

# Qatar Shelter Initiative: Knowledge Management Review FULL Presentation

This work carried out for the **Qatar Foundation**.

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# Executive summary

- Knowledge management can enable effective working
- However it needs to be grounded in the realities of the local context
- The knowledge lifecycle is discontinuous and fragmented across a plethora of organisations and actors
- To understand the gaps it is important to understand the needs
- The knowledge base is wide, taking many forms from many sources
- Knowledge creation occurs in the field and is a relatively natural process through the implementation of projects and programmes

Continued...

# Executive summary

- However knowledge is not captured or retained, dispersing with the practitioners at the end of the assignment
- Strong interpersonal create a level of trust is built and forums are seen as a safe environment to synthesise learning – but within a small cadre of people
- Organisations are much less willing to share evaluations/lessons from unsuccessful programmes
- Knowledge management practices within the sector are influenced by the behavioural dynamics of the key actors, especially those driven by funding constraints
- There are many knowledge and information dissemination channels available - but difficult to find what is needed

# Knowledge needs

*“The expertise is there but people often don’t know what they don’t know”.*

*“There are a lot of non experts (or ‘experts’) involved in shelter projects. They don’t know what they need to know because they are basing projects on their own specific set of skills which may not be shelter related”.*

*“We don’t know what we want”.*

# Knowledge needs

Role	Stakeholder Group	Knowledge needs
<b>Strategists</b> Funding Policy Coordination Leadership	Donor (also Implementers)	Information on capacity and experience of implementing organisations.
		Updates on program and progress.
		Understanding of shelter programs and their complex processes.
		Information on why the sector is important.
		Information on what other donors are funding.
		Information on the needs of beneficiaries.
	RCRC, UN Agencies and INGO's (also Supporters and Implementers)	Information on cluster members.(for cluster leads IFRC and UNHCR)
		Context specific information (e.g. local government set ups, connections, environmental, social, economic and political data).
		Information on their own programs globally, (e.g. if their programs are successful, capacity of teams, etc).
		What works well and doesn't work well.
		Information on other sector responses (WASH, logistics etc)
		Design specific information: technical shelter data
		Information on current issues in the sector, policy and program development.

Continued...

# Knowledge needs

Role	Stakeholder Group	Knowledge needs
Implementers Enable Provide	Local RCRC and Local UN Agencies and Local INGOs (also Supporters)	Shelter specific information (technical and other). Humanitarian context information: how to operate within a disaster situation (depends on INGO mandate) Who is doing what, where.
	Local NGO's (also Supporters) (as above in Local RCRC /local UN Agencies and local INGOs and the additional following points)	How best can they use their local knowledge in the delivery of projects Who are the key actors to link up with

Continued...

# Knowledge needs

<b>Role</b>	<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Knowledge needs</b>
<b>Supporters</b> Research Training/Education Network Dissemination Services/material support	Private sector (also Implementers and Hosts)	What are the needs and where can their capability deliver the most benefit How do they fit it What is an appropriate financing model
	Universities/ Training (also Hosts)	Shelter specific knowledge and development/humanitarian specific knowledge.
		Sector trends, program thinking and policy.
	Network/Research (also Strategists)	Understanding of the roles, relationships and connections of organisations. Current issues affecting the sector.
Media		Sector progress, issues and program thinking.

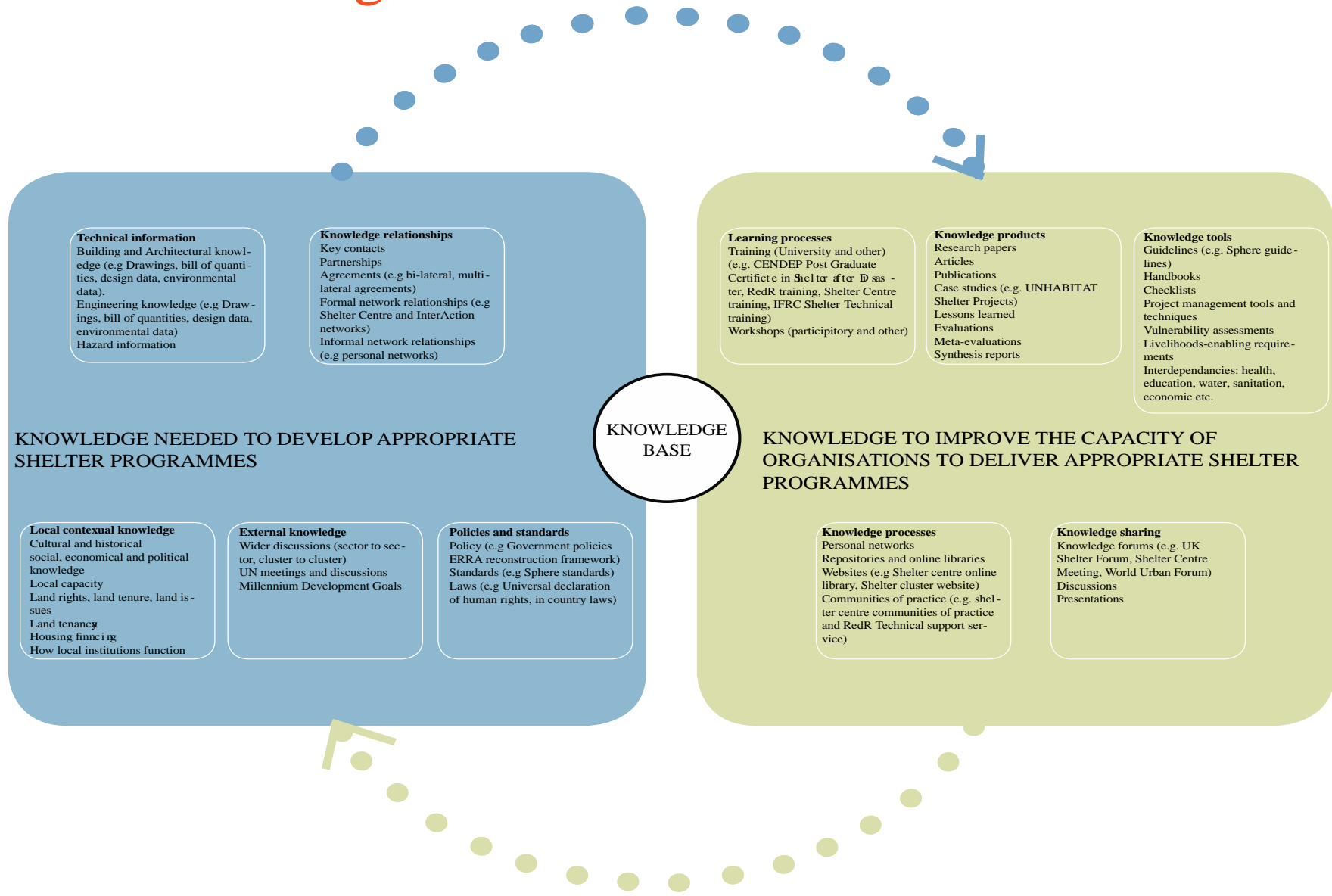
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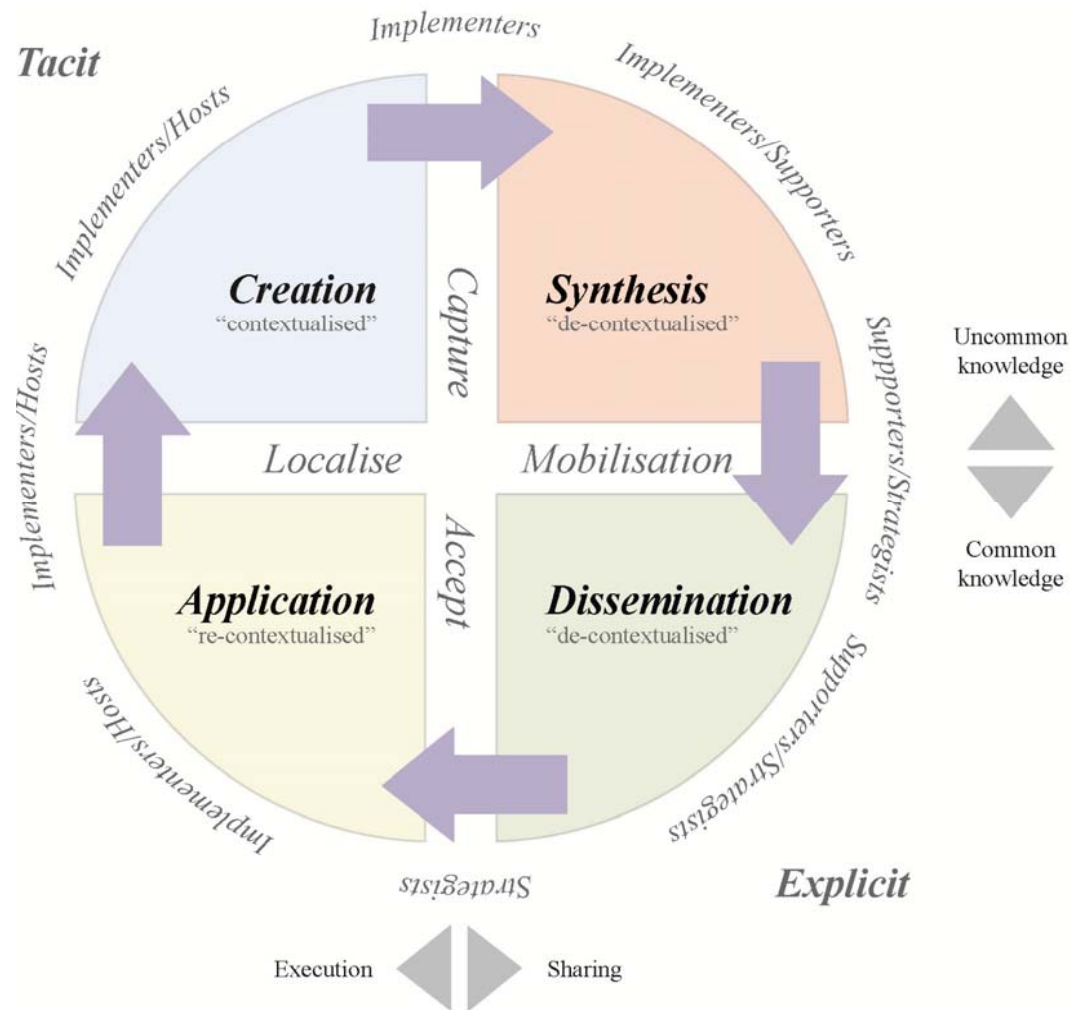
# Knowledge needs

<b>Role</b>	<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Knowledge needs</b>
<b>Hosts</b>	<b>Government (also Strategists and Implementers)</b>	Advice and guidance on appropriate shelter response frameworks to put in place such as construction methodologies, how money should be spent and where, what approach to take (e.g. owner driven, cash grant schemes). How to coordinate, administrate and manage major programmes (often with limited capacity)...where they can acquire additional support capacity
	<b>Beneficiaries (also Implementers)</b>	What the reconstruction framework is and how to implement it.
		Who to contact for assistance/guidance in reconstruction and what support systems are in place to assist them. What their own capacity is and how it can be utilised.
	<b>Affected community</b>	What support systems are in place to assist them.
<b>Non affected communities (also Supporters)</b>	Awareness of potential vulnerabilities and an understanding of what to do in the event of a crises. Understanding of crises situation.	

# The Knowledge Base

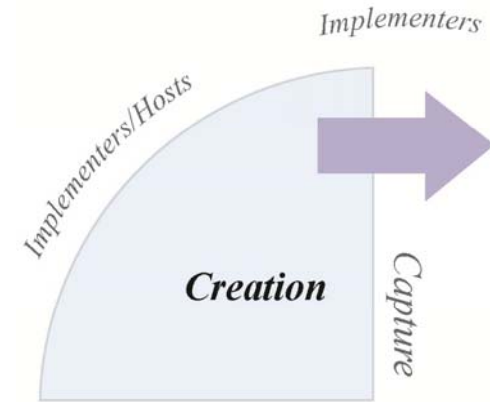


# The Knowledge Lifecycle

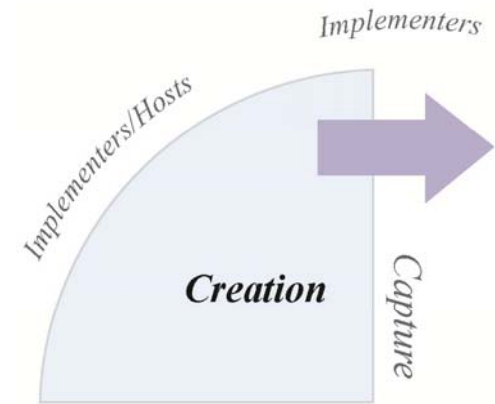


# Creation & Capture

- Significant knowledge is created at the initial project stages
- The challenge for the sector lies in capturing this
- Information is captured as part of the Shelter Coordination Team process
- Knowledge dissipates with people at the end of a programme
- Reports and evaluations are important, but struggle to capture the context or only a fraction of the potentially accumulated knowledge, especially tacit
- Hosts act as co-creators but rarely share with the sector

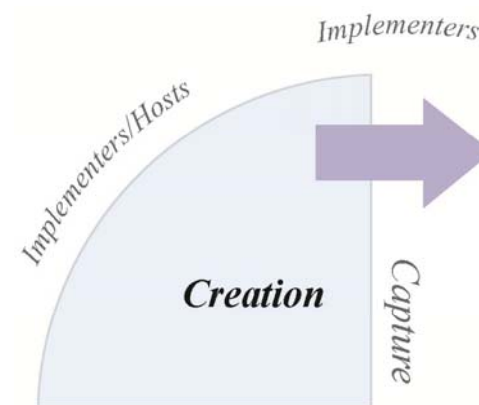


# Creation & Capture



*“Even within Pakistan there is variation of culture/social context behaviour etc. within their own country which will influence how they live. There is a need to look at local solutions and resources and best practices from the community. Local people have the experiences and local knowledge. Gathering best practices from different areas would be a great resource”.*

# Creation & Capture

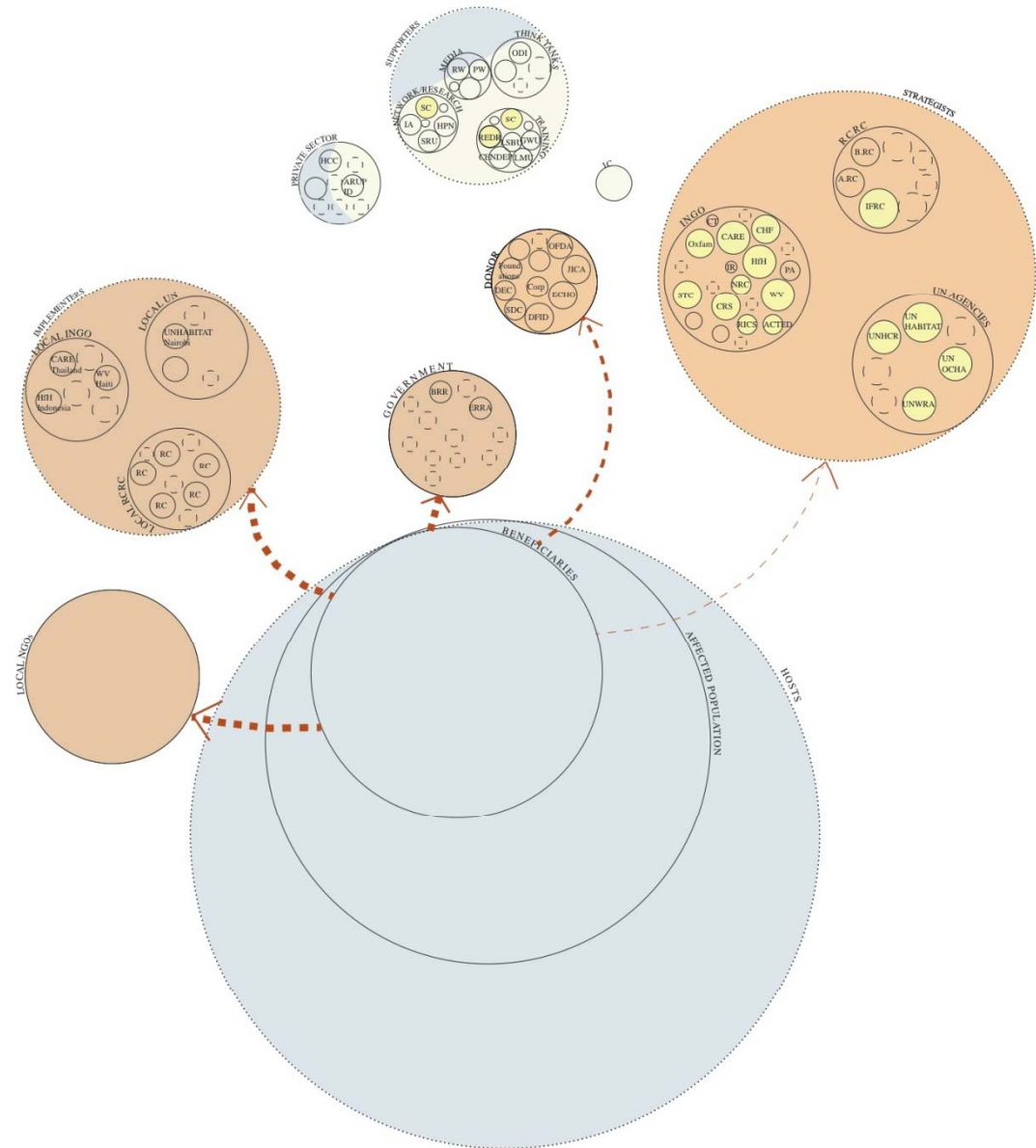


*“Humanitarian donors don’t often fund large amounts of training or research.*

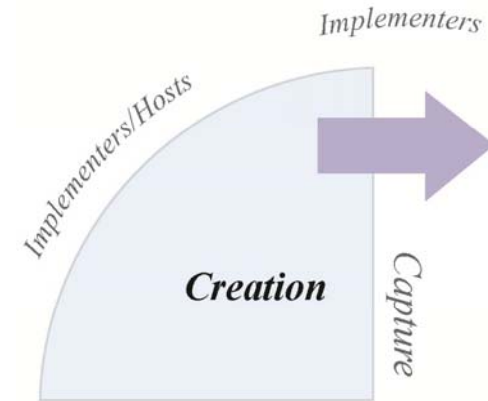
*For e.g. following disaster in Indonesia, once work was completed there was a wealth of experience to share. Only 5% stay with the organisation. In the event of another disaster in Indonesia, would have to start from the beginning again”.*

# Creation & Capture

- Implementers generate knowledge at the local level
- New ideas, experiences and learning are generated through the design and implementation of shelter programmes.
- After large-scale disasters there may be capacity to apply and localise learning from previous responses.



# Creation & Capture



Capture and Creation is usually post disaster.

More pre-disaster capturing of information needs to happen:

*“Kathmandu for example is a high-risk area. We should sort things out now in terms of shelter, livelihoods, health education etc”.*

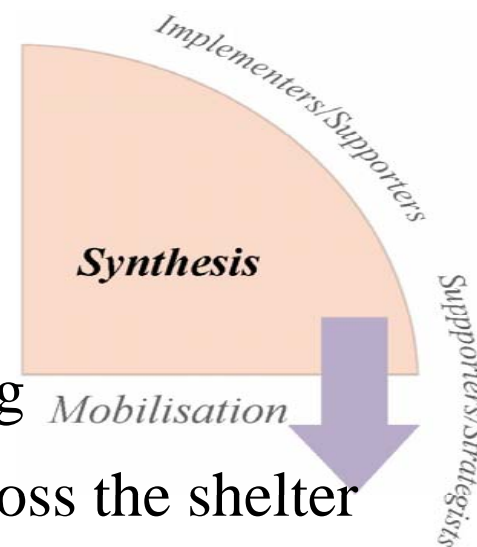
*“Very few people stop and capture what is happening...there is never any money available to capture practice”.*

*“Knowledge is in people’s heads, there is no good internal systems to get that knowledge out”.*

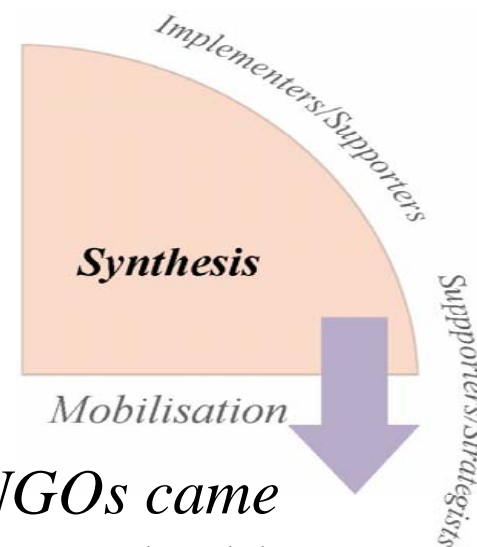


# Synthesis & Mobilisation

- Local synthesis of information and knowledge occurs during execution, especially in reporting
- But experiences and ideas not often shared across the shelter community
- Away from responding to disasters, implementers synthesis experiences through participation in meetings, forums or conferences
- High reliance on face to face meetings to synthesis knowledge or in bi-lateral conversations
- Discussions in forums are often with limited input from experienced field practitioners



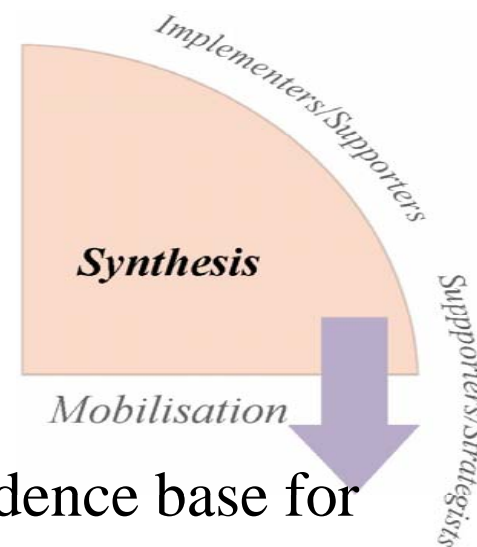
# Synthesis & Mobilisation



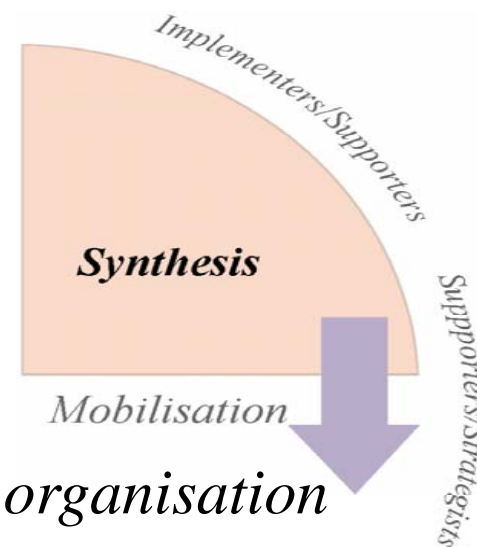
*“In Sri Lanka, local NGOs and International NGOs came together for discussion and collaboration. This was highly successful as each came away feeling like they understood certain issues. This information was documented and fed back into the sector, but a lot of it would have become lost due to the turnover of people in the sector”.*

# Synthesis & Mobilisation

- Whilst significant amount of information shared in the sector, few actors engage in synthesis and mobilisation to create robust evidence base for dissemination
- Occurs only when time and funding available
- RCRC, UN agencies and INGOs all synthesis and mobilise knowledge (to a certain extent) through the creation of manuals and guidelines for shelter practitioners, within their organisations



# Synthesis & Mobilisation



*“Not enough knowledge sharing is done in the organisation level let alone the cluster”.*

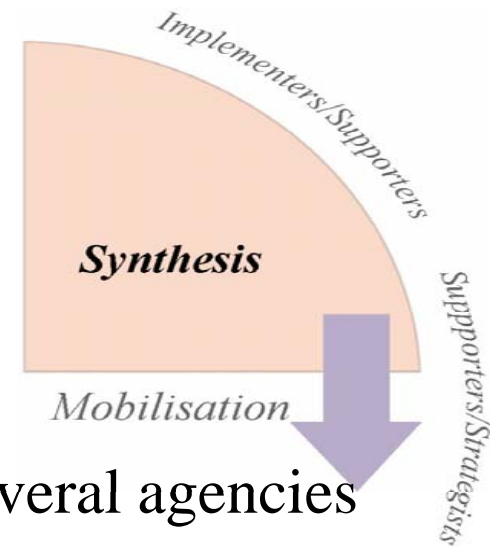
*“Cluster is not set up well to share knowledge”.*

*“There are a lot of statistics but no knowledge associated with it. For example, 5000 houses were built. But this offers no knowledge, rather information”.*

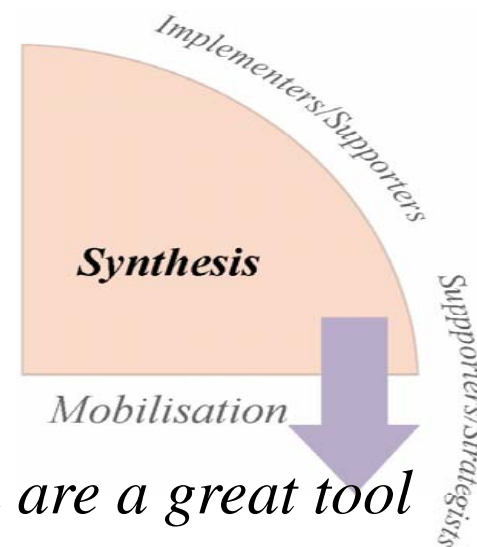
# Synthesis & Mobilisation

Synthesis between organisations:

- Co-creation of shared knowledge
- Meta-evaluations of shelter programmes by several agencies
- Knowledge shared at forums
- Focussed research on key topics



# Synthesis & Mobilisation



*“IFRC have short video documentations which are a great tool for knowledge sharing”.*

*“A lot of knowledge available, no systematic way to share or transmit knowledge.*

*he knowledge might be there, but there is no way to link it to new people in the sector”.*



# Forums

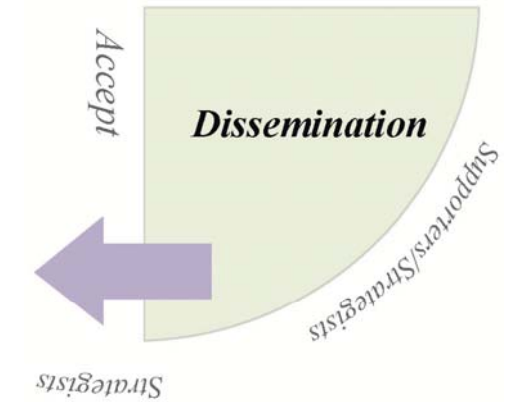
Forum name	Frequency	Location	Size	Attendees	Est.	Convener
World Urban Forum (WUF)	2 yrs	Global – different location each time	<10,000	Public	2002	UN-Habitat
Asia Pacific Housing Forum	2 yrs (opp. To WUF)	Asia – different location each time	500>1,000	Open – via registration	2007	Habitat for Humanity, IFRC
Europe and Central Asia Housing Forum	2 yrs (opp. To WUF)	Europe/Central Asia – different location each time	<200	Open – via registration	2011	Habitat for Humanity, UNDP, IFRC, UNECE
Shelter Conferences	1 yr	Oxford	<50	Open – via registration	2009	CENDEP
Shelter Meetings	6 months	Geneva	<50	Not private sector	2004	Shelter Centre
UK Shelter Forum	6 months	UK – various	<30	Shelter practitioners	2005	UK shelter practitioners
Shelter Cluster Meetings	6 months	Geneva	<50	Cluster members	tbc	IFRC
Shelter and Settlements Working Group	6 months	Washington	<50	Shelter practitioners	2011	InterAction



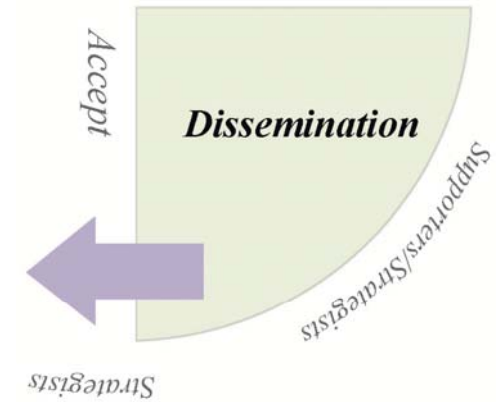
# Dissemination

Common mechanisms:

- Personal networks
- Training
- Forums
- Hard copies of publications and CDs/DVDs
- Online document libraries
- Online videos



# Dissemination

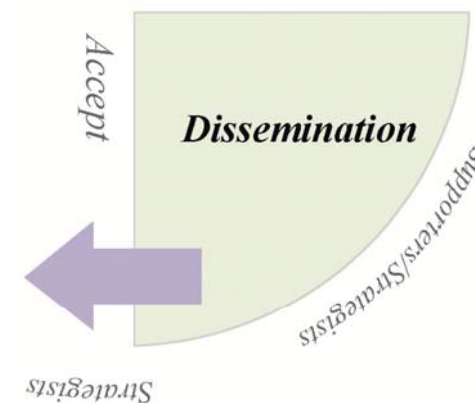


*“Knowledge is not distributed and shared due to language”.*

*“There is not enough dissemination of knowledge, no coming together with a coherent definition of things”.*

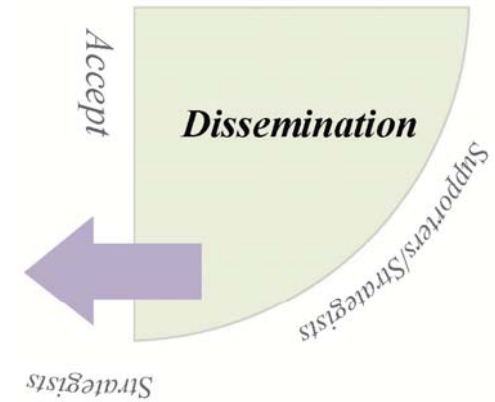
*“Institutional memory is very poor”.*

# Dissemination



Knowledge format	Amount available or used	Dissemination mechanism					
		Personal networks	Training	Forums	Hard copies	Online libraries	Online videos
		A lot	A little	A lot	Some	A lot	A little
Evaluations of single programmes	A lot	◆		◆		◆	
Presentations	A lot	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆
Guidelines and manuals	A lot	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Case studies	Some	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Policies and standards	Some	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Meta-evaluations	A little	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Synthesis reports from forums	A little	◆		◆		◆	
Experiences of shelter practitioners	A little	◆	◆	◆			

# Dissemination



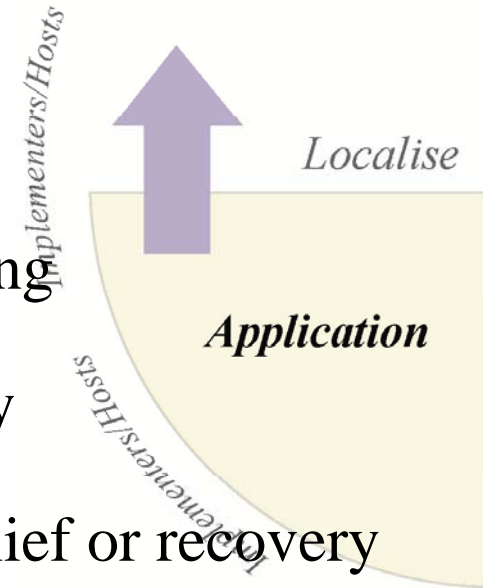
*“China may have a wealth of knowledge that is not accessible. Very little of this has made it into English literature. China have a very strong government with a disaster management strategy”.*

*“Any information that is brought by foreigners is information that is too expensive”.*

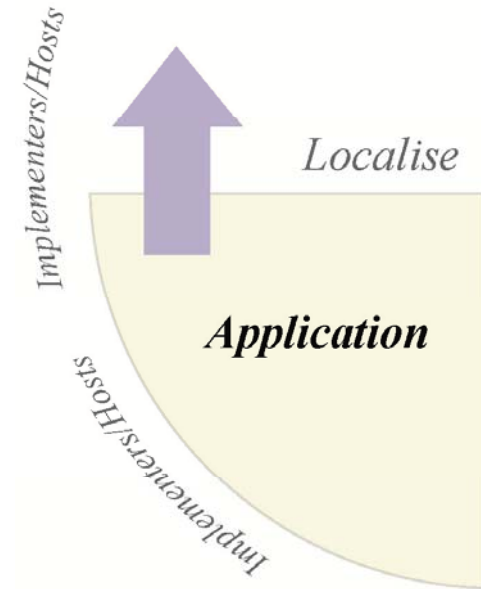


# Application & Localisation

- Implementers and hosts apply ideas and learning
- Limited in DRR due to lack of time and money
- So generally can only be applied in disaster relief or recovery
- However fresh practitioners don't bring this hinterland of experience and so are relearning and recreating
- Reusing knowledge requires a process of contextualisation
- Available explicit knowledge can be too generic
- Reliance on individuals to disseminate knowledge and support local teams, and is a bottleneck



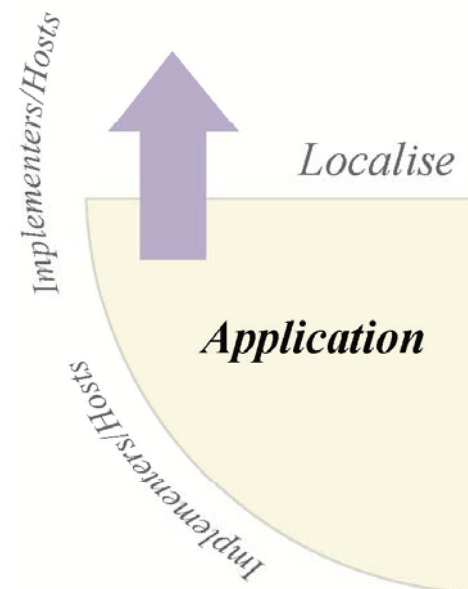
# Application & Localisation



*“The best KM system could be in place but if people aren’t there to use it, and are just passing through, it won’t be successful”.*

*“Governments want to take control but often don’t know how”.*

# Application & Localisation

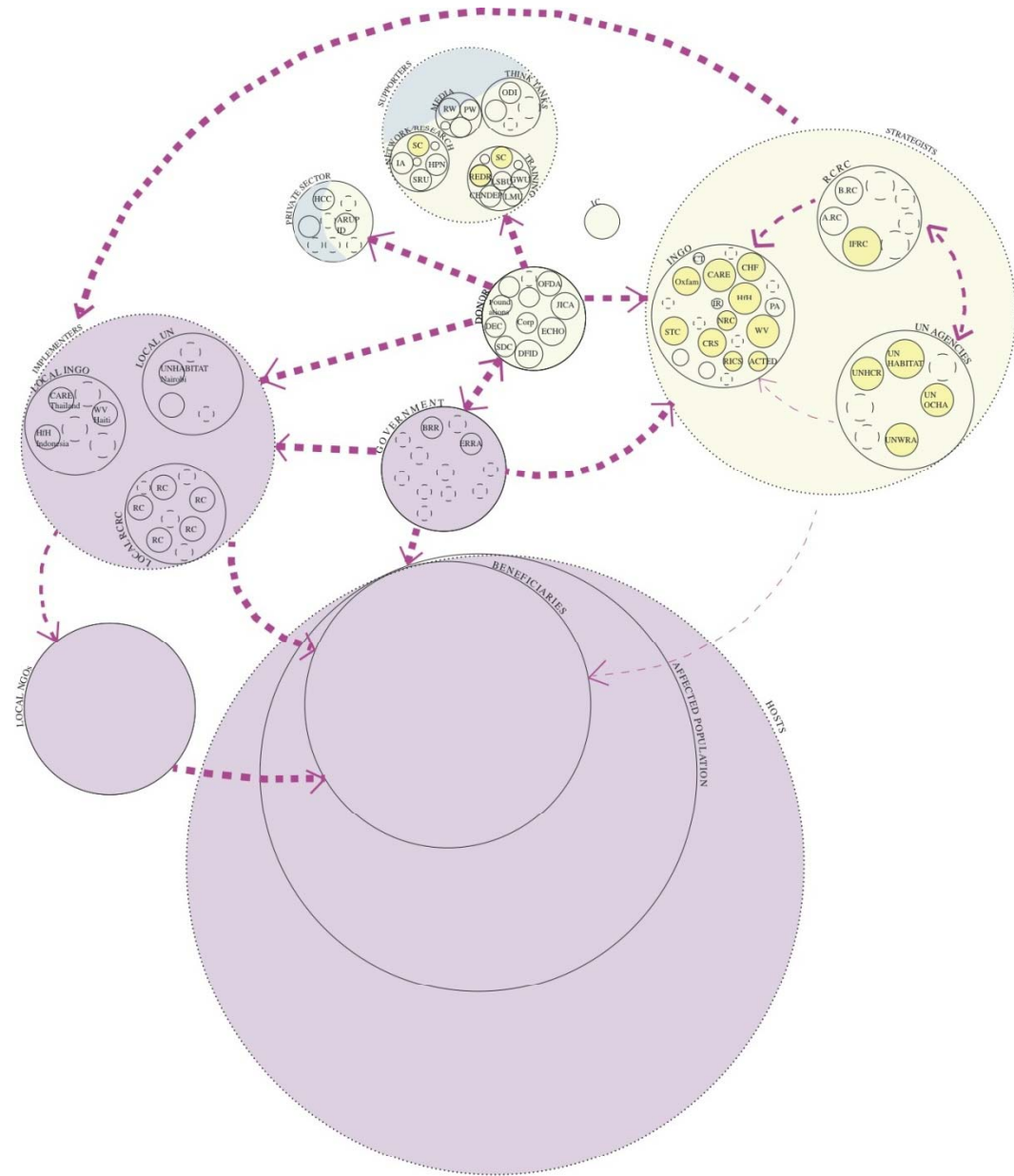


*“National cluster meetings may not be proving to be productive for infield staff. The meetings are necessary however field staff have found hub meetings to be more productive as they are able to talk about all the issues in one meeting, whereas they are disengaging with the national cluster meetings”.*



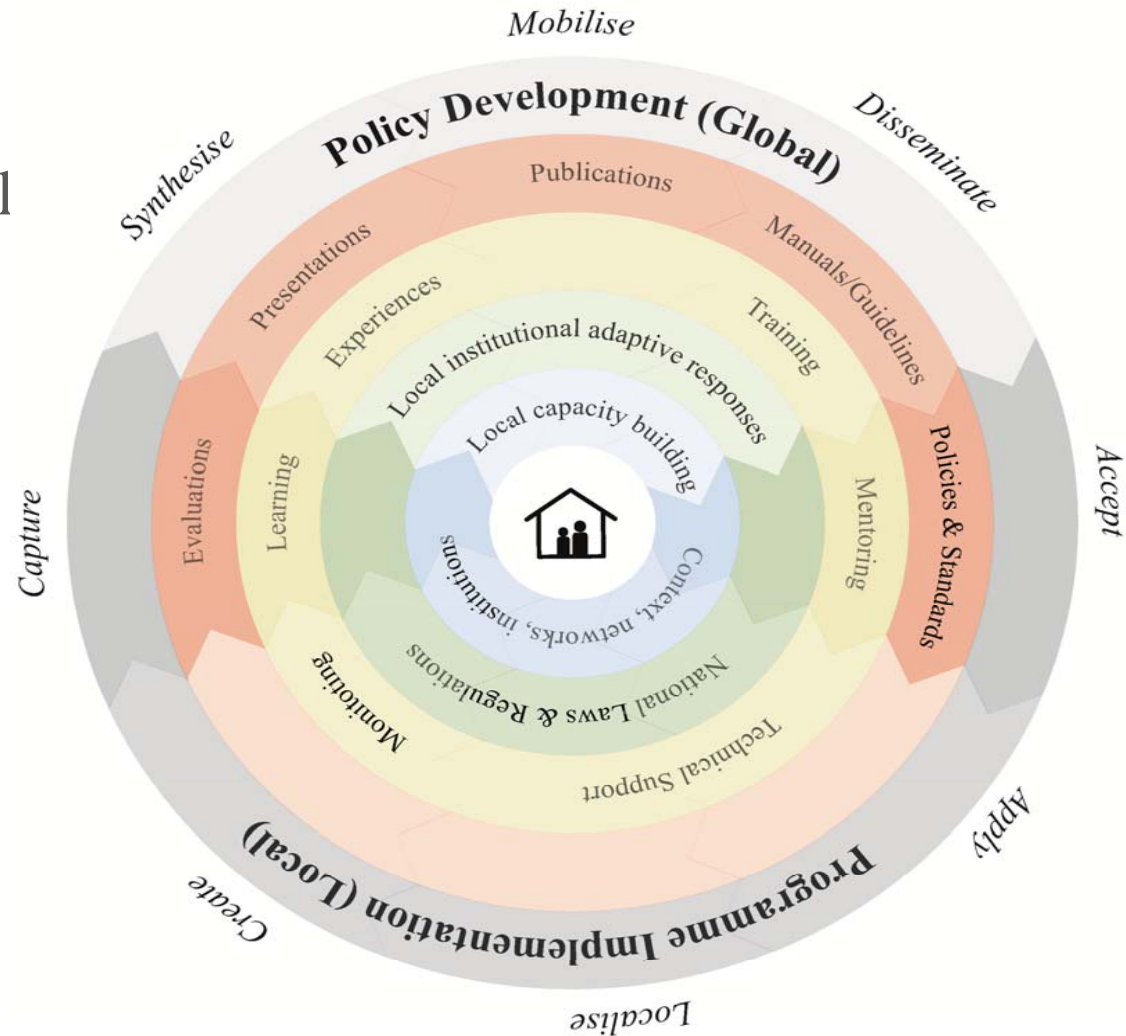
# Application & Localisation

- Highly contextualised
- Disconnect at application in life cycle driving significant recreation of knowledge
- Shelter sector experts are critical but are a bottleneck



# The process for institutionalising knowledge

An effective knowledge cycle offers the potential as a process for institutionalising knowledge within the sector. Operating at a number of key levels.



## Types of Knowledge

- Global Explicit (documents/publications)
- Global Tacit (shelter expert + global networks)
- Local Explicit (documents/publications)
- Local Tacit (shelter team + local networks)

## Challenges & barriers

*“There is never any money available to capture practices.”*

*“Competitive nature of the sector, similar to that of the private sector. No one wants to give away their knowledge for free”.*

*“Donors are not in the business of institutional capacity building. Some have a good understanding of it, such as OFDA, but upper levels of USAID may not understand it”.*

## Challenges & barriers

*“People get asked to comment on documents in a random way. It is very last minute with not enough time leeway”.*

*“Too many expectations on field staff. They do not have time”.*

*“During the disaster there is too much chaos. The time to understand all these skills is before the disaster”.*

## Challenges & barriers

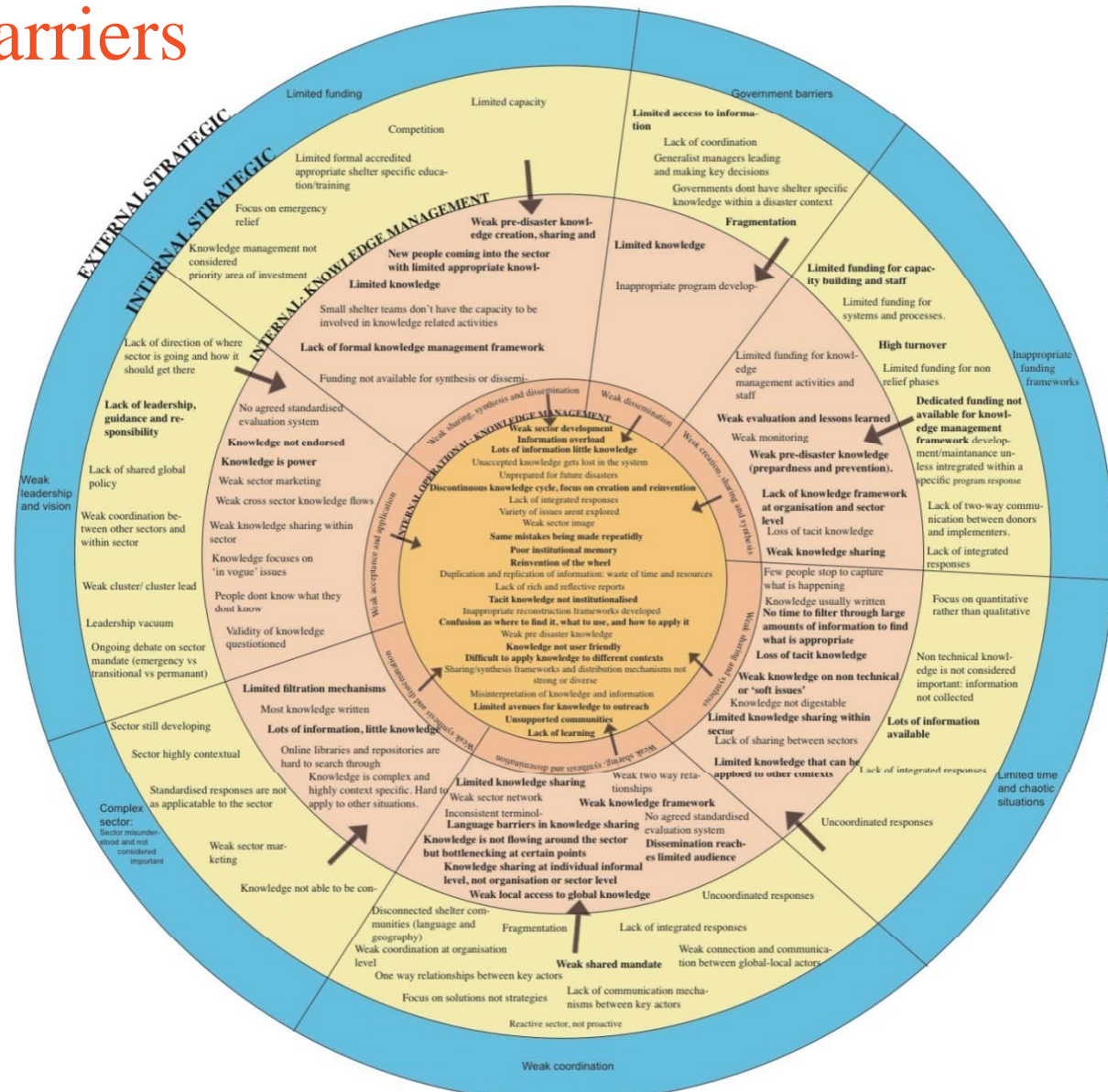
*“There is limited resources, research development. It is hard to learn, document and develop something in an emergency phase, Staff do not have the time to do innovation and research. This needs to be done later. Not enough time to institutionalise the knowledge”.*

*“Some things are documented and shared, but time is an issue”.*

*“Need to be backed up by people who have the skills. If there are enough people around with skills they can absorb all the issues that come around”.*

# Challenges & barriers

- Limited funding
- Inappropriate funding mechanisms
- Government barriers
- Weak coordination
- Weak leadership
- Complexity of shelter



## Challenges & barriers

*“People at different levels need a shared understanding, not necessarily solutions, but an ability to have conversations on what the options are”.*

*“Not enough knowledge sharing is done in the organisation level let alone the cluster”.*

*“Humanitarian agencies don’t talk much which is a problem”.*

*“Can have information overload. Need to have gatekeeper who can control”.*

# Learning from cross-cutting sectors

- Shelter sector has connections and impacts with other sectors
- However the links are one way and are weak
- However there is the unique potential to be an integrator
- The Sector provides a contextual understanding
- Other sectors are more mature in their approach to knowledge and can provide some useful benchmarks, however the nature of the knowledge created in the shelter sector has very different characteristics so a level of reinterpretation is required



# Learning from cross-cutting sectors

*“WASH cluster are at the point where they are discussing validation of information. Shelter cluster probably doesn’t have the partner engagement that would allow this to happen”.*

# Gaps and potential solutions

## Creation and Capture

- Knowledge is lost at the end of a shelter practitioner's contract or the completion of a shelter programme.
- It's difficult to identify which lessons learned are applicable in other contexts.
- There are specific gaps in knowledge within the sector.

# Gaps and potential solutions

## Synthesis and Mobilisation

- Local implementers are disconnected from global networks.
- Knowledge from local implementers (particularly local NGOs, local governments and affected communities) is rarely shared.
- Knowledge shared at global forums is difficult to absorb and apply to local contexts.
- Knowledge captured in evaluations of single-programmes is difficult to apply to new situations.
- Experienced shelter practitioners have high levels of tacit knowledge but it is difficult to share this learning.
- Knowledge sharing is heavily reliant on personal networks and face-to-face meetings.

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# Gaps and potential solutions

## Synthesis and Mobilisation

- ‘Supporters’ play a key role in the sharing, synthesis and dissemination of knowledge but have weak influence over the implementation of shelter programmes.

# Gaps and potential solutions

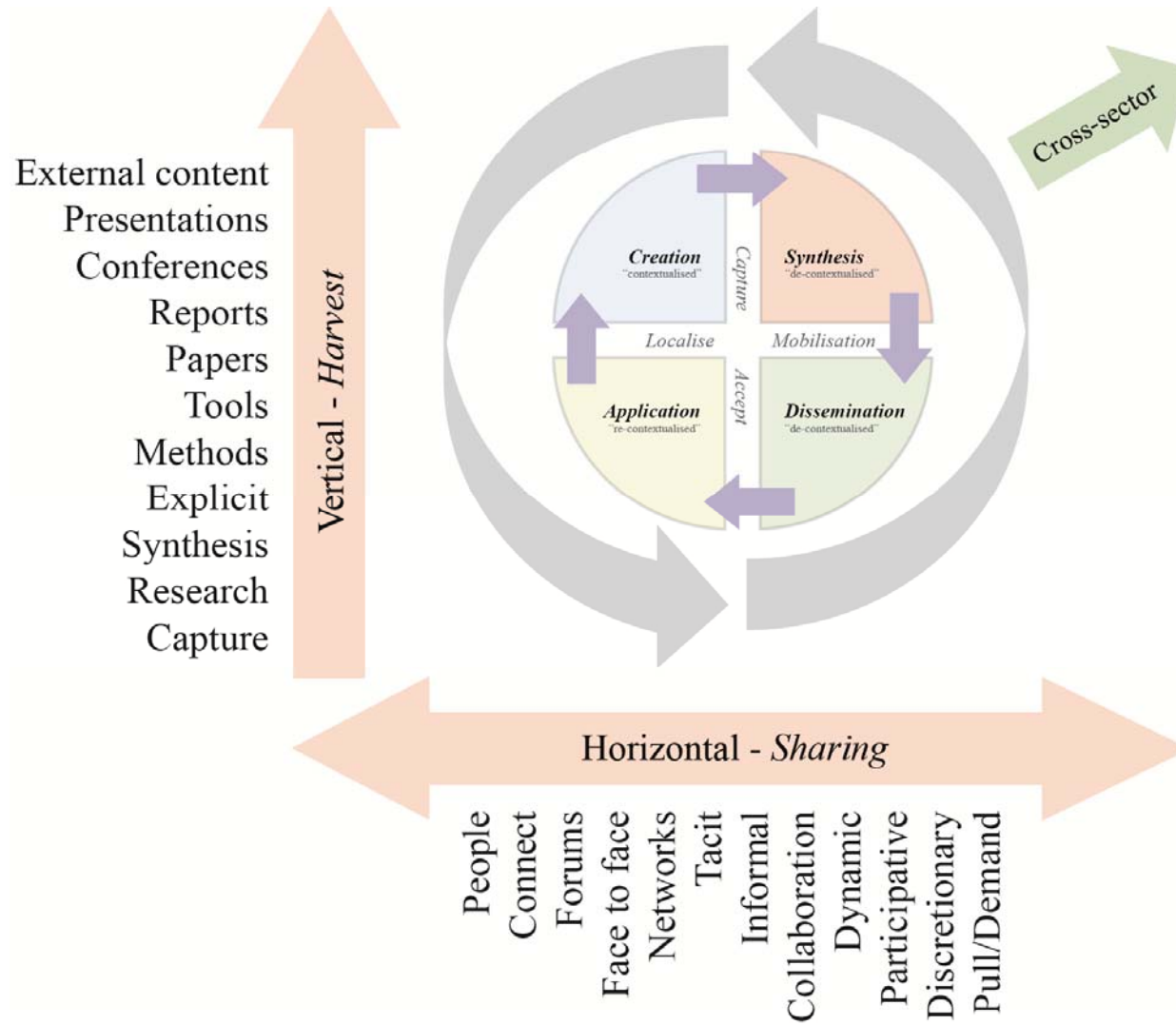
## Dissemination and Acceptance

- It's difficult to search for and find useful information.
- Knowledge doesn't reach those who need it.
- Finding the right context specific knowledge at the point of need.
- Knowledge is largely written and therefore limits which audiences it can be directed towards (due to language).

## Conclusions and recommendations

- A knowledge management “strategy” for the Sector is required:
  - *Aligned to the “Sector strategy”, however defined*
  - *Established on a basis of sector wide consensus*
- Knowledge management capacity within organisations and the sector as a whole is highly variable but limited:
  - *Provide support to build knowledge management capacity*
  - *Provide knowledge management services to the sector to fill gaps in the knowledge life cycle*
  - *Build out from organisational capacity*
- Little is known about the knowledge needs of local actors or the knowledge lifecycle in response to specific disasters:
  - *Undertake further research to understand specific relationships and needs, and life cycle in a specific situation*

# Enabling knowledge lifecycle effectiveness



Thank you