

Role of United Nations Population Fund in the Middle Level Income Countries

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Abstract

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is in the middle of revising its strategies and work practices to better fit the needs of the Middle Income Countries (MICs). UNFPA has developed a Strategic Plan for the period of 2014-2017 on UNFPA activities in MIC countries where it places knowledge transfer and knowledge brokering as one of its key roles. Nevertheless, there is an inconsistency between the proclaimed goals and internal strategies and policies of separate UNFPA offices specifically to knowledge brokering. This thesis develops a framework that UNFPA should adopt in order to carry play role of a knowledge broker. This framework is developed based on the reviews the theories behind knowledge brokering and knowledge transfer as well as evaluation of UNFPA's current practices. The framework contains key elements, capacities and functions of knowledge brokering and the assessment of how they fit into exiting UNFPA programme practices and staff profile at country and regional level

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List of Abbreviations

ECOSOC - General Assembly and Economic and Social Council
ICPD – International Conference on Population and Development
MDG – Millennium development goals
MIC - Middle income countries
ToR – Terms of References
UN – United Nations
UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Funds
UNOPS - United Nations Office for Project Services

Introduction

The topic of middle income countries has come up in global development agenda relatively recently and was caused by “a large shift of countries from low-income to middle-income and high-income categories for the past 20 years”. In addition to this, MICs have recovered well after financial crises and according to the forecast made by Weisbrot (2011) they continue their development with annual rates over 8 percent in 2013.

Due to this fact UN organizations started actively working on adapting its strategies and mechanisms to fit better the needs of the Middle Income Countries (MICs). There are several reasons for such focusing. Firstly, there is still a need to address poverty issues in MICs. Secondly, assistance to MICs can contribute to creation and maintenance of such global public goods including global health, controlling global drug trafficking, addressing climate change, improving world security and peace (Verbeke & Renard, 2011). Thirdly, the experience of assisting to MICs can serve as a best practice for Low Income Countries (LICs).

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is also working in increasing its emphasis on MICs. In particular, it has come up with UNFPA Strategy for MICs which main provisions are reflected in UNFPA Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. This Strategy identifies key UNFPA roles in their assistance to MICs. In particular, UNFPA’s role as knowledge broker is strongly emphasized. However, there is evidence that beside Strategy, UNFPA work practice and other internal documents do not elaborate on fulfilling of this role.

This thesis aims to elaborate a framework of the strategy that UNFPA should adopt in order to play the role of a knowledge broker. It is developed through review of existing literature on knowledge transfer and knowledge brokering (Chapter 2); it aimed to come up knowledge brokering definition, define key elements of knowledge brokering process, key capacities and possible functions (Chapter 3). It also includes assessment of how knowledge brokering process fit into exiting UNFPA programme

practices and whether country and regional office staff have capacities required for knowledge brokering. Finally the paper provides the set of recommendation that UNFPA should adopt/ implement in order to perform the role of knowledge broker.

1. UNFPA and UNFPA for middle income countries

1.1. UNFPA - brief history.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is the subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly. It is responsible for population and development issues, with emphases on reproductive health and gender equality within the United Nations (UN) system and based on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The Fund receives the overall policy guidance from the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); the reporting on administrative, financial and programme matters is done to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/ United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The Fund is managed by the Executive Director. UNFPA gets its budget from voluntary contributions of some 180 governments, private sector groups and individuals and operates in 126 countries (UNFPA, 2011).

In response to new aid environment, UN reform and the “need to be more focused, strategic and systematic” in achieving International Conference ICPD and MDG goals, UNFPA has undertaken two main changes in its operation. First, in September 2011 the Fund narrowed down its focus from the broader area of population and development, with three key thematic areas: reproductive health, population and development and gender – to the reproductive health with women and youth being the main target groups. These changes were reflected in UNFPA Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 which was revised in 2010 and extended till 2013. Second, the Fund has marked out middle income countries (MICs¹) among all countries it operates in as the special category that required revised strategies for Funds interventions.

¹ According to the WB, there are now 108 MICs (54 LMICs and 54 UMICs). Economies are divided according to 2011 GNI per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method. The groups are: low income, \$1,025 or less; lower middle income, \$1,026 - \$4,035; upper middle income, \$4,036 - \$12,475; and high income, \$12,476 or more. Despite the fact that the primary purpose of this categorisation is setting up criterion for eligibility for World Bank and other development

1.2. UN/ UNFPA and middle income countries

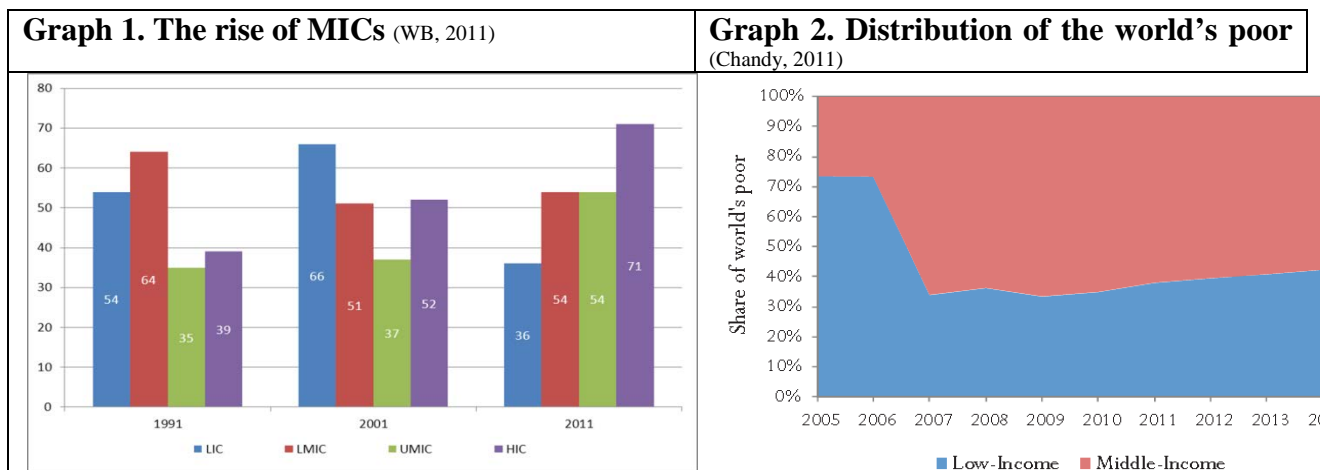
The topic of MICs has come up in global development agenda relatively recently and thus this type of countries has never been viewed as the one that require particular approach in development aid provision in UN in general and in UNFPA in particular. It was for the first times discussed at the first international conference on co-operation with MICs in Madrid in March 2007. Two other international conferences on middle-income countries took place in close succession in El Salvador and Windhoek in 2007-2008. All conferences emphasized the need for further support of MICs and revision of cooperation instruments and principles of development aid to fit it better countries needs and priorities and ensure their active participation in decision making process and promotion of international cooperation, including South-South (developing countries with developing countries), with emphasis on horizontal and triangular forms of cooperation. Thus, all development agencies should revise or elaborate new mechanisms of collaboration with MICs and continue supporting these countries. This support should be aimed at reinforcing countries' efforts aimed at development and poverty reduction.

There are the following arguments that explain why development agencies, including UN should provide further support and development assistance to MIC that came up at the mentioned above conferences and are named by other scholars: assistance to MICs: poverty reduction, global public goods and knowledge spill over effect.

1. Poverty reduction. The positive tendencies in MICs development are accompanied by negative ones. There was “a large shift of countries from low-income to middle-income and high-income categories for the last 20 years (Graph 1)”. In addition to this, MICs have recovered well after financial crises and according to the forecast made by Weisbrot (2011) they continue their development with annual rates

banks' lending, it is widely used by the donors to prioritise their development assistance and define development strategies (World Bank, 2012)

over 8 percent in 2013. Despite these positive tendencies, MICs are still a home for 72 percent (960 million people) of the world's poor, who live in extreme poverty (Graph 2) (UNFPA, 2013). This is a significant change from beginning of 1990th, when 93 per cent of poor people were living in low income countries (LICs) (Sumner, 2011).



2. *Global public goods.* MIC can to contribute to creation and maintenance of such global public goods as avoiding the spread of communicable diseases and HIV, control of drug trafficking, addressing climate change, improving world security and peace, or maintaining global financial stability (Verbeke & Renard, 2011). Nevertheless, to provide this contribution, MICs still need a subsidy in addressing “single issue” programmes. For instance, support of such programmes as HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment at country level will first help the country in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment and second, they will contribute to support of such public goods as other people's health within the country and in the world in general. Support of such climate saving programmes as reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases in MICs can spillover development: decrease of emission, facilitate improvement of living conditions, introduction of new technologies in MICs, since LIC are bordering with MIC this positive effect can be distributed/ have positive effect of their living conditions as well (Verbeke & Renard, 2011).

3. *Knowledge spillover effects.* MICs can be a bridge or channel of new knowledge and technologies, successful experience and practices to LICs (Verbeke & Renard, 2011). Taking into account that many countries just recently moved to the group of MICs from LICs and that many of them are bordering each other and thus have a lot similarities, knowledge and experience transfer and sharing can be more successful in comparison to transfer from developed countries into LIC.

UN response

Taking into account the rise of MICs issue and the fact that UN has never considered MICs as the category of countries required particular approach in development aid provision UN have come with arrange of documents that could serve as further guidance for UN agencies in their cooperation with MICs. The General Assembly by its Resolution 63/223 adopted at 63rd session in 2008 recognised, acknowledged, reconfirmed and invited UN to provide further support to MICs; by the resolution 64/228 in 2009 the General Assembly recognised that MICs still face “significant challenges in achieving their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals” and has requested the Secretary General to submit the report on cooperation with MICs. The respective report titled “Development cooperation with middle-income countries Report of the Secretary-General” (A/66/220) was prepared and presented at 66th session of the General Assembly in 2011. The 66th session resulted with adoption of a resolution (A/C.2/66/L.78) which reaffirmed UN support to MICs countries and need to develop “well-defined, coherent strategic framework” of UN cooperation with MICs.

To follow up to this resolution, the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of six UN organizations: UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund), UN-Women and WFP (World Food Programme) “Middle-income countries: The role and presence of the United Nations for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals” was held in 2012. The discussion was

built based on the Secretary General report and prepared specially for the meeting background paper on MICs. Although the discussion concluded that UN role in development of MIC still requires rethinking and the forms of its engagement should be redesigned in accordance with country specific context, the meeting participants came to the conclusion that the role of UN in MICs should be:

- monitoring and promotion of international agreements and inclusive development;
- assistance to MICs in development and implementation of social policies and strengthening institutions capacity;
- advocacy and upstream of policy dialogue, *broke and transfer knowledge*, build national capacity and consensus;
- facilitation of South-South and triangle partnership for knowledge and technologies – the shift in development paradigm from “donors” and “recipients” of developments assistances to partnership.

Each of participating agencies were supposed to consider/ make respective changes in their programme strategies and activities in MICs.

UNFPA response

UNFPA interest in revision of its programme approaches and development of new modalities towards MICs is explained by the composition of the countries the Fund is working in. Out 126 countries the Fund is currently working with, ninety belong to MIC group, and 66 percent of UNFPA financial assistance goes to this type of countries (UNFPA, 2010).

Taking this into account, UNFPA is currently actively involved in identifications of its role and modalities of operation in the MICs. Guided by UN resolutions and the Secretary General Report the

Fund developed the Strategy towards MICs in February 2010 and prepared in August 2011 the analytical review “UNFPA engagement in middle-income countries (MICs): status and new opportunities”. The main positions of these documents are integrated into Fund’s operation via their inclusion into UNFPA four year Strategic Plan. The draft UNFPA in MICs Strategic Plan for 2014-2017 has highlighted the following *key roles of UNFPA* in this group of countries:

- *Knowledge Transfer: Policy Advice and Technical Assistance.* The shift of countries from LICs group to MICs one is followed by the shift of their interests in development assistance. Currently MICs are more interested in “high-quality upstream policy advice and technical assistance” and knowledge transfer. UNFPA acknowledges the fact that Fund’s internal capacities might not be sufficient for providing advice and required knowledge. Taking this into account UNFPA, sees its role as a *broker* rather than a direct provider of knowledge and expertise with focus on national and institutional capacity building. Knowledge brokering should be done with focus on establishment network of experts who can be involved on contractual basis rather than permanent employment. The latter is expected to facilitate development and increase of the number of initiatives at national and sub-national levels through availability of models, best practices and lessons learned (UNFPA, 2009a).
- *Strengthening National Capacity.* UNFPA should continue empowerment of MICs to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. Particular emphasis should be made on improvement of institutional capacities to develop policies and strategies, establish partnership and support networking. UNFPA’s support and facilitation of MICs’ role as emerging donors and potential contributors to the South-South and triangular is Fund’s priority (UNFPA, 2009a)..

- *Consensus-Building, Brokerage, and Advocacy.* Taking into account that civil society due to its development is more powerful national actor in MICs than in LDC, UNFPA should make effort to empower this sector and facilitate its partnership with governments and involvement into policy development and implementation. In addition to civil society UNFPA should facilitate the partnership of governments with research and policy institutes, private sector and mass-media (UNFPA, 2009a)..
- *Co-facilitating Development of an UN-wide Policy Framework for MICs.* This role will allow UNFPA to participate and influence development process by stressing its comparative advantages (UNFPA, 2009a)..

It is clear that UNFPA sees knowledge transfer and knowledge brokering as one of the important roles of the Fund in MICs. However, internal strategies and policies do not elaborate on the following important components of this role of UNFPA:

- There is no clear definition of knowledge brokering and knowledge transfer and key elements of its process. The role of UNFPA as knowledge broker is not described and explained, it just mentioned in UNFPA Strategy towards MICs (UNFPA, 2010) and analytical reviews “UNFPA engagement in middle-income countries (MICs): status and new opportunities” (UNFPA, 2011).
- There is consistency in using terms of knowledge brokering: a) knowledge brokering is a part of partnership “the greater emphasis on partnerships implies that UNFPA will increasingly assume the role of a broker of both knowledge and financial and human resources” (UNFPA, 2013); b) knowledge brokering through the partnership (UNFPA, 2010).

- UNFPA as knowledge broker functions and capacities are not clearly defined. UNFPA Strategy towards MICs only mentions that to play the role of knowledge broker the Fund “should be complemented by strong environmental scanning, political dialogue and negotiation skill”, possess deep knowledge of the local context, major stakeholders and the process and dynamics of policy development “at the national, regional and global levels” (UNFPA, 2013).
- No assessment how the role of knowledge broker can fit into existing organisation structure of UNFPA country offices (CO).

Taking into account that UNFPA internal policies and guidelines do not elaborate on mentioned above aspects the present paper is interested to shape the framework of the strategy UNFPA should adopt to play the role of knowledge broker. To reach the aim the paper will elaborate on the following:

- a) definition of knowledge transfer and knowledge brokering;
- b) key elements of knowledge brokering process;
- c) functions and capacities the UNFPA should adopt to perform the role of knowledge broker at country and regional office level;
- d) what changes are required in UNFPA programme development and implementation process, country and regional office capacities.

assess how suggest knowledge brokering elements, functions and capacities fit into existing UNFPA programme development and implementation process and correspond to available capacity at country and regional office level

Methods

- to respond to the questions from “a” to “c” the paper will summarise, analyse and translate with implication for the UNFPA the literature on knowledge brokering and knowledge transfer;
- to respond to question “d” the summary of functions, elements and capacities required for knowledge brokering summarised based on the literature review will be compared with respective elements of a country and regional office from.

Country and regional office are selected among all UNFPA organisation structures due their direct involvement into programme formulation and implementation and work with stakeholders at national and regional.

Knowledge brokering is used in public sector relatively recently. Taking this into account most of scholars suggest that to feel exiting theoretical gap (results of knowledge brokering process are not defined, it is not clear what indicators should be used to measure its efficiency, there is no evidence that knowledge brokering will lead to evidence based decision making) in study knowledge brokering more direct observations should be carried (CHSRF 2003, Ward et al, 2009, Ziam, 2009). At the same time most of knowledge brokering activities in public sectors taking place in Canada in public health area. Therefore it is not feasible to carry out the trip to Canada and plan and carry out observation process within the framework of Master Thesis. Due to this, the paper does not bring any originality into theoretical discussion of the knowledge brokering. At the same time the paper closes the gap that exists in UNFPA internal policies and guidelines with regards to Fund role as knowledge broker.

2. History and theories of knowledge brokering

2.1. History of emergence

Initially, knowledge brokering emerged in late 1800s in Germany and was used to establish communication and build networks between industries and universities (Ziam, 2009), and since then it has been used as a part of knowledge management process (Ward et al, 2009). Knowledge brokering has been used to facilitate innovations and development of new products (Roth, 2003). In last decades knowledge brokering has been borrowed by to public sector as well.

In *public sector* the knowledge brokering is referred as the strategy to facilitate communication between researchers and end users and development of evidence-based decision making. The necessity to use knowledge brokering in public sector came up due to several reasons. *First*, decision makers and researchers are coming from different worlds and they speak different languages and sometimes do not have capacities to understand each other. Due to the language “barriers researches can spend ages to complete research and provide decision makers with answers they are requesting for (Mitton, Adair et al. 2007). *Second*, passive dissemination of research results among decision and policy makers has been acknowledged to be ineffective (Ward et al., 2009). The practice has demonstrated that strategies that involve interaction between two sides and involve policy makers into process of research result in higher degree of research outcomes application in policy development and implementation. Some scholars suggest that this interaction between researchers and users might be the most effective method in achieving evidence-based decision making (Kothari, 2005; Lomas, 2000). Knowledge brokers or intermediates can feel this gap in communication between two worlds: researchers and policy and decision makers by application “knowledge transfer, finding, assessing and interpreting evidence, facilitating interaction and identifying emerging research questions” (CHSRF 2003 report cited in Ward et al, 2009).

In *development aid* knowledge brokering is emerging with the shift from the concept of direct “north-south” (from developed countries to developing) knowledge transfer to facilitation of “south-south” (from developing to developing countries) partnership and cooperation and the need of entity to facilitate this process (Stiglitz, 1999). Stiglitz (1999) support this shift by the following claims: *first*, “best practices”, which were actively applied under “north-south” mode of development aid, can rarely be generalised and to be successful need to be adapted to local conditions. *Second*, practical knowledge is in most cases tactic knowledge and thus it should be transferred through twinning, training and brokering. *Third*, perception of policy-makers as passive recipients in recipient countries should be changed and development agencies should invest into their capacity building to develop and implement policies (Stiglitz, 1999). This theoretical background is very much in line with the arguments and new strategic directions of working with MICs mentioned in chapter 1.

Hereby the preconditions for emergence of knowledge brokering and its history gave the beginning of academic studies of the process of knowledge brokering.

2.2. Knowledge brokering and theoretical background

Knowledge, knowledge transfer and knowledge brokering

The Oxford (2013) dictionary gives the following definition of *knowledge*: “facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject”. Nonaka (1998) *classifies* knowledge into *tactic* and *explicit*. Explicit knowledge is easily expressed, codified and formalized and can be easily shared. In contrast, tactic knowledge is “not easily expressed, codified and formalized” and thus it is difficult to communicate or share it (Nonaka, 1998). Lind&Persborn (2000) distinguish two important *features* of knowledge: “*know how*” and “*know*

that”, the first means that people understand, know, can talk and act in respective situation; the latter means that people not only have understanding, knowledge, ability to talk and act, they know the process and can describe it.

The concept of “know how” and “know that” talks about *knowledge transfer* as the process of articulating of “know how” into “know that” (Lind&Persborn, 2000). Based on Nonaka’s classification of knowledge *knowledge transfer* what can be defined as process of articulation of tacit knowledge into explicit (Nonaka, 1998).

In both concepts (“know how” / “know that” and the concept of tacit and explicit knowledge) *knowledge transfer* reflects the communication between two entities: individuals or organizations that have a question and individuals or organizations that have an answer/ required knowledge (Figure 1). Due to lack of understanding between these two entities, there can be a large number of interactions before the one who needs an answer or required knowledge can actually get them. The literature (Lind&Persborn, 2000; Nonaka, 1998) names the following possible reasons of lack of understanding between questioner and knowledge resource: 1) the one that asks the question/ or searches for knowledge is not able to explain what type and in which context the knowledge is needed, or 2) the other side is not able to interpret and understand the question correctly, or 3) two sides have different level of background knowledge (pre-understanding) on the subject of the question.

These reasons of the length of interactions to get required answer give the possibility to identify four barriers that might influence success of knowledge transfer process (Lind&Persborn, 2000):

- Those who ask might misinterpret the problem and the context; this might lead to the situation when a question is not addressing the real problem.

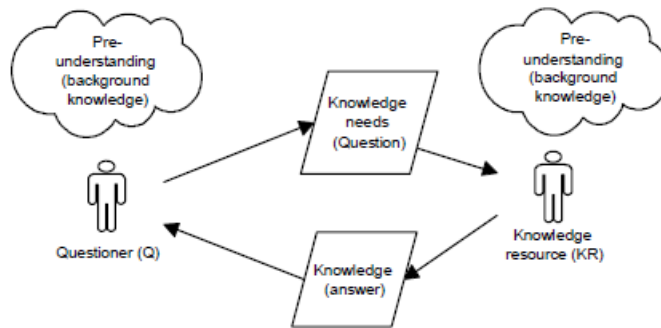


Figure1. Knowledge transfer through communication between two roles (Lind&Persborn, 2000).

- The knowledge holder might not have skills and capacity to interpret and convey the answer.
- Those who ask might not have enough capacity to understand, interpret and use the answer.

If any of above mentioned barriers take place, there will be a need in a lot of interactions between these two parties, some of these interactions should be personal, some “know-how” will not be so easy to transfer into “know-that” or some tactic knowledge will be not so easy or even impossible to articulate. Thus, the process of knowledge transfer to be successful requires existence an individual or organization that will make communication of these two parties possible and facilitate their understanding of each other. Scholars calls this entity “knowledge broker” and the process “knowledge brokering”.

Knowledge brokering – what?

Knowledge brokering is defined as “ encouraging researchers and decision makers to work together on developing research questions and finding the answers to them; creating resources ... to share information, ask questions, and find answers, or link up with the people who can provide them;

establishing dissemination processes; and encouraging the use of research-based evidence in running the healthcare system” (CHSRF, 2003).

Other literature is talking about *knowledge brokering as a part of knowledge management*, “where existing knowledge is captured, stored, and then shared under the direction of brokers for reuse and new applications” (CHSRF, 2003). In addition to this, knowledge brokers stimulate innovations in two ways: 1) by recombining existing ideas from different fields; 2) by connecting users and researchers at the early stage of the research, where users can communicate their needs and interests or problems to be solved and researchers can turn this into research questions of their studies Hargadon and Sutton (2000).

Thus *knowledge broker* is an individual, group of individuals, organisation or even countries who bring people together for mutual rather than individual benefits. Knowledge broker activities are aimed at facilitation of communication, access to and exchange of information and knowledge (Higgins, 2000). If the researcher is trying to reach the policy maker on his own, this is a *knowledge transfer* rather than knowledge brokering. At the same time, if the same researcher is trying to facilitate meetings of his/her colleagues with policy and decision makers, she/ he are acting as knowledge broker. There for knowledge brokers are the individuals or organisations who build between different entities the links that otherwise would not exist (CHSRF, 2003).

Theories of knowledge brokering

The review of theoretical background of knowledge transfer and knowledge brokering is very important in this paper as it will help to define main element of knowledge brokering process,

knowledge broker possible functions and capacities and will contribute into the closure of gap in UNFPA internal policies and guidelines on its role as knowledge broker.

The theoretical background of knowledge brokering is usually associated with the following concepts:

1) The theory of structural networks

- The theory of strong and weak ties

The theory of strong and weak ties emphasises the role of “intermediate links in the flow of information between individuals” (Hargadon, 2003; Ziam, 2009). Strong ties exist between relatives and friends, in while weak ones connect colleagues, neighbours. Strong links are usually less rich in flow of information due to their redundancy. At the same time, the weak ties can connect communities that otherwise would not be connected. In this case, these ties play a role of strategic information channels. *In this regard the role of knowledge broker is referred to stimulation and facilitation of these ties between actors* (Granovetter, 1983).

- The structural holes theory

Burt’s (1992) theory of structural holes is based on the idea that weak ties between individuals create discontinuity, which Burt calls “*structural holes*”. Burt argues that knowledge brokers by accessing the information from both sides will fill in these structural holes and allow knowledge transfer between internal and external to the organization knowledge (Burt, 2000, quoted by Pratim, 2007). Knowledge brokers are the individuals and organizations that connect disconnected entities, recombine and disseminate knowledge between them.

2) *The theories of knowledge transfer*

The theories of knowledge transfer emphasize the difficulties in communication and lack of understanding between researchers and users of the results of their work. Knowledge brokers can improve this communication by bringing these two groups together, this will result in better communication of users' research needs to researchers and higher level of research utilization by users. Huberman (1994) argues that knowledge brokers facilitate transfer "identifying, synthesizing and adapting knowledge for the potential users". Knowledge brokers also facilitate development and access to knowledge networks (Ziam, 2009).

3) *Knowledge brokering as a framework*

- *Knowledge management framework*

This framework and perception of knowledge brokering is close to private sector knowledge management and sees it as the process, consisting of the following dimensions (McLean, 1997):

- *Creating knowledge*: the process of new knowledge production.
- *Acquisition of knowledge*: the process of identification and acquisition of old and new knowledge.
- *Assimilation of knowledge*: integration of acquired knowledge into the total storage/ volume of individual or organizational knowledge.
- *Dissemination of knowledge*. Knowledge brings benefits to the society or individual only when applied
- *Use/application of knowledge*: perceives knowledge from two aspects: a) use knowledge for economic or social returns; b) generating new knowledge as a "worthwhile cultural activity" (McLean, 1997) despite the fact that knowledge is not immediately used.

It is acknowledged that dissemination of knowledge even active one does not always guarantee that knowledge/ outcomes of the research will be applied in decision making. At the same time Armstrong et al propose (2007) that knowledge brokers could improve this process by a structured dissemination that would consist of “trainings, workshops, professional development opportunities, communication through print and electronic media and personal, face-to-face contacts” (Armstrong et al, 2007).

The literature suggests that knowledge management model is the most deeply studied and understood aspect of knowledge brokering. It has appeared in response to problems of “navigating, managing and sharing” large volumes of research and other information (Ward et al., 2009). For instance, such company as Land Water Australia was using knowledge brokering to share and disseminate knowledge (Morley, 2006). Sin (2008) admits that knowledge brokering has been used to mitigate language and cultural barriers between researchers and decision makers by interpreting research and other knowledge into language understandable for decision and policy makers, thereby stimulating use of research outcomes and evidence based decision making. Knowledge brokering has been also used to stimulate new research by converting policy issues into specific research questions (CHSRF, 2003).

The knowledge system framework is quite broad and thus can bring about any activities related to knowledge brokering. Nevertheless, it is more concentrated on knowledge adaptation, dissemination and communication, as a response to a growing number of research and its lack of relevance to the decision making. This gives the ground for another analytical framework for discussion of knowledge brokering, the framework which is based on building relationship between decision makers and researchers. This framework is known as the transactional or linkages and exchange framework (Ward et al, 2009).

- *Transactional or linkages and exchange framework*

In transactional/ linkages or exchange framework knowledge brokering is concentrated on facilitation of communication and building links between those who creates and uses knowledge. In context, knowledge broker is the one who builds these links (McLean, 1997).

This framework focuses on the establishment of links between creators of knowledge (researchers) and their users (decision makers). A believe that involvement of decision makers into the research process is the best way to make research be used is in the core of this framework. Knowledge brokers, acting as intermediaries or linkage agents can ensure this by establishing and supporting networks, partnerships and collaboration for development of new research and application of their outcomes and exchange of knowledge (CHSRF, 2003; Ward et al, 2009). This framework can also be called as ‘matchmaking’ (Ward et al, 2009).

Even though this framework is quite widely used, Lomas (2007) admits that there are not many reports that can support its effectiveness in promotion partnership relationship between decision-makers and researchers. At the same time, the evidence confirms that involvement of policy makers at the early stages of the research has high chances to result with application of research outcomes in the policymaking process (Innvaer, 2002).

- *Social change or capacity building framework*

Finally, social change framework/ capacity building is aimed at increase of access to information and knowledge use by increasing access to and use of information by knowledge users, and this might lead

to a positive social change. In this case knowledge broker is perceived as capacities builder (Ward et al., 2009) and the model can also be called “capacity building”.

This framework is based on the perception that policy and decision makers experience lack of ability to interpret and use research results and recommendations. In this case the knowledge broker, to improve this capacity of decision and policy makers, can employ the following strategies:

- *Education* activities aimed at both policy and decision makers and researchers.

Education of policy and decision makers should be targeted at increase knowledge and skills on availability and use of online research basis; to improve analytical, interpretive skills, including skills of formulation policy questions and evidence based decision making, communication and knowledge transfer skills.

Education of researchers. The literature reviewed suggests that in practice knowledge brokers pay more attention to policy makers and left outside researchers (Ward et al, 2009). Thus, to increase effectiveness of capacity buildings activities, knowledge brokers should target their activities at researchers as well. These activities should be targeted at improvement researchers’ ability to transfer policy issues into research questions and carry out policy oriented research, improvement of communication, presentation and interpretive skills.

- *Ensuring accessibility* and skills improvement of policy makers to use information and compute technologies and software (McLean, 1997).
- *Involvement of mass-media* for the communication and dissemination results of research and raising policy issues existing in the country.

Despite the fact that capacity building activities are actively employed in knowledge brokering activities, there is lack of evidence and published reports with assessment of this model (Ward et al, 2009). Thus, Dobbins et al (2009) argue that application of this framework is very often supported by

anecdotal cases rather than by rigorous evaluations. They also suggest that this situation could be improved by the development and application of knowledge brokering and evaluation guidance. This will create possibility to evaluate capacity building activities in knowledge brokering process and will create evidence for its application or the ground for the model improvement. Nevertheless knowledge broker continue use this model capacity building to increase capacities of decision and policy makers to use results of research for policy development, implementation and assessment (Ward et al, 2009).

2.3. Knowledge brokering functions

The analysis of theoretical frameworks of knowledge brokering suggests that the organisation or individual who decide to be a knowledge broker can adopt the one of the following functions (Michael, 2009; Sin, 2008):

- **Informing.** This function includes increase access and dissemination results of research, transformation them into understandable to policymakers format. For instance: factsheets, policy briefs, research summaries, creation of web-resources and research data bases.
- **Linking.** Finding based on policy makers request expertise in particular area and experts linkages to policy makers.
- **Matchmaking** is close to linking, but in addition to this includes brining policy and decision makers together with researchers and experts and helping them to think about the issue more broadly and strategic. For instance holding working meetings, conferences, and open discussions. Knowledge broker performing this function should also assist policy makers in building partnership relationships between two sides: policy and decision makers and researchers. By performing this function knowledge broker should be careful with number of clients and thematic area it specialised in. Because the number of clients might be too big or too large and thematic areas too broad or too broad, all of these might lead to limitation of new sources of

knowledge. For instance, advisory meetings at the ministries, conferences and round tables, university internships in the government.

- ***Focused collaboration*** when knowledge broker facilitates and supports formal/ contractual relationship between decision maker and research to address/ on particular policy issue. For instance, contracting research group or institution to carry out research, support and facilitation of working groups, electronic knowledge networks.
- ***Strategic collaboration*** is a facilitation of further level of collaboration when all: policy and decision makers and researchers jointly negotiate problem and the possible to address it. For instance, memorandum of understanding/agreements between two sides with emphasis on equality of participating partners, communities of practice.
- ***Building sustainable institutions*** relates to building advanced level of collaboration when all policy and decision makers jointly discuss and articulate the policy issue to be resolved. It also focuses on by both parties. For instance, “co-management arrangements, local enterprise partnerships” (Michael, 2009), self-sustaining consortium.

Movement from “linking” function towards building sustainable institutions represents increase in knowledge brokering sustainability and efficiency (Sin, 2008).

In general the tasks/ functions of knowledge broker is to bring policy and decision maker together to exchange information and cooperate together, by helping them to understand each other needs and assist them in translation of policy issues into research questions, summarising and adopting research results, facilitate their application in policy development, implementation and evaluation. In addition to this knowledge brokering should stimulate innovation: appearance of new research in response to

emerging policy issues. In summary knowledge brokering activities should promote and lead to evidence based policy development (CHSRF, 2003).

At the same time knowledge brokering as any process has its challenges that might influence knowledge transfer efficiency and success. Thus the organisation or individual who decide to be a knowledge broker should be aware of them.

Challenges of knowledge brokering (Hargadon, 2003; Ziam, 2009).

- knowledge broker might distort either question or information, rather than supporting their clear formulation;
- knowledge broker is not able to find accurate and relevant source of knowledge, either does not very well researcher capacities and possibility to provide answer to policy and decision maker.

There are two explanation of this risk: either knowledge broker does not have information about existing researcher entities or its experience in finding expertise is not sufficient;

- knowledge broker acts as knowledge source and starts to compete with researcher;
- knowledge broker is not able to mediate discussion between decision makers and researchers;
- knowledge broker does not have enough resources either human or financial to facilitate the process of knowledge brokering.

3. Knowledge brokering, implication for UNFPA

Taking into account that UNFPA considers the main focus of its role as knowledge broker on building networks of experts, making best practices and lessons learnt available and increasing institutional capacities among all theories of knowledge brokering the Fund can use the combination of theory of structural networks, transactional or linkages and exchange framework, the theory of knowledge

management as background theories for the development its strategy of knowledge brokering. Because these view knowledge brokering as the process of establishment links between policy and decision makers and researchers and the role knowledge broker as the one who facilitates and assists both parties to establish links and networks.

At the same time UNFPA should consider one important issue. The history and theory of knowledge transfer suggests that knowledge brokering has emerged in response to lack of understanding between two sides: knowledge users and knowledge producers. Thus knowledge adaptation/ assimilation and development capacities of both decision makers (to communicate policy problems, be able understand research results and apply them in policy process) and researchers (formulate policy oriented research questions, carry out policy oriented research and communicate its results to decision makers in understandable manner) are the core element of knowledge transfer process and knowledge broker functions. Therefore, the Fund should also take into account the theory of knowledge transfer and framework of social change and capacity building as additional theories that the Fund should use to frame its knowledge brokering strategy.

To summarise, to develop the strategy of knowledge brokering UNFPA should use four main theories of knowledge brokering: theory of linkages, theory of knowledge transfer, theory of knowledge management and the theory of social change and capacity building. The review of these theories gives the possibility to define the following main elements of knowledge brokering process and come up with functions and capacities of UNFPA as knowledge broker.

3.1. Elements of knowledge brokering process

The process of knowledge brokering includes the following main elements (Ward et al, 2009):

- *Problem identification and articulation questions.* First, the process starts from *identification of problem*. To do so, knowledge broker attends the working meetings with decision makers and helps them with problem articulation. This process is followed by *problem reviewing, clarification and focusing*, identification knowledge needed.

- *Analyzing context.* As the problem does not exist on its own, the knowledge broker should analyse the context the decision maker is operating in. Characteristics of the organisation and the team / group of decision makers including professional identities should be taken into account in the knowledge transfer process (Dobbins et al, 2009). *At organisational level* it is important to assess: values the organisation is integrating into the research, existing infrastructure that can help knowledge transfer, including financial, human and others such as computer equipment, access to available research data bases, staff training and appraisal. Knowledge of existing constrains for operation, potential supporters and opponents are also essential for the knowledge transfer process and knowledge broker should be ready to address them including conducting formal negotiations/ meetings with both supporters and opponents. Last but not least knowledge broker should be aware of policy and decision making processes and style, existing policy opportunities (Stone et al, 2005, Ward et al, 2010). This stage should also contain articulation of decision makers pre-understanding possible solutions and context (Lind&Persborn, 2000). *At individual level* knowledge broker should pay attention to participants professional occupation in the organisation and length of their stay in it, available skills and competencies, “perceived decision-making authority; values; preferences and attitudes towards the use of research evidence in decision making; informational needs; and knowledge and skills related to” knowledge transfer (Dobbins et al, 2009).

Analysis of these factors is important as can have their influence in knowledge transfer process. For instance available skills, competencies and expertises within the organisation sets the level of possibilities of the organisation to understand and process the knowledge, professional identity might influence the type of information decision maker might request.

- *Locating knowledge.* Identification of potential sources of information that decision makers are interested in is an important element of knowledge brokering. It could be either results of existing research or existing research entities (organisations, networks, think tanks). In the first case knowledge broker will have to assess whether the existing knowledge is relevant, credible and can be used for the needs of policy makers. If yes, the knowledge broker should further proceed with adaptation of the information to make it understandable for decision makers (i.e. go the “knowledge interpretation and use” stage). (Ziam et al, 2009; Lind&Persborn, 2000) In the second case, if knowledge broker has adopted strong and weak ties, or linkage and exchange or capacity building model, knowledge brokering will have to build the infrastructure for the researcher and decision maker communication. In both cases knowledge broker should possess a good knowledge management system, to be able to monitor, track, file and store large volume of information and have quick access when needed. (Dobbins et al, 2009)
- *Creating infrastructure.* At this stage of the process, the knowledge broker should arrange the infrastructure to support and mediate discussion between researchers and decision makers. (Dobbins et al, 2009;Todorova, 2007). It is important that the infrastructure is designed and established based on decision maker view. At the same time, it is important that the infrastructure supports the other participants/stakeholders of the knowledge transfer process and balance the power distribution between them. It also essential to include both sides of the

knowledge transfer process into infrastructure development to make them accept and use it. Knowledge broker should also facilitate/ ensure establishment of win-win situation between itself and researcher to support cooperation. (Szulansk, 2000; Dobbin et al, 2009) It means that knowledge broker should not compete with researcher for knowledge provision and have clear role distribution between them. One infrastructure is arranged the knowledge broker can proceed to knowledge translation and exchange stage (Fiher, 2010).

- *Knowledge translation and exchange* element includes two aspects. First aspect relates to the general process such as “discussion and clarification” either of the knowledge acquired from available research or preparation of the research, discussion its programme and questions it suppose to answer and recommendations provide. The second aspect is about type of knowledge transfer activities that can be implemented to facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange. These activities can be information collecting, adaptation and dissemination or facilitation of linkages and intermediation, that allow decision makers and researchers either connect each other or meet and discuss (Ward et al, 2009) This stage should also include capacity building activities, which aimed, as it was discussed earlier at improvement capacities of both decision makers and researchers, so the first can articulate the problems, understand and interpret results of the results, the later can transfer policy problems into research question, carry out policy oriented research and interpret/ present the results in the language understandable to decision and policy makers (Lind&Persborn , 2000).
- *Knowledge use.* Applicability of received knowledge is the main issue in all knowledge transfer processes. The knowledge received might *be used* in three ways: *directly*, almost without any change or modification; *conceptually*, to influence on somebody’s opinion; or *politically*, to

support or challenge existing policies or programmes. (Lind&Persborn , 2000) The other issue is to ensure that knowledge is used in the future. To do so the knowledge broker should facilitate demand for research and respective supply, build the framework and facilitate partnership between decision makers and researchers to support policy makers access to required knowledge and information. At the very first stages the knowledge broker might participate in the meetings of policy makers and researchers, to facilitate discussion, ensure that both parties speak the same language and about the same issues and understand each other. (McLean, 1997, Hargadon, 1998) At this stage knowledge broker can also provide support or advice to decision makers on implementation of the research recommendations, their assessment and generating new questions for further research. For sustaining knowledge use the knowledge broke should also implement interventions aimed at improvement capacities of both researchers and policy and decision makers as it was mentioned above under social change and capacity building framework (Fisher, 2010).

3.2. UNFPA skills and capacities as knowledge broker

The literature studied suggests there is no fixed job description for a knowledge broker. The fact that there is still no comprehensive knowledge brokering guidelines and evaluation reports does not allow to come up with concrete job profile for knowledge broker (Hargadon, 2002; Detwiller, 1995). At the same time analysis of available literature and practical experience give the following core skills and capacities of knowledge broker, either individual or organisation.

There is also a warning in the literature reviewed, that there is no clear understanding of what should be the result of the knowledge brokering and how it should be evaluated.

Key skills and capacities of knowledge broker:

Reviewed theories, knowledge brokering process and functions give the ground to suggest that for the UNFPA to be a knowledge broker, it should possess the following capacities: absorptive, mediating, communication and networking. In addition to this the organisation should have knowledge learning and sharing stimulation culture and staff with respective knowledge and experience.

I. Absorptive capacity

Absorptive capacity is the capacity of the organisation to collect evidence. The components and determinants of the absorptive capacity are presented at the Figure 2. Absorptive capacity includes the following skills and capacities:

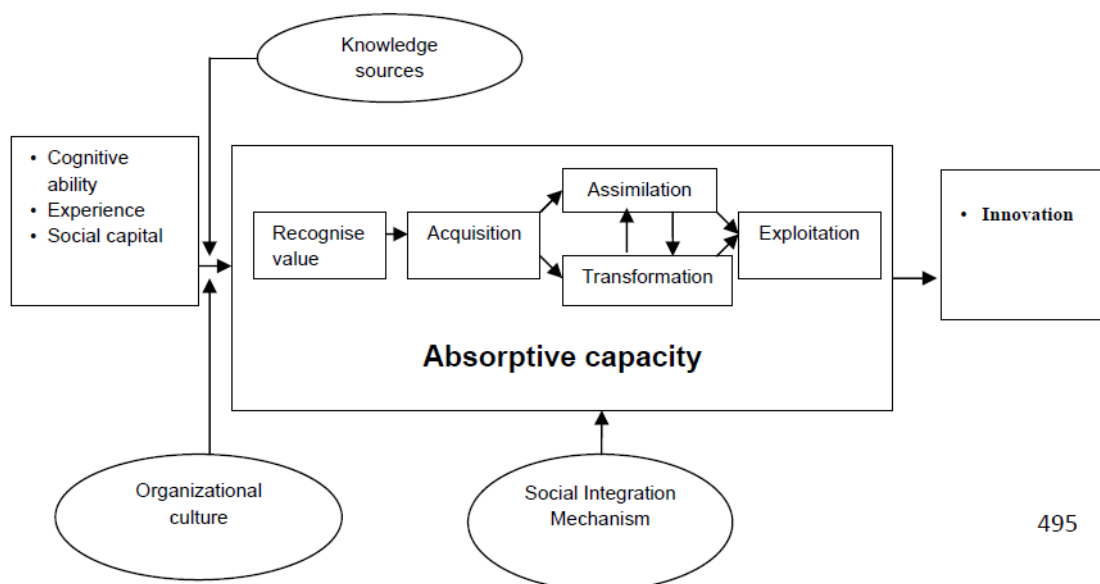
a. to identify, assess value of and acquire knowledge and information.

UNFPA should possess the capacities to systematically seek and track knowledge and information. Ability to assess knowledge value (carry out critical appraisal) is the next very important ability of the organization should have (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997) as at this stage the organization defines the information relevant to requests of policy and decision makers. Once knowledge is identified and assessed the Fund should be able to proceed with their acquisition. This means the organisation should have access to the available sources of this knowledge and have possibilities and rights for their use (McLean, 1997, Ziam et al, 2009).

b. Knowledge assimilation and transformation

UNFPA should be able to analyse, interpret, understand and clarify the information and knowledge acquired from external sources. In addition to this the organization should have understanding of general issues of research design and research results interpretation and application. The Fund should

also be able to adapt/ translate the knowledge to make them understandable for policy and



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Figure 2. The framework of the absorptive capacity of knowledge broker (Ziam et al, 2009)

decision makers (Zahra & George, 2002). Ability to transfer policy issues into research questions/problems.

c. Knowledge exploitation/ innovation

Taking in account the fact that need for knowledge can rarely be met by respective supply: either the problem arises when required knowledge are not available, or available knowledge come in the format that is not understandable for users Hargadon and Sutton, 1997. In this situation UNFPA should have the capacity to innovate knowledge, i.e. it should be able based on syntheses of exiting information and knowledge and awareness of exiting policy problems to 1) stimulate innovation/ new researchers that will help to address exiting problems, or 2) based on the analysis of potential/ projected policy issue to stimulate again the generation of required knowledge and recommendations. Monitor and indentify emerging policy issues for which research could come up with recommendations and advice.

UNFPA should have access to both external and internal sources of knowledge and information as this essential part of knowledge transfer process. Access to the large pool of external sources will provide the organization with extensive information and knowledge on the thematic areas the organization is working. In addition to this it will increase the Fund opportunity/ chances to find the knowledge it is looking for. Internal sources of information, especially their possibility to redistribute available information should be developed within the organization. To develop this capacity the organization should aim at increase of its capacity and availability of instruments to scan for knowledge (Ziam et al, 2009, Dobbins et al, 2009), increase of participation in research communities (Deeds, 2001) and collaborations and alliances (George et al., 2001).

Presence of social integration mechanism: knowledge sharing and exchange mechanisms can have a very positive influence on efficiency of absorptive capacity of UNFPA as knowledge broker. Because presence of a mechanism that stimulates knowledge exchange and sharing stimulates and increases knowledge absorption capacity of the organisation. Thus UNFPA should invest into development of absorption capacities of its staff as it will increase efficiency of all knowledge absorption process (Dobbins et al, 2009).

II. Communication and advocacy

To be knowledge broker UNFPA should possess excellent interpersonal, communication, diplomatic, listening and motivation skills and skills to be flexible (Dobbins et al, 2009, CHSRF, 2003). In addition to this, the organisation should have advocacy skills to promote evidence based decision making and new directions/ topics for the research. UNFPA should be able to develop and maintain trusting relationship with policy and decision makers

III. Mediation and facilitation

UNFPA should have capacity and authority to bring people together and facilitate their communication. The fund should also possess the capacity of facilitation of communication between researchers and policy and decision makers and be aware and have skills to manage the power dynamics between both sides and regulate its influence on the process of problem formulation, its transformation into research questions and development research recommendations. UNFPA should also possess the ability to engage all stakeholders into the process, be able their communication and and ensure/ provide the possibility that all voices are heard (Hargadon and Suttton, 1997).

IV. Networking: social capital

Capacity/ possibility to mediate and facilitate communication are based in great sense on the knowledge brokers' capacities to build and maintain social network. Capacity to develop and maintain partnership with "individuals, groups, organizations" (Hargadon and Suttton, 1997) is important for the extension and diversification of sources of knowledge and ideas. Particular emphasis should be made at development of the social capital of UNFPA, i.e. development of networking capacities of individual staff, as they make a great contribution into the development of the networks the organization can have (Szulanski, 2000; Jones, 2006). At the same time UNFPA should also pay effort not only at developing staff capacities to build new networks but to maintain the contacts and ties with their regular partners both among policy makers and researchers (Szulanski, 2000).

V. Knowledge and experience

UNFPA as knowledge broker should possess knowledge and ability to identify emerging policy issues that could be addressed with help of researchers (Dobbins et al, 2009). Understanding and knowledge of policy and decision making mechanism in UNFPA thematic areas is also essential for successful the

knowledge brokering. Analysis done by Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (2003) indicates that individual involved into knowledge brokering should have Master of Science degree and there is no need to have it in any particular field, at the same extensive knowledge of particular thematic area and tendencies in its development, facilitating and constrain factors are very important.

As it comes to experience, skills to help policy makers to apply research results in policy development monitoring and implementation experience in interpreting survey results broker are very important (Dobbins et al, 2009). Regarding the number of years of working experience as knowledge broker existing literature does not provide any empirical evidence to the fact that number of years spent as knowledge broker has influence on absorptive capacity of knowledge broker.

VI. Organisational culture

UNFPA should bolster development of organisational culture that will facilitate, promote and encourage knowledge exchange and sharing between its staff members. As if the organisation stimulates and encourages knowledge sharing and exchange, the knowledge its staff will use every opportunity to learn and acquire new knowledge and improve knowledge brokering skills (Hargadon, 1998).

3.3. Fitting/ integrating knowledge brokering into organisational structure and staff functional duties of UNFPA at national and regional level.

As it was mentioned in the Chapter 1 Country and regional office are selected among all UNFPA organisation structures due their direct involvement into programme formulation and implementation and work with stakeholders at national and regional.

To assess the possibility for UNFPA to be a knowledge broker on country and regional level the following aspects will be analysed:

- whether knowledge brokering process can fit into modality of programme development and implementation in UNFPA;
- whether UNFPA has capacities required for knowledge brokering at regional and country office level. To do so, the generic terms of references (ToRs) of programme staff and organisational culture, including knowledge management system, will be analysed against capacities defined in sub-chapter 3.2.

Knowledge brokering and UNFPA country programme

a) formulation process

The analysis of UNFPA country programme process formulation and implementation demonstrates that the process contains almost all elements of the knowledge brokering process. All UNFPA activities at country level are carried in the format of country programme, which is usually formulated by local Government in cooperation with UNFPA and presents five year strategic directions for UNFPA interventions in the country. The knowledge brokering process should include six main elements: problem identification, context analysis, locating knowledge, creating infrastructure, knowledge transfer, exchange and utilisation. The country programme formulation process has almost the same stages. For instance the process includes identification of countries' priorities and needs within the mandate of UNFPA, analysis of the context the programme to be implemented in, identification and allocation resources, including financial and human. Required knowledge and expertise is usually reflected in the annual working plans (AWP), which the mechanism for country

programme implementation. The AWP contains detailed activities, including description and identification of required expertise and knowledge and potential sources (UNFPA, 2012).

Nevertheless there is a serious contradiction between knowledge brokering process and requirement for country programme. Ant country programme document should contain concrete results of its activities, indicators to measure the progress and sources of information for this measurement. At the same time, as it was mentioned earlier there is no clear definition of what are the results of the knowledge brokering. This means that if the Fund would decide to measure results and effectiveness of performing its role of knowledge brokering it will not be able to do so. This will contradict UNFPA programme policy and guidelines that require each country programme to contains “robust results framework” (UNFPA, 2012), including clearly defined indicators and targets; planned monitoring and evaluated and results evaluation plan.

To summarise, the country programme formulation process can accommodate knowledge brokering as it contains almost the same elements. At the same time UNFPA should decide whether it wants to monitor and evaluate its activities as knowledge broker. This is caused by the fact that neither existing academic literature no analysis of available practices cannot provide the Fund with results of knowledge brokering and measurement of its efficiency.

Recommendation. To address this issue UNFPA has two possible options. *First*, UNFPA could invest into further detailed studies of knowledge brokering process to come up with clear description of the process, results, indicators, sources of information and monitoring and evaluation activities. *Second*, the Fund might consider revision of its country programme formulation and implementation guidelines

and allow country office to leave knowledge brokering activities without identification of results, monitoring and evaluation.

b) Implementation process

At the stage of country programme implementation both Regional and Country offices have some elements of knowledge brokering in their activities. For instance, ToR of both regional and country contains such elements as problem identification; both of them are responsible for monitoring the situation in UNFPA thematic area, analysis of main trends and identifying emerging policy issues at regional and country level respectively (UNFPA, 2007c,d). Regional office is responsible for monitoring research and availability of expertise in UNFPA thematic areas, including establishment and maintenance of consultant and research institutions roster and all this is a part of knowledge location element of knowledge brokering process. Both country and regional office should establish and maintenance of networks with experts, country office is also responsible for establishment partnership with national stakeholders including decision makers. Even though it's not directly mentioned, both country offices and regional office are providing possibilities for policy makers to communicate with each other and researchers, this is done through conducting working meetings and conferences at national and regional level and this the part of such element of knowledge brokering as creation of infrastructure. Both country and regional office are responsible for communication with consultants and research institutions before the conferences and meetings whether researchers and policymakers are taking part and this knowledge transfer and exchange element of knowledge brokering process. National institutions and policymakers capacity building, that among others include and evidence-based policy making, that guaranties knowledge use is also reflected (UNFPA, 2007 c,d.).

Despite the fact that many elements of knowledge brokering are present in country and regional ToRs, there is the set of some important elements that are not reflected. For instance such element as analysis and adaptation of available research and knowledge, creating, support and facilitation ties between decision and policy makers, facilitation involvement of researchers into the process of policy development, improvement capacities of researchers to carry out policy relevant research and skills to communicate its results to policy makers in the understandable to them language.

In summary, ToRs of both country and regional offices allow them to be a knowledge broker and contain main elements of the process. Those elements can be easily added into the document. At the same time there is one important aspect that should be mentioned. Knowledge brokering is one of many other processes the country and regional office is responsible for, for instance, country and regional programme general management, including development and review processes, advocacy and communication with UN partners and mass media, resources mobilisation. It should be also mentioned until now many country offices are carrying out capacity building and knowledge transfer activities at practical level, i.e. training medical doctors, teachers and young people rather than working with policy makers.

Recommendation: taking above said into account UNFPA should ensure it has enough of human and financial resources for performing all functions, including knowledge brokering, included into the ToRs for country and regional offices. If there is not enough resources the Fund should make a clear priority between its function. In addition to this the Fund should also decide upon the level of knowledge transfer process, either it is done at service delivery level (training health service providers, teachers, NGOs, etc) or at the level of policy making.

c) Staff capacities at Regional and Country office

Regional office

There are twenty three persons are working in the Regional Office. 12 of them, excluding Regional Director, Personal Assistant to Regional Director and Regional Team Coordinator are professional staff² who directly involved into implementation of the Regional Programme. The review of ToRs covered the section of functional duties, capacities, knowledge and experience required to take the position.

The review of the regional office staff ToRs shows that almost all capacities required for knowledge brokering are included (UNFPA, 2007, c&d). For instance, the ToRs contain such capacities as identification, assessment and acquisition of required technical knowledge and information, which the part of absorptive capacity. The next most common capacities required for occupation the programme position in the regional office and that is needed for performance of knowledge broker role are communication and partnership. All programme staff required to possess excellent communication skills and be able to build and maintain partnership with research communities. Knowledge and experience requirements for knowledge broker are also reflected in the ToRs of the regional office staff. All programme staff are required an advanced university degree in a very vast number of fields (literature does not contain no concrete field of education required to be a knowledge broker) and extensive working experience (beyond five-seven years depending on the position type) in particular thematic or technical area, such as gender, HIV, reproductive health, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

² Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, Resources Mobilisation Advisor, Programme technical advisor on RH/RR, Communication Advisor, Research Assistant, Consultant on Gender, HIV Advisor and Youth Programme Specialist (UNFPA global directory at UNFPA intranet, [www. myunfpa.org](http://www.myunfpa.org))

At the same time staff ToRs do not mention such essential for knowledge brokering process capacities as knowledge assimilation, translation, exploitation and innovation, mediation and networks development and management.

Country office

The number of professional staff, involved into programme implementation varies from 3 to 9 in the country offices of EECA region (UNFPA ICF, 2009). At the same time all of them have a generic ToR and differs by the thematic area the person is expected to work in. The only exclusion is ToR of Assistant Representative, who does overall coordination of country office and the programme.

The analysis of ToRs, the same sections as for the Regional Office staff, i.e. the section of functional duties, capacities, knowledge and experience required to take the position reveals that quite a few capacities required for knowledge brokering are presence at ToRs of country office staff. Those are communication capacity and ability to learn and share knowledge. All other capacities: knowledge assimilation, translation, exploitation, mediation, networking, knowledge use and exploitation are not included into the country office staff ToRs.

d) Organisational culture

UNFPA organisational culture pays high attention and effort into stimulation of knowledge exchange and sharing within the organisation. The Fund has its knowledge sharing Strategy developed in 2008. The Strategy has such important aspects as integration of knowledge sharing into activities of each country and regional office and ToRs of their staff. The Strategy also plans the development of technical support required for knowledge sharing. Currently the Fund has on-line repository for

uploading and submitting best practices and lessons learnt on its corporate intranet. The Strategy also foresees activities aimed at stimulation of development and maintenance of social networks, in particular between UNFPA staff. Online platform for communication between UNFPA staff that has been developed and is available at UNFPA intranet to ensure this process. To stimulate knowledge sharing activities within the organisation the Fund conducts contest for the best practices, which are assessed, published and distributed at all major UNFPA events and meetings, they are also available on UNFPA corporate web-site under thematic sections. Programme staff is responsible for self learning and acquiring new knowledge. Capacity of self-learning is included into the ToRs of all programme staff of UNFPA. In addition to this the Fund provides access to many electronic analytical and research data basis and magazines.

However, despite supportive organisational culture and availability of technical possibilities to share knowledge, UNFPA staff is quite passive in exploitation of these resources. For instance, out of 8 thematic groups for sharing best practices at UNFPA intranet only 6 are active. Among them, the latest update available belongs to the on Humanitarian Response and was done in 2010, at the same time for such groups as Reproductive health and Gender; the latest updated was done in 2006. Even though there is an access to wide range of research data base and magazines on UNFPA intranet, it does not provide the summaries of the latest one and most valuable for UNFPA, there is no assessment of its implication either for thematic areas the Fund is operating in neither for its business and operation process.

In general, the staff at regional level has more capacities to carry out knowledge transfer and be knowledge brokers, rather than staff in country offices. The only capacities that staff in regional office is missing is capacities of knowledge assimilation, translation, exploitation and innovation, mediation

and networks development and management. Staff profile at country offices is lack of many capacities required for knowledge brokering, capacity and ability to learn and share knowledge are the only ones included into the ToRs.

Recommendation. To carry out knowledge brokering UNFPA should review ToRs of its staff at regional and country office levels and include the capacities that are currently missing.

Recommendations.

The purpose of this paper was to develop a preliminary framework of the strategy for UNFPA in order to be able to fulfil the role of a knowledge broker. The review of the existing literature on knowledge and transfer showed the gaps which are missing in the work practice and internal documents of UNFPA.

As a result following recommendations were developed for consideration of UNFPA.

1. *UNFPA should perceive knowledge brokering* as “encouraging researchers and decision makers to work together on developing research questions and finding the answers to them; creating resources ... to share information, ask questions, and find answers, or link up with the people who can provide them; establishing dissemination processes; and encouraging the use of research-based evidence in running the healthcare system” (CHSRF, 2003).
2. The knowledge brokering process in UNFPA should contain the following main elements: problem definition, analysis of context the policy makers operates in both at organisation and individual level , knowledge location and adaptation, creating infrastructure for knowledge transfer, carrying out knowledge translation and facilitation of knowledge use. The process should also includes capacities building activities for both policy makers and researchers. The first should be able formulate policy questions and communicate them to researchers and be able to interpret research results. The latter carry out policy oriented research and communicate results to policy makers.
3. As a knowledge broker organization UNFPA should possess following skills and capacities:
 - **Absorptive capacity:** UNFPA should have an access to information and should have the capacity to properly search for knowledge and information. It should possess the ability to analytically approach information and knowledge and transform into meaningful policy

proposals (Zahra & George, 2002) and/or research questions. In case when required information or knowledge is absent, UNFPA should be able to research and generate knowledge.

- **Communication and advocacy:** As a knowledge broker UNFPA should maintain excellent relations with knowledge producers and knowledge users. It should be able to promote decision making based on analytical evidence and to identify gaps in knowledge and information.
- **Mediation and facilitation:** UNFPA should be able to mediate and promote discussion between various stakeholders, in particular between knowledge producers and knowledge users.
- **Networking/social capital:** UNFPA should be able to promote to the development of social capital both internally within the organization network and externally at the level of its external partnerships.
- **Knowledge and experience:** UNFPA should itself be able to serve as a source of knowledge and experience to be able to work with various policy issues. It is key that its staff will have necessary knowledge and experience to understand on going developments in UNFPA thematic areas.
- **Organisational culture:** UNFPA itself should be a knowledge-friendly organization open and conducive for knowledge generation and exchange between its staff.

For successful implementation of knowledge brokerage role at various stages of program work following is recommended for UNFPA:

- It is revealed that country program formulation process contains elements of knowledge brokering, however lacks the ability to evaluate its activities as a knowledge broker for advancing self learning process. There are two available options for addressing this problem: one is it to adequately incorporate knowledge brokering process with appropriate measurement tools; another option is to remove the need to determine results, monitoring

and evaluation of knowledge brokerage in its country programme formulation and implementation guidelines, at the same time leaving knowledge brokerage role in place.

- At the stage of program implementation, TORs of staff at country and regional office levels contain knowledge broker elements. However, UNFPA staff are overwhelmed with performing variety of other functions. It is recommended, that UNFPA should possess sufficient human and financial resourcing for carrying out all functions. Alternatively, UNFPA should clearly prioritize functions. At the same time, UNFPA should decide the level at which knowledge transfer should be carried out, either at the grass root or at the policy making levels.

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The preliminary look at capacity of UNFPA staff based on the review of TORs at Regional has showed that in general they do contain all essential elements of knowledge brokering. However, they lack the requirements on such important components as knowledge assimilation, translation, exploitation and innovation, mediation and networks development and management. The TORs of staff at the Country Office level contain fewer elements required for knowledge brokerage. Thus, overall it has been determined that staff at Regional Office has more capacity to carry out knowledge brokerage and knowledge transfer functions. The general recommendation is that UNFPA should carry out evaluation of staff TORs and fill out gaps in terms of missing duties and requirements necessary for organization to serve as a knowledge broker.

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