The Knowledge Translation Toolkit, Bridging the Know-Do Gap: A Resource for Researchers
Edited by Gavin Bennett and Nasreen Jessani
New York: Sage; Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2011. 253 pp.
ISBN: 9788132105855.

A Book Review by

Danièle Filion
University of Ottawa, Canada

The *Knowledge Translation Toolkit, Bridging the Know-Do Gap: A Resource for Researchers*, edited by Gavin Bennett and Nasreen Jessani, is a practical resource that teaches researchers how to manage and present knowledge gained through research in order to reach decision-makers and optimize its application. The application of researchers' findings in the development of policy, no matter to what extent their findings could serve to improve peoples' lives, can depend on successful communications and an ability to identify research needs. It is necessary to both develop relevant research projects and communicate their relevance. The book's main premise is that there exists a research-policy gap that must be closed. This is an issue that garners much attention in the health research and policy landscape. The *Knowledge Translation (KT) Toolkit* presents itself as a resource that aims to help close that gap.

The *KT Toolkit* effectively demonstrates that although researchers may possess important expert information, the real-world value of their knowledge sometimes simply rests upon their ability to communicate it. The *KT Toolkit* presents four knowledge translation models extracted from a 2006 number of the World Heath Organization *Bulletin*: the push model, the pull model, the exchange model and the integrated model. The push and pull models represent the most basic knowledge translation (KT) dialogues. Using the push model, researchers attempt to transfer knowledge to decision-makers so that it influences policy-making. The pull model, on the contrary, is used by decision-makers seeking researchers' knowledge. The two other models are based on a more complex dynamic. The exchange model implies a mutually beneficial partnership involving the researchers and decision-makers. The integrated model calls for the participation of a third party institution, a "Knowledge Translation Platform" (KTP). The KTP acts as a knowledge broker, connecting policy process with research. The *KT Toolkit* focuses on the push model, arming researchers with a better understanding of their own specialized knowledge in light of the policy-making context and practical tools to transmit their knowledge through reaching and captivating their target audiences.

In a translation theory perspective, the use of push tools and strategies are akin to a functionalist translation approach. In order for the researchers to communicate their specialized knowledge, they must adapt the messaging to their audiences' needs and levels of expertise. In the Introduction, the authors claim that the tools they present will be helpful in having

researchers' science reach people and be understood, augmenting the chances of influencing toward positive action. Overall, the tools will increase the usefulness and value of the research. This enhanced positive impact of research, according to the authors, is reliant on better communication, ensuring that the information is relevant for those it aims to help and in a form that is useful to them. KT is the process thanks to which the expert information becomes useful to external users, such as decision-makers, transforming "latent information" into "active knowledge".

To achieve communications objectives, the book promotes the use of defined standardized formats to present information, which are to be selected according to the audience. A telling example of the extent to which there is a difference in how researchers go about sharing information amongst each other compared to reaching a broader audience of non-experts is the scientific journal article. Non-scholars tend to consider journals to be uninteresting and difficult to understand. This tool is therefore inadequate to influence policy. Yet, it is a tool that gives researchers the capacity to appropriately transmit the scientific aspects of studies to specialized audiences. Indeed, it is a complete stand-alone tool allowing them to influence research and other researchers.

Amongst its many lessons, the book teaches that it is also necessary for researchers to have a good grasp of the research and policy context in which their research is to be applied. A thorough reading of the context allows for a thorough understanding of decision-makers' perspectives and interests. It reveals the contextual pressures that work for and against the researchers in meeting their objectives. Tailoring KT activities to the environment where the knowledge is to be applied helps toward their success.

The scope of the *KT Toolkit*'s content is quite broad. The information ranges from touching on organizational considerations to fulfilling individual researcher needs. For example, the authors include information for organizations on proper knowledge management, which helps to identify gaps in knowledge and make effective use of knowledge that already exists. Individual researchers, on the other hand, will find useful tips on presenting their research to ensure success when participating at a conference (including best practices for the use of PowerPoint slides). Being somewhat short in length considering the wide scope of information, the *KT Toolkit* does not provide extensive in depth information on every topic examined. It is a practical introduction to KT, with useful guidelines and checklists for general KT capacity-building. The sections on the various topics do include further resources for the readers who wish to explore and utilize the concepts introduced. Many of the resources are, however, Internet-based, which brings into question their longevity (some links already no longer work).

It is worth noting that the *Knowledge Translation Toolkit* is a 2011 co-publication by Sage and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The IDRC is a Canadian Crown corporation that wishes to provide help with research on the application of scientific knowledge for the advancement of developing regions. The *KT Toolkit*, whose main audience is researchers that work in systems and policy research, and in which there is frequent reference to activities in developing regions, fits within the IDRC's mandate. A number of references to IDRC activities are included in the *KT Toolkit*. The [IDRC's](#) website presents precise information on the organization and its mandate, as well as resources.

Overall, the *KT Toolkit* is a practical resource that presents an exhaustive set of helpful tips and tools supported by relevant theoretical information. It also provides a great number of examples of successful KT activities that enliven the text while motivating the reader. The writing style is generally clear and catchy, but sometimes somewhat excessively colorful in its

effort to capture attention. This resource is oriented toward meeting professional rather than academic needs.

About the Reviewer

Danièle Filion is a Master's student in translation studies at the University of Ottawa's School of Translation and Interpretation. Danièle holds a college diploma in advertising and a Bachelor of Arts degree in French literature. Over the past decade, her career path has given her the opportunity to work in a variety of settings, allowing her to acquire and put into practice a wide range of communication expertise, including healthcare related environments.

Citing this book review:

Filion, Danièle. (2012). [Review of the book *The knowledge translation toolkit, bridging the know-do gap: A resource for researchers*]. *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*, *5*(1), 127-129.