impact learning and engagement. See this [article](#) by Palethorpe and Wilson (2010).

⁷ Phipps, D.J., Brien, D., Echt, L., Kyei-Mensah, G. and Weyrauch, V. (2017, p. 189). Determinants of successful knowledge brokering: A transnational comparison of knowledge-intermediary organizations. *Research for All, 1 (1)*, 185–97. DOI 10.18546/RFA.01.1.15.

⁸ Williams, K., & Grant, J. (2018). A comparative review of how the policy and procedures to assess research impact evolved in Australia and the UK. *Research Evaluation, 27(2)*, 93–105. doi: 10.1093/reseval/rvx042

⁹ MacGregor, S., & Phipps, D. (2020). How a Networked Approach to Building Capacity in Knowledge Mobilization Supports Research Impact. *International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership 16(5)*. URL: <http://journals.sfu.ca/ijepl/index.php/ijepl/article/view/949>. doi: 10.22230/ijepl.2020v16n5a949

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 10.

Research Impact Canada shared a revised theory of change for these activities¹¹:

Figure 1a. Traditional Knowledge Mobilization Logic Model

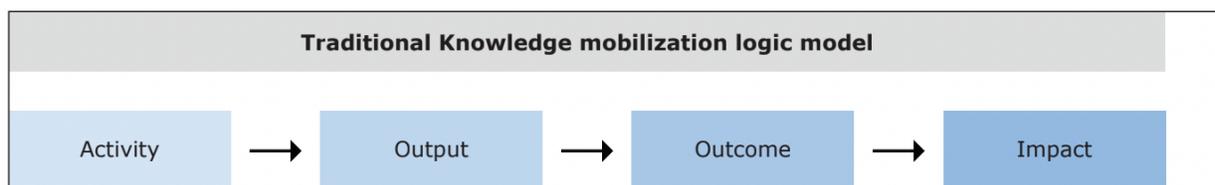
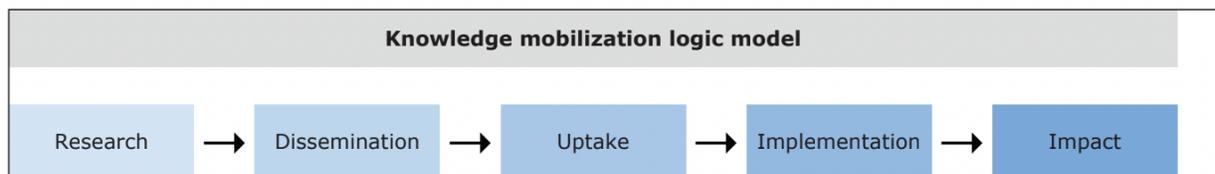


Figure 1b. Knowledge and Mobilization Logic Model

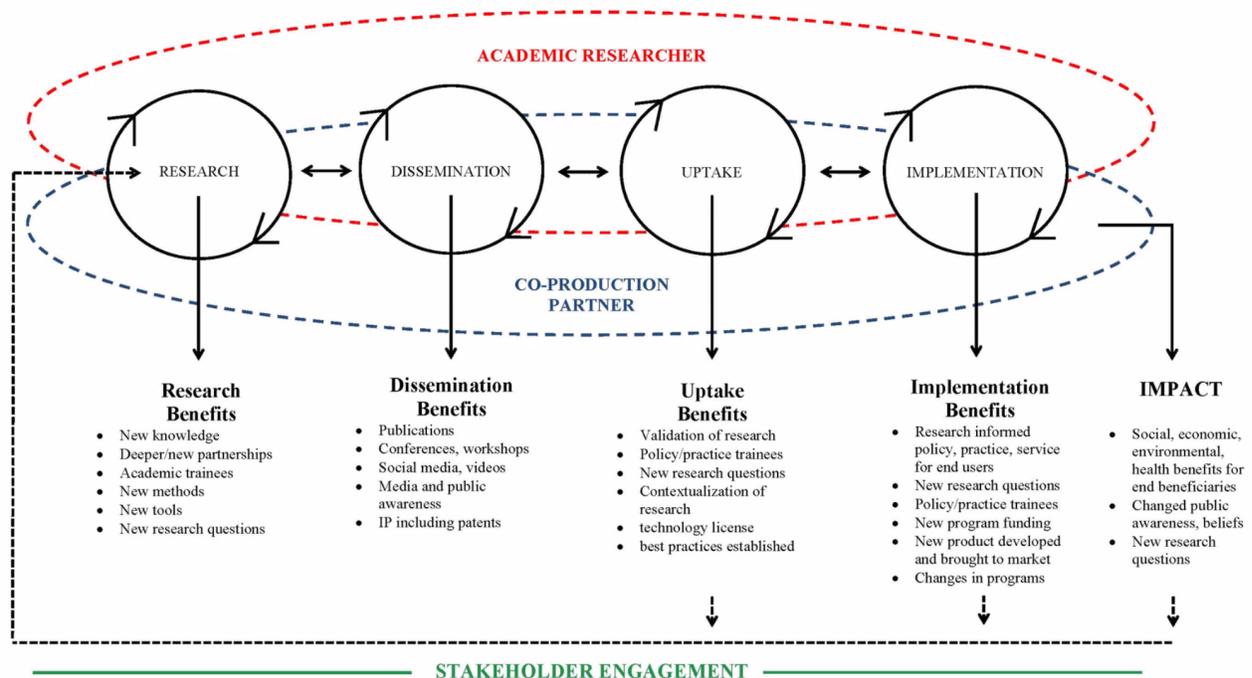


Common critiques around knowledge exchange for researchers in universities include “limited time for interactive mobilization efforts, adverse incentives for impact-related work, insufficient access to institutional resources, unrealistic expectations and work overload, scarce opportunities for professional support and development, and precarious working conditions for professional staff¹²”. [PRIA](#) recommended more participatory action-oriented research, especially with civil society organizations, and is willing to engage further on methods for partners to do this.

¹¹ Phipps, D., Cummings, J., Pepler, D., Craig, W., & Cardinal, S. (2016). [The co-produced pathway to impact describes knowledge mobilization processes](#). *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, 9(1), 31-40.

¹² MacGregor, S., Phipps, D. J., Malcolm Edwards, C., Kyffin, J., & Portes, V. (2022, p. 168). Institutionally embedded professionals’ perspectives on knowledge mobilization: Findings from a developmental evaluation. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* (1975), 51(3), 166-183. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.vi0.189103>

Below is a pathways to impact diagram which provides a visual guide of how partners are approaching co-production of knowledge with academia¹³.



On the topic of networks for engagement, we asked every partner how they would like to engage with each other going forward. Two partners noted they go to meetings, and find them “interesting”, but they simply don’t have time to engage regularly and take all of the learnings back. This is a real paradox of knowledge exchange and mobilization!

Another partner flagged the importance of what they termed “structural accretion” suggesting that organizations are focussing on introducing new knowledge mobilization activities “without either foregoing old ones or creating separate new institutional structures to support these functions...generat[ing] disruptive demands on well-established traditions and university operations, challenging each institution to reengineer itself to survive¹⁴”. Similarly to the EdTech Hub, Mastercard Foundation, the FCDO What Works in Global Education Hub (and others), they

¹³ Provided by David Phipps from Research Impact Canada. Phipps, D., Cummings, J., Pepler, D., Craig, W., & Cardinal, S. (2016). [The co-produced pathway to impact describes knowledge mobilization processes](#). *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, 9(1), 31-40.

¹⁴ Fischman, G. E., Anderson, K. T., Tefera, A. A., & Zuiker, S. J. (2018, p. 218). If mobilizing educational research is the answer, who can afford to ask the question? An analysis of faculty perspectives on knowledge mobilization for scholarship in education. *AERA Open*, 4(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858417750133>

are investing in professional capital to support the development of a systems perspective. Education.org noted that big conferences such as [UKFIET](#) and the [Education World Forum](#) (among others) are good places to engage, perhaps through discussion panels or other groups on knowledge mobilization and innovation exchange. The new [Forum for Education Research in/for/by Africa](#), with the first meeting held in April 2022, has objectives to address the barriers to local researchers to share among themselves in research.

On 7 September, Education.org formally launched [Accelerated Education Programs: an Evidence Synthesis for Policy Leaders](#), along with a high-level guidance note. Some of the findings focus on the challenges of engaging in education research for knowledge exchange. Structural constraints include a shortage in countries for applied educational research, and the fact that a lack of funding means that the research community is chasing and competing for funding. These global south institutions and researchers do not usually get to decide the research questions, but instead have to follow the topic decided by the funder. Findings in the report noted that partners on the ground don't always ask local researchers and communities what is important, funding their research priorities. There is also a barrier around intellectual property rights. Many researchers didn't feel they had the right to share their research if it wasn't formally published. They were scared about 'stealing', but were disappointed that their research went to funders, who never shared it further, especially publically. A couple of interviewees noted how trust has to be built over time to show that organizations supporting research in the global south will advocate for better ethical principles and intellectual property mechanisms.

Appendix 1 - Matrix Summary of Organizations and Initiatives Reviewed

The full matrix with hyperlinks can be viewed and downloaded [here](#). Please note this is a summary only and we recommend contacting organization leads directly for further details.

Initiative/ Organization	Contacts	Dates	Implementing Partner	Region/Country of Focus	Approaches/Services	Documents Reviewed	Other Info
Schools2030 Global Program by Aga Khan Foundation Budget: \$3.5M https://schools2030.org/	Dr. Bronwen Magrath (Global Program Manager) Bronwen.Magrath@akdn.org Andrew Cunningham (Global Lead, Education) andrew.cunningham@akdn.org	2020- 2030	Schools2030 will collaborate with 10 National Governments, 10 Local Research/ Design Partners in the Global South, 1,000 schools, 50,000 Teachers and 500,000 Learners.	Afghanistan, Brazil, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Portugal, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda.	Using the principles of human-centred design and focusing on the key transition years of ages 5, 10 and 15 years old, schools2030 supports teachers and students to design and implement education micro-innovations. The low-cost and scalable innovations will inform and transform education systems to improve holistic learning outcomes for the most marginalised learners worldwide.	2021 Annual Report Evaluation strategy Schools2030 Theory of Change Draft Kenya Learning Partner Report	Twitter: https://twitter.com/schools2030 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/schools2030/ LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/schools2030/
Education.org (Insights for Education)	Dr. Randa Grob-Zakhary-CEO randa@education.org	2019- 2023	The foundation is supported by a visionary co-investor collective and is growing partnerships across governments, agencies, NGOs, universities, businesses and foundations in Africa, Middle East, Europe, and North America.	Global	-Working to advance evidence and improve education for every learner. Its mission is to build resources for education leaders by synthesizing and translating an inclusive range of evidence, and to enable these resources to be used by those who make education happen by building bridges between knowledge actors, policymakers and practitioners. -Create global public goods and work at country-level with education leaders	-White paper executive summary -Insights for Education Annual Report -The post-covid recovery imperative -Accelerated Education Programs: An Evidence Synthesis for Policy Leaders	
FCDO EdTech Hub Budget: Directorate (20.3m) and Girls Education Department (£16m). https://edtechhub.org/	Molly Jamieson Eberhardt (Engagement Director) molly@edtechhub.org Susan Nicolai (Director,EdTech Hub)	2016- 2024 (cost extension to 2027)	EdTech Hub brings together experts from the following partner organisations: Brink, Jigsaw Consult, Open Development & Education (OpenDevEd), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Results for Development (R4D), and the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.	Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania	Research, Innovation (sandbox) and technical assistance (helpdesk) Recently established the programme's research portfolio of 13 primary research studies, to be delivered over the next two to three years in partnership with more than 20 institutions, including universities, non-profits, foundations, private enterprises, and governments.	Business Case Annual Review Website	

<p>FCDO What Works Hub for Global Education (WWGE) Budget: £55 million over eight years (with review and break points).</p>	<p>Kate Ross-Education Advisor kate.ross@fcdo.gov.uk</p>	<p>2021-2029</p>	<p>To be contracted for April 2023</p>	<p>Brazil, DRC, Ghana, Ecuador, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria(Edo State), Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda.</p>	<p>Improve the use of education evidence with a focus on foundational learning, by robustly summarising and communicating the best evidence in ways that governments and practitioners need and commissioning new research that responds to evidence gaps. Strengthen education and finance ministries' capability to identify the problem – the reasons that student learning outcomes are low – by bringing researchers, practitioners, and policymakers together to analyse the data and come to common evidence-based agreement on strategic priorities for investment. Embed a new approach to evidence in education, through technical support to governments to test and adapt cost effective reforms that work in practice to enable girls to read by age 10.</p>	<p>Business Case</p>	
<p>Global Education Program by The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation Budget: \$22M/Year Website</p>	<p>Clio Dintilhac Clio.Dintilhac@gatesfoundation.org</p>	<p>2018-2025</p>	<p>Center for Global Development, Central Square Foundation, EdTech hub, Population Council, Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Program, UNESCO, World Bank, Research Triangle institute.</p>	<p>3 States in India and 2-3 Countries in SSA</p>	<p>Data and evidence: They support efforts to improve the availability and quality of learning assessment data, to identify barriers to educational access and learning, and to conduct research on effective instructional practices, including the use and scaling up of educational technology.</p>	<p>Global Education Overview</p>	
<p>UNESCO-The Global Education Coalition Budget: Website</p>	<p>Mami Umayahara-Asst. Program Specialist in Education m.umayahara@unesco.org</p>	<p>From March 2020</p>	<p>Multiple Organizations (175 partners)</p>	<p>112 Countries</p>	<p>The coalition is operating in 112 countries, deploying large cross-country missions such as the Global Skills Academy, which aims to equip one million youth with employability skills and conducting large scale data collection and advocacy such as the Joint global survey on education response (UNESCO, United Nations children's Fund, World Bank, and the organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) GEC partners are contributing financial resources to support coalition actions e.g., consortium of UNESCO, UNICEF and the WB funded by a GPE grant.</p>	<p>Education Overview</p>	

<p>USAID SHARE Budget: \$25M core funding,\$15M buy-ins Website</p>	<p>Tom Purekal-Program Director tpurekal@nd.edu</p>	<p>2020- 2025</p>	<p>University of Notre Dame(UND)</p>	<p>Honduras, Haiti, Liberia, Senegal, Mozambique, Kenya, Philippines, Rwanda, Cambodia, Indonesia etc.</p>	<p>Focus on conducting research related to three of USAID's four learning agendas - 1) foundational skills; 2) education in crisis and conflict; and 3) higher education. You can find the specific research questions that we are working on and respective locations within the slides above. Approach is to carrying out this research involves analyzing the ecosystems related to research areas within each country to adapt our multi-country research designs to each country's context.</p>	<p>Business Case Annual and Quarterly Reports</p>	
<p>Wellspring Philanthropic Fund</p>	<p>Joyce Malombe-Interim Program Director jmalombe@wpfund.org</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>RELI</p>	<p>Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya</p>	<p>1) Transforming Organizations: Work together to transform organisations into high functioning vehicles of regional change. This is achieved by becoming self-learning organisations that learn and transform from our experiences. Guided by Monitoring Evaluation and Learning experts and the Well Made Strategy communications team. 2) Creating Evidence of What is Working: Believe in sharing learning with peers and the world to make sure that successes are repeated, rather than mistakes. We achieve this through focused learning events, webinars, videos and blogs. Our collective learning is shared with the wider educational community through a rich online learning environment. 3) Engaging Policy: We pursue collective policy engagement, seeking to influence policy in East Africa. We achieve this by generating evidence- based policy implications from our work, and collaborating with policy makers and influencers to achieve a brighter future for our region's children.</p>	<p>Documents are available here.</p>	

<p>Education Sub Saharan Africa (ESSA)</p>	<p>Lucy Heady-CEO Lucy@essa-africa.org</p>	<p>2021-2026</p>	<p>ESSA</p>	<p>Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia</p>	<p>Our work starts with harnessing the power of universities and colleges to transform Africa's future. Colleges, universities, and vocational courses build young people's skills for work and skills to be active citizens in their communities. Colleges and universities are hubs for knowledge, driving evidence, and solutions for transforming society. These institutions are the training ground for professionals, including teachers, education staff, and vital health workers.</p> <p>What we do Identify the biggest issues in tertiary education, driven by the needs of young people, educators, and employers. Build influential partnerships with organisations that want to improve education in Africa and beyond. Understand what data and evidence is needed for change. Turn data and evidence into action: finding practical solutions, maximising resources, and attracting investment. Harness the power of Africa's universities, colleges, and businesses to advocate solutions at scale. Improve education and increase work for young people in sub-Saharan Africa. Our work is aligned to Sustainable Development Goals: Quality Education and Decent Work, and the Africa Union Agenda 2063.</p> <p>Implementing Partner(s): Schools2030 will collaborate with 10 National Governments, 10 Local Research/ Design Partners in the Global South, 1,000 schools, 50,000 Teachers and 500,000 Learners. Through its annual dissemination of evidence at local, national and global forums, Schools2030 is estimated to indirectly reach 10 million learners and 2 million teachers.</p>	<p>2020/2021 Annual Report 2021-2026 5th Anniversary Report 2021-2026 Strategy Framework ESSA Impact Report ESSA Pitch Deck</p>	
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Appendix 2 - List of Persons Interviewed

No		Title	Organization	Initiative	Email	Documents Reviewed	Interviewed
1	Karen Mundy	Director	IIEP UNESCO	All	karen.mundy@gmail.com	N/A	Not Available
2	Clio Dintilhac	Senior Program Officer	Gates Foundation	Global Education Team (Initiative to be clarified)	Clio.Dintilhac@gatesfoundation.org	X	Whatsapp
3	Molly Jamieson Eberhardt	Engagement Director	EdTech Hub	EdTech Hub	molly@edtechhub.org	X	Zoom
4	Kate Ross	Education Advisor	What Works Hub for Global Education	FCDO	kate.ross@fcdo.gov.uk	X	Zoom
5	Andrew (Andy) Cunningham	Global Lead, Education	Aga Khan Foundation	(2030 Schools Initiative)	andrew.cunningham@akdn.org	X	Zoom
6	Liesbet Steer	Director	Education Commission	To be clarified	lsteer@educationcommission.org	On Leave	Emailed
7	Mami Umayahara	Assistant Programme Specialist in Education	UNESCO	Global Education Coalition	m.umayahara@unesco.org	On Leave	Emailed
8	Randa Grob-Zakhary	CEO	Education.org	Education.org	randa@education.org	X	Whatsapped Susan Grant-Lewis

9	Joyce Malombe	Interim Program Director	Wellspring Philanthropic Fund	RELI Schools2030	jmalombe@wpfund.org	X	Zoom
10	Lucy Heady	CEO	ESSA (Education Sub Saharan Africa)	All ESSA Activities	Lucy@essa-africa.org	X	Zoom
11	Tom Purekal	Program Director, SHARE	Uni ND (USAID SHARE)	SHARE	tpurekal@nd.edu	X	Zoom
12	Bronwen Magrath	Schools2030	Aga Khan	Aga Khan and Schools 2030	Bronwen.Magrath@akdn.org	X	Zoom
13	Kent McGuire	Program Director, Education	Hewlett Foundation	All	kMcGuire@hewlett.org	On Leave	On Leave
14	People Listed Here	Used website contact form	Community Economies	CERN Research Network	https://www.communityeconomies.org/index.php/about/ce-research-network-cern	No response	No response
15	Kennedy Mbeva	Founder	Africa Research and Impact Network	All	mbevaki@gmail.com	No response	No response
16	Frederick Masinde Walamwa	Education Specialist	African Development Bank	All	f.wamalwa@afdb.org	On Leave	On Leave
17	Rita Bissoonauth	Education Manager	African Union	All	r.bissoonauth@africa-union.org	On Leave	On Leave

18	Per Borjegen and Brajesh Panth	Education Division	Asian Development Bank	All	brajeshpanth@yahoo.com P.Borjegen@adb.org b.panth@adb.org	On Leave	On Leave
19	Rajesh Tandon	Founder & President	PRIA	All	rajesh.tandon@pria.org	X	Zoom
20	Dr. David Phipps	Director	Research Impact Canada	All	dhipps@yorku.ca	X	Zoom
21	Dr. Jen Gold	Research Director	UK Government What Works Hub (and UKRI-ESRC)	All	jen.gold@esrc.ukri.org	X	Zoom
22	Phil Baty	Chief Knowledge Officer	Times Higher Education	All	phil@timeshighereducation.com	X	Whatsapp
23	Jennifer Brennan	Head, Canada Programs	Mastercard Foundation	All	jbrennan@mastercardfdn.org	On Leave	On Leave
24	Josep Ibáñez	Professor, Universitat Pompeu Fabra	GUni	All	info@guninetwork.org j.vilalta@guninetwork.org	On Leave	On Leave
25	Amy Jo Dowd	Researcher for Scoping Study	Gates Foundation	Implementation Research	amyjodowd@gmail.com	X	Zoom