



Institute for Culture and Society
Summer Scholarship Research Program 2020
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Project 114: The dark sides of knowledge translation

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Project description

Knowledge translation represents an avenue to address the oft-cited chasm between what should happen and what does happen¹. Although variously defined, knowledge translation encompasses myriad processes through which different knowledge's coalesce to inform practice. As such, it is more than the mere use of empirical results or clinical guidelines – it involves the amalgam of these with other knowledge's, including (but are not limited to): the experiential wisdom and preferences of a patient and their family members; cultural norms; clinician expertise; the managerial and leadership prowess of their superiors; as well as the knowledge embedded within local networks – be they clinical or familial^{2,3}.

Knowledge translation is often lauded as an aspiration to work towards⁴⁻¹⁴. It challenges, if not contests stability, homogeneity, and our comfort zones because it diversifies and democratises voices and knowledge's. Rather than award primacy, or indeed sole attention to knowledge borne from research, knowledge translation recognises experiential wisdom, practitioner expertise, managerial prowess, leadership styles, and cultural competencies (*sensu lato*), among others.

However, all that glitters might not be gold. Reflecting on this adage, this project considers the dark sides of knowledge translation. Following a critique of knowledge translation scholarship, the dark sides are considered with reference to the experiences of those who have been tainted by their knowledge translation pursuits. Specifically, academics, clinicians, managers, patients, and carers will be invited to share stories of woe, where their knowledge translation practices were associated with negative effects. The purpose of this project is not to demote the importance of knowledge translation – but rather, to advance it, in a better-informed way. Only by considering the dark sides of knowledge translation can they be identified, managed, and potentially moderated, if not averted. This might involve addressing injustices and supporting those who are vulnerable to these dark sides.

Furthermore, this project aligns with the Western Sydney University [Research and Innovation Plan \(2018 - 2020\)](#).

Project Aims

The aim of this project is to clarify the dark sides of knowledge translation and how they might be managed, and potentially moderated, if not averted. This will be achieved by addressing the following objectives:

1. Conduct a scoping review of extant literature and critique this literature to clarify the dark sides of knowledge translation, the associated effects, as well as management strategies, and/or
2. Collect and analyse participant narratives re these lines of inquiry, pending clearance from the relevant WSU Committee
3. Report on the findings for the purpose of a manuscript for a refereed academic journal

Project Methods

The supervisory team, including the student, will complete the following:

- For the purpose of the scoping review:
 - Develop, pilot-test, and deploy search strategies tailored for relevant academic databases
 - Determine the inclusion criteria
 - Develop an extraction tool to aid the analysis of pertinent content from the identified publications
- For the purpose of the narrative research (pending clearance from the relevant WSU Committee):
 - Recruit participants
 - Collect the narratives

The student will complete the following:

- For the purpose of the scoping review:
 - Cull the identified publications
 - Extract pertinent content from the identified publications
 - Contribute to a manuscript for a refereed academic journal
- For the purpose of the narrative research (pending clearance from the relevant WSU Committee):
 - Analyse the narratives
 - Report on the associated findings

Opportunity for Skill Development

Supported by the supervisory team, the student is expected to develop the following skills through the course of this project:

- Superior analytical skills to conduct a systematic review
- Improved writing skills to report on research findings for an academic audience

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

- Is in their final-year of an undergraduate degree
- Is studying, has studied, or has an interest in the discipline(s) of: management, sociology, psychology, the humanities, cultural studies, nursing, allied healthcare, medicine, health and/or social policy, social science, and/or health science
- Has excellent communication skills and confidence in their basic writing skills

Project 115: State of the World's Children: Companion Reports

Supervisor(s): Amanda Third - a.third@westernsydney.edu.au
Principal Supervisor

Girish Lala - G.Lala@westernsydney.edu.au
Second Supervisor

Project description

Between May 2019 and February 2020, a multi-disciplinary team in the Young and Resilient Research Centre designed and oversaw qualitative data gathering workshops in 18 countries around the world to collect data for UNICEF's flagship annual report, the State of the World's Children 2019: Children, Food and Nutrition (<https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-of-worlds-children-2019>).

Separate, creative and participatory workshops were held with two different cohorts of participants around the world – adolescents and recent mothers. Workshops involved participants working individually or in small groups to complete activities like drawing, mapping and storytelling. These activities were designed to explore adolescents' and mothers' perceptions and experiences of food and nutrition in participants' everyday lives. Conclusions from a preliminary analysis of the data appeared in UNICEF's flagship SOWC 2019 report. Two further companion reports that analyse this data set in more detail are nearing completion.

This student project involves producing brief (e.g., 4-6 page) summary reports for each of the participating countries. The students will be guided closely by the supervisors, and will have opportunity to work closely with the rest of the research team. The students will draw from the original, large data set to populate and, where necessary, tailor an existing country report template with relevant data to illustrate the key findings. The students may be asked to undertake additional qualitative (e.g., thematic) and quantitative (e.g., descriptive statistics) analysis to identify key country-specific findings for inclusion in country reports. If this is necessary, the student will collaborate closely with supervisors.

All country reports will follow the same general format. Students will work with an existing research centre report template, and will also be able to draw on previous similar reports (e.g., the 2019 State of the World's Children report and the Companion Reports; and those from a very similar 2017 SOWC project) for guidance. While some self-directed work will be expected and encouraged, supervisors will be readily available and will guide and support the student to undertake this very important piece of research to inform policy and programming work in countries around the world. Students will be listed as report co-authors. Individual country reports will be distributed to and used by relevant UNICEF country offices to guide in-country policy and programming.

Project Aims

Working closely with supervisors:

- Identify country specific data from existing large data set of international participants
- Populate an existing report template with relevant data and, where necessary, tailor the template to reflect country-specific findings
- Where required, undertake additional qualitative/quantitative data analysis (under close direction of supervisors)
- Summarise global and country specific analyses in individual reports (18 countries)

Project Methods

Data collection for this project has already been undertaken. Student will be involved in analysing and summarising existing data and reports. Student will:

- Have the opportunity to work with a large data set of (primarily) qualitative data on an important topic that impacts adolescents' and mothers' around the world
- Learn online data management techniques
- Be exposed to techniques for navigating ethical issues relevant to working cross-culturally and with potentially vulnerable participants
- Gain exposure to research where outcomes have clear international policy and programming application
- Learn about and undertake mixed-methods analyses
- Potentially be invited to take-part in meetings with and present research findings to international partners (UNICEF)

Opportunity for Skill Development

The student will:

- Learn techniques for coding, managing and analysing a large data set of primarily qualitative data
- Learn about and undertake mixed-methods analyses (including understanding the strengths and limitations of mixed methods research)
- Learn about the ethical issues relevant to working cross-culturally and with potentially vulnerable participants
- Have opportunity to learn how to position research insights to effectively influence global policy making and programming
- Learn how to write effective reports and communicate the findings of research in a wide variety of settings.
- Participate in and learn about strategies for effective international partner engagement (UNICEF)
- Experience working in a highly collaborative, fun and engaging research environment that is focused on building wellbeing outcomes for young people

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

- Good organisational and time management skills and ability to manage diverse information and materials
- Good Word and Excel skills (confident with document formatting, confident with entering/importing and manipulating mid-sized data sets in excel, e.g., 20 columns x 400 rows)
- Basic knowledge of descriptive statistics useful but not essential
- Basic knowledge of SPSS useful but not essential
- Basic knowledge of qualitative analysis techniques (e.g., thematic analysis) useful but not essential
- Supervisors encourage collaborative work and student will have opportunities to contribute views and ideas; ability to communicate and work in a team will enhance student experience
- An interest or expertise in adolescent and/or maternal health is recommended!