

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN AN INTERNATIONAL NON-
GOVERNMENTAL NETWORK OF ORGANISATIONS: A CASE STUDY
OF ONE WORLD INTERNATIONAL**

By

Patricia Mweene Haamujompa Lumba - HMJPAT001

Dissertation Supervisor: Dr Gretchen Smith

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**Faculty of Humanities
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DECLARATION

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Abstract

Knowledge management will support activities that improve the performance of organizations and organization networks due to the known benefits of collaborating. Although knowledge management is deemed to be vital for organizations, no uniform model of practice exists for any organization. This condition can also be ascribed to the scarcity of information on Knowledge management practices, experiences, role models and general concerns. Concerns of the critical role knowledge management can play in NGOs, including NGO networks; due to their complex structures have often been addressed. These concerns include among others the priority given to external action and the client versus internal administration work and results analysis; structural high turnover among staff, volunteers and donors; the lightness of the permanent structure and the performance of field activities in a situation and climate of emergency and or/lack of funds, and/or in stressed or disorganized environments.

This report is based on the outcomes of a study that explored the knowledge management practices and challenges in an international NGO network; OneWorld International (OWI). The investigation constituted comparative case studies of two centres (one in Zambia and the other in the Netherlands) belonging to a single international network. An empirically grounded framework of knowledge management practices based on the taxonomy proposed by Holsapple and Joshi was utilised as the reference framework for the study. The framework provided guidelines to characterize factors that influence organizational knowledge management; knowledge manipulation activities (processes) and organizational knowledge resources.

The study uses two approaches: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative approach, which was used in the preliminary stage of the data collection exercise, provided an in-depth interpretation by means of open-ended interviewing of the knowledge management issues that needed to be grasped. The qualitative approach was complemented by a quantitative approach using a Likert scale based on attitude statements. The attitude statements were

developed from the responses obtained during the open interviews. The quantitative approach also provided the means to make comparisons between the centres and provided the results of opinions, beliefs and attitudes of the respondent's knowledge management perceptions.

The results of the empirical study confirm that a variety of factors affect knowledge management behaviours in NGO networks. These factors include managerial and internal controls such as management styles and incentives for knowledge creation and sharing; resource influences; and environmental influences relating to an organization's culture and the needs of partner organizations. The study highlights important variation in diversity, gaps and perceptions in managing knowledge between centres in the network that are based in Europe and Africa. This is despite significant commonality in knowledge management processes and infrastructures. The results further show that institutionalisation of knowledge management practices within a network seem to enable or constrain knowledge management at centre and network level. Recommendations are proposed to improve knowledge management practices at local and international level and include enhanced technical and advisory services at international level; capacity building; creating greater awareness of knowledge management; decentralization of knowledge management processes; implementation of a knowledge management strategy at network level and improving relationships between centres.

The research concludes that networked NGOs and specifically OWI could operate more efficiently and incrementally enhance service provision by leveraging their knowledge resources more effectively. It is in this light that knowledge management practices should be examined in NGOs and particularly networks with their complex structures and attendant reoccurring and unavoidable problems.

Dedicated to

My husband Kasonge Watson Lumba

and

My daughter Rachel Lusekelo Lumba.

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Last but not least, I give the glory to God, who gives the wisdom, strength and health to do all things.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

BDO	Building Digital Opportunities
BINGOs	British International Non Governmental Organisations
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CMS	Content Management System
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COPs	Communities of Practice
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
Dfid	Department for International Development, UK
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
GEPSE	Governmental, economic, political, social and education
GROs	Grassroot Organizations
IICD	International Institute for Communication and Development
INGOs	International Non Governmental Organizations
IT	Information technology
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
I&KM	Information and Knowledge Management
KM	Knowledge Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBO	Management by Objectives
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NPOs	Non Profit Organizations
OD	Organisation Design
ODA	Overseas Development Agency
OWA	One World Africa
OWI	OneWorld International
OneWorld.nl	OneWorld Netherlands

PERT
TQM

Program Evaluation and Review Technique
Total Quality Management

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

1.1 Aims of the research project

This dissertation is centred on an exploratory study of Knowledge Management practices and challenges in a networked non-governmental organization (NGO). The exploratory study focuses on two centres; one from a developed country in the northern hemisphere and the other from Africa that are part of a single NGO network¹. By focusing the study on two centres, it is hoped that the study would ultimately provide a comparison of the knowledge management practices between the northern and southern hemispheres, as well as the developed and developing world. Based on the findings, recommendations will be made on a best practice model to be implemented at all the OWI centres, particularly the centres studied in supporting and enhancing their various programmes and projects.

This opening chapter provides an introduction to the research topic and also provides an overview of the complete study. It commences with a brief background to establishing the relevance of the research project as an area of academic enquiry. The necessity for research in knowledge management practices in a networked NGO is then validated². This is followed by the outline of the approach used in undertaking the research. Finally, the research questions used to guide the enquiry and the theoretical framework of the entire study are presented in sequence.

¹ Sydow and Windeler (1998: 267) describe an international network as “rather decentralised, somewhat polycentric and a possible outcome of collective strategies, an interorganisational network may well be strategically led by some focal or “hub” organisation.

² As the dissertation is country dependant, the results of the study will not necessarily reflect the perceptions of other centres of the network based in other countries.

1.2 Research assumptions

NGOs in general are playing an increasingly important role in international development. Over the past years, there has been an increase in donor funding to NGOs as they are seen as better providers in development. However, although NGOs have been seen to play significant roles in development, much of their operations have been influenced by the two poles of the “New Policy Agenda³” (Edwards & Hulme, 1996a: 2). In this theory, it is assumed that firstly, Governments enable private provision but minimize their direct role in the economy because of their supposed cost-effectiveness in reaching those masses that cannot be reached. Secondly, Edwards and Hulme believe that through the New Policy Agenda, NGOs and supporting Community Based Organisations (CBOs) are seen as vehicles for democratization and are therefore essential components of society acting as counterweight to state power by protecting human rights, opening up communication channels and participation, providing training grounds for activists and promoting pluralism.

Due to the New Policy Agenda, NGOs have been motivated to scale up operations. There has been a rise in Northern NGOs extending their organisations to both developed and developing countries (Edwards & Hulme, 2000: 48). The motivation for scaling up has also meant that to a large extent, NGOs have been seen as vehicles for “democratisation” and have been the preferred channel for service provision in the deliberate substitution for the state. The scaling up process has meant the development of NGO networks. The need for ‘branches’ of NGOs networks to be visible to their local constituencies has meant that in most cases, branch NGOs have had to be accountable to a number of their stakeholders and still be expected to be part of the international development fashion of the New Policy Agenda. This in many ways has brought about complexity to management of NGO operations.

³ The “New Policy Agenda” is a kind of unofficial, virtual agenda of official donor agencies which is driven by two sets of belief relating to the enhancement of NGO growth and operations: neo-liberal economies and liberal democratic theory (Edwards and Hulme, 1996a: 2).

The influx of developmental NGOs in recent years has meant that greater accountability is expected from stakeholders, and a mounting of competition among NGOs as a result of diminishing donor funding (Ebrahim, 2003: 814). Responding to the fast changing environment, marked by globalisation and increasing competition, NGOs have been forced to be innovative and offer an 'alternative agenda' in order to survive (Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington, 2006: 3). New and innovative ways of managing NGOs has been seen as central to NGO accountability. Among these trends are knowledge management, which a number of NGOs might actually be practicing but are not aware of doing so.

1.3 The necessity for the research project in Knowledge Management practices in a net worked non profit making organizations

NGOs like profit making organisations have to some degree been involved in knowledge management due to the evidence of knowledge management practices within the NGO sector (Cummings, Heeks & Huysman, 2003: 2). According to the authors, knowledge management practices within NGOs include networking and participatory processes. These processes entail that staff are seen as sources of skills and capabilities for making effective decisions and increasing programme impact (Sheehanm, 1998). However some authors remain sceptical to the effectiveness of knowledge management practices among NGOs, particularly NGOs that are part of a network. Knowledge sharing particularly at inter organisational level is often said to be hindered by "dynamics of power, opportunism, suspicion, and asymmetric learning strategies which can constitute processual barriers to collective knowledge development" (Larsson et al., 1998: 285).

Additionally, it is generally believed that the ineffectiveness of knowledge management practices among NGOs is attributed to wrong knowledge management strategies for NGOs particularly as many NGOs are just taking first steps in knowledge management and are therefore displaying a copycat behaviour to profit making organisations (Britton, 1998: 2).

Against that background, there has been much interest into deeper insight into how and why knowledge management may be the answer in enhancing organizational performance and efficiency among NGOs. Most importantly, the demand for accountability and services that are timely, integrated and tailored, demands that NGOs follow new managerial paradigms (Lettieri, Borga, & Savoldelli, 2004: 16). Amongst existing NGO complexities relating to competition and stakeholder demands, knowledge management could ensure that appropriate decisions are made by ensuring that the right information is delivered to the right person in a just in time manner.

1.4 Objectives of the dissertation

Against the aims and background assumptions presented above, the objectives of this dissertation are articulated as follows:

- a. To determine the degree to which OWI centres practice knowledge management procedures.
- b. To determine the degree to which OWI centres are learning organisations.
- c. To establish how OWI centres determine the knowledge they require.
- d. To learn the major managerial challenges that the centres and network is facing in managing its knowledge.
- e. To determine the degree to which individuals are involved in networking between centres.

1.5 Research questions

To maintain a clear focus on the research aims and objectives, and to provide a framework for the research project, the dissertation will be based on the following research questions:

- a. What are the internal and external factors influencing knowledge management policies and practices at local and international level?

- b. What knowledge management processes are in place to achieve an environment of learning?
- c. What knowledge resources are valued at both local and international level?

1.6 Rationale

The researcher's background in development organisations is a major motivation to exploring knowledge management practices amongst developmental NGO networks. Through her experience, the researcher is able to identify the importance and difficulties associated with knowledge management in developmental NGO networks⁴. The researcher is particularly interested in exploring knowledge management practices in NGOs to tie the perceptions with what has been established theoretically in the literature. Furthermore, the knowledge management module taken at the University of Cape Town brought about the motivation of exploring the knowledge management trends amongst developmental NGO networks.

The research focus on knowledge management is relevant, as no detailed analysis of knowledge management practices in the OWI network has been undertaken to date. The study therefore presents a first step in remedying this deficiency. It intends to make contributions to an area of on going wider debate on NGO managerial and coordination issues and how these consequently influence knowledge management practices. Overall, the research affords new insights into understanding the practice, problems and challenges of knowledge management in NGOs, but particularly International NGOs with linkages in the northern and southern hemispheres.

Although the scale of this research is small, the researcher hopes to raise important issues regarding NGO internal and external influences on knowledge management practices by being involved in such a debate. It further hopes to obtain responses that will in turn influence the current policies at OWI, its respective centres and other networked developmental NGOs. Therefore, based

⁴ The researcher worked for a number of networked regional (Southern Africa), International NGO networks, as well as national development projects based in Zambia from 1998 – 2005.

on the available literature found in relation to knowledge management, this research argues that analysis from practical experiences can contribute to the awareness of issues, and can complement academic perspectives.

1.7 Theoretical framework of the study

The investigation into the knowledge management practices at OWI was based on and organised according to Holsapple and Joshi's Knowledge Management framework. The framework presents a cyclical three-fold approach to Knowledge Management in organisations. According to Koch and others (2002: 13-21), the framework considers three interrelated activities that look at organisational knowledge management as the application of knowledge manipulation skills in performing knowledge management activities that operate on the organisation's knowledge resources to achieve organisational learning and projection. The process is further influenced by external factors that also trigger knowledge need.

According to the framework, knowledge management influences rotate around coordination, control, leadership, resources and environmental conditions. These influences govern and determine how knowledge management unfolds in an organisation (Holsapple et al., 1998: 12-67 cited by Koch et al. 2002: 13-21). Governed by knowledge management influences, organisational role players execute knowledge manipulation activities such as selecting, acquiring, generating, internalising and externalising knowledge.

In summary, the theoretical framework for the study provided an outlook on internal and external policies that influenced knowledge management practices in the targeted OWI centres; the various knowledge management processes that are in place to culminate the achievement of learning; and finally how knowledge management was valued in the organisations studied.

1.8 Limitation of the study

This research sought to offer a critical view of influences and challenges of knowledge management practices among individual centres of a network. The research basically compared the practices of the two centres based on a north – south perspective. The study also examined networking trends and challenges of a consolidated network. In this regard, the study provided recommendations for effective networking between centres belonging to a single network. It attempted to offer a balanced and perhaps more realistic view of the often challenged views regarding the manner of NGO operation in its contribution to development, and the manner in which knowledge management is integrated in NGO operations as a means for NGOs to be seen as playing a pivotal role in development and maintaining their competitive advantage.

The research however did not attempt to assess whether NGOs are better or worse at managing knowledge in view of their “comparative advantage”. Furthermore, the research did not measure the success of networking between NGOs.

Although the research attempted to present an understanding of inter-organisational knowledge management, it did not give a total picture of the network (partners, donors and key stakeholders). Its focus was rather on inter-organisational knowledge management practices within single networks. However, the same concepts of inter-organisational networking identified in the research could be applied to some degree to autonomous centres belonging to a single network.

1.9 Outline of the overall approach used in undertaking the research

The initial point of departure for this study consisted of undertaking open interviews with managers from two centres that are part of the OWI NGO network. Summarised background information on the organization is included in Appendix D of the dissertation.

In order to gain a broad perspective of current knowledge management practices in the centres and to obtain relevant responses and identify gaps and key areas to focus on in the main study, the researcher conducted preliminary open interviews with middle and top management of the organisations. The analysis of data based on the fieldwork is detailed in Chapter six of the dissertation.

Encouraged by the positive responses at the early stage of the research, the researcher was motivated to conduct an extensive literature review of the relevant factors related to the NGO sector; knowledge management practices in both the NGO sector and the profit making sector; as well as background information relating to the OWI network. The insights gained from the literature review and the preliminary fieldwork facilitated the conduct of the quantitative data collection methods using a likert scale as a self-administered questionnaire. The likert scale was used to identify knowledge gaps emanating from the preliminary interviews. The preliminary interviews and the self-administered questionnaires both used factual and attitude-finding questions with themes that related to the research questions and the theoretical framework of the study.

1.10 Organisation and overview of research

The work is divided into seven chapters. The second chapter, following this introductory chapter sets the main study into its broader perspective by exploring the definitions, roles, typologies and theories of NGOs. The third chapter introduces the knowledge management dimension by providing an overview of the key concepts related to knowledge management. Chapter four presents a review of the literature related to the theoretical framework of the field research by focusing on issues relating to external influences; processes and resources of knowledge management. This chapter also provides examples on the application of the theoretical framework.

The last chapters of the study are devoted to the fieldwork. It begins with chapter five which describes the research methodology. This describes the

methodologies used during the open interviews and quantitative data collection process. This is followed by the research findings that are presented and discussed in Chapter six.

The last section of the study concludes the study by presenting recommendations. The conclusion integrates the preceding sections with the argument that the centres based in the northern and southern hemispheres have unique environmental and internal controls that affect knowledge management practices at local level and consequently at network level. The conclusion therefore reiterates that knowledge management practices should be examined in NGOs, particularly networks with their complex structures and often reoccurring and unavoidable problems.

Four appendices supplement this dissertation. Appendix A presents the list of open-ended questions; Appendix B presents Individual Administered Questionnaires; Appendix C presents the guide to the attitude statements and Appendix D provides background information of the case studies and outlines the wider context in which the two centres in the research project operate. In essence, the section describes the contemporary scene of the network and roles of the centres in relation to the broader NGO sector.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON NGOs

2.1 Introduction

NGOs are increasingly being considered to be one of the most dynamic phenomena in international development. The literature on NGOs is both optimistic and pessimistic as to the roles NGOs play in international, national and local arenas. In spite of negative opinion, external and internal pressure mounted upon NGOs, there has been, and continues to be, tremendous growth to the sector (Edwards & Hulme, 1996b: 1). This section will provide some background information on the NGO sector by examining six significant dimensions relating to NGO: definitions; the proliferation of NGO operations; classification of NGOs, coordination and control (with an emphasis on accountability, governance and leadership structures); financial dependency and finally the comparative advantage of NGOs.

2.2 Definitions of the concept of NGO

The precise meaning of the term “NGO” is not clear and does not carry a single label (Van der Kooy, 1992: 8). In the literature, terms such as the third or voluntary sector, non-profit organizations (NPOs), social movements, civil society, CBOs, voluntary organizations, grassroots organizations (GROs) and independent sector are often synonymous with ‘NGO’. The concept of NGO has also many times been associated with development (Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington, 2006: 3). Eade (2000: 9) states that a great variety of approaches and activities are embedded in the concept of development; such as “building latrines and sinking wells through to supporting union education programmes and human rights work”.

The use of “NPOs” is widely accepted, particularly with North American literature, and is evident in the works of authors such as Hayes (1996). Lettieri, Borga and Savoldelli (2004: 16) state that “the non profit sector encompasses all

the organizations aimed at creating social value for society as a whole and which do not recognize as their main goal the creation of profit for stockholders”.

The term CBO has been synonymously used to represent an NGO or NPO. For instance, Moyo (1996: 7-9) argues that the term CBO is viable as there is considerable overlap among NGO types with several NGOs belonging to more than one category. Therefore, CBOs are regarded as NGOs as they can form umbrella organizations that are intermediary or service NGOs. Conversely, the use of the term CBO remains debatable. Hayes (1992: 11) argues that CBO, has “compounded rather than ameliorated” the confusion to the use of the term due to the non-specific and imprecise use of the term.

The literature further reveals that some authors regard the term ‘civil society’ as an imprecise term with a long history in Western political thought and ideology. The term is often associated with advocacy and social responsibilities. Fowler (2003) refers to civil society as

an awakening or ‘rediscovery of the rights, roles, responsibilities and capabilities of citizens acting collectively as agents of change and as the foundation, guardians and instruments of accountable governance and corporate responsibility, nested and connected from local to global levels.

Mitlin, Hickey and Bebbington (2006: 6) support Fowler’s opinion in the sense that they relate the role of NGOs in development to three main dimensions: NGOs as both an underlying process of social change; the tripartite division between three key institutional arenas of state, civil society and market; and the third relating to the relationship between localizing and globalizing tendencies in defining what NGOs do and are.

The term ‘third sector’ is debatable in its use with the term NPO or NGO as seen in the literature. A number of authors, such as Uphoff (1996: 17) dispute the use of the term ‘third sector’ as the term denotes the idea that being a third

sector means that NGOs are distinct from the “first government and second – commercial private sector”. The authors argue that this view is misleading as NGOs are viewed as having complimentary roles of government and private sector, as they are appropriate vehicles to increasing participation, promoting human rights, or strengthening local – level planning or as agents of democratization. The concept of ‘third sector’ is generally used to denote the idea that a NPO belongs neither to the public nor private sector. Rather, it is generally believed that its roles are different from profit and government entities (Hayes, 1996: 14). In this context, Hayes (1996: 14) argues that the concept of “independent sector” is used as an alternative to the third sector “in order to indicate its freedom from constraints of profits and politics”.

Although this characterization of being ‘an independent sector’ assumes that NGOs align themselves away from profits and politics, it can be misleading. The term independent could imply that NGOs do not cooperate with major stakeholders such as the government in bringing about development. Being an independent sector should rather mean that NGOs are seen as an alternative means of bringing about development. Although different, NGOs are therefore regarded as complementary players in change and development. In this case, NGOs are regarded as government companions in development. This dispels the notion that NGOs are anti-revolutionary or anti-government.

What is evident from the literature is the phasing out of certain concepts that had some relationship with “NGO”. The term ‘progressive’; a term used by organizations that found themselves in direct opposition to government and the need to break down the apartheid system organizations for instance was widely used in South Africa. However, the term is no longer used as South Africa is currently in a period of transition and political fluidity (Steyn, 1992: 63).

Due to the various definitions given to the concept ‘NGO’, Hayes (1996: 11) suggests that a “starting point in defining the NGO sector is to examine the role of the NGOs in society”. For instance, Van der Kooy (1992: 8) identifies the cluster of features that characterize NGOs below from which the remainder of this section draws lessons on the characteristics of NGOs from.

Van der Kooy describes NGOs as:

...organizations promoting development concerning a wide spectrum of development – related activities, responsible to their donors and to the communities they work for. They are relatively independent, altruistic organizations, established privately with objectives of rendering assistance and relief, and of transferring resources to promote directly or in-directly, development at grassroots level. They are often committed to the idea of popular participation, human (resource) development and community (social) education. As such, NGOs can be mediators between donors and recipients, and also be facilitators for development, even for other NGOs.

Having explained the different interpretations of the various definitions of the interrelated terms for NGOs, it was decided to use the synonymous concepts interchangeably in this study. This is in keeping with general practice in the field and also in the interest of providing some variety and respect for the use of the terminology of provided by different authors. It can further be argued that the use of terminology, without any doubt will forever be aligned to what NGOs feel should drive their existence. Thus the development of an NGO will normally play a role in the terminology that it uses. A clearer illustration will be painted in the next section that discusses the proliferation of NGOs.

2.3 The proliferation of NGOs

A feature of the development of NGOs is the fact that marked differences surfaced amongst NGO's in their understanding of their duties. This was particularly manifested by different eras of development and in different localities of activity⁵. Although there has been a wave of new NGO literature, both old and new literature discloses a distinction between pessimistic and optimistic historical motivations (Swanepoel, 1992: 15). In providing an analysis of NGO growth, this section shall be divided into the four-stage NGO development paradigm illustrated by Mitlin, Hickey and Bebbington (2006).

⁵ It is difficult to obtain exact figures on NGOs in operation at country level due to rapid growth of NGOs and unavailable registry systems in most countries. In 2001, an estimate of over 200 NGOs working in the field of HIV and Aids at country level in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia and Uganda (CAFS, 2001).

The authors attribute the growth of NGOs to the historical role NGOs have played in development. They divide the growth into four periods with no suggestions of precise dates. The first is characterized by NGOs involved in philanthropic action and advocacy; mission organizations, voluntary contributions, and promotion of peace or elimination of slavery. According to the authors, this phase paved way for the second phase when some of such organizations closed down during the 1960 and 1970s.

The second stage of NGO growth is characterized by a period when NGOs worked closely with governments. Mitlin, Hickey and Bebbington (2006: 16) make a reflection of this era as to when the sector “became increasingly critical, engaging more fully with the notion that it was imperative that NGOs elaborate and contribute to alternative arrangements among state, market and civil society (generally on a national rather than a transnational scale)”.

Third stage of the NGO development paradigm presents the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s when NGOs were particularly seen as effective means for delivering international relief and development programmes to those for whom the government could not cater for (Commins, 2000: 71).

Although issues relating to development NGOs are categorized in the third stage of NGO growth by Mitlin, Hickey and Bebbington (2006: 20), the proliferation of “Development NGOs”, are reported to have been established at the time of most of the best known specialized UN agencies (Eade, 2000: 9). The establishment of NGOs therefore aimed to achieve the practice behind why the concept development exists, which is “why poverty exists and persists, and about how to eradicate it”.

The fourth period of NGO growth is believed to have a close link to either issues relating to poverty reduction (Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington, 2006: 25) or to the two poles of neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic theory (Edwards & Hulme, 1996a:2). This is reflected in the many NGOs aligning themselves with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A number of

authors have however contested the worthiness of such goals as having the potential to rein and depoliticise the range of strategies open to NGOs in promoting development. For instance, Heeks (2005: 1) accuses MDGs as being neo-liberators, “an all – size fits all model and an invention from the north”. In that regard, the MDG agenda falls into the same trap as the old- modernization and globalization, which dominated the world in the 1960s and 1970s⁶ (Bonbright, 1992: 4).

2.3.1 The proliferation of international NGOs

The growth of International NGOs (INGOs) or networked NGOs is attributed to globalization; existing since 1960s (Swanepool, 1992: 17). As a result, the ideological dominance of neo-liberalism in the late 20th century; facilitation of sustainable changes through international advocacy, meant that such international NGOs have a less direct involvement at grassroots level, but greater need for maintaining strong institutional links at partner level (Madon, 2000: 2-4).

A positive effect on international growth of NGOs has been the establishments of an increase in a globally networked International NGO community interacting across the world and finding considerable common ground and scope for sharing information to increase the impact of development programmes (Madon, 2000: 4). Thus for many NGOs, the obvious strategy for increasing their impact on development is by expanding projects which have been judged to be successful. As already been noted, this by all means has a link to globalization. There is evidence of many NGOs based in developing countries following this trend beginning in the 1980s, where it led to the formation of British International NGOs (BINGOs). In the north, the trend went as far as NGOs expanding their operational budgets and staffing as well as increasing the number of countries in which they work (Edwards & Hulme, 2000: 48).

⁶ State centred modules are evident in the situation analysis conducted by CAFS (Centre for African Family Studies) discovered that many NGOs were founded to fill gaps and rectify deteriorated services in health services (CAFS, 2001).

Undoubtedly, a positive side of the picture and sometimes a contradicting picture can be attributed to NGO growth. Some see the growth of NGOs as an essential element to democratic societies and as vital means of self-expression. Yet others see them as efficient, decentralized mechanisms to deliver social services. Furthermore, some see them as opportunists in the global economy. However, because of different NGO and civil society expectations and revolution of globalization tendencies, to some extent, the search for civil society is ongoing as there are various roles in development to be played (Fowler, 2003).

Due to the distribution of offices for INGOs, many organizations have adopted decentralized; team based and distributed structures or network structures. According to Ahuja and Carley (1999: 741), such distributed structures or virtual structures have been enabled by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to help enhance coordination among staff. An example is OWI, whose operations form the basis of this study.

Furthermore, most INGOs have ensured that a major control factor of influence on the direction of management processes in the network relates to the process of institutionalisation. Institutionalisation is a normal practice that enhances organizational cohesiveness and overall effectiveness particularly if organisations have expanded organizational structures and complicated information flows leading to differing perspectives of an organisations mission (Rodriguez, 2005: 4). In this dissertation, institutionalisation of knowledge management will particularly refer to the coherent approach to the ways by which systems are in place and implemented to manage information and knowledge in the OWI network.

2.4 Classification of NGOs

It is necessary to classify NGOs in order to have a clearer picture of the type of NGO that is the focus of this study. The task of classifying NGOs is not easy due to the tremendous range and diversity of NGOs as seen from the historical overview and evolving nature of the sector analyzed in the previous section. Hayes (1996: 19) argues that at general level, classification of NPOs presents profound difficulties that are yet to be surmounted. Nevertheless, some of the approaches observed in the literature are as follows:

Eisenberg (1993) cited by Hayes (1996: 17) in his classification merely bisects the sector into those that promote self betterment, which he sees as essentially private and secondary organizations chiefly concerned with societal problems. Gatewood and Lahiff (1997: 133), as cited by Hayes (1996:18) classify NGOs according to activities focused at either members or nonmembers. Similarly, Roszkopf & Witt (n.d: 2-3) identified five categories of organization types that make up organizations belonging to NPO sector. These are the culture, leisure (for example) and advocacy sector; the welfare sector; the sector of church associations; the sector of political parties; and the business sector. Moyo (1996: 7-9) presents a typology of NGOs in relation to the strategies and approaches of NGOs. For instance he classifies the organizations into seven types by form or activity namely: Relief agencies; social welfare programmes; development project implementation; local community mobilization; research and technology development; advocacy and awareness-raising; and indigenous business lobby.

An attempt at classification that has proven difficult due to an overlap in activities is 'human rights and development organizations'. Organizations placed in this category view development in terms of rights in an international obligation that must be fulfilled irrespective of an individual or country's economic status or model (Nelson, 2003: 2014). Thus because development is viewed as a human right, most organizations practicing development are in some ways involved in human rights and advocacy work. For example, Amnesty International, originally a 'human rights NGO', adopted a new mission that included areas once considered as the domain of development work; such as economic, social and cultural rights (Nelson, 2003: 2015). Another example of a human rights and development network of organizations

is OneWorld International (cf. Appendix D for more information on the network's activities), which is the organization being surveyed in this study.

2.5 Coordination and governance of NGOs

At its most rudimentary level, coordination allows organizations to know about one another's activities. At higher levels, coordination may enable strategic planning that enhances multi-agency efficiency and program delivery. It is generally believed that NGO coordination plays a key role in NGO efficiency and delivery systems. Although the effectiveness of coordination is highly appreciated, Moyo (1996: 31) argues that the effectiveness of NGOs is often undermined by inefficiencies that arise from poor coordination of NGOs. Significantly, Moyo notes that the durability and impact of NGOs tend to depend on the institutional sustainability of NGOs, their governance structures, especially their leadership, constituencies and accountability. Indeed, for wider political reasons, NGOs can only guarantee their institutional sustainability through a reliable grounding and legitimacy within the communities they work. They require strength vis-à-vis state structures and the determining role played by donors.

Although information sharing and strategic planning if conducted in an efficient manner could result to organisation efficiency, the key problem with various efforts at coordinating NGOs has been the control-oriented coordination. According to Moyo (1996:32), a number of NGO activities are threatened because donors and Government agencies tend to mobilize power with which to dominate the NGO scheme. Governments can exercise the wrong type of control particularly when NGOs are viewed as a threat. In such instances, governments may use the non-accountability of NGOs or accountability to no one except wealthy foreign organizations as an excuse to harness and control them (Moore & Steward, 2000: 81). However, it should be noted that the control-oriented factors placed on NGOs differ depending on the type of NGO. Fowler (2003) reports that:

the reality is more subtle and complex. For example, typically CSOs dedicated to welfare provision and supplementing state services are better tolerated and encouraged than those established to contest policy or influenced and monitor governance, while other types are seriously controlled if not actively repressed.

2.6 Accountability among NGOs

The literature shows that there is a demand on NGOs from both funders and clients to raise questions on accountability. To a great extent, the interest in focus has been on improving the measurement and tackling of programme results and programme assessment rather than on general efficiency of an organization (Herman & Renz, 2004: 694). However, it is also evident that more pressure is being put on NGOs to exercise greater accountability due in part to a series of highly publicized scandals that have eroded public confidence in non profit organizations. Coupled with the rapid growth of the sector around the world, there has been a need to place tighter control of NGO activities (Ebrahim, 2003: 813). Therefore, accountability is seen as a means for NGOs to take internal liability for determining their organizational mission and values, opening up to public scrutiny and assessing performance in relation to goals (Ebrahim, 2003: 815).

Due to the rapid growth in the number of NGOs, it is not an uncommon phenomenon for society to constantly probe NGOs with questions on 'who they are and what they do'. Accountability and NGOs are linked words that have put NGOs to the test as the quote from Moore and Stewart (2000: 81) shows:

Who are these people accountable to? They set themselves up as specialists and experts on problems that they define themselves, live entirely on foreign money, and can do what they want provided they keep their funders happy. They claim to speak on behalf of the poor, the disabled....aids victims or whatever, but how do we know that they are in any way representing or serving their clients?

Scholars and practitioners of development have offered a number of definitions on accountability. For instance, at a theoretical level, accountability is viewed as

the attachment involving the giving of demands for the basis of performance (Hayes, 1996: 97). Accountability is also referred to as a process and means by which individuals and organizations report to a accepted authorities and are held answerable for their actions (Edwards & Hulme, 1996a: 967). The literature also relates accountability to the legal, financial, process and programme dimension of performance. Hayes (1996: 98) refers to the need for accountability for probity and legality activities, which ensures the proper use of funds in an authorized manner.

Accountability is also distinguished between short-term functional accountability (which account for resources, resource use and immediate inputs and) and strategic or functional accountability, for the impacts that an NGO actions may have on the actions of other organizations and wider environment (Edwards & Hulme, 1996b: 8). The various constituencies that NGOs are accountable to such as clients, employees, funders, licensing bodies and boards of directors, governments and private businesses, are likely to use different criteria in evaluating the organization's effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 2004: 695).

Furthermore, NGOs are not able to provide equal accountability to all constituencies at all times as they face difficulties in prioritizing and reconciling multiple accountabilities (Edwards & Hulme, 1996b: 9). Therefore, multiple accountabilities has presented many organizations in the sector (just as with any organization) with problems, particularly the possibilities of having to over account, because of multiple demands or being able to under account because each overseeing authority assumes that another authority is taking a close look at actions and results (Madon, 2001: 6).

The different constituencies to which NGOs are accountable to are summarized in Table 2.1

Table 2.1
SCOPE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AMONG NGOs

TYPE OF NGO	ARENA OF RESPONSIBILITY						
	Boards	Members (Constituencies)	Beneficiaries (Project Participants)	Donors	Government Ministries/ Registrar	General Public	Other NGOs
CBOs	-	/	X	-	-	-	-
Intermediary NGOs	/	X	?	/	X	-	-
Service/ Trusts	/	X	/	/	?	?	?
KEY							
/	Key level of accountability						
X	Secondary level of accountability						
?	General responsiveness to expectations						
-	Non critical area of accountability						

Source: Moyo, 1996: 16. Towards an understanding of Zimbabwean NGOs.

2.7 Financial dependency of NGOs

Multilateral development agencies and governments are recognizing NGOs as potential partners in development. As a result, more and more sources of NGO funding are derived from external sources to assist NGOs implement development programmes (Van der Heijden, 1987: 103). Accurate figures for aid are hard to come by; particularly figures relating to funding for NGOs based in the developing world. In 1991, Van der Kooy (1991: 11) reported that 15 percent of all financial development assistance worldwide was channeled through NGOs.

At country level, figures tend to vary. For instance in 1996 in the UK alone, there was a rising trend of dependence on government grants alternating between 18 to 52 percent in 1994, a rise from 7 to 15 percent indicated a decade earlier (Edwards & Hulme, 1996a: 962). The general indication in the literature is that the figures in the United States and Central Europe are higher, where as much as 50 to 90 percent of government grants were allocated to NGOs (Edwards & Hulme, 1996a: 962). Significantly, percentages relating to NGO funding reveal that the majority of the finances provided to NGOs are increasing in proportion to the aid granted to third world governments throughout the world (Moyo, 1996: 18).

In as much as Northern NGOs are privileged to obtain funding, the literature shows that the majority of the grants from Northern NGOs are eventually passed on to NGOs in developing countries (Edwards & Hulme, 1996a: 962; Bonbright, 1992: 4). However, the relationship between NGOs in the developed and developing world is viewed as misrepresenting the power of Northern NGOs as funders of Southern NGOs. This type of funding is attached to conditionalities to receiving countries while foreign programmes have meant that local demands of Northern NGOs have in some way suffered (Clad & Stone, 1993: 196).

The main sources of NGO funding is predominantly based on donations and grants from external donors, although a small proportion is increasingly coming from governments, communities, private entrepreneurs, and to a lesser extent self funding mechanisms, such as membership fees, which have not significantly reduced NGO dependency on external donors as the fees rarely are able to sustain NGO operations at a large margin (Moyo, 1996:18). One view is that where NGOs pursue profits, they should face the same conditions (taxes, duties and regulations) as private firms. Yet, in the face of a weak internal financial base among NGO constituencies and unreliable donor funding, NGO

sustainability of programmes and dependency remain unresolved issues (Oronje, 2006: 82)⁷.

2.7.1 The effect of external funds on NGO sustainability

It is widely noticed that external donor dependency comprises a large amount of NGO funding and therefore has affected the ability of NGOs to be self – financing sustainable institutions as noted from the above discussions. Moyo (1996: 18) notes that NGOs, unlike governments, rarely generate income through charges and fees for services provided. Additionally, NGOs particularly those based in developing countries do not obtain development loan finance (Hudock, 1997: 590). A trend therefore is that NGOs give to their members, goods and services without charge therefore creating a welfare oriented management system for NGOs, which ‘breeds a dependency syndrome and sustainability problems’ for them (Moyo, 1996: 18).

A further effect and concern is that the willingness of NGOs that are officially funded may not be able to voice out unpopular issues due to possible strains in relationship with governments. For instance, in Africa, there is growing evidence that NGOs that depend on external funding are more likely to be regarded as illegitimate by their own governments in policy debates (Edwards & Hulme, 1996b: 6).

The literature further indicates that donor priorities tend to follow changing international policy fads to the detriment of NGO programmes. This creates a situation where NGOs are suspicious of the intentions of donors, the conditions attached to funds, and the lack of donor transparency (Moyo, 1996: 20). Pearce (2000: 26) has noted that external funding often means that donors make a shift to their funding to specific and short-term projects based on erratic criteria relating to topics and geographical priorities, with much greater conditionality

⁷ Empirical evidence from a study on challenges faced by the African Population and Health Research Centre showed that inadequate and delayed disbursement of funds disrupted the continuation of dissemination workshops for their research projects due to shortage of funding (Oronje, 2006: 82).

attached and without covering institutional overheads. This is illustrated by Mitlan, Hickey and Bebbington (2006: 12-13) who state that:

This bundling has meant that NGOs have been subject to the dominant ideas and rules that travel with development finance – in particular ideas related to neoliberalism and security. This has made it difficult for many northern NGOs, who in turn pass on these difficulties to their partners. Indeed, as Northern NGOs [and Southern] talk of partnership and de centering, their means of exerting influence remain powerful. For these reasons, some northern NGOs stand firm to not accept resources that come bundled with such rules

According to the authors, the funding of poverty related programmes has meant that there is less funding for NGO programme development and innovation, and more for the management and administration of state programmes. As a result, there is a growing trend among NGOs to compete among themselves due to diminishing funds. Competition among NGOs has also resulted to NGOs spending considerable time chasing money that is not very useful to them. For instance, Moyo (1996: 19) argues that the existing funding pressure within NGOs forces them to engage in projects that give quick returns, to the detriment of the longer term development oriented projects and institution building. As a result, this diminishes the sustainability of NGOs. It is further observed in the literature that a greater effect in competition for funds contributes to the unlikely possibility of fostering collaborative relationships on which effective policy alliances are built (Fowler, 1991: 53).

The literature indicates that reliance on outside support particularly becomes a problem in instances where funding has been guaranteed but only guaranteed for a short period. For instance, Moyo (1996, 20) notes that the duration of funding often ranges from one to ten years, however, the problem in reliance therefore means that the majority of NGOs receiving confirmed funding for only one year at a time therefore resulting to donor fatigue. Empirical evidence shows that if support for funds is not reliable it often limits an NGO's ability to strategically plan and implement their activities (Hudock, 1997: 590). Often, heavy dependence on donors sometimes connote that NGO projects are held in abeyance due to delays in disbursement and increased donor insistence on

disbursing funds in small trenches, in the interest of greater accountability (Moyo, 1996: 19).

A further general complaint among NGOs with regard to the use of funds relates to most donors not providing a small percentage of grants for administrative purposes (Moyo, 1996: 20). Significantly, most donors prefer to fund projects over funding administration, capacity building and capital equipment (Hudock, 1997: 592). This is because donors view capacity support as an overhead expense that should be minimized (SocialEdge, 2006). Yet, office rentals constitute a significant element in core costs and are a major problem for the bulk of NGOs that do not own offices.

Donor interest and 'direct involvement' in alleviating poverty has created a new trend in which there has been a switch to direct funding of NGOs in the South from donors, instead of via Northern NGOs (Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington, 2006: 26). Although this trend has empowered NGOs in developing countries, it has at the same time created a strain in relationships between NGOs in the South and their counterparts in the North. Manji (2000: 75) notes that as official donors fund NGO based in developing countries directly, the institutional identities of such NGOs grow less dependent in Northern NGOs and they began to set their own agendas and development programmes.

It is further noticed in the literature that there has been patriotism of Southern NGOs by Northern NGO counterparts (Manji, 2000: 75-79)⁸, therefore implying that Northern NGOs are becoming more like donors than NGO partners. Some authors argue that although a North – South relationship divide may exist, a

⁸ Such dilemmas were shared at the 1990s UK review of effectiveness of north to south aid, with a special emphasis on ODA (currently DFID). The study argued that British International NGOs (BINGOs) for instance had failed to accept the shift where donors could make direct funding to Southern NGOs despite having long dealings with number of organisations. Their arguments against direct funding is believed to lie in the belief that Southern NGOs lack accountability; lack experience in undertaking Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of projects and managing projects according to donor requirements; fear that direct funding could easily make NGOs shift their accountability from their own constituencies towards donor, thus creating donor driven agendas in project implementation. However, it was felt that BINGOs were in fact afraid of their own futures if they were not entrusted with funds. (Manji, 2000: 75 - 79).

south –south divide is eminent among bigger and smaller NGOs in developing countries. Mitlin, Hickey and Bebbington (2006: 26) argue that while NGOs in developing countries have been successful in raising funds from donor sources, smaller NGOs with less capacity have had problems to raise funds due to bureaucracy of bilateral agencies. In that context, emerging NGOs in the South are viewed as funders when they fund other NGOs through their capacity development programmes.

Finally, it is noted that external funding mechanisms have a negative effect on enabling time and space for NGOs to articulate approaches and new ideas due to its compromised position. Edwards & Hulme (1996b: 5) argue that when official agencies finance service delivery, they expect contracted outputs to be achieved and less interested in a learning process.

2.8 NGO governance and leadership

“The governance of NGOs implies the totality of functions that are required to be carried out in relation to the internal functions and external relations of organizations” (Tandon, 1996: 42). In this way, governance should address issues relating to vision, mission and strategy; future directions and long –term strategic considerations. It addresses the issues of policy in relation to internal programming, staffing and resources. An NGO board is often associated with the governance of NGOs. The functions of an NGO board are said to consist of defining the mission and policy of the organization; dealing with personnel matters, including policy, selection and overseeing staff; maintaining the image of the organization among its constituents; providing financial stability for the organization and maintain the continuity of the board (McLaughlin, 1986: 219 - 220, cited by Hayes, 1996). The roles and structure of NGO boards are best illustrated by Tandon (1996: 42-46) who provides a four-part classification of the role of the board in relationship to the stages of growth within an organization. His categories consist of four types of boards: family, invisible, staff boards and professional boards.

However, there has been much debate surrounding the “reality of such forms of governance....in relation to the efficacy and effectiveness of governing mechanisms” (Hayes, 1996: 54). For instance, it is generally believed that the various NGO governing bodies exist with varied effectiveness (CAFS, 2001: vii). This concurs with Tandon’s typology which shows that the form and functioning of governance mechanisms may be inadequate from the perspective of accountability as an inactive board may limit the full scale of governance of NGOs to enable continual, objective, and appropriate feedback on the implementation and management functions of the organization (Tandon, 1996: 43). In that context, CAFS (2001: vii) argues that “there is a need to focus on understanding of the roles of the board; dealing with potential conflicts between founder members and younger professionals; code of conduct for boards; leadership development; sustainability; and appropriate management models”.

Although a basic understanding of NGO governance has been illustrated in this section, considerable ambiguity remains with respect to the situation of governance within NGO networks and associations. However, Tandon (1996: 46) admits to a lot of unproductive and frustrating experiences with governance in “sets of independent and autonomous institutions” within networked NGOs due to their complex structures.

2.9 NGO management roles and positions

An important element of management functions is recognizing the leadership roles of management in a typical NGO. As opposed to governance which focuses on policy and identity, management focuses on the day to day implementation of programmes (Tandon, 1996: 53). Therefore, the quality of NGO leadership varies depending on the level of the NGO, its degree of specialization, range and the character of its constituency. According to Roskopf & Witt (n.d: 5) NGOs often comprise of leadership roles played by board members, executive committees and their boards or their Annual General Assemblies, by executive or administrative directors and by their key programme officers, volunteers, members and stakeholders. As the leadership

roles of board members has already been discussed in the previous paragraphs, this section shall focus on other NGO management positions and key issues that affect their performance and general performance of an NGO.

Programme and administrative officers are often regarded as the professionals of NGOs and often as second tier staff, although maintaining them is often a problem as most NGOs cannot afford to hire better qualified staff, therefore resulting in large gaps between top and next ring leaders in terms of analytical, technical and organizational skills (Hayes, 1996:24). The gap in skills is said to place work and administrative burdens on a lean leadership whose abilities are most useful to organizational, mobilization and advocacy matters (Moyo, 1996: 24).

Loyalty is often indicated in the literature among the reasons why it is hard to keep professional staff. For instance Hayes (1996: 77) is of the opinion that professional staff is often motivated by dual standards: those of their organization and those of their professional colleagues or development. As a result, the latter may be inconsistent with organizational objectives or undermine their allegiance to the organization (Newman & Wallender, 1978: 26, cited by Hayes, 1996: 77).

Hayes (1996: 78) argues that the standards created by professionals may create rigidity and therefore interfere with the changing needs of the beneficiaries. However, whereas other professionals accept the technical competence of professionals, Moyo (1996: 24) notes that professional staff are often limited in the field of management and therefore provide no guarantee that technical training and competence would translate to administrative ability. This limitation is said to exist because it is noted that professional education does not usually translate into administrative ability.

The use of volunteers to ensure programme implementation although accepted in many NGO circles is said to bring complications in the management of NGO affairs particularly if management is not well specialized in volunteer work. According to Hayes (1996: 78), managers of volunteers would do well to be

applied sociologists and marketing experts who have the know how of uncovering the special network of people who are potential volunteers and should further be able to make the idea of volunteering fascinating and irresistible even without pay.

Additional challenges of NGO staffing lie in the lack of security in employment and career structure due to funding constraints that lead to high staff turnover and shortage of experienced staff (Hayes, 1996: 78; Laporta, 2002; Moyo, 1996: 25). Staff payment problems arise from the immeasurable nature of service activities which do not make it easy to link rewards and/ punishment directly to output, as a result, this makes the pay element of staff motivation more problematic (Newman & Wallender, 1978, cited by Hayes, 1996: 92).

The literature further indicates that certain established control systems have implications for NGOs. For instance, Hayes (1996: 92) is of the opinion that the involvement of different categories of staff such as professionals, volunteers and administrative workers, add to the basic constraints such as: professionals' resistance to control (Child, 1984 cited by Hayes, 1996: 92). Bearing this in mind, Newman and Wallender, (1978: 30, cited by Hayes, 1996: 92) suggest that managers design their organizations to appeal to prevailing professional norms in instances where professionals dominate a workplace. Control is essential, because if professionals and volunteers reluctantly accept control; this may negatively impact the operation of administrative employees in the organization (Hayes, 1996: 92) and consequently to performance and implementation of programmes.

2.10 Comparative advantages of NGOs

Given the relatively weak institutional and funding basis of most NGOs, it is sometimes difficult to bring out the comparative advantage of NGOs, if they are to be compared to other types of development institutions based in the public or government sector. Nevertheless, the arguments brought out on the comparative

advantage of NGOs relates to the type of relations existing between NGOs with other stakeholders and issues relating to performance evaluation.

Biggs and Neame (1996: 34) provide caution to why there is a problem with regards to 'NGO comparative advantage thinking'. Firstly, the authors argue that it cannot be assumed that an NGO can make it without a government as the nature of government and what it does with its power and resources have a determining factor on whether an NGO is able to achieve its work. Furthermore, the authors argue that one has to look at specific NGOs in particular context to see whether they do better in certain circumstances. In their second argument Biggs and Neame (1996: 34) state that comparative advantage for an NGO depends on the types of relationships built with stakeholders, particularly if they are able to form unambivalent relationships with beneficiaries and stakeholders and plan their organizations in ways that are optimal for the situations and development tasks selected for themselves. The third argument relates to the economic theory that assumes that NGOs are not in the best position to distribute wealth. Thus, the authors argue that it is more appropriate for actors to concentrate on their own wealth and abilities.

Difficulties in measuring performance is brought out further by Edwards and Hulme (1996b: 4) who attribute the absence of a large body of reliable evidence in the impact and effectiveness of NGO operations. For instance, problems in obtaining comprehensive assessments was experienced by the Building Digital Opportunities (BDO⁹) programme in Sub Saharan Africa due to the extremely broad and complex partners and projects that a number of partners are involved in. Due to the broad nature of programmes, BDO viewed the learning study as 'a rather arbitrary affair' (Gerster & Zimmermann, 2003: 5)

⁹ The BDO programme is co-funded by the Department for International Development (DFID, UK), the Directorate General for International Co-operation (DGIS, Netherlands), the Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation (DGIS, Netherlands), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC, Switzerland) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The programme focus is to identify, remove key barriers to and develop opportunities for poverty focused ICT for development, through a broad range of issues. Five NGOs implement the BDO programme: the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), OneWorld International (OWI) and the Panos Institute (Panos).

An exception to evidence given on the performance of NGOs is the area of micro policy reform where a growing number of case studies demonstrate that NGOs are able to influence governments and official agencies especially when they work together (Edwards & Hulme, 1996b: 5). Furthermore as strength in support of their existence, NGO advocacy is seen as an advantage. According to Hayes (1996: 31) NGO advocacy can be relevant in that policy advocacy for instance represents the campaigning role of NGOs and focuses on providing a service for organizations or citizens needing help and who do not have a voice. Additionally, social services and relief sectors are seen to be more obvious in measuring performance (Moyo, 1996: 29).

The literature indicates that despite the many weaknesses facing NGOs, they are still at an advantage in many areas, particularly with regards to proximity to clients. Moyo (1996: 25) states that NGOs are able to “initiate projects, provide services and project support in areas not reached by government or other development agencies, especially where the natural resource base and infrastructure are weakest”. Hayes (1996: 26) further argues that the type of services provided by states are not consumer specific as states endeavor to provide only basic levels of provision whereby NGOs tend to focus on particular areas of interest thereby they are able to provide specialized services. Although specialization addresses specific needs neglected by the state, it is apparent that shortages are both in groups served and geographical areas. By being flexible enough to provide specific services to targeted groups, Hayes (1996: 29) further argues that NGOs are close to their communities. Therefore, NGO proximity to communities means that there is more likelihood for them to target vulnerable communities than government or other development agencies (Scheepers, 1992: 53).

Innovative is an ascribed advantage of the NGO sector. Innovation has been supported as having the ability to experiment and improve on past performance in instances like the provision of information services (Johnson, 1981 quoted by Hayes, 1996: 30). Bigg and Neame (2000: 45) argue that although NGOs have innovative skills in developing new methods and approaches for research and

development planning that can be adopted by other actors such as government, the tribute in innovation should not necessarily go to NGOs but to combined teams from governments, research institutions, universities, and international institutions, as well as field practitioners who often times have no NGO affiliation.

The ability of NGOs to scale up their operations using official funds and using the New Policy Agenda to make their voices heard more through lobbying and advocacy is generally noted as an advantage (Edwards & Hulme, 1996b: 2). However, Edwards and Hulme (1996b: 5) caution that as NGOs expand their services for the sake of growth, one might expect falloff in their flexibility, speed of response and innovative ability particularly if they are more reliant on official funding. Furthermore although organizational ability may be manageable, bureaucratic tendencies may arise, and this maybe problematic for any agency.

INGOs are particularly regarded as important in their capacity to influence global policy on development issues such as poverty alleviation, sustainable development and human rights due to their simultaneous attachment to local places and cultures on one hand, and their critical engagement with global institutions on the other (Madon, 2000: 2). However, despite strategic advantage of INGOs in terms of multi-level reach, their contribution to date remains limited to small-scale success stories than to affecting development directions more broadly (Madon, 2000: 5).

The literature indicates that NGOs generally provide cost effective services such as appropriate technology and the use of volunteers in the sector. Nevertheless, there is contradiction to the issue of the sector being able to make savings on labour costs. For instance, Preston (1990: 15 quoted by Hayes (1996: 27) noted that wages among NPO staff in 1996 were on average 10 to 15 percent lower than counterparts employed in profit making organizations. Hayes (1996: 27) however disputes this finding due to the tremendous variations in NPOs. In a UK based research carried out by Mellor (1985 quoted by Hayes, 1996: 27) regarding staffing, it was discovered that employees had relied on goodwill to

the degree that they had contravened employment laws. In other words, Hayes argues that although savings may be gained, this may involve less than equitable treatment of staff in comparison to their counterparts working in the commercial sector.

NGOs are recognized for their ability to mobilize local people with limited resources for projects and attaining greater levels of participation and compliance (Cernea, 1988: 17). Collier (2000: 122) argues that an NGO project has the potential of providing local government with the means of mobilizing people and "integrating them in the planning and implementation of economic and social development –dependency, of course on the degree of decentralization in government." An NGO is therefore an excellent means of establishing or reinforcing a process whereby people and government work together to solve local problems. Hayes (1996: 34) supports this idea by stating that mobilization services offered by NGOs afford opportunities to citizens to become involved by contributing money, time and skills towards providing a range of services and activities. However, participation of beneficiaries is often limited as it is generally noted that beneficiaries are often involved in participation at a later stage of projects rather than at the formulation phases that attribute successful projects (IICD, 2005).

The issue of NGO flexibility presents further debate relating to whether NGOs are able to perform more effectively than other counterparts. It has been noted that NGOs are flexible in adopting project management systems, projects and technologies suited for local need and use (IICD, 2005). However, it has also been noticed that the management systems and information to most effectively adapt the projects to the changing market conditions are not adequately organized (Moyo, 1996: 28 - 29). In instances where NGOs may have well documented management systems, they are believed to be weak in their capacity in results-based management, and therefore need to focus on the element of human potential as well as stockholder's interests (CAFS, 2001: 7).

Although there is general consensus with regards to comparative advantage of NGOs, the above observations seem to reveal that government and the more

developed sector of private enterprises will continue to play a key development role. However, NGOs have the opportunity to play intermediary roles between state and non state institutions in respect of participation, accountability and development (Dias, 1993: cited by Collier, 2000: 123) and in that sense can be regarded as key players, if only they can marshal their inherent strengths properly, rise to the challenge of their weaknesses, and see their diversity differently and harness this as an asset in order become winners (Van Wyk, 1992: 2).

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 INTRODUCTION TO KEY KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 Definitions of Knowledge, Information and data

Data, Information, and knowledge are concepts that have often been interchanged by a number of people. Although the three concepts are frequently taken to be the same thing, they are in fact quite different in meaning and application (Wilson, 2002). According to Beckman (1999: 1-5), the three concepts form a coherent part of the knowledge hierarchy. Beckman further mentions that at the bottom of the hierarchy is data meaning facts, images, or sounds, second in the knowledge hierarchy is information, which means formatted, filtered, and summarized data.

The third concept, knowledge, in the hierarchy is a broad and abstract notion that appears to be a recent 'rebirth' as it has created current debates particularly in the Western world. However, it is not a new concept and has been addressed by people as long as they have thought seriously about their work. The early hunters were for instance concerned about the expertise and skills of their team mates when they went to capture prey (Wiig, 1997: 2); ancient Greek scholars such as Aristotle used the term 'knowledge' in their philosophical works (Wilson, 2002; Demarest, 1997: 375).

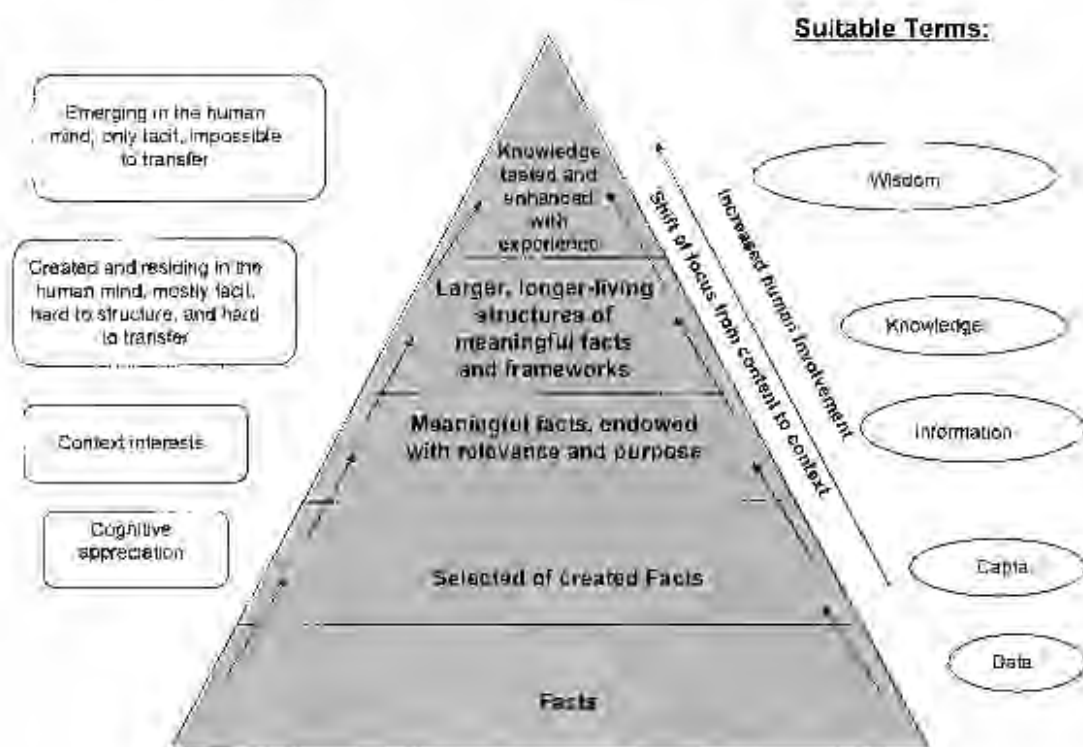
Beckman (1999: 1-3) defines knowledge as instincts, ideas, rules and procedures that guide actions and decisions. According to Beckman, the phrase knowledge may therefore be defined as organized information applicable to problem solving, therefore providing reasoning about information and data to actively enable performance, problem solving, decision making, learning and teaching (Beckman, 1999: 1-3).

Wilson (2002) places an emphasis on individual knowledge rather than organisation knowledge in his definition. Wilson defines knowledge as "what

we know: knowledge involves the mental processes of comprehension, understanding and learning that go in the mind and only in the mind, however much they involve interaction with the world outside the mind, and interaction with others”.

Some authors add a fourth category to the knowledge hierarchy by including the concept of ‘wisdom’, which they believe increases the context sensitivity and filtration through human cognition from data to knowledge (Schueber, 2003: 11). The data to wisdom pyramid is illustrated in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1
The Data to Wisdom Pyramid



Taken from Schueber, 2003: 9

3.2 The epistemological dimension of knowledge

The Literature identifies knowledge in two forms; tacit and explicit knowledge. According to Gupta, Iyer and Aronson (2000: 18), Polanyi first distinguished tacit and explicit knowledge in 1958. Gamble & Blackwell (2001:11) define tacit knowledge as knowledge that is about experience, wisdom and empathy. For instance, they refer to this knowledge as the type that provides the energy that creates great cooks, artists, musicians, poets and the same energy that differentiates an outstanding businessperson from a good one.

The literature remains divided as to the possibility of whether tacit knowledge may or may not be captured. On one hand, Polanyi (1958 cited by Wilson, 2002) argues that tacit knowledge cannot be captured, as it “is hidden knowledge even from the consciousness of the knower”. Furthermore, Wilson (2002) argues that tacit knowledge involves comprehending issues; a process, which in itself is rarely understood. In other words, tacit knowledge is hard to grasp as it is information that is contained in people’s minds and the difficulty lies in documenting, sharing and managing it effectively (Goh, 2005: 11).

On the other hand, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1994: 47-90) argue that tacit knowledge can be captured by converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge through a three-part knowledge creation¹⁰ theory that focuses on knowledge creation at individual, group, organisational and inter-organisational levels. The first relates to a knowledge conversion process of socialisation, externalisation combination and internalisation; the second relates to the context of Ba¹¹; and the third relates to knowledge assets¹². The knowledge creation spiral enables organisational knowledge creation that centres on the continual dialog between

¹⁰ The knowledge creation process is discussed further under the section dealing with the ontological dimension of knowledge.

¹¹ Ba is a space for interaction meant to encourage interorganisational communities and organisations engage in the knowledge creation process. Ba enables a nurtured culture, a language to facilitate the exchange of ideas and an atmosphere of trust and care (Ahmadjian, 2004: 227-245; Brannback, 2003: 28-38)

¹² Knowledge assets consist of organisational resources such as people, artefacts, computer systems (Koch et al, 2002: 15)

tacit and explicit knowledge, and the social interaction that enables knowledge sharing between individuals.

Wilson (2002) however believes that Nonaka (2001) could have easily misunderstood Polanyi's analysis of 'Tacit knowledge'. Wilson (2002) is of the opinion that what Nonaka could be referring to is 'implicit knowledge', which consists of previously unexpressed but expressible knowledge.

This expressible knowledge is defined by Gamble and Blackwell (2001: 11) as "explicit knowledge" as it can be expressed in words, numbers and for instance can be stored in an artefact, such as paper, a drawing, or a computer. Because this knowledge can be stored, it tends to be more formal and systematic (Beckman, 1996:1-5).

It is quite evident from the views held by the different authors that the dividing line between tacit, implicit and explicit knowledge is dependant on whether knowledge can be captured, transferred or understood to some recognisable form or not. It can further be argued that if tacit knowledge is hard to grasp and understand, explicit knowledge when converted from tacit knowledge is of a different and perhaps lower value. This is attributed to the difficulties experienced in documenting information from people's minds. As a result, it can be argued that tacit knowledge will always have a higher value.

3.3 The ontological dimension of knowledge

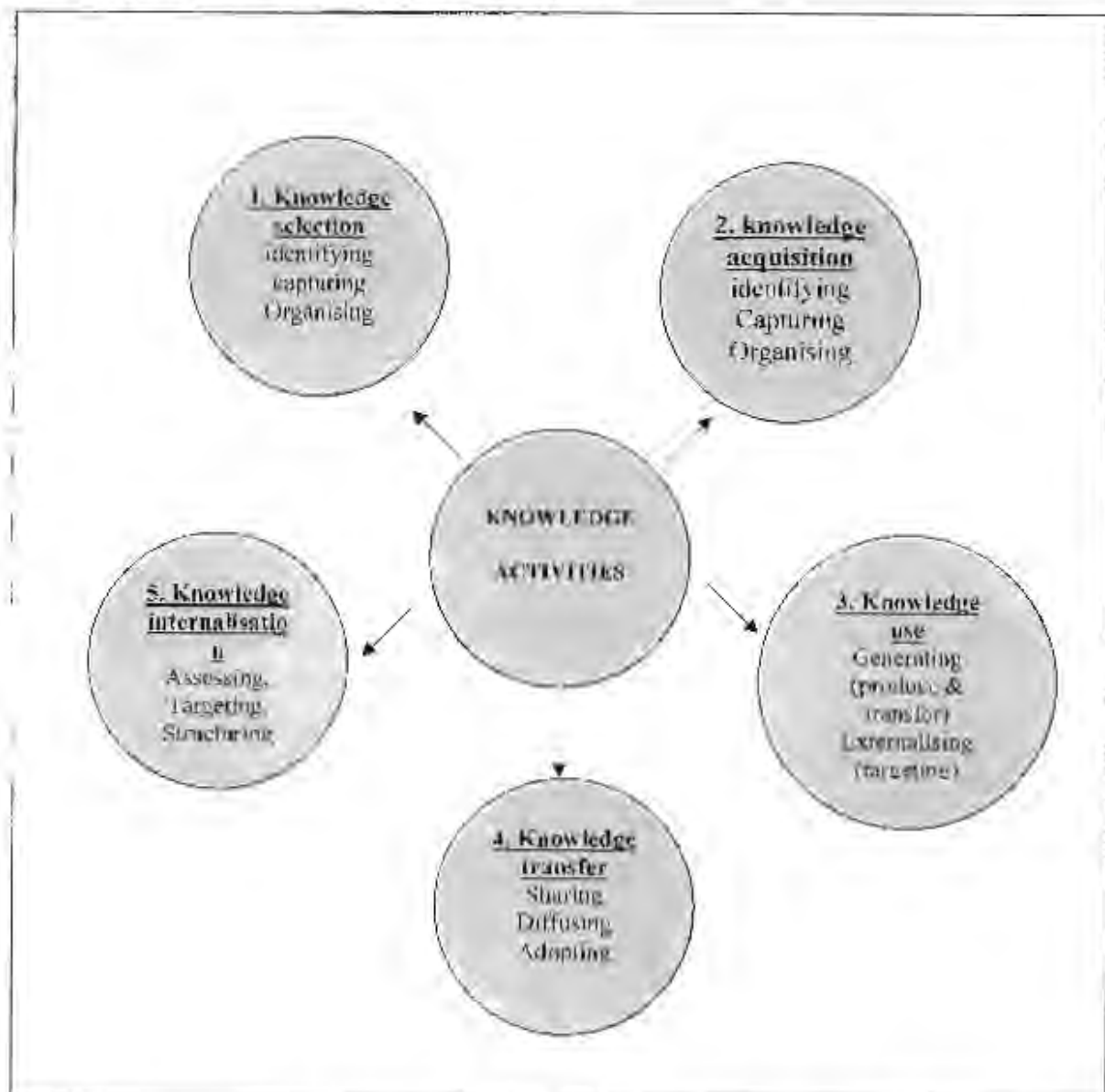
The ontological dimension shows the theoretical process of how knowledge is created, used and transferred in individuals and organisations. The knowledge activity processes that enhance knowledge creation are discussed below using knowledge creation theories obtained from Holsapple & Joshi as discussed by Koch and others (2002: 13-21) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (2004: 47).

3.3.1 Knowledge management processes

According to Koch and others (2002: 16), the knowledge management process is in five stages: knowledge selection, knowledge acquisition, knowledge generation, internalisation and externalisation. Figure 3.2 illustrates the main elements of the knowledge management processes in summarised form.

Figure 3.2

Summary of knowledge management processes



The role of knowledge selection is viewed as an extremely important role in KM. Holsapple and Joshi (1999: 7-1 – 7-18) state that although an organization can have vast knowledge resources, it is of little significance if the knowledge

relevant to some need is not easily and readily available at the desired time, place and form.

The process of selection often involves formal and informal socialisation. Koch and others state that this process is different between operational and strategic layers of an organisation. The operational layer may consist of an informal socialisation process whereby members become aware of the location of varying types of knowledge. Informal socialisation is facilitated by open shared working areas. Executing knowledge selection allows participants to easily draw upon existing organisational resources rather than acquire the same knowledge from external resources or re-invent the wheel through knowledge generation (Koch et al, 2002:16).

An important aspect of knowledge selection involves capturing knowledge. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) the way in which knowledge is captured depends to a large extent on whether it is tacit or explicit knowledge. Koch and others (2002, 17) are of the opinion that through socialisation systems such as shared meanings and effective communication, tacit knowledge can be transferred.

The process of knowledge acquisition requires that knowledge be internalised into an organization's knowledge resource in an appropriate manner in order to make future selection possible or effective (Holsapple, & Joshi, 1999: 7-2). Koch and others are of the opinion that knowledge acquisition usually occurs after knowledge selection fails to address a knowledge need. In other words, knowledge acquisition is a process that identifies knowledge in the organisation's external environment and transforms it into a representation that can be internalised and/or used within an organisation (Holsapple & Joshi, 1999: 7-3).

The process of using knowledge is the activity of applying existing knowledge to generate new knowledge and / or produce an externalisation of knowledge (Holsapple & Joshi, 1999: 7-14). Generating knowledge can therefore be applied to meet a knowledge need when knowledge selection fails and when

external knowledge is unavailable or too time consuming and /or unable to be acquired (Koch and others, 2002: 17). In knowledge generation, managerial influences and existing knowledge resources are enablers (Koch and others, 2002: 17). According to Koch and others, knowledge generation is enhanced through a variety of means such as weekly meetings, which can help has been done effectively, what needs improvement, and what measures can be taken to address challenges. Facilitation of knowledge generation can further be done by empowering employees to initiate knowledge generation activities and hiring employees with an appetite for learning; developing participant knowledge including an understanding of processes within an organisation and their impact, and establishing a culture where staff in an organisation are able to improve processes and create an environment that encourages experimentation and an infrastructure that allows socialisation and reflection time.

The internalisation process is an activity that alters the organizational knowledge resources based on the acquired, selected or generated knowledge. Knowledge flows from the three activities are received which aim to produce knowledge flows that impact an organisations state of knowledge (Holsapple & Joshi, 1999: 7-14). Koch and others state that once knowledge is produced, it can become part of an organisation's existing knowledge resources, can be used in future internal activities, and can be transferred to external recipients for their use. However, in order to transfer knowledge to external recipients, there is need for recipients to be aware of the purpose, services and knowledge is available. This is because the first stage of externalisation is governed by an organisation's purpose, which in turn lays out the intended services, products and recipients. Koch and others (2002), further believe that the efficient execution of the other knowledge manipulation activities and their related enablers, socialisation and downturn¹³ also enable externalisation.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (2004: 47) come up with a theory that focuses on knowledge creation at individual, group and organisational and inter-organisational level. The theory centres on four modes of interaction which

¹³ Down-time is known to enable one to ponder upon external recipient needs and develop social relationships so that one is able to understand issues and their context (Koch et al, 2002: 17).

constitute the 'engine' of the entire knowledge creation process comprising of socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2004: 47) According to the authors, and in accordance with the socialisation process described by Holsapple & Joshi (1999: 7-14), the socialisation process involves sharing experiences and creating tacit knowledge such as technical skills. The externalisation process involves articulating tacit knowledge into explicit concepts thus creating a concept by combining deduction and induction (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2004: 57).

The 'combination process' is a process of systemising concepts into a knowledge system by combining different bodies of explicit knowledge. Individuals exchange and combine knowledge through a variety of media such as documents, meetings, telephone conversations, or computerised communication networks (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2004: 61). The authors believe that reconfiguring existing information through sorting, adding, combining and categorising of explicit knowledge, as conducted in computer databases can lead to new knowledge.

The fourth mode of the knowledge creation process; internalisation, involves embodying explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. This process is related to learning by doing as experiences are internalised into individuals tacit knowledge bases in the form of shared technical know how and become valuable assets (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2004: 63). Documentation of the process further helps individuals to internalise what they experience and increases their tacit knowledge.

3.3.2 Enabling conditions for knowledge creation

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1994) identify five enabling conditions for organisational knowledge creation: intension, autonomy, fluctuation, redundancy and requisite variety.

The condition of intension is concerned with justifying an organisation's vision on knowledge creation. Therefore, organisational strategies are seen as intentional means of developing organisational capacities of creating knowledge. The condition of 'autonomy' ensures that individuals and groups within organisations are allowed to create and share knowledge. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1994), autonomy allows independent thinking and room for growth that eventually adds to organisational wealth.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1994), the knowledge creation process involves continuous contact with the environment, meaning that the knowledge creation process is in a process of fluctuation. The authors believe that chaos or discontinuity can generate new patterns of interaction for organisations. Therefore, organisations adapt managerial challenges to the external environment as a means of resolving crisis environmental situations and challenges.

Redundancy of information is seen as an important means of sharing 'tacit knowledge' between members of an organisation. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1994), redundancy allows individuals to share knowledge with each other and even with those that may not need the concept immediately. Therefore, redundancy maximizes overlapping of organisational information thus creating the opportunity for individuals to become aware of organisational activities and information that may not be in their direct line of operation. In this context, redundancy may be seen as a way of creating knowledge within an organisation.

The fifth condition enabling knowledge creation deals with efficiency. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1994), the condition of requisite variety

aims to maximise access to the broadest variety of necessary information by going through few steps. To maximize such variety, the authors state that everyone in an organisation should be assured of the fastest access of necessary information through a variety of means such as multi-functional, cross-cultural, inter-organisational activities or suitable ICTs.

3.4 Historical growth and perception of knowledge management

Although the term knowledge management is believed to have occurred only in 1986¹⁴, the concept is believed not to be new but rather a part of an evolutionary process stemming from previous management techniques, which according to Wilson (2002) could be regarded as “management fads and fashion”. The historical perception on ‘knowledge management’ is traced back to the Taylorist movement of the early part of the last century¹⁵ (Wilson, 2002). According to Wilson, the beginning of the twentieth century was also marked by the appearance of ‘Time and motion study’, which were developed directly from Taylor’s scientific management, and continued into the 1970s as a widespread industrial engineering technique. The human relations school is believed to have had a considerable influence in the emerging organisations and consulting companies after the Second World War (Wilson, 2002).¹⁶

The second half of the twentieth century put a lot of emphasis and development of techniques relating to a number of management, administrative and executive skills. Wilson (2002) argues that many of these techniques such as ‘downsizing’, and ‘business process re-engineering’ have been known to have

¹⁴ Although the term knowledge has been in existence for a while, the current age has also coined connected phrases to ‘knowledge and knowledge management such as ‘knowledge based economy, ‘the networked knowledge economy’ and ‘knowledge society’. The development of these phrases have been due to the emphasis on the creation of new ideas, technology, the quality of human capital and service –related industries rather than on industry and production for attaining productivity and growth (Castells, 2000: 77; Skyrme, 2000: 9).

¹⁵ Taylor was an administrative expert who agitated for the training of personnel in production skills, and this is believed to have a beginning in the management of knowledge. Taylors, research laboratory in the early years of the twentieth century became a knowledge management mechanism for ensuring the production, distribution, and capitalization of certain specific skills. These skills determined the best way for the worker to do the job, to provide the proper tools and training, and to provide incentives for good performance. (Encyclopaedia Britannica Ready Reference, 2003).

¹⁶ The human relations school emerged out of research between 1927 and 1932 at the Western Electric Harthorne Works in Chicago (Mayo, 1933 cited by Wilson, 2002).

failed due to their 'Utopian' characters¹⁷. Yang and Lynch (2006), concur with Wilson's analysis that knowledge management could be traced from the many existing management techniques. They trace the history of knowledge management from as early as the 1950s, believing that Organizational Design (OD) and structure often related to Knowledge Management.

The authors further state that in the 1950s, management tools such as Management by Objectives (MBO) and Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) enabled the management focus to shift to distributed expertise and knowledge. In the 1960s, the authors suggest that centralization of management activities moved tacit knowledge into the organizational management picture. Later on, in the 1970s, concepts such as strategic planning and experience curve recognized cultural specificity in organizations.

In the 1980s, attention shifted to total quality management (TQM) where the corporate culture incorporated the practice of learning, unlearning, and experience into the practice of management. In the 1990s, Yang and Lynch (2006) state that concepts such as core competencies; the learning organization, and reengineering were introduced and related to knowledge management. Finally in the 2000s, the authors argue that knowledge management came into general acceptance and use from the management of intellectual capital, enterprise integration and the development of a knowledge-sharing culture within organizations.

Koenig and Taiash (2004: 3) concur with Yang and Lynch (2006) and relate the concept of knowledge management to its development from a number of management techniques. The evolutionary process of the concepts is believed to not necessarily replace an earlier stage, but merely emphasizes aspects of

¹⁷Wilson (2002) identifies an incomplete and non sequential list of over twenty management techniques that gained popularity in the second half of the last century. Many of the techniques were viewed as unsuccessful as organisations were told to apply the technique throughout the organisation for maximum benefit. Many organisations realised that the costs of carrying out the technique to the whole organization meant that the organisation became crippled, and the technique could only be applied to a section of an organisation, therefore producing unsatisfactory results.

knowledge management that was perhaps inadequately recognized previously (Koenig & Taiash, 2004: 4). The authors are of the opinion that the first and second stages of knowledge management respectively consisted of intellectual capital and human relations, and cultural dimensions. During the intellectual capital stage, the key practices can best be described by the catching phrases “best practices” or “lessons learned”; the second phase related to Communities of Practice (COP)¹⁸, organizational culture, and finding ways of fitting in tacit knowledge into a knowledge management system. According to the authors, knowledge management is currently in its third stage whereby ‘content management’¹⁹ has dominated the cluster of topics and issues pertaining to knowledge management.

3.5 The meaning of knowledge management

The case with most new theoretical models often paves way for definitional problems. This can be seen from the many definitions of the concept that have been associated with “what knowledge management is” and ‘just how knowledge is manifested in organisations’ (Yang & Lynch, 2006) and individuals (Wilson, 2002). Due to its diversity in use,²⁰ Wilson (2002) concludes that ‘knowledge management is an umbrella term for a variety of organisational activities and individual use and refers to it as “nonsense” and “fuzzy”. However, Wilson argues that the fuzziness of the term may be the reason to why the term is used to cover a very wide range of topics.

¹⁸ A community of practice (COP) is defined as a group of people who share common problems and interests and their knowledge and expertise in specific areas is shared by interacting on a regular basis.

¹⁹ The process of content management involves locating, selecting, acquiring, processing, managing and disseminating content and an important element of the process involves arranging content and assigning index terms (Koenig & Taiash, 2004: 4).

²⁰ The concept of ‘knowledge management’ has been widely distributed across different fields of practice such as computing and information systems; information science, information management and librarianship; management; artificial intelligence; engineering and medicine. As a matter of fact, these fields have all tried to define knowledge management and claim it as their academic discipline (Wilson, 2002).

Although the concept of knowledge management is often associated with the management of “knowledge”, Wilson (2002) argues that many authors²¹ have used the term “knowledge” synonymously with “information”, dictating a false impression that knowledge can be managed. Wilson (2002) argues that knowledge cannot be managed, particularly as:

we often do not know what we know: that we know something may only emerge when we need to employ the knowledge to accomplish something. Much of what we have learnt is apparently forgotten, but can emerge unexpectedly when needed or even when not needed.

Therefore, Wilson concludes that “those activities that are not concerned with the management of knowledge; activities not concerned with the management of information are concerned with the management of work practices, in the exception that changes in such areas as communication practice will enable information sharing.”

Powell (2004: 129) concludes that as the concept knowledge management is ‘meaningless’ and cannot be applied universally, it is more precise to think of knowledge management as a portfolio of specific projects and larger initiatives. The literature shows that the definition of knowledge management may be an amalgamation of concepts borrowed from artificial intelligence, knowledge based systems, software engineering, human resource management and organization behaviour fields. A few definitions are indicated below to illustrate the diversity of definitions available.

3.5.1 Process based definitions of knowledge management

A number of authors define and relate knowledge management to its processes and practices. Skyrme (1999:59), for instance defines knowledge management as the “explicit and systematic management of vital knowledge and its

²¹ A comprehensive debate is provided by Wilson (2002) provides a debate on the distinction in use of ‘knowledge’ and ‘information’. The debate is based on the use of the term ‘knowledge management’ from journals that were searched on the Web of Science citation indexes between 1981 to 2002, with the term ‘knowledge management’ in the title.

associated process of creating, gathering, organising, diffusion, use and exploitation, in pursuit of organisational objectives". Demarest's process based definition states that knowledge management is "a set of processes and systems – technical or human – that support and help channel the firm's value creating activities along the lines suggested by the shared, styled model" (Demarest: 1997: 374). According to Wiig (1997: 2), knowledge management focuses on managing effective knowledge processes by understanding and managing systematic, explicit, and deliberate knowledge building, renewal and application. Goh (2005: 7) strongly argues for knowledge innovation to be efficiently managed within an organisation as it is an essential factor that enables the creation, growth, exchange and application of new ideas into profitable goods and services.

3.5.2 Knowledge management and innovation

Judging from the Goh's above definition of knowledge management, it is clearly obvious that there is a link between knowledge management and innovation. Demarest (1997: 381) is of the opinion that innovation is a result of an existing link between knowledge management and enhanced economic performance. The author has asserted that the same conclusion is derived in all studies of innovation that were conducted in the last twenty years prior to 1997, which suggested that: "innovation begins with a new kind of knowledge within the firm".

3.5.3 Knowledge management for effective decision making

Efficient and effective decisions are believed to be enhanced by having strategic decisions that predict what the competition will do or on knowing something better than or ahead of competitors (Parlby & Taylor, 2000). As a result of the need to stay ahead of competitors, Du Plessis (2005: 197) argues that many

organisations are implementing knowledge management to ensure that decision makers have access to adequate knowledge for decision-making.

3.5.4 Collaboration and knowledge management

A common definition and use of the concept relates to the collaborative approach of knowledge management. Du Plessis (2005: 195) states that knowledge management is essentially about “creating collaboration forums where knowledge can be created and shared, that can act as a catalyst for decisions and actions to be taken based on knowledge shared or created in these forums, in order to maximise opportunities”. Such collaborative spaces or knowledge networks are described by Skyme (2000: 35) as rich and dynamic phenomenon in which knowledge is shared. Gordon (2005: 17) additionally, thinks that knowledge management is fundamentally about collaboration and networking. However, other aspects such as IT, culture, learning and performance, which affect knowledge management are emphasised by the author as a precursor to networking and collaboration.

3.5.5 The relationship between ICTs and knowledge management

The evolution of the knowledge society has often been associated with the major ICT revolution that is currently in place²². Therefore, most of the literature on knowledge management is profoundly conversant with technology use (Wilson, 2002). The technology focus deals with acquiring knowledge from people, in computer knowledge –based systems, and knowledge made available over technology-based networks such as e-mail and groupware (Wiig, 1997: 1). Wilson (2002) notes that the working definition of knowledge management for Accenture, reads: “The knowledge management solution provider enables

²² The ICT sector comprises a variety of devices, technologies and services built on scientific breakthroughs in computers, software design, photo-optics, circuit switching, and satellites among others. The most visible technology tool is the Internet. Other knowledge management systems comprise groupware, Intranets, and whiteboards. An analysis of some types of technology used in knowledge sharing is brought out by Coleman (1999: 10-1-10-16) and Por (2004).

workers to capture, manage and share information throughout the organisations.”

Yang and Lynch (2006) concur with Wilson’s knowledge management definition. The authors state that information processing relates to the capturing of organizational memory into sophisticated information structures. Malhotra (2000a, quoted by Yang & Lynch, 2006 quote), therefore enabling an organisation’s information to be organized and analysed in an organisation’s computer databases in such a way that knowledge is “easily shared throughout the organization.” By doing so, an organization is able to capture knowledge that its employees need in a central repository. Many authors such as Du Plessis argue that technology is merely a facilitator of collaborative and knowledge sharing activities. Therefore, the capturing process should be able to embody significant management issues surrounding organisational efforts that seek synergies by combining information processing through the use of appropriate technologies, as well as the creative and innovative capacity of human beings (Barth, 2000 cited by Goh, 2005: 6).

3.5.6 The relationship between learning and knowledge management

Learning and knowledge acquisition have often been used synonymously in the literature. This confirms that the aspect of learning has for a long time been associated with the attainment of new knowledge. Furthermore, many definitions of knowledge management orient themselves with learning. A succinct definition relating knowledge to learning is provided by Cummings, Heeks & Huysman (2003: 2) who define knowledge management as “managerial support for learning within and between organisations and consequently, for the effective use of organisational knowledge”.

Furthermore, the description of knowledge management from the Harvard Business School provided by Wilson (2002) states that the learning processes determine how individuals and organisations create, acquire, interpret, transfer, and retain knowledge, which may take a variety of forms.

Pedler and others (1991) quoted by Britton (1998) define a learning organization as one “that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself.” That continuous transformation in the learning process relates to what Garvin (1993:81) defines as the ability of an organization to possess skills in creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights. Therefore, Garvin is of the opinion that an organisation should continuously reflect on the various elements of emergent and realised strategy and learn from them in such a way that it can better respond to new opportunities and new threats as they emerge in the future, therefore enhancing a strategic process in learning.

In summary, Nissen (2006: 78) states that learning involves having the time to build knowledge. Therefore, apart from being linked to knowledge, learning is also closely linked to strategy as it involves the continuous process of implementing strategy (Britten, 1998; Larsson and others, 1998: 285).

3.5.7 The relationship between strategy development and knowledge management

The strategic dimension of the concept has been identified by a number of authors who see knowledge as an important element in the strategic process of an organisation. Figallo and Rhine (2002: 61-81) place an emphasis in formulating strategies for the foreseeable future. In this case, the authors dwell on organisations being able to adapt to change by catering for sudden stops and adapting to changes an organisation should take. As a result, Du Plessis (2005: 196) believes that knowledge management is directly linked to strategic resources, as the strategic resources provide the means to creating innovative products and services, thus giving the organisation a competitive edge. The author further states that the potential of knowledge to manage and leverage knowledge provides the means to enhancing strategy formulation and implementation. According to Davenport (1999: 2-2), an organisation could look at an existing strategy to determine what knowledge would make it

successful, or look at its existing knowledge and specify what strategy would best take advantage of it.

Some authors further support the link between knowledge management and organisational strategies. Davenport (1999: 2-2) states that the integration of knowledge management in ongoing strategic objectives, core competencies and employee capabilities if transferred improves the performance of organisations. Koegelenberg (2004: 55) however argues that assessing and measuring the outcomes and performance from strategy can best be done by a learning organisation.

3.5.8 The relationship between Intellectual Capital and knowledge management

Intellectual capital is defined as intellectual material such as knowledge, information and intellectual property, and experience that can be put to use to create wealth in organisations (Coleman, 1999: 10-12). Although intellectual capital is said to be valuable, it is difficult to measure, as it is an intangible asset²³. Intellectual capital is believed to create innovation, and thus contribute to organisational growth and application of new ideas into profitable goods and services, and this ultimately ensures better future strategic direction for an organisation and the attainment of competitive advantage (Goh, 2005: 7). Sena and Shani (1999: 8-2) describe intellectual capital to consist of elements relating to human, organisation and customer capital. However, the authors argue that the scarcest commodity in organisations is not customers, technology or capital, but rather people. Recognising the value placed in people, many organisations are investing in a myriad of ways such as certification programmes, training and education courses as a means of enhancing knowledge creation and knowledge sharing among staff (Liebowitz, 1999: iii).

²³ Several authors have designed a number of techniques focusing on elements such as human capital; financial measures, performance and work processes. Examples of techniques include Skyrme's intellectual capital valuation techniques (Skyrme, 1997); The human resources assets and knowledge asset measurement (Wilkins et al, 1997); and the IC-Index (Roos & Roos, 1997: 374-384).

Wilson (2002) in citing Loudes (1999) noted that the 1999 definition of knowledge management for Ernst and Young was equated with the management of 'intellectual capital', whose definition included "encouraging information exchange among staff; building intranets in order to provide access to information resources, creating yellow pages to expertise; and creating newsgroups for employees to encourage information exchange"

3.5.9 The competitive advantage of knowledge management

Knowledge has been associated with gaining and maintaining competitive advantage as it allows an organisation to solve problems and seize opportunities (Earl & Scott, 1999 quoted by Du Plessis, 2005: 197). Globalisation and changing market trends have particularly meant the need for organisations to maintain their existence in their markets. Therefore, some authors state that the only sustainable competitive advantage in the future is the effective and efficient organisation of a company's knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Du Plessis (2005: 197) states convincingly that knowledge management provides an organisation with a competitive advantage in respect of availability of and access to relevant, up-to-date strategic knowledge on markets, products and services, competitors, processes and procedures, employee skills, and the regulatory environment for decision-making and daily work activities. However, competitive success can only be a result of the strategic management of intellectual capital (Bontis, 1999, cited by Du Plessis, 2005: 197).

3.5.10 Knowledge management and its relationship to customers

An important aspect related to the concept of knowledge management is the role of the customer as knowledge from customers has to be incorporated by an organisation for product and service innovation, generation of ideas as well as for continuous improvement of products and services (Salomann & others, 2005). As businesses change, so do knowledge management priorities and the need of customers. Short and Azzarello (2004: 37) are of the opinion that due to the rapid changing nature of business practices, knowledge management requires a solid foundation in the practice of change management, process

analysis and business operations improvement. According to Du Plessis (2005: 198), knowledge management provides the technology, processes and platforms to create, share, harvest and leverage knowledge on customers in one central location.

3.5.11 The Human Resource element of knowledge management

The literature of knowledge management also claims that the 'people' dimension is an important element of managing knowledge, despite most of the literature oriented towards technology use (Wilson, 2002). Durham (2004: 293) argues that knowledge management systems are essentially people systems as knowledge management systems are not able to themselves. According to Yang and Lynch (2005), people must carry out the interpretation of important aspects of the environment and the harnessing of knowledge. Therefore, it is common for organisations to have elements that focus on skills development and competencies in their "knowledge management strategies. Davenport (1997 quoted by Wilson, 2002) noted that Microsoft had a training programme, which 'claimed' to be a knowledge management strategy. According to Davenport, the description of the training programme that stated: "The knowledge base for Microsoft IT must always be current. Therefore, the IT group has focused heavily on the issue of identifying and maintaining knowledge competencies", was in actual fact describing a training programme rather than a knowledge management programme as the description of the training programme was said to be "wrapped up in the jargon of the day".

Shipton and others (2005: 118- 128) also suggest that human resource management is a key aspect that enhances organisational performance by drawing upon human resource systems in recruitment and selection, induction, appraisal and training, as a means of an organisation promoting knowledge management. However, the literature reveals that a number of authors combine the human resource element with other elements connected to knowledge management. Gartner group for instance defines knowledge management as a discipline that supports a built-in approach to recognize, capture, review,

retrieve, and share all of an organisation's assets: information databases, documents, policies, procedures, and previously uncaptured know-how and skills in individual employees (Yang & Lynch, 2002)

Additionally, Du Plessiss (2005: 194) links knowledge management to people by mentioning that 'knowledge management has impacts that drive organisations to dedicate people to systems and processes'. Knowledge management is therefore seen as a means by which systems are put in place, such as encouraging team relationships, authority relationships and COP, in order to enable people to take part in the knowledge creation and sharing process (Wilson, 2002). In that essence, knowledge management is seen as creating value from organisation intangible assets (Wiig, 1999:3-1).

3.5.12 The relationship between culture and knowledge management

Culture is a complex social characteristic of human groups. In addition to those values, purposes and internal alignments, it includes structured relations, language, manners and history and unconscious practices. According to Figallo and Rhine (2002: 113), although culture aligns itself with an organisation's values, mission, goals, and strategy, culture is not necessarily defined by them. However, the presence of culture in an organisation is believed to determine behaviours, decisions as well as power structures and role definitions (Figallo & Rhine, 2002: 117).

According to Lam (2005), culture plays an important factor in knowledge management as it removes a number of possible impediments to the institutionalisation of knowledge management in organisation. These impediments include: competition among staff resulting to knowledge hoarding, lack of personal reward and incentive to engage in knowledge sharing, concerns over job security and employee devaluation, stigma associated with someone else's knowledge, preference for the type of knowledge sharing tool, and doubts over knowledge shared by more junior staff.

3.6 Overview of knowledge management application in the NGO sector

The cyclical tasks of what is involved in knowledge management, such as identifying, managing, and valorising things that the organization knows or could know, is a fairly new and evolving concept for business (Davenport, 1998). Although new, there is a general belief that better knowledge can lead to measurable efficiencies in product or service production, and that it can be used to make wiser decisions about strategy, competitors, customers and service life circles (Davenport & Prusak, 2000: 6).

Non-profit organisations however have not been far behind in grasping the importance of knowledge management, as knowledge management is partially accepted by NGOs involved in the development establishment (Cummings, Heeks & Huysman, 2003: 2). NGOs for instance have for a long time believed in participatory management, which entails that staff are seen as a source of skills and capabilities and are encouraged to take initiative in making decisions, increasing programme impact and organisational effectiveness (Sheehanm, 1998). In the literature particular mention is made of the use of online networks or COPs in development organisations (de Vasconcelo and others, 2005) and the role that partnerships among NGOs and stakeholders play in enhancing service provision (CAFS, 2001: vii). An example of the use of online communities which aims to disseminate sector specific lessons, news and ideas is Dgroups, which currently supports virtual communities of members (Dgroups.Org, 2006) and intra and inter organisational networking (Cummings, Heeks & Huysman, 2003: 5).

Although there is evidence of knowledge management practices among NGOs, some authors remain sceptical with regard to the effectiveness of its practice in these organisations. The literature reveals that knowledge sharing, particularly at inter organisational level, is often hindered by “dynamics of power, opportunism, suspicion, and asymmetric learning strategies which can constitute processual barriers to collective knowledge development” (Larsson and others, 1998: 285). Ineffectiveness is also attributed to the adaptation of wrong knowledge management strategies for NGOs. According to Britton (1998: 2)

and Roszkopf and Witt (n.d.: 1) many NPOs are only starting to implement knowledge management strategies and are often displaying a copycat behaviour to profit making organisations. Roszkopf and Witt (n.d.: 1) are of the opinion that as the structure and communication processes in NPOs are different from profit making organisations, NPOs must consider an alternative approach despite the common belief that the two types of organisations are both in need of knowledge management to survive.

However, whatever approach may be followed, Drucker (1993: 2) challenges organisations to manage knowledge effectively as the world has entered the era of the knowledge society, and this era dictates that NGOs face new challenges due to many changes in society. Additionally, NPOs are currently involved in a radical renewal process that is changing its structural and internal operations. As a result, NPOs are required to improve their performance continuously. Most importantly, the demand for services that are timely integrated and tailored to make demands, have forced NPOs to follow new managerial paradigms (Lettieri, Borga & Savoldelli, 2004: 16) such as knowledge management.

Against that background, and information discussed in the preceding chapters which examined the unique characteristics and structures of NGOs, deeper insight into why knowledge management may be the answer in enhancing organizational performance and efficiency may be answered. A reflection to what is discussed in the preceding chapters points out to issues relating to challenges in efficiency, relevant service delivery and accountability for the need that NGOs implement a knowledge management programme.

For NGOs, the issue of making profits has not been a motivation for implementing a knowledge management programme as efficiency has instead become an ethical objective in viewing the importance of knowledge management. Hurley and Green (2005) state that NGOs face greater challenges to increase professionalism in producing efficient services in order to sustain donor motivation, to satisfy stakeholder accountability, and face less complexity in field conditions. Stakeholder opinion is particularly relevant as the needs of beneficiaries often increase with the variety and quality of the services

provided; and they may question the benefits of their memberships [or partnership] in relation to the membership fee [or partnership agreements] (Rosskorf & Witt, n.d: 3).

The accountability measures set out by donors may focus too much on control functions, such as focusing on whether the money is being spent properly rather than on learning and sharing (Laporta, 2002). When NGOs rely on external funding, it often means that they operate under greater constraints, and are therefore unable to articulate approaches and ideas as these may compromise official orthodoxies (Edwards & Hulme, 1996b: 8). Furthermore, a most notable challenge on dependency relates to the risk that non profit organisations take: lack of control, higher costs and inappropriate strategies (Baldo & Sibthorpe, 1998: 69).

Laporta (2002) observes that a number of reoccurring and unavoidable problems specific to NGOs suggest the critical need to put in place efficient knowledge and information circulation and formalized procedures. The author specifically mentions the high levels of structural turnover among contractual staff and volunteers; the application of permanent structure of NGOs is often inadequate; the democratic rules and 'bottom up' procedures of decision making that are inherent in NGOs; the lack of pressure to 'protect' specialized knowledge with formalized procedures against well-defined competitors, so knowledge remains tacit; the major assets of NGOs are intangible, often involving knowledge and know-how of its people.

As previously mentioned by Laporta, the non-profit intangible nature of NGOs has an effect on how NGOs are able to measure their performance. According to Hayes (1996: 75), the absence of a profit measure leaves NGOs without the benefit of a measuring instrument for judging their general performance. Measuring tools as used by profit making organizations permits quantitative analysis of proposals, thereby enabling inputs and outputs to be measured effectively (Anthony & Young, 1994: 55). Furthermore, Edwards and Hulme (1996b: 9), observe that the measuring performance subscribed to by most NGOs is an amazingly difficult task particularly in relation to empowerment

and other qualitative changes. As a result, Manji (2000: 76) is of the opinion that very few NGOs, both in developed and developing countries are able to demonstrate extensive experience in monitoring, management and proper evaluation of projects. Manji particularly emphasizes that poor management in most cases have brought about major problems for NGOs.

Edwards and Hulme (1996b: 11) add to the list of challenges experienced by NGOs by stating that the field activities of NGOs are often carried out in a framework and climate of emergency and scarcity of resources, and/or in a stressed or disorganized environment. As a result, compressed project planning cycles often leave very little room to learn the lessons of experience, let alone use them (Laporta, 2002).

Edwards and Hulme (1996b: 12) further argue that many NGOs generally have poor perceptions of the value of managing knowledge. The authors attribute this to the little awareness of the connection between knowledge and the strategic processes of organizations, often meaning that priority given to support of knowledge management programmes is low. The authors therefore argue that the lack of understanding and prioritisation of the role of knowledge management creates an environment where rushed decisions are made, poor strategic directions are taken, both tacit and explicit knowledge is not being captured, thus leading to the loss of valuable contributions from individuals and processes.

The lack of critical processes and knowledge needed to evaluate, develop, document and share successful programmes often brings multi-faceted problems relating to replication of programmes and failure to replicate successful programmes (Hurley & Green, 2005). There are however instances where organisations are aware of the value of knowledge management but do nothing about it. The authors contribute this to the fact that tasks involved in running a knowledge management programme can be time consuming and costly. For example, the authors have observed that working cultures in organisations may deliberately or not deliberately not support knowledge management activities in knowledge creation and sharing as more pressing and urgent activities are given

more priority. Therefore, organizations may be forced not to employ a broad spectrum of techniques and instruments to improve the performance of knowledge management operations.

The lack of knowledge sharing particularly between organisations based in developed and developing countries, and sometimes between organisations based in developing countries has in part been attributed to the Digital Divide. As the Digital Divide is often associated with the use and access of technology, Baldo and Sibthorpe (1998: 67) are of the opinion that technical problems relating to lack of computer support, spare parts, trained maintenance technicians and phone lines (enhancers of the digital divide and enablers for knowledge sharing) often are problems particularly found with NGOs in developing countries. According to Mutula (2002: 120), the Digital Divide has thus created different levels of appreciation and use between developed and developing countries mostly due to cultural and environmental conditions.

As noted in the preceding chapters, the nature of donor environments and preferences in development programmes dictate that aid is often preferred for emergency relief rather than IT related projects that are difficult to measure (Baldo & Sibthorpe, 1998: 67). Therefore financial limitations have a direct effect on networking enhancers, such as computers, rental charges and the running cost of technology networks. This places constraints on organisational goals and strategies (Anthony & Young, 1994: 61).

Nevertheless, despite the various hurdles occurring in NGOs that have contributed to ill-defined knowledge management strategies, some authors argue that NGOs can still embrace KM, particularly through networking and by taking advantage of the special characteristics they possess. These 'special characteristics' have been discussed in Chapter 2.10 on the Comparative advantage of NGOs. Characteristics such as NGO commitment to empowerment encourage NGOs to use information to benefit those with less influence in society (Larsson, R. et. al, 1998: 288). Their participatory style provides them with perpendicular linkages that connect people and institutions at different levels and allow for exchange of information and resources (Sheehan, 1998).

Echeverri-Carroll (1999: 300) argues that organisational linkages are crucial as organisation performance is associated with the quality of these linkages.

Despite all that has been said about the need for knowledge management in the NGO sector, not much is said about how NGOs can embrace knowledge, yet this sector is expected to rise to the challenges as presented by Valderrama (cited by Pearce, 2000: 26).

Development NGOs today confront a problem of identity and coherence. How do they intervene in the market and extend and diversify sources of finance without losing sight of the objectives which are their *raison d'être*, and which are already related to democracy and human development? Evidently in this field, there are no magic formulae and simple recipes.

However, the literature reveals that the existing challenges regarding NGO approach to knowledge management should ensure that NGOs adapt to changes of environment and include organisational learning activities to gain competitive advantage. Nonaka (1991: 36) argues: "in an economy where the only certainty is uncertainty, the one sure source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge". NGOs are therefore urged to engage into key professional human resource management activities that enhance and use their competitive knowledge advantage in providing their services. According to Baldo and Sibthorpe (1998: 64), as NGOs are moving from project- focused work towards those that are concerned with broader development issues, they need to make systematic use of knowledge for research, institutional memory, learning, practice, advocacy, lobbying, public education, evaluation and accountability are in place.

The role of knowledge management in NGOs is viewed as crucial. De Vasconcelos (2005: 2) argues that although NGOs build up a valuable stock of local knowledge as they are in contact with local needs and aims, assessing them and building on them in their day to day interventions is often not possible as this valuable knowledge is often sidetracked, misplaced or lost in the

complexity of the communication hierarchy²⁴ and displaced due to the high level of staff turnover associated with many NGOs.

²⁴ The communication hierarchy in NGOS involves communication from field missions; communication between the field mission and the main office, communication between NGOs, communication between NGOs and the beneficiaries; communication between NGOs and donors; communication between NGOs and civil society

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher applied Holsapple and Joshi's knowledge management theoretical framework to investigate the knowledge management practices at OWI. The framework considers three interrelated activities that look at organizational knowledge management as the application of knowledge manipulation skills in performing knowledge management activities that operate on the organization's knowledge resources to achieve organizational learning and projection. The process is further influenced by knowledge management influences and is triggered by a knowledge need (Koch et al, 2002: 13-21). The framework is cyclic with no real beginning or ending points.

According to the framework, factors influencing knowledge management consist of managerial influences; resources influences and environmental influences. These influences are able to govern the conduct of how knowledge management unfolds in an organization (Holsapple & Joshi, 1998: 1-27 cited by Koch et al, 2002: 13-21). The framework dictates that managerial influences consist of managerial styles, leadership, control and coordination. Resource influences consist of human, financial and material resources. Environmental influences consist of competition, economy, emerging technologies, fashion and GEPSE ²⁵climate (Okunoye, 2005).

Governed by the factors that influence Knowledge management, organizational participants execute knowledge manipulation activities. As previously mentioned, these activities consist of selecting, acquiring, generating, internalising and externalising knowledge. It is further noted that knowledge manipulation activities operate on knowledge resources to create organizational value (Koch et al, 2002:14). According to the framework, knowledge Resources consist of participants (human and computer participants); artefact, such as

²⁵ GEPSE refers to the governmental, economic, political, social and education factors affecting an environment

strategy documents; culture; infrastructure; transformations and external sources
The asset and value in knowledge therefore comes from knowing facts and skills that enhance organisational value (Skyrme, 2002). Furthermore, organizational value can be said to be the result of achievement of organizational learning and projection. Organisational learning is a process that results in enhancement of internal competencies whereas projection results in enhancement within an organisation's environment (Holsapple & Joshi, 1998: 4 quoted by Koch et al, 1998: 15).

The value in knowledge therefore means putting a value on people, their collective capabilities and the embedded intelligence in an organisation's computer systems (Skyrme, 2002). This intelligence and computer systems provide the knowledge resources of an organisation. Koch and others, (2002: 15) translate knowledge resources to include schema and content resources. According to the authors, schema resources consist of purpose, strategy, infrastructure and culture; the context in which knowledge is created and used (Jennex & Olfman, 2004) and infrastructure. Content resources on the other hand consist of participant knowledge and artefacts.

Table 4.1 illustrates the various components of the framework and shows how they are interrelated.

TABLE 4.1

Holsapple and Joshi's Knowledge Management Framework.

ACTORS INFLUENCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT		KNOWLEDGE ACTIVITIES		KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES		ORGANISATION LEARNING & PROJECTION
<p>Managerial Influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managerial style • Leadership • Control • Coordination <p>Resource Influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge resources • Human resources • Financial resources • Material resources <p>Environmental Influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition • Economy • Emerging Technologies • Fashion • GEPSE • Climate 	<p>GOVERN</p> <p>→</p>	<p>Knowledge Selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying • Capturing • Organising <p>Knowledge Acquisition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying • Capturing • Organising <p>Knowledge Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating (monitoring, evaluating, producing and transferring) • Externalising (targeting and producing) <p>Knowledge Transfer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing • Diffusing • Adopting <p>Knowledge Internalisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing • Targeting • Structuring • Delivering 	<p>CREATE</p> <p>→</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants-Human and Computer participants • Artefacts • Culture • Infrastructure • Transformations • External Sources 	<p>ACHIEVE</p> <p>→</p>	

Adapted and developed from: Koch and others (2002: 13-21)

4.1 Sample case studies on the application of the theoretical framework

The sample studies in this section aim to facilitate the understanding of how Holsapple and Joshi's framework may be applied to factors influencing knowledge management, knowledge manipulation activities and the resources of knowledge management for the application of organisational learning. In this context, analysis of the three dimensions of the framework should increase one's understanding of how knowledge management may function in relation to the framework.

4.1.1 An investigation of knowledge management within a university IT group.

The study was based on an IT group responsible for maintaining the computing infrastructure within the Mays College of Business (Koch et al, 2002: 14). Holsapple and Joshi's Framework was used to in formulating the interview questions, and understanding how knowledge management is practiced in the IT group. The study concentrated on every part of the knowledge management episode such as the knowledge management influences, knowledge manipulation activities and knowledge resources (Koch et al, 2002: 14). These aspects are discussed below.

4.1.1.1 Knowledge management influences

According to Koch and others (2002: 15), managerial aspects define management support through leadership, allocation and management of project resources, and oversee the knowledge management system through coordination and control of resources. By providing internal control on all processes in an organisation, an organisation is assured of focusing on the implementation of strategies and the attainment of organisational objectives. Anthony and Young (1994:3) are of the opinion that management control endeavours to ensure that an organisation devises useful programmes and implements them effectively.

In the IT case study, questions relating to managerial influences were directed to the associate dean, who had primary responsibility for managerial influences. The coordination aspect of managerial influences further looked at how knowledge manipulation activities are deployed. The associate dean's choices in coordinating dependencies within and between knowledge choices, other resources and knowledge manipulation activities were said to influence the way that knowledge management unfolded in the IT group, and ultimately in the choices that the IT group chose knowledge manipulation activities.

Control aspects were measured by how management influenced the methods the IT group used to protect its knowledge resources which included among others protecting culture and control factors such as recruitment practices that hire employees that fit in with the organisations mandate. Managerial control was further influenced by the mechanisms put in place controlling the quality of knowledge. Within the IT group, personal feedback, surveys and experimentation were some of the ways put in place for evaluating the quality of internalized information within the group.

A key aspect of the managerial influence activity included in Holsapple and Joshi Framework as quoted by Koch et al (2002, 16) involves the managerial influence on leadership. Leadership is defined by Saint –Onge and Armstrong (2004: 9) as the manner in which individuals choose to exercise their responsibilities. The leadership values that promoted value in the IT group involved a desire for teamwork, encouragement of open communication, support of learning, and a tolerance for failure.

4.1.1.1.1 Resource Influences

Resource influences are the financial resources and knowledge sources needed to build a knowledge management system (Massey et al, 2002; quoted by Jennex and Olfman, 2004). According to Koch and others (2002, 16), resource influences can support and constrain the execution of knowledge manipulation activities and thus affect the development of knowledge resources. Koch further states that financial resources that had an effect on knowledge management in

the IT group included financial and human resources. The findings on the IT group showed that funding, endowment, enrollment and tuition affected the ability to acquire and retain human and material resources. Human resources helped in the development of knowledge resources. Koch and others illustrated that human resources helped develop the schematic knowledge resources that interact to support the IT group's mission of being a leader in the application of IT for educational purposes. As a result of the resource influences brought about by finance resource restriction, knowledge manipulation activities not in direct support of the mission of the group were therefore not allocated financial resources and not supported within the IT group.

4.1.1.1.2 Environmental Influences

Massey and others (2002) describe environmental influences as external forces that drive an organisation to exploit its knowledge to maintain its competitive position (Jennex & Olfman, 2004). These external environmental pressures can relate to regulatory, marketplace, customer, partnerships, and reputation.

However, in contrast to managerial and resource influences, organisations have little control over environmental influences. The investigation of knowledge management within the IT Group confirmed that environmental influences such as competition, fashion/technology, markets, time and GEPSE climate (governmental, economic, political, social and education factors affecting an environment) were constantly being evaluated by launching knowledge management needs to acquire external information through benchmarking studies, environmental scanning and socialization (Koch et al., 2002: 16)

4.1.1.2 Knowledge manipulation activities

The study of the IT group showed that the group was involved in the manipulation activities consisting of knowledge selection, knowledge acquisition, knowledge generation, internalisation and externalisation (Koch et al, 2002: 16).

The process of selection in the IT group involved formal and informal socialisation facilitated by awareness of location of varying types of knowledge and open shared working areas. In the IT group, identifying the location of knowledge between the operational group and between members of a strategic group in different offices consisted of both formal and informal inquiries, had a longer turnabout time, and consisted of a socialisation process dependant on weekly staff meetings.

Within the IT group, knowledge selection was usually executed before other knowledge manipulation activities because socialisation and the teamwork culture made internal knowledge easily accessible (Koch et al., 2002:16). Executing knowledge selection first allowed participants to easily draw upon existing organisational resources rather than acquire the same knowledge from external resources or re-invent the wheel through knowledge generation (Koch et al, 2002: 16).

Koch and others (2002: 17) are of the opinion that through socialisation systems such as shared meanings, and effective communication, tacit knowledge can be transferred. Therefore, open work areas, overlapping job descriptions and a team work oriented culture were believed to enable the capture of tacit knowledge within the IT group (Koch et al, 2002: 16-17). The capture of explicit knowledge was done via verbal, electronic or written documents. Periodical meetings, socialisation, and a communication links facilitate the capture of explicit knowledge in the IT group (Koch et al., 2002: 17).

As the process of knowledge acquisition usually occurs after knowledge selection fails to address a knowledge need, knowledge acquisition in the IT group was enabled by an environment that financially supported acquiring external knowledge and an infrastructure that made external information and communication resources easily available. The group was said to have access to a comprehensive library system, information services, Internet, email, and a telephone system. The group was encouraged to build relationships with potential sources of information sources such as vendors, students, recruiters,

and other IT personnel within other colleges and universities (Koch et al, 2002: 18).

Knowledge generation in the IT group was applied when the associate dean facilitated weekly meetings, which helped members of the IT group assess what had been done effectively, what needed improvement, and what measures the group could take to address challenges. Of equal importance in facilitating the generation of knowledge was empowering employees to initiate knowledge generation activities and hiring employees with an appetite for learning. Furthermore, knowledge generation was enhanced through well developed participant knowledge including an understanding of processes within the IT group and their impact, a culture where group members wanted to improve processes; an environment that encouraged experimentation and an infrastructure that allowed socialisation and reflection time.

Koch and others (2002: 17) state that the externalisation of knowledge within the IT group was enabled by mechanisms like meetings, training sessions, electronic communication and the grapevine all of which made external recipients aware of the IT group's services and facilitated the projection of knowledge. Furthermore, the efficient execution of the other knowledge manipulation activities and their related enablers, socialisation and down-time also enabled externalisation. Down-time was known to enable the IT group to ponder external recipient needs and to develop social relationships so that the group could understand issues and their context.

Once knowledge is produced, it can become part of an organisation's existing knowledge resources, and can be internalised to be used in future internal activities, and can be transferred to external recipients. However, in order to transfer knowledge to external recipients, there is need for recipients to be aware of the purpose, services and knowledge. This is because the first stage of externalisation is governed by an organisation's purpose, which in turn lays out the intended services, products and recipients (Koch et al, 2002: 17).

4.1.1.3 Knowledge resources

Koch and others (2002: 18) describe knowledge resources “as the final component of an organisation’s knowledge management system”, therefore making resources valued assets of an organisation and consist of assets such as an organisation’s culture, infrastructure, purpose and strategy, and participant knowledge and artefacts.

4.1.1.3.1 Strategy

The study by Koch and others revealed that the IT group’s strategy was governed by the type of knowledge needs that launch knowledge management needs. The IT group’s strategy was embedded in a continuous learning cycle, recognising the need for persistent deployment of knowledge management needs to keep pace with other universities uses of IT and an ever-changing IT environment. Therefore, the IT group’s strategy was seen as a means of creating wealth as it comprised of plans for using infrastructure, culture, artefacts, participant knowledge, and other resources (Koch et al, 2002: 18).

4.1.1.3.2 Culture

The study on the IT group revealed a number of traits that ensured that knowledge sharing was supported. Members of the IT group described their culture as one that encouraged the performance of knowledge manipulation activities. The members viewed their culture as team-oriented, warm, supportive, friendly, and non-competitive and one that had an emphasis for learning and trust. It was also noted in the study that several components of the group’s infrastructure seemed to enable knowledge management.

The IT group’s infrastructure enabled knowledge selection by promoting teamwork and socialisation. Koch and others (2002: 19) state that responsibility sharing was written into job descriptions; group members shared the same office; and the group held weekly meetings. The study also revealed that the group’s reporting structure was a flat organisational hierarchy.

A number of human resource practices enabled knowledge acquisition as performance evaluation criteria outlines areas where knowledge acquisition needed to occur and specified a plan for obtaining that knowledge. Furthermore, financial awards were not based on a set amount allocated between members of the group. The focus on human resource strategies therefore enabled knowledge retention and appreciation due to staff motivation and retention of knowledge workers (Horwitz, 2004:30). Investing in such programmes ensures that an organisation's most competitive advantage, that is, its 'human capital' is maintained (Liebowitz, 1999: iii).

4.1.2 Case Study Two – Context-Aware Framework of knowledge management cultural and infrastructural considerations.

Okunoye's multi case studies considered knowledge management in developing countries, with a special emphasis on cultural and infrastructural considerations (Okunoye, 2005). His study was based in three countries (India, Gambia and Nigeria) and is based on Holsapple and Joshi's knowledge framework. Okunoye's study challenges other studies that have overlooked the importance of a local operating environment and culture context. His findings for instance show the considerable differences in the IT infrastructures globally between countries, particularly between western and developing countries.

For instance, he states that the IT infrastructure is less developed in Sub Saharan Africa than in India where the government has invested heavily in infrastructure development. With regards to culture, Okunoye's study confirms that external culture has a great influence on internal organizational culture. He relates his findings to Hofstede's study that found that countries in different regions differ in power distance, individual and collective dimensions²⁶.

²⁶ Power distance as the extent to which the less powerful members of an institution within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Cultures that are high in power distance are illustrated by decisions being made by superiors without consultation with subordinates. Individualist cultures are those in which the ties between individuals are loose and value personal time and personal accomplishments. Collectivist societies value a groups well being more than individual desires. People in collectivist societies are often integrated into strong cohesive groups (Ford and Chan, 2003:14).

Okunoye's study also looks at organizational variables such as strategic alliances, internationalization of firms and services, technology transfer, globalization, recent advances in ICT, western management styles and forms of organization have a great influence across the world. He states that while the basic principles of knowledge management are the same, the assumptions are not. For instance Okunoye found that while training and learning without formal certification could be acceptable for employees in the westernized industrialized countries, employees in Sub Saharan Africa would normally like to have a certificate for their training.

4.1.3 Case Study Three – Knowledge flows in innovation networks: a comparative analysis of Japanese and US high –technology firms

An illustration of knowledge management in a networked environment is obtained from Echeverri-Carroll's study of knowledge flows in innovation networks: a comparative analysis of Japanese and US high technology firms (Echeverri-Carroll, 1999: 296-303).

The study confirms that collaboration between firms is an important source of knowledge as it enhances organizational learning and provides timely access to new information and resources that are otherwise unavailable while also testing internal expertise and learning capabilities. Consequently, the degree to which firms learn and increase their stock of knowledge is a function of the extent of their participation in network activities. The study indicated that US firms that have internalized many of the features associated with the Japanese organization structure²⁷ had far better networking results and evidence of innovation, development of new products, and were able to introduce new processes faster than competitors in their own industrial groups that did not.

²⁷ Japanese firms devote a much greater amount of resources than US firms to reduce the time taken to develop and introduce an innovation. The Japanese system has important implications for the innovation performance of firms, which involve customer participation at an early stage of a design or pilot stage of a product. As a result, shorter product development is the result of an organization based on a greater flow of information both within the manufacturing establishment and with other firms, including suppliers and customers (Echeverre-Carroll, 1999: 296).

4.1.4 Limitation of sample studies

Koch's study is limited as a sample for the framework as it focuses on a single unit of an organisation rather than a single network. As this research is based on a network, it is difficult to validate findings based on a single entity, particularly if it relates to a network. Furthermore, the study does not focus on NGOs. These limitations therefore show that Koch's study is not inclusive of and does not give a total picture of knowledge manipulation activities, processes and influences as it is not network and does not focus on the non-profit making sector. The study is therefore insufficient to be used as a framework for the exploration of knowledge management practices and challenges for this research. Similarly, Echeverri-Carroll's study is limited, as it does not focus on knowledge management in an NGO network.

Likewise, Okunoye's study does not focus on a networked organization. The study is also limited in that it does not focus non-profit making organizations. To ensure that this study focuses on non-profit making organizations, the study is supplemented by a number of studies that focus on the special characteristics of non-profit making organizations. Hurley and others (2005) suggest that a within and between approach should be particularly considered when assessing knowledge management in the non-profit making sector. The framework suggests looking at organizational sub systems such as technology, structure, tasks and people. The framework recognizes the difficulties and challenges faced by NGOs; such as spending large amounts of time, funds and imagination reinventing the wheel, while the potential of programmes that have already proven their effectiveness remains sadly underdeveloped and therefore suggest knowledge management programmes that should target the development, evaluation, documentation and successful sharing of programmes (Hurley et al., 2005).

4.2 Application of Theoretical Framework

In order to be able to answer the major research questions pertaining to how OneWorld staff perceive and manage knowledge, it will be imperative that the research follows a framework that will embrace knowledge management across the full spectrum of organizational needs and addresses elements that might have a direct effect on knowledge management, and at the same time accommodate external knowledge by comparing knowledge sharing at network level.

Putting all these elements together, the study arrived at Table 4.2, summarizing the components of the framework that can be used for analysis of knowledge management practices and challenges in developmental NGO networks.

Table 4.2

Framework for analyzing the knowledge management practices and challenges at OWI.

Research Question	Main Criteria
a. What are the internal and external influences on knowledge management policies and practices at local and international level?	Follow Holsapple and Joshi's framework, Okunoye's framework Okunoye's framework, Holsapple and Joshi's knowledge processes, Non profit organization characteristics, such as Hurley
b. What knowledge management processes are in place to achieve an environment of learning?	Okunoye's framework, Holsapple and Joshi's knowledge processes. Okunoye's framework, Holsapple and Joshi's knowledge processes. Externalization of knowledge, Echeverri-Carroll's
c. What knowledge resources are valued at both local and international level?	Okunoye's framework, Holsapple and Joshi's knowledge processes, Non profit organization characteristics, such as Hurley

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the Knowledge Management practices and challenges in the OneWorld International Network (OWI). As mentioned in Chapter 1.0 of this research, the study focused on two centres from the OWI network; OneWorld Africa (OWA), and OneWorld Netherlands (OneWorld.nl)²⁸.

5.1 Research Design

The purpose of devising a research design is to plan how the researcher intends to conduct the research project (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:74). The plan that was derived for this exploratory case study on knowledge management practices and challenges in a networked NGO was devised in such a way to ensure that relevant evidence was obtained to adequately answer the research questions and to test the theoretical framework described in Chapter four. As previously indicated in Chapter 1.5, the research questions are: What are the external control influences on knowledge management policies and practices at local and at international level; what knowledge management processes are in place to culminate the achievement of learning; and what knowledge resources are valued at both local and international level?

In order to ensure a more rigorous design process, the research design incorporated a comparison group by providing at least two alternative interpretations of the findings. The researcher chose to use a comparative design between two OWI centres, i.e. OWA, a Southern based centre and OneWorld.nl, a Northern based centre.

²⁸ The two centres will subsequently be referred to as OWA and OneWorld.nl in the remaining part of this dissertation.

In order to ensure comparison, a cross-sectional design was decided on. Cross sectional designs relate to a process that compares unrelated groups and takes all the measures at the same time (Oppenheim, 1992: 9). Although the case studies of the two centres studied were from the same network, their operations and existence can be said to be different in many aspects. The cross sectional approach was also taken in order for the researcher to move away from a descriptive type of research and move towards a more analytic approach. Oppenheim states that a cross sectional approach no longer asks “how many?” but “what goes with what and why?” As a result, the approach tried to ultimately answer questions about relationships and determinants of networking and knowledge sharing activities between the two centres.

The research also aimed to answer a number of research questions relating to the knowledge management practices within the centres studied by basing it on a theoretical framework that focused on the interconnected cycle of the knowledge management process, i.e. influences, processes and resources. As a result of focusing the research on interconnected knowledge management processes, the research process adopted a multi-causal model and moved away from a mono-causal model that according to Oppenheim (1992: 17) often does not tell the full story of effects and causes; which can therefore produce misleading results.

Furthermore, the multi-causal model enabled the knowledge management processes and practices of OWI to be studied in the light of the various research questions asked. These included making a cumulative interrelated study of the various processes to enable the research to establish associations and speculate on the causes of the processes and their effects. The advantage of using this method of association patterns is that it is able to indicate casualty and therefore and suggest an effective intervention method (Oppenheim, 1992: 15).

An important focus of the research design was that the aims and specifications of the questionnaire and interview instruments was to align the overall research aim which focused on how staff work at OWI with the processes they employ in the knowledge cycle (i.e. creating, acquiring and sharing knowledge). To ensure

this, an overview of the literature on knowledge management was firstly provided. Secondly, an empirical study was conducted investigating OWI, its centres, and key strategic management personnel to establish the state of knowledge management practices and challenges the network is facing in managing knowledge effectively and efficiently at local and international level.

5.2 Study Population

A study population is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is essentially selected (Babbie, 1999:180). The study population for this study was drawn from OWI employees at international and centre level.

As it was not possible to study the entire defined population of staff based in all the OW centres, a sample was taken from the population groups. In this instance, the sampling specifically targeted management staff at centre and international level that is directly involved in managing programmes. Following a systematic selection is essential (Baker, 1988:137) as it involves investigating people who are knowledgeable about the topic (Henning, 2004:71).

Desirable participants for the research were chosen through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of sampling method using non probability sampling which however have a number of disadvantages, the greatest of which is the difficulty in generalizing its findings to a wider population (Baker, 1988:156).

Despite its disadvantages, purposive sampling was used, in this research project because its findings can still be used to study a particular sample of interest (Baker, 1988:156). Additionally, readers are able to extract from a well-written report those elements of the findings that are found to be transferable and that may be extended to other settings. Above all, Baker (1988:156) recommends non-probability sampling for exploring ideas that are still undeveloped. Knowledge Management, being a new field clearly fits into that description.

The justification for using purposive sampling was to include deviate individuals who in the researcher's judgment were in a position to allow a comparison of knowledge management practices within the network. As the study is about knowledge management practices, and is biased towards strategic and managerial issues, the sample deliberately targeted individuals tasked with strategic processes, such as top management, middle management and knowledge creators at various levels. Overall, the process of selection was judgmental, which is another term for purposive sampling (Baker, 1988:157).

In drawing the sample, it is often recommended that the quality of the sample, however careful it is selected, can be no better than the sampling frame from which it is drawn. Baker (1988:144) recommends that the sampling frame should be representative of the population it supposedly enumerates. In following that guideline, up to date staff lists that indicated positions and length of service were used in drawing the sample.

A sample from OWA represented 8 out of 8 full time staff members while the sample from OneWorld.nl represented 7 out of 7 staff members. were interviewed from OWA and 7 out of 7 staff were interviewed from OneWorld.nl²⁹. In this case a sample size of 8 staff members was acceptable from a centre having 10 key respondents. This method of sampling was based on Powell's table of determining sample size from a given population (Powell: 1994:7). As the staff number in both organisations are relatively small, the quantitative methods of data collection aimed to cover the entire sample size.

5.3 Methods

Research methodology focuses on the individual and unbiased procedures constituting the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used in collecting data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:75). The data collected focused on

²⁹ The sample size represented the total number of management staff employed with the centres at that particular time. Sample sizes could have been larger as OWA had a number of vacancies and staff that had recently resigned.

current data based on the current knowledge management practices of the OWI centres. Historical data was also referred to in instances where an analysis needed to be justified. Furthermore data relating to plans and strategies was considered. In deciding which methodology to adopt, the researcher considered using multi-faceted methodologies to investigate the problems as knowledge management cuts across many academic disciplines³⁰.

5.3.1 Research approaches

The study used two approaches, qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative approach was used in the preliminary stage of the data collection exercise. The qualitative approach provided an in-depth interpretation of the knowledge management issues that needed to be grasped. In that context it was necessary to obtain in-depth knowledge of the respondents understanding of knowledge management particularly as the meaning of KM often differs from person to person. Above all, although trends of knowledge management practices were visibly in place within the OneWorld International Network, the phrase “Knowledge Management” was not a regularly used phrase. In that sense information was obtained from the participants’ point of view what and how they felt knowledge was managed within the OWI network. Significantly, the researcher took the qualitative approach as a means of providing sufficient detail to judging the interpretation of the phenomena and its relevance in answering the research questions (Leedy, 2001:233).

The qualitative approach was complemented by a quantitative approach using a Likert scale based on attitude statements. The attitude statements were developed from the responses obtained during the open interviews. In order to provide the results of the opinions, beliefs and attitudes and measure them in percentages, it was necessary to use the scale. The quantitative approach also provided the means to make comparisons between the centres.

The use of both the qualitative and quantitative approaches enabled the researcher to apply triangulation in order to overcome deficiencies and bias.

³⁰ The multi discipline nature of knowledge management is discussed in Chapter 3.

Triangulation is a method used by researchers to help overcome the deficiencies and biasness that stem from single methodologies. To prevent bias and deficiencies, the researcher conducted open-ended questions. Gaps in knowledge management practices that were not mentioned by the participants but evident in the literature were incorporated in the Likert scale. The open-ended interviews and Likert scale, were followed up with telephone interviews or Email interviews.

5.3.2 Research techniques

The research techniques comprised the methods used for data collection. They are concerned with measurement, quantification and instrument building and with making sure that instruments are appropriate, valid and reliable (Oppenheim, 1992: 6). Some of the techniques followed in this research project looked at how data would be collected, (that is face to face interviews and/or email correspondence); how attitudes would be measured, discovery of patterns of practices on knowledge management; what questions could be grouped together to form scales; how questionnaires and question modules could be developed; the analysis to the contents of the replies to the questions; and how missing data could be avoided, such as verifying answers from the respondents. The various data collection methods involved:

5.3.2.1 The piloting process

A pilot investigation is a small-scale trial before the main investigation, and it is intended to assess the adequacy of the research design and of the instruments to be used for the data collection. Wilson (1996:103) recommends that a pilot study should be carried out at the beginning of a research project, as it is an essential element in testing the effectiveness and efficiency of the data collection instruments.

It was necessary to conduct a pilot study in this instance to ensure that all understand the subject matter and that it is covered comprehensively. In this instance, the pilot phase assisted with not only the wording of questions, but also with procedural matters such as the design of questions and their sequences

and the reduction of non-response rates (Oppenheim, 1992: 48). Furthermore, the piloting phase ensured that the open-ended questions were tested in order to quantify the responses. For this to work effectively, Wilson (1996: 103) recommends that the pilot sample must be representative of the variety of the individuals that the study is intended to cover. In following this recommendation, purposive sampling as already discussed was used to pick out the respondents for the pilot investigation.

A major aspect of the pilot process involved rephrasing the open-ended questions and the codification of the questions and the responses. Oppenheim (1993: 49) recommends this process as it assists in the classification and processing of responses. The pilot study was carried out in three different stages. The first stage involved conducting wide-ranging unstructured interviews as a way of conceptualizing the problem and developing a 'hidden agenda', which according to Oppenheim (1993: 52) develops new ideas emanating from a respondents point of view.

The second stage of the piloting process involved experimenting with the close-ended questions so as to discover how respondents spontaneously interpret the question (i.e. within their frame of reference). This process enabled the researcher to include categories that were not anticipated to be included as well as the clarification of various ambiguities. For instance issues of the governing board and control came out strongly in the interviews with OWA staff, and statements relating to communication with the board therefore had to be included in the scale. It was also discovered during the interviews that staff had varying interpretations of knowledge management practices. The various statements and opinions from staff therefore had to be summarised and included in the Likert scale.

The pilot stage also looked at modifying the attitude statements as the non-respondents that tested the attitude statements reported that some questions were too long, unclear and/or repetitive, and the answer categories could not be seen on the computer screen once the respondent had reached the middle of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was appropriately amended and standardized

for fieldwork application following the respondent's advice. Doing so also made it possible to cut down the time in which the questionnaire could be answered from 18-20 minutes to 10-15 minutes. Modification and testing of questionnaires is highly supported by Oppenheim (1992: 53) who states that a poorly constructed question is more likely to produce a narrow range of responses or would be more likely to be misunderstood by part of the sample as the question may be too vague, too wide, and narrow in scope, too long, or too short.

In the 'experimentation' of the open interviews, two guidelines were followed in facilitating the open-ended and close-ended interview process. The first step insured that the open-ended questions were kept to a minimum, as they usually require much thought and writing on the part of the respondent. The second step ensured that the questions used during the open-ended interview process covered a similar range and variety in the Likert scale due to the outlook, attitudes, precepts and experiences of the responses. However, care was taken not to eliminate information important to the context and background of the study (Oppenheim, 1993: 117).

5.3.2.2 Face to face interviews

The first data collection method involved conducting face-to-face interviews in a standardized, but in-depth format. Oppenheim (1992: 67) illustrates that

the role of the 'depth interview is to listen with the third ear'. According to Oppenheim (1992: 70) interviewers must not only note what is being said, but also what is being omitted, must pick up gaps and hesitations and explore what lies behind them; and must create an atmosphere which is sufficiently uncritical for the respondent to come up with seemingly irrational ideas, hatreds or misconceptions....the job of the depth interview is thus not of data collection but ideas collection as opposed to standardized that gather facts and statistics.

The interviews were carried out from June – July 2006, lasting from 45 – 60 minutes per person.

A standardized interview schedule was used to ensure that each respondent was asked the same question. According to Wilson (1996: 100) the same question types often carry the same meaning and responses are comparable across similar question formats. The interview process was also receptive to any questions that came up from respondents during the standard interview process as participants sometimes needed to clarify certain issues that came up during the interview process. Using open-ended questions is generally accepted as it ensures that the respondents' beliefs or opinions are not restrained to predetermined categories (Wilson, 1996:100).

In order to ensure that the interview process stayed within the limits of the theoretical framework prompts were included in the interview schedule as a means to prompt for specific issues relating to the framework and to prevent unclear or vague responses. However these were avoided as much as possible in order to avoid leading the respondent.

Although it is often advised to record such interviews (Oppenheim. 1992: 67), it was not possible to do so, as respondents were uncomfortable at the thought of being recorded and wanted to be as free as possible. An attempt was made to write all answers in verbatim. To make the process easier, questions were sent to the respondents as least two weeks before the interview. Some respondents made notes on what to talk about. These notes were collected by the interviewer at the end of each interview, combined with the interviews own notes and a new set transcribed within two days. The final version of the transcribed answers was returned to the respondent for verification. Any additional questions that needed to be clarified by respondents were communicated to the respondent via email or telephone.

5.3.2.3 Self administered questionnaire

The second aspect of the data collection process involved administering an email questionnaire. This method was employed to gather data in a structured manner and gauge the knowledge management practices among OWI staff. The questionnaire was administered by email to facilitate the speed and cost of reaching the dispersed OWI community. This method is recommended by as being one of the fastest and cheapest means of conducting an investigation Wilson (1996: 102). The use of self administered questions is also supported by Oppenheim (1993: 103) as self administered questionnaires minimize interview bias by permitting interview assessments and providing necessary explanations to questions but not the interpretation of questions.

A series of initial interviews, from the open interviews, together with ideas from the relevant the literature eventually led to the conceptual framework and the decision to measure a number of variables by means of structured inventories. The structured inventories were done by way of attitude statements that were in form of a Likert scale. Attitude statements can be regarded as belonging to the closed question and there is therefore not much room for answer categories. Oppenheim (1993: 104) therefore recommends that the context, sequence, and response categories must therefore help the respondent without unintentionally biasing the answers. To provide for non-structured responses, the attitude statements therefore provided a comments category where respondents could provide further information and examples if they wished to do so.

The building process and planning of the attitude statements followed some general considerations relating to question planning, building of question sequences or modules within the questionnaire³¹, and question content and

³¹ The ordering of attitude statements reflected the general theoretical framework and the themes designed for the study. The statements did not follow one another in theme sequence but were arranged so as not to mislead respondents nor put them in a situation that their skills were being tested. Personal data questions that were put at the beginning of the questionnaire were very minimal, and most questions were optional so as to put it in the respondents mind that they are not being tested. This was followed by short instructions on how the questionnaire should be answered and the return email address of the researcher.

purpose³² that are provided by Oppenheim (1993: 118-129) and DeVellis (1991: 69) to ensure that attitude statements are relevant and efficient for a study.

While the physical design of the questionnaire was adopted from Helvetas Learning NGO Package³³, the conceptual content was solely constructed by the researcher in order to ensure that the list of statements responded to the research questions and the research themes. The eleven themes that were developed consisted of the following: Management and control systems; finances and resources; stakeholder relationships; internal knowledge processes; external knowledge processes; knowledge needs; communication processes; communication infrastructure; strategy and policy formulation; applying learning and developing organisational memory/ intellectual capital. Each of the themes consisted of five questions. The Likert scale used in this study is provided in Appendix B.

5.4 Reliability and Validity

Baker (1988:123) defines reliability as the degree to which a procedure for measuring produces similar outcomes when it is repeated. This is important in question formulation because if a question is irrelevant, too complicated, or likely to be misinterpreted by a respondent, such a question is highly likely to produce highly unreliable responses (Silverman, 2001:229). To promote reliability, the following steps were used:

³² These rules involved: avoiding double –barrelled statements; avoiding double negative or positives within a statement; making use of a neutral measure or answer to accommodate opinions for those who neither agreed nor disagreed to a statement; making use of ‘any comments category’, so as not to restrict a respondents thought pattern; use of simple words and avoiding technical terms; paying attention as not to over-tax the respondents memory by including questions that require deep thinking; paying due attention to detail, such as layout, providing instructions and question numbering.

³³ The package may be accessed on http://www.helvetas.ch/wEnglish/competencies/Knowledge and Development/Working_Material.asp?navid=19

Open interviews were conducted to provide an opportunity for staff to help the researcher understand how they comprehended the subject matter. Therefore, the type of answers obtained during the open interviews provided the ground for the type of key themes to be included, and type of language the researcher used during construction of the attitude statements. The open interviews also acted as a pilot from where the pre-test of the interviewing schedule was done to ensure that the all questions are clear and free of ambiguities. The researcher suggests that the second stage of the data collection process that entailed using attitude measurements increased the chances of obtaining reliable and similar answers. This is due to the use of fixed choice answers for this process.

Validity, which addresses the question of whether the researcher is measuring what they think they are measuring, addresses critical issues of the relationship between theory and the indicator (Baker, 1988:119). Validity also deals with “confidence of knowledge, but not certainty of the truth” (Silverman, 2001:225).

To ensure validity, the following steps recommended by Silverman (2001: 236) were used in this study: the employment of more than one data collection method to allow corroboration; the representation of key themes of the knowledge management domain in the attitude statements. This was an important exercise as “in theory, a scale has content validity when its items are a randomly chosen subset of the universe of appropriate items” (DeVellis, 1991: 44-45); the employment of analytic induction by testing or re-examining the theoretical framework for this study; verification of respondents answers after data was transcribed after the open interviews; providing prompts (only where necessary³⁴) to guide the researcher during the open interviews; and obtaining clarity of answers from respondents that made brief comments to the attitude statements.

³⁴ Oppenheim (1992: 144- 148) advices against biased probes and careless prompts, poor structure and wording which are often the main cause of reducing validity and reliability. In following this guideline, the researcher tested the Attitude statement structure and wording prior to distributing the questionnaire to the respondents.

5.6 Analysis of secondary data

The secondary data that was used in this research project involved analysing the content of the body of material available from the literature, documents produced by the centres such as organisational strategies, and the OWI information portal. Content analysis involved a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases (Leedy, 1985:155). In respect of this study, the literature covering areas in knowledge management related to issues addressed in the theoretical framework. The drawback in using this technique is that the documents available can be limited or partial and that the documents were often written for some other purpose (Babbie, 1999:296). As a result, the researcher found literature on many studies and articles that were biased towards NGO control and coordination or general knowledge management information that was written for some other purpose.

Despite the above drawback, the advantages of using this method outweigh the disadvantages. Notable among the many advantages of conducting the literature review is that it will increase the researchers confidence in the topic, will provide new ideas and approaches that may not have occurred to the researcher, it will show the researcher how others have handled methodological and design issues in similar studies and it will help the researcher in the interpretation and making sense of the findings, and ultimately help the researcher tie the results to the work of those that have preceded this study (Leedy, 2001:70).

5.7 Ethics

This research project strived to maintain all ethical procedures as laid down in the various codes of conduct imposed on professional researchers. One ethical principle highly that is often emphasised is that nothing should be done to the subjects of the research without their agreement, and that this agreement should be based on an adequate knowledge, supplied if necessary by the researcher, of

what is implied by consenting (Sapsford & Abbot, 1996:319). Furthermore, Oppenheim (1993: 104) is of the opinion that the ways in which respondents are approached during the data collection process is of paramount importance as it has an effect of the response rate. The following factors were considered to enhance respondent motivation and to ensure that the method of approach was respected:

- Communicating every step of the process to the respondents, and the purpose of the research at the beginning.
- Obtaining permission from the Executive Directors via email and telephone.
- Sending information to staff on the research via email, particularly prior to administering the questionnaire and conducting face-to-face interviews with OWA.
- Permission letters to undertake staff interviews were sent to the heads of the units at least six months before the data collection process.
- Additionally, advanced warnings prior to the data collection process were communicated with the heads, who in turn communicated to their respective staff. This communication was done a month before the actual data collection process. The length and duration of the questionnaires were also considered so as not to put off the respondents. The questionnaire was not more than 5 pages in length.
- Confidentiality and anonymity was also maintained in the data processing stage and gathering stages, as recommended by Sapsford and Abbot (1996:320) involved not mentioning the respondents name in the findings and analysis, unless they agreed to be quoted. In that instance respondents details were pseudo names or not indicated.
- The research outputs will also be brought to the attention of the organization as a way of carrying out an open research.

Respondents were issued with reminders during the follow up stage. Good rapport was maintained with participants during that phase and as well as the personal interview phase. However, as it was necessary to maintain anonymity,

reminders to respondents could not be issued to individual respondents. Sometimes anonymity could not be avoided, as the teams are rather small. Additionally, non-responses that were 'situational' had to be followed up. If respondents did not respond, their wishes were granted rather than forcing a respondent and obtaining poor answers.

When developing the questionnaires much effort was made to avoid humiliating respondents by baffling them with terminology, technical terms and abbreviations. Equally important was the use of 'introductory statements by way of explaining and elaborating the meaning of the open-ended questions during the in depth interviews.

5.8 Data analysis, presentation and reporting

The analysis process involved scrutinizing data for underlying themes and other patterns that characterized the cases in more detail than a single piece of information can. The results of the analysis was categorized, and clustered into meaningful groups that translated to the knowledge manipulation processes, (such as networking and workflow process), knowledge resources (such as technology, views on knowledge management, strategy and work culture), and enablers of knowledge management (such as internal and external culture, environmental factors and leadership).

The coding frame developed during the pilot work was adopted ensured that the categories were more appropriate although recoding of some categories was necessary for the Likert scale. This approach enabled reliability checks to be conducted. It was particularly necessary to review the categories so as to reduce the loss of some information.

The description of the findings followed a "Group in interaction structure in that it first tells of individual [knowledge management] experiences" (Wolcott, 1994: 15) that each centre faced. After the individual descriptions were made, description of the two cases studies put together in their interactive setting in

order to present a single entity of knowledge management issues at OWI. In other words, the description first looked at organizing each case study by describing the sites before doing cross-setting pattern analysis. The description of the data was organized according to the theoretical framework, and respective questions under the framework. By so doing, the organization is based on recommendations made by Patton, (2002: 439) and Walcott (1994: 20) for ensuring that key processes and issues identified during the data collection process are logically organized.

The interpretative analysis of the findings was influenced by a number of factors. These included the:

- Combination of ideas taken from the methods (the literature review, study of organisation documents for OWA, face to face interviews, electronic interviews using open-ended questions and specific follow-up questions, and an analysis of the findings).
- Interpreting the findings against the theoretical framework.
- Undertaking the epistemology and ontology world view

In this regard, the analysis used both a within – case and a cross – case analysis of the data. The objective of the within-case analysis was to build an explanation of the case by using a deduction and induction cycle. The interpretative process involved drawing conclusions from the combination of the above methods, and following that causality could be established. As most of the causes were interrelated, it proved difficult to interpret without the researcher having to repeat herself. The researcher tried to solve this problem by discussing the analysis under headings and subheadings that summarised the deductions rather than by following the theoretical framework and framework used to report the findings. The researcher also found it helpful to use association patterns during interpretation for cases where the exact cause could not be found. Oppenheim (1993: 15) proposes that it is easier to establish associations as they give a strong hint about causality and associations can

suggest an effective intervention method even though the cause remains unknown.

The quantitative results of the findings were analysed by arranging the data from each respondent into categories (themes) in tables that displayed the averages and standard deviations³⁵. Before the averages were calculated, the different attitude rates were added from all the participants in each centre. The average data of each of the three tables were highlighted in order to depict a radar chart displaying a gauge relating to knowledge management practices for each of the centres. A selection of 0-20 was made for the data range on all the radar charts.

5.9 Limitations of the study

The research met with some restrictions in contrast to its original ambitious goal. Most of these limitations can be linked to lack of resources. The researcher depended on emails to obtain a large amount of primary data (except in the case of OWA), and considerable methodological shortcomings were thus experienced with email communication. These shortcomings related to issues that were not anticipated such as: the possibility of email being overlooked or not checked, and if it was checked, it was done late. The centres also have a large influx of online information overload and spam, and it was only identified at the end of the data collection period that the researcher's email was read as spam at OneWorld.nl, and thus almost all of it was deleted.

This could have been the reason why the other centres could not provide responses. The researcher realised only too late that she should have placed receipts on all her email correspondence to monitor the situation better. She was however fortunate to have obtained responses from OneWorld.nl, who were not her initial study sample. Face to face data collection is far more effective for more descriptive responses. Email, can be used to make follow-up contact. Nevertheless, the findings provided a picture of the uniqueness of knowledge

³⁵ The tables are included in Appendix D.

management practices and recommendations that can be applied in networked developmental NGOs.

The other major restriction on the research project involved the reluctance of some OWI employees to participate in the research project. A possible reason could be that respondents were not willing to answer the open-ended questions as they regarded them to be rather complex. The other reason for the reluctance was the perceptions on knowledge management, as some employees felt that they were not in a position to answer such questions, as it was not in their domain of work.

The researcher felt that the attitude statements could have been framed differently for OneWorld.nl as the attitude statements were developed from identified information gaps obtained during the face-to-face interviews with OWA staff. Nevertheless, the attitude statements were thought provoking for OneWorld.nl as indicated by the director who stated, “we are busy professionalizing our organisation. A lot of questions are very valid for OneWorld.nl and our work. I hope that within 1.5 years we can agree more with the statements. As far as the OW Network is concerned, there is a world to gain.” This statement reassured the researcher of the relevance of question types. However, some clarifications had to be made on the attitude statements to OneWorld.nl respondents.

A further limitation was the inability of the researcher to obtain information from the OneWorld.nl portal as it is in Dutch. The researcher had to rely on OneWorld.nl staff for additional organisational information. Significantly, during the data collection stage, the researcher was able to establish that trust and willingness between researcher and respondents go hand in hand and are crucial to obtaining reliable data. If the researcher had pushed the process further, she would have definitely obtained ‘false’ data, hence her decision to focus on the available data and not push for more information, particularly in instances of unwillingness. However, the researcher further felt that as the

research was exploratory³⁶, she needed to put a stop to gathering data that was not part of the framework, and reached a point of closure when she realised that the data collected had reached a saturated stage.

³⁶ Exploratory research is usually conducted because a problem has not been visibly defined, nor has the real range of the problem been explained. Therefore, it allows the researchers to familiarise themselves with the problem to be studied and if possible generate hypothesis to be tested. Because it is investigative by nature, it is the initial research before more conclusive research is undertaken and determines the best research design, data collection method and selection of subjects and it further concludes that the problem does not exist (Ryerson, 2006).

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Attitudinal measurements

This section comprises the observations and responses obtained from OWA³⁷ and OneWorld.nl³⁸ during the data collection process. The section begins by providing quantitative findings from the attitudinal statements that were measured on a Likert scale³⁹. The findings are briefly discussed according to the eleven themes based on the knowledge management perceptions from the OWI staff that responded to the Likert scale. These themes consist of management and control systems; finances and resources; stakeholder relationships; internal knowledge processes; external knowledge processes; knowledge needs; value of communication processes; value of ICT infrastructure; strategy and policy formulation; applying learning and developing organisational memory and intellectual capital. The list of statements is found in Appendices B and C.

A summary of scores showing the total score for each theme, the average score for each theme⁴⁰, and standard deviation⁴¹ is illustrated after the description of each theme. The summarised findings of the eleven themes for each centre are presented in the form of radar charts in Figures three and four after the description of the themes.

6.1.1 Management and control systems

This section contains the perceptions from staff on the centres' control systems and coordination activities. The questions in this section aimed to rate the respondents perceptions on the various managerial enhanced control and

³⁷ OneWorld Africa

³⁸ OneWorld Netherlands

³⁹ The breakdown of the responses from the Likert scale indicates that 57.4%, (4/8 responses) of the study population responded for OWA. OneWorld.nl had a 100% response rate (7/7 responses).

⁴⁰ The average score is abbreviated as (Av)

⁴¹ The standard deviation is abbreviated as (SD).

coordination factors, communication processes and systems within and outside their centres that enhanced or affected knowledge management practices⁴².

Table 6.1 indicates that the above average total score of 12/20 was obtained by OWA. A below average score of 7/20 was indicated by OneWorld.nl this category. Statement 1 indicates that OWA staff particularly felt that the centre's offline and online mechanisms are well placed to enhance information and knowledge sharing. OWA staff however provided a low score of 2 for statements number 23 and 45, as staff agreed to OWA providing opportune times for personal feedback between staff and board and management; and staff are regarded for the contribution they make to the centre's learning via a mirage of means, such as positive feedback, time off for study, employee recognition and task allocation.

Table 6.1 further shows that OneWorld.nl staff generally felt satisfied with the opportune times being given for personal feedback between staff and board and management, as indicated in statement 23, they particularly felt that knowledge retention was not sufficiently built into their performance management systems as a score of 0 (strongly disagree) was given for statement 34.

⁴² Cf. Appendix C.1.1 (statements 1, 12, 23, 34 and 45)

Table 6.1 Management and control systems

Management and control systems		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
1	3	2
12	2.5	1
23	2	3
34	2.5	0
45	2	1
Total	12	7
Av	2.4	1.4
SD	0.4183	1.1402
Scores: Strongly disagree 0 Disagree 1 Neutral 2 Agree 3 Strongly Agree 4		

6.1.2 Finances and resources

This section contains the perceptions on how the financial factors and resources may have an impact on the information and knowledge management activities within the centres. The questions therefore aimed to rate the respondents perceptions on how the various resources within the OWI network and centres are managed⁴³.

Table 6.2 shows that a below average total score of 9/20 was indicated for OWA in this category, which also happened to be the centres weakest factors influencing information and knowledge management. OneWorld.nl obtained an above average total score of 13/20 in this category as indicated in Table 6.2. OWA staff particularly disagreed to financial limitations not affecting key information and knowledge management systems such as costs of running the centres' technology network as a score of 1 was allocated for this statement. OWA staff further disagreed to donor agencies not dictating the usage of their funds for programme activities. OWA staff agreed that they were in control of financial planning activities and the centres resources and facilities, such as staff

⁴³ CF. Appendix C.1.2 (statements 2, 13, 24, 35 and 46)

development programmes, training events and conferences are made available to all members for staff for the sake of the centres organisational development (Statement 24).

OneWorld.nl's above average scores show that it had a more positive perception of the management of finance within their centre. The staff further agreed to time, human and material resources as having a big impact on information and knowledge management systems within their centre.

Table 6.2 Finances and resources

Finances and resources		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
2	2.5	1
13	2	3
24	2.5	3
35	1	3
46	1.5	3
Total	9.5	13
Av	1.9	2.6
SD	0.6519	0.8944
Scores: Strongly disagree 0 Disagree 1 Neutral 2 Agree 3 Strongly Agree 4		

6.1.3 Stakeholder relationships

This section contains the perceptions on relationship processes within the centres and between the centres and their various stakeholders such as donors, partners, beneficiaries, and the government⁴⁴. The prevailing relationships were mostly measured through the existing communications patterns and involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making processes. Table 6.3 indicates that both centres obtained an above average total score of 12/20 in this category.

⁴⁴ cf. Appendix C.1.3 (Likert scale items 3, 14, 25, 36 & 47).

As indicated in statement number 3, OWA felt that they had a strong relationship among staff that enhanced the centre's decision making processes as staff generally felt that their centre was not based on a strict hierarchical top to bottom structure. The ratings in this section as shown in Table 6.3 confirm that OWA staff were ambivalent as to whether exiting communication with their beneficiaries contributed to the centre's objectives and as the beneficiaries were represented in the formulation of the projects (statement 25). OWA however disagreed that existing government policies did not interfere with the ICT and development goals at local level.

OneWorld.nl also indicated that their staff maintained some sort of relationship with their various stakeholders. However, unlike OWA, OneWorld.nl felt that existing government policies in the Netherlands did not interfere but rather promoted the ICT and development goals at local level.

Table 6.3 Stakeholder relationships

Stakeholder relationships		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
3	3	4
14	2.5	2
25	2.5	2
36	2.5	1
47	1.5	3
Total	12	12
Av	2.4	2.4
SD	0.5477	1.1402
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1
	Agree 3	Neutral 2
	Strongly Agree 4	

6.1.4 Internal knowledge processes

The aim of this section was to gauge the internal procedures for the regular monitoring, review and evaluation of centre based programmes. This section also gauged the ways and means in which staff were encouraged to share knowledge within their centres⁴⁵. Table 6.4 indicates that OWA and OneWorld.nl obtained above average aggregate scores of 12 and 11 respectively in this category.

As indicated by Table 6.4, OWA staff generally agreed to existing monitoring and evaluation of programmes. However, staff felt that individuals did not often view each other as working partners as they constantly did not strive to freely criticise and find out and meet each others expectations and needs during the evaluation processes (statement 37). OneWorld.nl also agreed monitoring and evaluation of programmes existed in their organization as indicated in Table 6.4 (statement 4). However, OneWorld.nl staff felt that their centre did not have sufficient built- in capacity to encourage staff to take periods off their daily operational responsibilities in order to reflect on their work experiences (Statement 15).

Table 6.4 Internal knowledge processes

Internal knowledge processes		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
4	3	2
15	3	1
26	2.5	3
37	1.5	2
48	2.5	3
Total	12.5	11
Av	2.5	2.2
SD	0.6124	0.8367
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1 Neutral 2
	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4

⁴⁵ cf. Appendix C.2.1 (Likert scale items 4, 15, 26, 37 & 48).

6.1.5 External knowledge processes

The purpose of this section was to gauge the externalisation⁴⁶ of the knowledge management processes relating to the networking activities between OWI centres and then again between OWI centres and other organisations⁴⁷. Table 6.5 indicates that OWA and OneWorld.nl obtained above average aggregate scores of 12.5 and 11 respectively in this category.

OWA and OneWorld.nl both indicated that networking was a key means by which their centres used and transferred knowledge, as seen by the statements 5, 12 & 27 that were agreed to in Table 6.5. However, from statements numbers 38 and 49, it can be seen that both centres indicated that the work experiences learned within their centres were not shared with peers or teams based in other centres on a regular basis. Furthermore, a comment made by OneWorld.nl stated that it 'could do better' with regards to making contacts with other organisation to gather useful knowledge and skills to benchmark itself against best practice it.

Table 6.5 External knowledge processes

External knowledge processes		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
5	3	3
16	2.5	3
27	3	3
38	2	1
49	2	1
Total	12.5	11
Av	2.5	2.2
SD	0.5	1.0954
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1
	Agree 3	Neutral 2
		Strongly Agree 4

⁴⁶ The externalisation process is discussed in chapter 3.3.1. This process refers to the use of knowledge by targeted audiences by articulating tacit knowledge into explicit concepts (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2004: 57).

⁴⁷ cf. Appendix C.2.2 (Likert scale items 5, 16, 27, 38 & 49)

6.1.6 Knowledge needs

This section gauged the centre's abilities to generate the knowledge required to meet organisational objectives. The statements examined the in-house skills needed for analysing M&E⁴⁸ reports and 'just in time' information for future application⁴⁹. Table 6.6 indicates that OWA and OneWorld.nl obtained aggregate scores of 10 and 11 respectively in this category.

From Table 6.6, it can be seen that both centres felt that their M&E functions could be better handled through more routine analysis of M&E reports; as a neutral score were provided for statements 6 and 28. From statement 17, it can be seen that the centres both felt that they needed in-house skills at converting raw information from internal evaluations and research into usable knowledge that can be applied for strategy implementation. From statement 50, OneWorld.nl specifically felt that their centre does not have 'just in time' access to specific information such as manuals or checklists containing information to enhance project formulation and implementation.

Table 6.6 Knowledge needs

Knowledge needs		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
6	2.5	2
17	1	2
28	2.5	2
39	2	4
50	2	1
Total	10	11
Av	2	2.2
SD	0.6124	1.0954
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1 Neutral 2
	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4

⁴⁸ M&E: Monitoring and evaluation

⁴⁹ cf. Appendix C.2.3 (statements numbers 6, 17, 28, 39 and 50).

6.1.7 Value of communication processes

The statements in this section aimed to gauge the various communication processes throughout the OWI network⁵⁰. Table 6.7 indicates that OWA obtained an above average aggregate score of 11 while OneWorld.nl obtained a below average aggregate score of 6 in this category.

From Table 6.7, it can be seen that both centres had a positive perception with regard to the network's mechanisms to enhance the experiences between staff in different teams, sections, departments and locations (a score of 2.5 and 3 were given by OWA and OneWorld.nl respectively on statement 18). However, it can further be seen from Table 6.7 and the low rating given to statement 40, that the centres, particularly OneWorld.nl felt that it is not easy to access information on lessons learnt from other parts of the network. From statement 51, it can further be seen that staff in both centres were ambivalent whether their staff have the skills to communicate their personal knowledge and wisdom to others.

Table 6.7 Value of communication processes

Value of communication processes		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
7	2.5	1
18	2.5	3
29	2.5	0
40	1.5	0
51	2	2
Total	11	6
Av	2.2	1.2
SD	0.4472	1.3038
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1 Neutral 2
	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4

⁵⁰ cf. Appendix C.3.1 (statements numbers 7, 18, 29, 40 and 51).

6.1.8 Value of communication infrastructure

The statements in this section aimed to gauge the existing ICT infrastructure throughout the OWI network⁵¹. From Table 6.8, it can be seen that OWA indicated more satisfaction with the existing ICT infrastructure (as their average aggregate score was 12) than OneWorld.nl, which had an average aggregate score of 10.

For instance, it can be seen from statement 8, that OWA staff felt that the existing infrastructure was good at supporting the centre's information and knowledge management processes when staff were out of the station; particularly if the staff had access to Internet facilities. On the contrary, from Table 6.8, statements 8 and 30, it can be seen that OneWorld.nl felt that the existing infrastructure was not adequate to fully support information and knowledge management functions for the entire network.

Table 6.8 Value of communication infrastructure

Value of communication infrastructure		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
8	3.5	1
19	2.5	3
30	2	1
41	2.5	2
52	1.5	3
Total	12	10
Av	2.4	2
SD	0.7416	1
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1 Neutral 2 Agree 3 Strongly Agree 4

⁵¹ cf. Appendix C.3.2 (statements numbers 8, 19, 30, 41 and 52).

6.1.9 Strategy and policy formulation

The set of questions in this section specifically aimed to gauge the inclusive nature of the strategy formulation process between the centres and their various stakeholders⁵². Table 6.9 indicates that OWA and OneWorld.nl respectively obtained above average aggregate scores of 11 and 12 in this category.

From Table 6.9, it can be seen that both centres indicate that to some degree, strategy formulation is providing a contribution towards the continuous improvement of their centres' objectives. However, from statements 31 and 53, it can be seen that OWA is less positive about their strategy to react to lessons learnt and policy formulation processes with regard to the proposal writing, as it is sometimes not inclusive of OWA, donors, beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Table 6.9 Strategy and policy formulation

Strategy and policy formulation		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
9	3	3
20	2	3
31	1.5	2
42	3	2
53	1.5	2
Total	11	12
Av	2.2	2.4
SD	0.7583	0.5477
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1
	Agree 3	Neutral 2
	Strongly Agree 4	

6.1.10 Applying learning

The aim of this section was to gauge the various best practices that are in the centres and network for improving organisational objectives and practice of each centre, OWI network and/or other organisations. The section on applying learning included questions relating to the employees' perceptions to skills

⁵² cf. Appendix C.3.3 (statements numbers 9, 20, 31, 42 and 53).

development and capacity building within the centres and OWI network⁵³. Table 6.10 indicates that OWA obtained an above average aggregate score of 11.5 while OneWorld.nl obtained a below average aggregate score of 9 in this category

From Table 6.10, it can be seen that while OWA partly recognised learning as an important element for improving its practices at local level, (statement 10), it was also regarded to be partly in place at international level, (statement 21). However, from statement 54, it can be seen that staff felt that learning within OWA was limited as the learning experience was not seen as everyone's business, but instead left to specialised units or senior managers.

On the contrary, Table 6.10 shows that while OneWorld.nl staff were fairly ambivalent about the application of learning (statements 10, 32 and 43) and very negative about the transfer of learning within OWI (statement 21). It was positive about learning not only being provenance of specialised units, but that it is everyone's business (statement 54).

Table 6.10 Applying Learning

Applying Learning		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
10	2.5	2
21	2.5	0
32	2.5	2
43	2.5	2
54	1.5	3
Total	11.5	9
Av	2.3	1.8
SD	0.4472	1.0954
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1 Neutral 2 Agree 3 Strongly Agree 4

⁵³ cf. Appendix C.3.4 (statements numbers 10, 21, 32, 43 and 54).

6.1.11 Developing organisational memory and intellectual capital

The aim of this section was to gauge the value each centre placed on intellectual capital. This was rated by examining systems that managers used to leverage intellectual capital⁵⁴. Table 6.11 indicates that OWA and OneWorld.nl respectively obtained above average aggregate scores of 10.5 and 12 in this category.

From Table 6.11, statement 22, it can be seen that the aggregate score for both centres suggests that there is marginally above average agreement that there are systematic procedures in place to leverage and retain intellectual capital (OneWorld.nl more so than OWA).

OWA was, however, very positive about its expertise database (statement 33); while OneWorld.nl was negative about this feature. OWA, in turn, was negative about the referencing and standardisation of verbal and operational information (statement 11). OneWorld.nl was again strongly agreed with the statement about the non-personalization of external visits, meetings etc to avoid non-accounted overheads (statement 55).

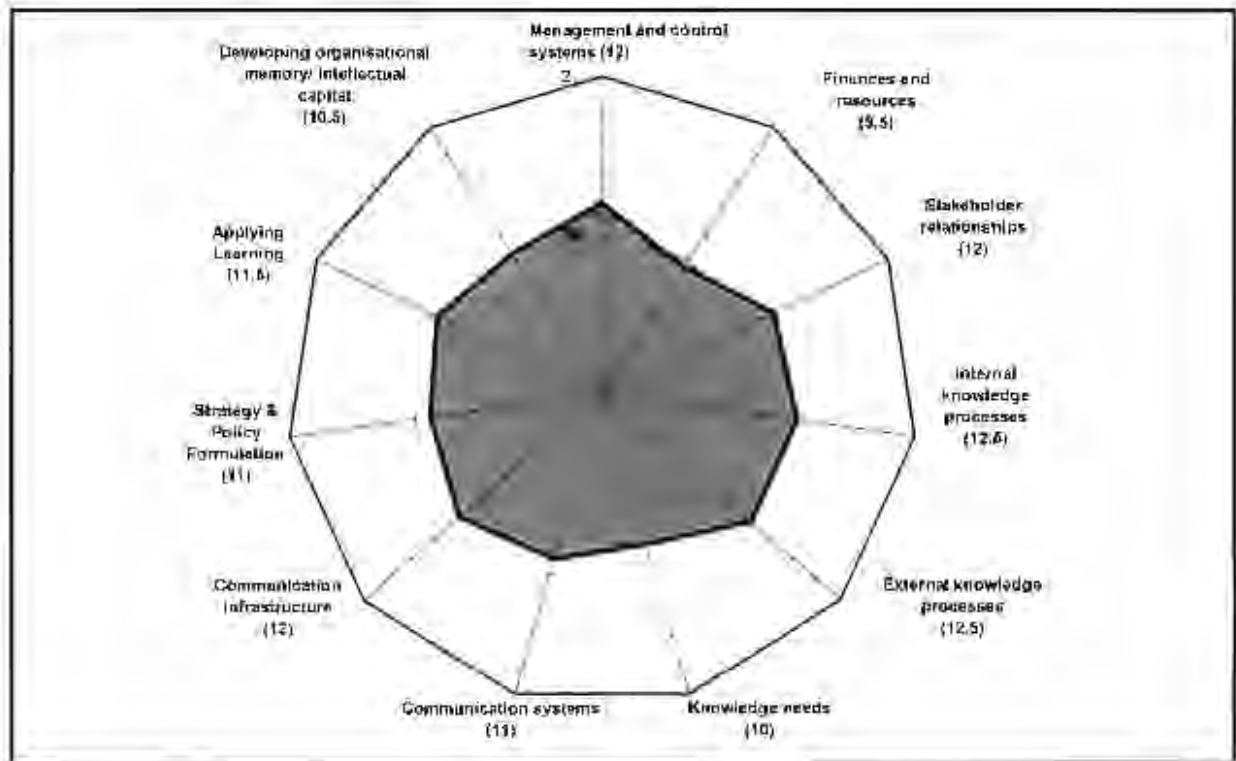
Table 6.11 Developing organisational memory and intellectual capital

Developing organisational memory and intellectual capital		
Statement	OWA's Score	OneWorld.nl's Score
11	1	2
22	2.5	3
33	3	1
44	2	2
55	2	4
Total	10.5	12
Av	2.1	2.4
SD	0.7416	1.1402
Scores:	Strongly disagree 0	Disagree 1
	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
		Neutral 2

⁵⁴ cf. Appendix C.3.5 (statements numbers 11, 22, 33, 44 and 55).

Figure 6.1

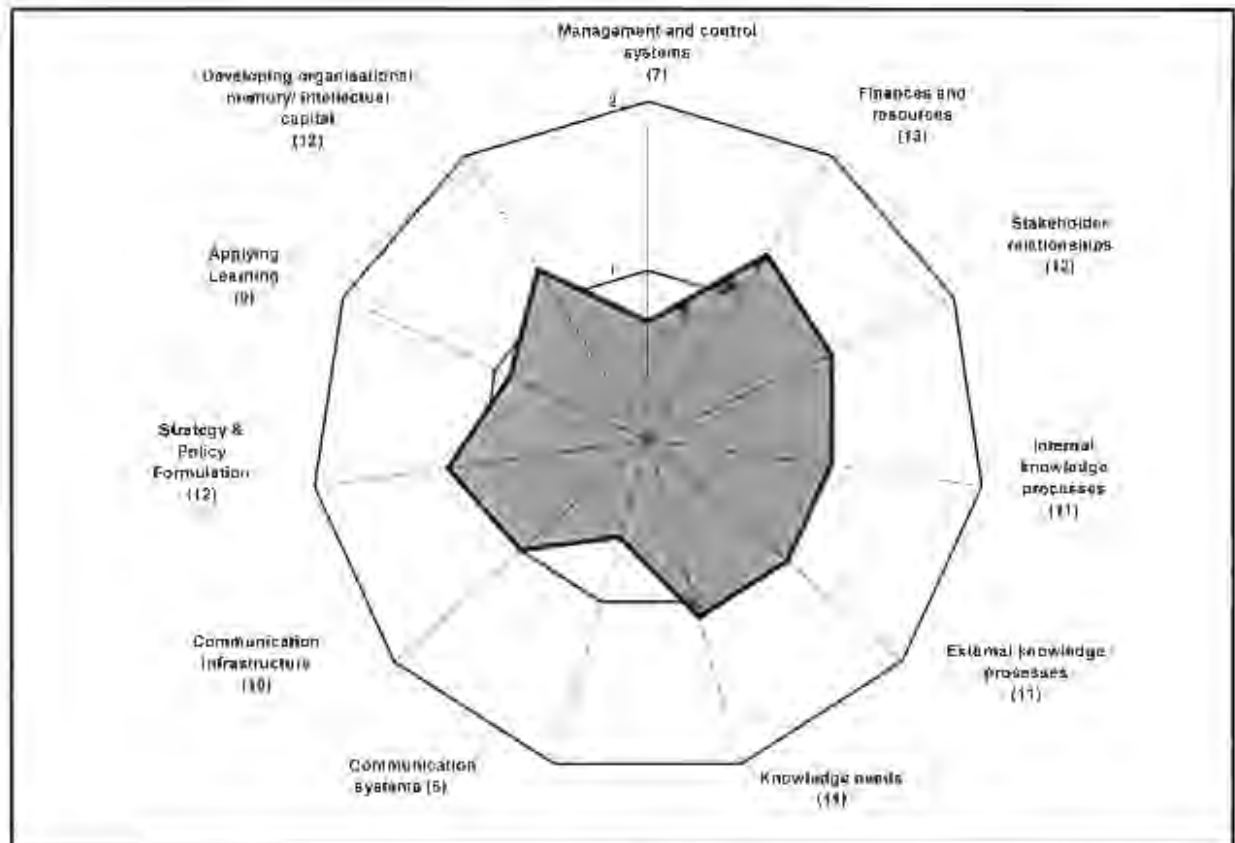
Summary of OWA attitude statements of knowledge management related trends



The radar chart shows that OWA is the strongest in internal and external networking, and very weak in finances and resources. The radar above shows very little variation in the aggregate scores obtained for the perceptions held by OWA staff relating to the KM state of their organisation. The overall rating is 11.3 which indicate a marginally (56.5%) positive rating and this ranged from a marginally negative rating for perceptions pertaining to 'Finances and Resources' (9.5), to the highest positive ratings of 12.5 for internal and external knowledge processes.

Figure 6.2

Summary of OneWorld.nl attitude statements of knowledge management related trends



The radar chart shows that OneWorld.nl is the strongest in its approach to internal use of finances and resources, but considers communication processes between centres to be a very weak point. In contrast to the small variation in the aggregate perception scores of the OWA respondents, a far greater variation is observed of OneWorld.nl. These range from the low ratings of 6 and 7 for respectively communication systems and management and control systems to the relatively high rating of 13 for finances and resources. These ratings are interestingly in direct contrast to the high and low ratings obtained for OWA. The overall rating of 10.4 indicates a very slight positive overall perception that is very similar to the overall perception of OWA.

6.2 Open-ended interviews

This set of data is based on the open interviews corresponding to the theoretical framework for this study and are presented under the various themes corresponding to the interview schedule. These themes relate to managerial, resource and environmental factors; knowledge manipulation activities and knowledge resources. The list of questions under each theme can be found in Appendix A⁵⁵. In the course of describing the findings, sample comments in verbatim are also included to present the respondents words or expressions in the most reflective manner⁵⁶.

6.2.1 Managerial, resource and environmental influences

This section contains the perceptions on the centres managerial responsibilities, resource and environmental influences. Corresponding to the theoretical framework in 4.1.1 which discusses the managerial, resource and environmental factors on knowledge management, the questions in this section aimed to discover what the respondents felt were the various ways in which managerial support was provided through controls and communication processes. From the theoretical framework discussed in 4.1.1, the questions relating to resource influences correspond to the financial resources and knowledge resources needed to build a knowledge management system. The questions on the environmental factors aimed to discover the various regulatory, customer and GEPSE⁵⁷ factors enhancing or affecting knowledge management practices.

⁵⁵ OWA and OneWorld.nl both provided a 100% response rate on open interviews from the target audience of managerial and professional staff.

⁵⁶ The information in verbatim is biased to OWA due to greater advantages in obtaining variety of responses in instances when face-to-face interviews are conducted.

⁵⁷ GEPSE stands for government, economic, political, social and education

6.2.1.1 Managerial control and coordination systems

Overall, the management staff at OWA and OneWorld.nl regarded their control and coordination factors to be influenced by top management, such as the Programme Manager (for OWA), their Executive Directors, or the Board or OWI.

Examples of control measures mentioned by staff in both centres included having strategic offline and online meetings with partners, staff meetings with the Board, and the Board having offline and online meetings, and internal weekly staff meetings. OneWorld.nl placed greater emphasis on holding meetings where the executive director is also present (if he is available) and OWA's director did not need to attend the meetings even if she was present. Furthermore the centres indicated that they held regular face-to-face meetings pertaining to certain specific projects among two or three colleagues, and the centres each hold an annual staff retreat to talk about strategic issues.

What was found to be different in these communication and control systems between the two centres was the number of times an activity could be held. It was noted that while the offline partnership meetings were organized three times a year for OneWorld.nl, OWA only makes an attempt to hold theirs at least yearly if finances were available. Furthermore, the OneWorld.nl board has offline meetings five to six times a year, whereby the OWA board has less offline meetings.

Both centres placed an emphasis on producing hardcopy documents. However, the emphasis was more notable within OWA than OneWorld.nl that placed a greater emphasis in use of online systems. For instance, OWA housed a library of hard copy documents, CDROMs, pictures and various audiovisual materials that is managed from the Directors' office by an office assistant. There was an also greater emphasis within OWA on writing various weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly reports. The management staff also emphasized that reports had to be produced after any outside trip in order for others to draw lessons from their experiences.

A special emphasis on capturing contact information was mentioned by both organisations, but more so with OneWorld.nl than with OWA (The OWA director made mention of it but not by the staff). OWA's director indicated that the staff were required to fill in a template and form to provide contact details and summary information on key issues that are discussed when they travel and have meetings outside the office. OneWorld.nl staffs manage an online contact database. It was noted that OneWorld.nl placed greater emphasis on the use of their computerised online network to share archived online documents and other information despite both centres having common tools such as the Internet, Email, SKYPE, Dgroups, Online and offline newsletters and common telephone lines.

Systems relating to human resource practices were also mentioned by OWA staff as possible managerial factors affecting knowledge management practices. It was noted that OWA had in place a volunteer system that aimed to fill any gaps in activities. For instance, a management staff member indicated that the use of volunteer journalists was important as they captured information on key events that was published online and offline.

Other human resource measures mentioned by OWA staff were "*finance procedures [used to] assist and direct staff in financial management issues...[and] a human resource policy manual and procedures assist and direct staff in managing their internal activities*". OWA staff also mentioned that new employees starting at the centre were taken through key procedures to enable them to fit into their jobs easily. Furthermore, a new member of staff attributed easy coordination and control to the simplicity in structure and the small size of the centre, therefore enabling "*people to know what to do and follow up*". New OWA staff particularly noted that their job descriptions included certain phrases that provided some guidelines for staff in the network to participation in information sharing at international level. The staff however indicated that these guidelines were not direct instructions in the promotion of 'knowledge management'.

Although OWA staff indicated and confirmed that control systems were in place at centre level, most staff were apprehensive that their local board did not play a key role in the governance of the centre. OWA staff felt that their board had potential, but could not lead in strategic directions as most of the members were based abroad and were held down by management positions they held within NGOs. In contrast to this, OneWorld.nl staff made no derogatory comments relating to their local board.

Both centres were aware of control system set up by OWI for the coordination of knowledge sharing activities at international level. Most staff stated that they were part of teams within OWI and they participated in various online meetings. For instance, a staff member at OWA reported that *“Editors produce reports and feedback after each programme that is shared with other staff at centre and international level.”* Control systems from OWI were greatly emphasized by OWA than OneWorld.nl. OWA staff felt that reporting mechanisms had to be in place with regard to OWI due to controls placed on use of finances and implementation of programmes.

6.2.2.2 Financial influences

Finances were looked at as a control measure and often determined how activities could be carried out. In the words of one OWA employee, *“Information and knowledge management is part of the organisation’s mandate, so the organization tries to prioritise information activities as part of its mandate. However, the need for money to carry out these activities remains a big challenge.”*

The weak financial situation had an effected programme management activities and caused delays in programme implementation. Therefore, a significant finding from OWA staff members was the displeasure because of delayed funding. A long-term member of staff who felt that there appeared to be tight controls placed on centres from the headquarters particularly voiced this. Staff also likened it to a north-south divide where they felt that the north (OWI) had

ultimate control over OWA's financial situation and how the money was channelled. In the words of the respondent, it was noted that *"There is a continuous battle between OWI and OWA because they are not happy with the money coming straight to OWA. The major trend is that money goes to/through OWI before it comes to OWA."*

On a positive note, some OWA staff indicated that they could manage programmes despite funding problems because of an increased ability to share resources between projects. By following a programme-based budget⁵⁸, management staff noted that they could share resources from different donors as long as their budget lines generally supported an objective. Staff also felt that a programme based budget increased closer linkages of programmes and ultimately to the sharing of ideas. OWA staff members particularly felt that the programme based budgets enabled them to have more control of a financial situation as they were able to understand the implications of handling and planning the finances for their programmes and for other programme managers, and most importantly understand when there were delays in the disbursements of funds from OWI or when there was absolutely no funding to carry out proposed programmes.

Some staff members specifically felt that OWA was financially advantaged as most *"of the information activities are done online and so it is hardly affected by financial roller-coasters."* Although this statement is well intended by the respondent, it indicates 'wishful thinking' on the part of that staff member as the findings relating to the needs of OWA partners indicated that most partners preferred and are in need of offline information services rather than online services. This will be discussed further in the analysis.

To the contrary the findings relating to financial controls and coordination for OneWorld.nl indicated very different outcomes, as OneWorld.nl staff were not personally in charge of their funds. The centre however admitted to having a

⁵⁸ A programme based budget covers wider programme areas and thus cuts across many projects. Projects are therefore able to draw money from other projects that fall under similar programme areas.

strict procedural system for management staff where all staff was required to register the number of hours they worked on projects. Despite having a better financial situation than OWA, the centre also admitted to financial constraints which limited programme implementation.

Both centres reported that they are very dependent on donor support. OWA's chief sources of funding being external donors such as Hivos⁵⁹, means that the organization relies on external donors whose funds come via OWI, while World.nl's donors (from Hivos as well as from the National committee on sustainable development and international cooperation) are internal donors based in the Netherlands.

6.2.2.3 Economic, political, social and education influences

The centres both recognised that economic, political and education factors had direct effects on their knowledge management activities. OWA's management staff felt that although the political climate in Zambia is conducive for carrying out OWA activities, political, economic and social factors had large effects. OWA staff was also certain that similar problems were being experienced around many of the African countries although at different levels.

One management staff commented that an unstable economy has a direct effect on information and knowledge management activities as the purchase and maintenance of ICTs, which are the major form of knowledge and information exchange, is very expensive in Africa where telecommunication costs are significantly higher than in developed countries.

OWA staff member noted that government played a significant influence in shaping the outcome of knowledge management in organizations as their intervention is needed for policy formulation and providing infrastructure for

⁵⁹ Hivos is a Netherlands NGO that provides financial and political support for local NGO's and southern based NGOs with the aim of enhancing sustainable improvement in these southern countries. The Hivos Culture Fund for instance supports activities in the field of culture and the arts." Making Civil Voices Heard" is a programme which Hivos has developed to promote the use ICTs (Hivos, 2006).

information provision. At a political level, OWA staff felt that *“the balance between politics and government has a huge bearing on network costs. This is primarily because governments are formed by political parties and those governments that do not have a bias or understanding of the importance of ICTs are bound to marginalize the sector, a case which is common in many African countries. This means that even at policy level, not much will be done to either enhance the sector or even to protect it. This leaves the sector open or vulnerable to all sorts of exploitation.”* OWA staff felt that politicians needed to be aware of the complexities relating to ICT provision and development.

The influence of governments was further felt by one OWA staff who stated that, the centre’s final say to a large extent is influenced by what governments think in issues of advocacy, as the centre has to be aware of not interfering in oppressive government policies. Reference was particularly being made to Zimbabwean NGOs who were not attracted in taking part in partnership activities due to current political factors in the country.

OneWorlds.nl staff confirmed that the overall political and social climate in the Netherlands embraced knowledge management as the *“Government policies do not interfere with ICT and development goals at country level”*. The country had in place policies and high standards on issues relating to information sharing and use and promotion of ICTs. The director at OneWorld.nl noted that knowledge management *“is even demanded by politicians, the donors and the people who donate money to organisations.”*

One OWA staff member noted educational impact on knowledge management activities as follows: *“much of the learning in Zambia does not have IT as part of their regular curricular. What this means is that in terms of education many acquire IT knowledge only at tertiary level. This creates a huge gap between the haves and have-nots of IT knowledge in the country. What this means is that you either know as a professional or do not know a single thing about Information and Communication Technologies. And to balance this disparity in an organization that is predominantly IT based can prove quite limiting.”*

A number of the OWA staff admitted they lacked the key skills demanded in a 'knowledge management environment'. Staff also indicated that they lacked sufficient leadership and communication skills to be effective in their expected leadership positions for their programmes.

Contrary to the education gaps exposed by OWA staff, OneWorld.nl provided a different picture of the education situation within the Netherlands as it was found to be far more developed than the situation prevailing in Africa. The data from OneWorld.nl staff indicated that education systems are readily available and provided on a continuous basis. The OneWorld.nl director confirmed that staff are encouraged to make use of educational facilities while they worked to fill any knowledge gaps they have. OneWorld.nl staff therefore found it easy to engage in continuing further education whilst in employment.

On a social level, the director at OWA showed concern that the social factor or culture of [African] staff was worrying as most staff "*do not prioritize reading and do not have a reading culture.*" According to OWA's director, lack of reading resulted in lack of knowledge of key strategic documents and emails. The director further noted that staff were often not aware of what was going on because they did not take time to read.

Socially, OneWorld.nl staff felt that they had an understanding of knowledge management because of the social climate of acceptance of knowledge management in their country. The director emphasized that "*Information and knowledge management is a hot topic in the Netherlands, and OneWorld.nl [was encouraged] to certainly pay more attention to it.*"

6.2.2.4 Partner Needs

Meeting the needs of partner⁶⁰ organisations was seen as a major environmental effect as partner organisations had considerable say in the type of services the two organisations provided. Both centres indicated that partners demanded a lot of services from them. OWA staff expressed that most of the partner needs differed due to the wide range of NGOs and civil society organisations that the centre was serving. In that context, the ability for OWA to meet the needs of partners was described by the all OWA staff as a “*Yes and No affair*” as not all partners benefited from the OWAs information facilitation services. The reasons are clearly represented by the words of one of the respondents as follows:

“Although OWA is a NGO serving NGO information needs, there is clear evidence that the information needs of most partner organizations is not sufficient because of the clash in priorities between OWA and partner organisations. Partners involved in service want to see measurable goods; therefore the information needs have to be tailored, innovative and simple but effective enough to be understood by partners.”

Another staff member stressed that *“being a civil society organization, most of our partners work in development and poverty fields as well as humanitarian and other service industries. These partners normally do not have any interest in ICTs and rarely use the internet for their work. This makes it very difficult to balance between our work and the partners’. As a consequence, work is not as efficient as it ought to be because we kind of operate at different levels. Many times information sharing or transfer is halted because of a lack of mutual appreciation of the means used.”*

As a result of the discrepancies evident in knowledge sharing between OWA and its partners, OWA’s director stressed that *“We [OWA] have discovered that some partners do not need information because they have access to the Internet and other mediums of obtaining information. As a result, OWA’s preoccupation*

⁶⁰ The term partner also refers to beneficiary in this research project. This is further discussed in chapter seven.

*has changed to focus more on community based organizations and being a facilitator in making available tools to the CBOs.” The director’s opinion tallied with an employee who stated that:” *Emphasis on the information and knowledge sharing activities is focused on disseminating information and directing tools for organizations to use in local content generation.*”*

It was felt by a few staff members that content repackaging by staff had to be carefully monitored, so that the real meaning of content is not disrupted when partner organisations made use of the OWA/OWI content portal. It was further noted by OWA’s management staff that the types of services OWA offered to partners were difficult to measure, particularly as information needs specifically targeted at rural based people is not achievable in a short time. Staff also felt that despite a lot of training and talking done with and on their own regarding meeting the needs of partner organisations not much action is taken by both partners and staff. The staff indicated that OWA needed to follow up on partnership activities to ensure that unnecessary theories on best practice are not reinvented.

The inability to effectively implement programmes was attributed to the wide geographical coverage of OWA and the different types of NGO partners OWA had to serve. However, staff felt that scaling down of OWA activities through the establishment of focal points would provide a solution to ensure more effective management of OWA’s programmes. One staff member emphasised that the *“focal points were expected to play a more strategic role than mere partner organizations and ensured that OWA obtains external knowledge needs”, particularly as OWA covers a large geographical coverage is too big, focal points decentralize most of the information sharing online and offline activities.*”

In a different light, although OneWorld.nl partner needs are partnership driven, the type of services provided by OWI (portal service) appeared appreciated as their partners were comfortable with the use of online media due to the economic and political climate that advocated for its use in the Netherlands. As a result, the findings reveal that OneWorld.nl was expected to provide current

information and knowledge management tools for their partner organisations as dictated by society.

6.2.2 Knowledge manipulation activities

The second section of the interview process focused on obtaining information from the respondents on the means they use to identify, present and share knowledge within and outside their centres. This set of questions specifically set out to find out possibilities of teamwork, collaboration and networking via intra and inter organisational means. Additionally, major findings detected from the external and internal controls discussed in the preceding chapters exhibited a direct link to the knowledge manipulation activities.

6.2.2.1 Internal processes

Apart from the electronic and offline meetings mentioned by staff in both organisations, it was noted by OWA staff that the use of the Content Management System (CMS) of the OneWorld portal was a key source from where organizational knowledge could specifically be used, transferred and acquired for external activities between the centres and their partner organisations. One staff member particularly mentioned that *“Many times information is gotten by doing research on the internet from other websites, through uploads on OWA Radio, through emailing lists, etc.”* Although the CMS was highly commended by OWA, staff still felt that a lot of work was needed in reshaping and repackaging information focused at the grassroots.

The use of information in hardcopy format was mentioned by a few staff members who felt that the publication of hardcopy materials such as newsletters, brochures and fliers was viewed important by the centre as a means of ensuring that external and internal recipients were aware of organizational objectives, services and information. Other means by which the visibility of OWA was enhanced was through the use of radio and participation in

workshops and external information sharing events (these were often carried out if funds were available).

It was particularly noted by an OWA staff member that “*Although money is an issue, priority is made to ensure that where possible, staff attend outside workshops and hold physical meetings.* She further added that “*Southern centers, particularly the executive directors have physical meetings to discuss strategic directions.*” At partnership level, it was noted that the establishment of focal points in Congo, Uganda, West and North Africa was meant to facilitate ICT for development activities among partner organisations.

Finally, it was mentioned by most staff members that most of them were in contact with OWI staff or other staff from other centres on work related issues and/or reporting issues. For example, the financial manager at OWA specifically mentioned that she worked closely with OWI Finance people “*in obtaining information relating to financial issues.*” However, the respondent also emphasized that there was a close working relationship with the local banking sector when advice on financial matters was needed.

The internal processes mentioned by staff in both organisations were also regarded as controls to ensuring efficient knowledge management processes. Staff at both centres felt that internal processes were well catered for. They mentioned the ease of access to information within the offices due to the existing computer network (which had a shared folder for all internal staff), email, SKYPE system, online discussion forums such as d-groups, and use of yahoo messenger.

However, OWA staff felt that information was not easily accessible when they travelled out of office. According to the CEO at OWA, pre requisite to travel meant that staff had to “*ensure that they have access to the Internet wherever they are*” in order to access information.

Additionally, it was noted that the Friday meetings held by OWA staff provided a forum for feedback, updates and plans for activities to be done in the coming

week. The Friday meetings were also seen as an opportunity where programme managers were able to plan on working together in the centre's activities. Friday meetings were also viewed as a time for provided information on how the various programme budgets were linked to organizational activities.

The OneWorld.nl team as already mentioned in the section discussing managerial systems and controls also had internal processes such as weekly meetings; online and face to face, etc. The centre also works with Outlook and web access, for those who work outside the office and everybody can check his or her own agenda and e-mail and that of others.

6.2.2.2 External knowledge processes

6.2.2.2.1 Collaboration and networking

Both centres mentioned that networking and collaboration with their stakeholders such as with the private sector, government, and donors was a significant means of obtaining external information and fulfilling partner needs. Further examples provided in where networking was viewed as essential involved obtaining external information from other staff members, local OWA staff, staff within the network (such as through online newsletters produced by each centre for the network), and partner organizations. Partnership meetings were regarded as important forums where OWA and OneWorld.nl could share strategic information with their partners. OneWorld.nl, for instance stated that they hold two offline events a year, one about ICT for Development and the other for their partners.

OWA staff highlighted collaboration and networking at national level [Zambia] more than at cross country, in Africa and international level. National level collaboration involved alliances with other organizations involved in ICT for Development/ and or development and human rights, such as the eBrain Forum, Civil Society for Poverty Reduction and MISA (Media Institute of Southern Africa – Zambia Chapter). Additionally a large number of OWA staff

mentioned that they were able to acquire knowledge by keeping up to date with emerging ICT trends and collaborating at various levels with various organizations such as the National Development Plan and Civil Society for Poverty Reduction.

At local level, OWA staff mentioned private sector collaboration with CELTEL, a private mobile provider. At government level, OWA indicated collaborating with the Ministry of Transport and Communication; particular emphasis was made on OWA's involvement in drafting the National ICT policy with other stakeholders. Additionally, it was mentioned by OWA's director that the directors of the Southern centres worked closely together in what is called the 'Consortium' because, the Southern centres have the same donors in a number of programmes.

OneWorld.nl, also indicated to a number of collaborative events. The Director emphasized that all team members were free to follow courses, education and workshops. As making contacts was a regular activity in the centre, OneWorld.nl also placed much emphasis on their contacts online database as a means of the staff "informing everyone in the team what they were busy with, who they talked to and who they are going to talk to. The centre further indicated that an important part of their networking activities involved inviting people from the outside to come and talk at their team meetings.

OneWorld.nl further indicated that it kept external recipients aware of organizational objectives, services and information of the centre through their website, by phone, press releases, narrative and financial reviews, and the centre sends out an OneWorld.nl electronic newsletter to the partners with news about themselves.

An example of collaboration between OneWorld.nl and the private sector involves managing the CMS with a private company called Greenlight Solutions. The CMS used by OneWorld.nl works differently from the CMS provided by OWI in that *"it follows a slightly different approach than most centres. Instead of highlighting the stories of the partners, the partners can*

publish their stories, their vacancies and events themselves. However, at the same time, we have a team of editors that independently and on the basis of our own editorial principles write daily news and background stories about the same issues.”

6.2.3 Knowledge Resources

The aim of this section was to obtain information from individuals on what they regarded were the existing resources emanate from their knowledge management programmes. The section’s ultimate aim was to also discover how issues of strategy, intellectual capital and information systems and culture were embedded and valued in the knowledge management practices within the two centres and the OWI network.

6.2.3.1 Strategy development

The staff at OWA and OneWorld.nl provided different answers on their understanding to connecting organizational programmes with issues relating to knowledge management. OWA staff indicated that OWA’s four main strategy areas automatically meant that the organizational strategy could be applied to the knowledge management processes within the organisation. Information related activities were related to knowledge management and so were issues relating to the use of ICTs within the network. One staff put forth that *“Our organization’s strategy and overall mission is to promote development through the use of ICTs and we use ICTs internally as well to achieve the same objective.”* An emphasis on institutional strengthening and strategy was also linked to knowledge management.

One staff member mentioned that *“the organization ensures that institutional strengthening is part of the strategy. A number of workshops have been held in the past and are lined out in future to strengthen organization capacity through individuals. Workshops target all members of staff. Examples of workshops held in the recent past include basic proposal writing, effective planning and budgeting, and effective communication.”* Additionally one staff felt that *“Staff*

and partners are involved in continuous learning as the Capacity Building of partners and staff is an important component of the strategy. What is out there to learn is part of ongoing routine? Learnt information is shared in reports and in-depth monthly meetings."

OWA staff also felt that OWI and donors had some influence in the type of strategy that the organization came up with and its implementation as their strategies were developed from externally generated proposals. However, one staff member felt overall, donors "*often play a part in dictating organizational knowledge needs."*

The perception from the OWA staff that linked strategy to continuous learning is related to OneWorld.nl perception on the link between knowledge management and strategy. Although no reference to a knowledge management strategy was made by OneWorld.nl, staff indicated that "*in the end, it [information and knowledge management] is all related to our overall mission and goals."* The OneWorld.nl team also admitted to more reflection on their strategy which they are busy formulating. The team admitted to not having done that much reflection before, as currently their focus was in providing a link between knowledge management and strategy.

6.2.3.2 Intellectual capital

To identify how the centres value intellectual capital, respondents were asked how they felt their centres valued individual knowledge. The question also meant to find out what individuals felt could enhance them to share deeper because they had the organization 'know-hows'. Staff at OWA seemed to link the value of intellectual capital to being given responsibilities and skills. For instance, the value in individual knowledge was indicated by the director as to when the organization recognizes unique skills in staff. She stated that "*staff that have additional skills are able to train others [such as] in the use of OW sites/ portal and use of Dgroups, and simple in- house skills such as in scanning a document."* It was further indicated that the organization recognises individual

knowledge because staff with 'special skills' often train others during the staff annual retreat, which includes a Training component, or staff train other staff "once in a while." By encouraging peer-to-peer learning, staff members felt that *"passing on information forms part of the capacity building component so that OWA does not always have to outsource."*

To some degree, the data shows that the staff appreciated top management assigning them with 'responsibilities'. One staff member indicated that *"I am given more responsibilities every time. That in itself shows that the services and skills I possess are appreciated and valued."* Further indication of appreciation of the knowledge that an individual possesses showed that ultimately, an individual was really the only reliable source of information. One staff member noted that *"Re-verification of information to individuals provides a learning process, and therefore shows that one is working."*

Although most staff did not mind responsibilities they indicated that extra responsibilities outside their scope of work were a burden. One staff member noted that responsibility was preferred if it *"corresponded to individual expertise"*. In two cases, it was felt that the network as a whole did not value intellectual capital. One staff member stated that:

In my opinion, the network does not show value to the knowledge that individuals possess. It is important to distinguish between being given more responsibilities and being able to be appreciated by management. For instance, if I keep informing management on the need for a new package so that my work is made easier, more timely and accurate but they do not see the need for one, then my work is not appreciated. I know that there is a better way and systems available to facilitate my work and of doing my tasks because of the experience gained in the corporate world that I had worked in before. Therefore, I feel that work is not appreciated because management does not know actual work that goes in obtaining results.

Relatively new staff members at OWA indicated that obtaining the best employees is a means by which the organization retains good knowledge and practice. A new employee felt that *"Given the opportunity to work for OW in*

itself shows the organisation's recognition to its employees [as] entry into the organization was rather competitive."

The findings further indicated that both centres deploy knowledge retention by ensuring that reported activities are indicated and measured on the individual M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) Frameworks. However, in contrast to issues linked to responsibilities, OneWorld.nl attributed the value to intellectual capital to their salary structures. The Director indicated that *"the more you know, the more value you have for our organization, and the more money you get paid."*

6.2.3.3 Creating value in information processes and systems

These questions related to what value and how effective the processes (not necessarily the technology) and the systems used in knowledge management at centre and international level were perceived by the respondents. OWA attributed its value to information systems by ensuring that all staff were familiar with their use. A staff member particularly mentioned that *"all OWA staff have easy access to information systems and ensure that all staff are trained in the use of the systems"*. The importance in accessibility and use was a requirement for partner organisations as well. Staff further noted that as OWA is an organization promoting ICTs, the convergence of technology and use of simple technology was necessary in ensuring that partners could use the type of technology that best suited them.

Additionally, OWA staff felt that the various features and range in ICT use ensured that the technology was used for different purposes and audiences. For instance one respondent put it that *"Dgroups has a number of features where by individuals are able to share information...The Oneworld portal provides a platform for organizations to share best practices...Value in ICTs is not limited to the Internet. OWA uses mobile phones for the project in Eastern Zambia for the group to obtain valuable information for maize prices. ...The use of the mobile phones adds visibility to what the entrepreneurs do and creates better lives for them."*

Contrary to the above statements, the use of basic technology was attacked by one staff member who felt that there was need for management to understand why better and more efficient information systems had to be in place at both centre and international level. It was noted that:

“The network has spent money in information systems for partners (CMS and Dgroups) however; I feel at organizational level the processes are cumbersome to getting the results. We need information systems that provide more timely and accurate information. Management does not understand the cumbersome processes and tasks. What matters to them is that people give the results.”

Lastly, OWA staff felt that the M&E ensured that value and progress of work was understood. Similarly, OneWorld.nl attributed value to their systems by ensuring that the M&E systems performed or contributed to the overall aims and programme activities. In other words, the organization shows the quantification of activities as an important process in ensuring that the OneWorld.nl’s activities had an impact. According to the director, OneWorld.nl was *“about to start with a system called Qualinet... which is both a tool and a measuring framework.... This measures our activities and relates to goals, mission etc.”*

6.2.3.4 Culture enhancer to knowledge sharing

The two centres provided different answers in response to the question on whether the organization has in place a knowledge sharing culture. OWA staff provided two answer categories: ‘Yes and No’. OWA’s answer can be summarized in what the director perceived as the nature of culture - “dynamic and ever changing.”

One staff member noted that *“all staff are generally open, though there is room for improvement. The organization works in a no closed-door policy. People are free to walk into one another’s office. This environment is better than at my previous job”*. New staff were able to identify “an existing culture” as indicated

by a relatively new employee who remembered being taken through debriefing sessions at OWA and OWI.

OWA's director noted that people are different; some are more withdrawn than others, and some having domineering attitudes. As a result, the director stated that management had put in place some measures to ensure that all staff are encouraged to share information and take ownership of the information sharing processes. The Friday face-to-face meetings were mentioned as a forum whereby a staff rota, which excluded the director, ensured that staff took ownership of the meetings. According to the CEO, the rota ensured that different people chaired the meetings, and minutes are written by different people. Out of station staff had to submit their Friday reports to the office before the meeting. The director specifically mentioned that management stressed on the need for face-to-face meetings instead of online meetings in order to encourage staff to bond and encourage team building, and build on culture.

To a lesser extent, the OWA director noted that a knowledge sharing culture does not fully exist as staff had not fully appreciated the Friday meetings. According to the director, staff *"sometimes want to rush and or get upset that time is going, so the meetings do not provide the platform for challenges...[additionally], people want the meetings to end as soon as possible so that they have time for other activities"*, as Fridays are half days. The director however stated that this attitude is changing and the centre has seen an improvement in individuals sharing information.

Almost similar sentiments were echoed by an OWA employee who stated that: *"there is lack of staff appreciation to submitting sufficient and relevant details making dissemination of relevant information difficult...Weekly Friday meetings and monthly meetings are held where important information is shared and highlighted to other members of staff. At these meetings, staff should therefore probe one another for more details."*

A long serving staff member noted that despite systems being in place in the centre, the culture was not encouraging due to the *"non active role of the*

majority of board members, who did not lead by example.” The respondent further stated that the inactive board led to a situation whereby OWA’s senior management played the role of the board, thereby providing poor leadership and control of internal processes.

OneWorld.nl agreed to ‘*more or less*’ having a culture of knowledge sharing. The centre described their set-up as “*not very strictly and systematically*”. Furthermore, OneWorld.nl staff described their set-up as a free environment where “*staff talk every week (some think we talk too much) and informally everyday (we are all in two rooms)*.” Although the team agreed that they could be able to share in a more systematic way, they felt that the current non-systematic method was better. The director stated that “*We are a small team and I am cautious for too much rules and regulations (and bureaucracy)*.” The centre however admitted that they were trying to implement procedures that ensured that everyone was informed or knew where to trace the information (online or archive or in documents).

6.3 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS RELATING TO THE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES AT OWI

The discussion is based on the synthesis of the information obtained from the interviews and the responses to the attitude statements (cf. Figures 6.1 & 6.2). The reporting framework is based on the knowledge management model adopted for the study.

6.3.1 Environmental factors influencing knowledge management

The section focuses on the discussion of issues relating to the research question pertaining to the factors influencing information and knowledge management policies and practices at centre and international level. This presents a discussion on the uniqueness of the information and knowledge management practices and challenges within the centres is due to their interaction with their various environments. The effects on environmental factors on organizations is brought up by writers of system's theory who state that ultimately, it is an organization's environment that defines its course and therefore an organisation has to interact with it's environment to survive, and to respond to changes in environment. A number of environmental factors such as economy, emerging technologies, and GEPSE climate (governmental, economic, political, social and education) can be attributed to the type of knowledge sharing that are in placed within organisations. Furthermore, management control functions, such as information and knowledge management are to a large extent influenced by an organization's external and internal environments. External environment play an important factor in managerial control in NGOs as it is concerned with matters relating to actions of customers, the constraints imposed by donors, governmental bodies, and customs of the society in which an organization exists. (cf. Chapter 2.6; 2.7; 3.6; 4).

The case studies on OWA and OneWorld.nl reveal that the main factors influencing information and knowledge sharing consisted of institutionalisation

and governance of information and knowledge management practices within the network, financial and resource factors, public and political awareness of knowledge sharing techniques, and cultural influences of knowledge management practices within the network.

6.3.1.1 Institutionalisation and control and governance of knowledge management practices

It was clear, that while OWI exerted good general management control measures (e.g. for staff and finances), there were no uniform control measures (or institutionalisation) that applied to knowledge management practices across the network. As a result, each centre within the network performed knowledge management activities differently and individuals had different perceptions of the role of KM. This is normal practice among many organisations as of the multidisciplinary nature of knowledge management inevitably hold a difference in meaning and emphasis for different people (Handzic & Hasan, n.d.: 1; Koenig & Taiash, 2004)⁶¹. This aspect was identified as a severe impediment to knowledge sharing within the network.

It can however be argued that the network's choice for not having a knowledge management coordinator maybe due in part to the network's perception of the irrelevance of such a person due to other pressing positions. Historical data however goes to show that in earlier years, OWI had a number of knowledge management positions, such as network coordinator. The phasing away of such positions could imply that the network assumes that it has reached a position whereby its staff should automatically practice knowledge management. Such a perception goes to show that the concept of knowledge management could be fading away and could be overtaken by other 'management fads' (Wilson, 2002)

Therefore, if a uniform perception of knowledge management is not prevailing particularly within a single network, effective knowledge sharing may be

⁶¹ Please refer to issues on different perceptions of information and knowledge management as discussed in Chapter 3.5.

blocked, and a network may not be able to achieve its vision (Weidner & Rahman, 2000: 32).

A typical example relates to virtual communication where it was found that because of the lack of controls and standardisation, virtual teamwork, a supposed feature of OWI, was not operating at the required levels of effectiveness. This however concurs with Milton (2005: 29) who stated that a number of challenges exist within virtual teams, namely issues of time zones, ad understanding of different cultural approaches if they are to be effective.

As a result, it is clear that at local level the control measures and policies reflected the environment and culture from where they emanated (Plaatjies, 1992: 124). The staff in the Netherlands was for instance more receptive to open sharing and 'criticism' than staff at OWA and this it is suggested relates to cultural differences between the two environments. It can thus be argued that the knowledge sharing culture within each of the OWI centres [and NGOs] replicated their societies and further that exposure to multiple cultures created a blend of influences.

This blend of culture was noted in OWA as the centre did not entirely exhibit a bureaucratic culture. According to Roberts, Jones & Frohling (2005), organizations would naturally tend to adapt managerial practices from other sectors, countries and other network partners. As a result, some of OWA's information and knowledge management practices were adopted from the blend of cultures borrowed from Zambia and the UK via OWI. Consequently, the blended culture was found by staff to be a far more open environment to work in compared to locally established NGOs that they had previously worked for.

Local control measures from management boards also exhibited effect on knowledge management activities. Staff at OWA, felt that their 'inactive' regionally based board could not effectively perform expected duties in defining the mission and policy of the organization; dealing with personnel matters, including policy, selection and overseeing staff; maintaining the image of the organization among its constituents; and providing financial stability for the

organization. The remarks relating to under participation by the board by OWA staff implied that governance problems are enhanced by the inability of effectively coordinating activities from remote locations (c.f Chapter 2.8).

In a situation where most board members are not active, it could imply that the board's coordinating functions are low as the active board members are over stretched in performing board duties. In the case of OWA, the interviews revealed that the director carries more duties in the board than would be expected. Extra responsibilities for both staff and managers means that they have less time to concentrate on the roles that they are better equipped to fill (Hudock, 1997: 595).

Contrary to OWA, OneWorld.nl did not provide any 'direct complaints' relating to their board. This could be an indication that the board is 'successful' as it has less operational hurdles and partly because OneWorld.nl board members are all based in the same country. Therefore, the board is able to play a more participatory role in the organisations activities. The OneWorld.nl board has indications of success as their 'operational styles' conform to what is highlighted by Lafredo (2000: 64-69) in successful NGO boards. According to Lafredo, an indication of success means that board members should be able to attend meetings frequently and deal with public relations and funding activities as discussed above. There is indication of OneWorld.nl board members participating more in offline and online meetings than OWAs board members.

As a boards success can also be attributed to it's members coming from various backgrounds and trades; ensuring that the board does not involve too many like minded professionals (Lofredo, 2000: 69), the diversity of OneWord.nl's board may place the organization at an advantage as Board members may not have conflicting loyalties between the organization the board member services and the organization that he leads or works for⁶². However, board members from outside a trade may signify that member may not be as profoundly

⁶² According to OneWorld.nl's Director, the OneWorld.nl board comprises six members that are "all based in the Netherlands; two of the members are representatives of NGOs, and four of them work for different companies (among others for a bank and as an advisor on diversity within companies)"

knowledgeable about the organisation, unlike board members from within a trade who in most cases would have served in volunteer positions for a good number of years (Drucker, 1998: 136).

As knowledge management cannot be separated from other managerial activities, it was noted that issues of governance existing at OWI also have an effect on the management of issues at OWA and OneWorld.nl. For instance, although OWA is supposed to be an autonomous organization, OWA employees still look up to OWI to provide a number of information and knowledge related services. This may be justified as in most instances a hub organisation of a network is expected to provide certain services for a network. Too much dependency however may lead staff to suspect that all services should come from the hub, thus limiting staff potential of utilising innovation. It is not surprising then that an OWA staff felt that OWI had spent a lot of money on the CMS, and therefore should consider upgrading the in-house software.

Issues relating to governance were not a key complaint for OneWorld.nl staff due to what the researcher judges to be an independent relationship existing between OneWorld.nl and OWI. Non-dependency can be confirmed from the number of in-house facilities at OneWorld.nl that are not obtained from OWI, for instance a different CMS. Therefore, it may be argued that the OWI centres are allowed to be innovative and independent to some extent.

Although that maybe the case, OWA exhibits a situation that confirms to lack of dependence due to strict governance from OWI. Strict governance can also explain for the continuous battle between OWA and OWI, where OWA wants to freely control its finances and implement its programmes. This type of relationship is however not alien to the NGO sector and comes about as a result of north-south strains brought about by patronizing northern NGOs on their Southern counterparts (Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington, 2006: 26).

Many donors and northern NGOs are aware of such strains and the effect of limiting learning and sharing and accountability if such strains exist. As a result,

many organizations such as the British Overseas Aid Group⁶³ (BOAG) regularly hold meetings to remedy such strains. In 2003 for instance, the group identified a number of systems that would help them balance the strong working values of working in partnership with Southern partners and beneficiaries. The systems particularly meant to stand up to external and professional scrutiny, and focused on non bureaucratic monitoring systems which increase learning, downward accountability and transparency; methodological approaches for understanding the dimensions of social change; methods for increasing stakeholder involvement and external scrutiny; and assessments relating to advocacy and campaigning (Charish et al, 2003).

6.3.1.2 Financial, economic or resource factors

The implication of a situation where financial resources is never certain and/or delayed dictates that organizational processes within NGOs relating to information and knowledge management functions are affected. It was noted that limited finances or delays in dispatching finances have a great impact on scaling up of programmes for both centres and NGOs in general. For branch organisations that are a part of International organisations or international networks, the situation is worsened when their main means of finances are obtained from headquarters. This is because monies to branch offices have to be channelled via the hub or headquarters and maybe delayed. As a result, OWA appeared more affected by financial issues, as indicated in Figures 3 and 4 largely because of their dependency on outside donor funding. Limited finances also affected the scaling up and out of programmes. The need for more finances is reflected in OWA's higher staff turnover and use of more volunteer staff than OneWorld.nl. The need for responsibilities to be carried out irrespective of few existing full time staff implies that staff lost the opportunities for learning and reflection on past and future work.

OneWorld.nl's better success towards financial issues was due in part to the centre's more direct contact with local donors. This was because OneWorld.nl

⁶³ BOAG agencies consists of Christian Aid, Action Aid, save the Children UK and Oxfam Great Britain

does not suffer from bureaucratic tendencies and frustrations that often come with receiving donor finances or/and via a hub such as OWI or external donors. Open, but tightly controlled financial procedures were also attributed to the higher rating of finances and resources for OneWorld.nl. The centre for instance follows a strict, but open control system of handling finances whereby staff are required to register the number of hours worked on projects. Payment is by knowledge contribution rather than by fixed hours. It was further evident that OneWorld.nl had better fiscal control systems and they were able to attract partners who were willing to pay for the services they appreciated. Another factor could be that OneWorld.nl were able to secure better support from policy makers and this can be attributed to government policies in the Netherlands that actively supports and promotes development goals at the local level.

6.3.1.3 Knowledge sharing culture

It was found that while knowledge sharing was relatively well established at local level, articulating local tacit knowledge into explicit concepts was not handled as well and this impacted negatively on knowledge sharing between centres. As already indicated, it further emerged that OneWorld.nl exhibited a more positive attitude towards knowledge sharing than OWA. This might be due to socio-political differences between the Netherlands and African countries. In the Netherlands values that are conducive to knowledge sharing and generation, such as cultural, political and educational factors, are highly esteemed. It is thus submitted that an organisation that operates in a culture that is receptive to knowledge sharing and knowledge generation would also be more receptive to knowledge management principles in general.

6.3.1.4 Partners' knowledge needs

The results clearly showed that both centres were aware of their partners' knowledge needs. Both centres had a number of controls to ensure that up to date information on partners was a regular activity. For instance, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities were in place to ensure that results were measured and anticipated before, during and after an activity in order to achieve good

results, which according to Milton (2005:11) ensure that the inter related aspects of learning before, during and after a programme are achieved.

Obtaining information on customers is further supported by Salomann and others (2005: 392-403) who state that the management of customers and their affairs is more effectively done when an organisation has the type of information for, about and from customers [partners]. Additionally, proper information is therefore vital if an organization is to attain competitive advantage (Nissen, 2006: 1).

Although weekly meetings are held by OWI centre staff, it was difficult to estimate whether outputs can be easily measured in the light of experimental and pilot programmes, particularly for OWA programmes which tended pilots in nature unlike OneWorld.nl which could measure its output due to the quantifiable nature of it's programmes (c.f Chapter 7.11 on the measurement of programme achievement). What this type of control tends to do is to provide feedback rather than final results; unless the types of programmes are one off programmes which would not require future follow-up, or post-action control. Due to the complexities in measuring qualitative programmes in NGOs, Rodriguez (2005: 22) recommends a mix of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation processes.

Although the centres appeared to use a range of evaluation methods, what maybe lacking in the evaluation practices is the use of benchmarking for measuring knowledge management. This practice was indicated not to be a usual norm of evaluation (see attitude statement number 49) in all centres⁶⁴. Through benchmarking an organisation is able to enhance its performance, as organisations are able to acquire new knowledge from 'better sources'. Through the transfer of knowledge such as in best practice, shoddier performers gain knowledge from better performers, then the overall performance of an organisation is likely to improve (Milton (2005: 18). If benchmarking is not

⁶⁴ Apart from OWA's involvement in the Southern consortium, not much information was volunteered among respondents about lessons learnt from other similar organisations.

efficiently done, it could mean that designed strategies may lack the “outside information” needed to provide a winning strategy (Drucker, 1998: ix). Nevertheless, NGO strategies are often not specific as they consider the various organisation functions to serve various stakeholders. As a result, this makes it ever difficult to monitor and measure NGO goals and objectives (Hatten, 1982: 102-103) and therefore confirms to the general debate of the difficulties associated with measuring the intangible nature of NGO programmes.

However, as previously indicated, the fulfilment of implementing knowledge needs was affected by financial constraints. Furthermore, both centres, particularly OneWorld.nl felt that they could improve on the application of existing knowledge. OWA’s rating for satisfying knowledge needs was slightly lower than OneWorld.nl’s (cf. Figures 6.1 & 6.2) and this can be attributed to the fact that their service delivery spanned a greater geographical area. This suggests that the geographical extent of a network could have a direct effect on knowledge management practices in an organisation.

The aspects of focusing on the needs of partners despite being able to implement programmes suggest that NGOs do not make money the centre of their plans as many corporate executives do. To illustrate this, Drucker (1998: 132-133) argues that in most instances, profit organisations usually start their planning with financial returns, while NPO would start with the performance of their mission, environment, the community, and the customers to be. These findings concur with Drucker’s argument that states that although financial constraints revolve around an organisations ability to carry out knowledge management operations, the financial constraints might not be that much of a barrier as long as an NGO is able to maintain its reason for being; which is the existence of its stakeholders and particularly, its beneficiaries. Therefore, although it is essential that partner needs are met if organizations are to gain a good reputation or image (DBSA, 2005: 26), it is additionally important that a customer focus is centralised if an organisation is to create long-lasting value creation (Weathersby, 2000b).

6.3.1.5 Strategy formulation

The staff at OWA and OneWorld.nl provided different answers with regard to their understanding of the relationship between strategy formulation and knowledge management issues. OWA staff indicated that OWA's four main strategy areas automatically meant that the organisational strategy could be applied to the knowledge management processes within the organisation. OWA staff also felt that OWI and donors had considerable influence on their strategy and its implementation since it was intricately related to externally generated proposals.

Although the OneWorld.nl staff made no reference to a knowledge management strategy as such, they indicated that "*in the end, it [knowledge management] is all related to our overall mission and goals.*" The OneWorld.nl team further indicated that they realised the importance of strategy formulation and reflection and indicated that more time should be given to these issues. This concurs with Siegal and Smith (2006: 28) who noted that the "execution of almost any strategy requires organizational learning, and therefore a strategy needs to be translated into discrete areas of inquiry that can answer questions on how new markets can be penetrated? How products and services are co-promoted? How relationships with key customers need to shift to avoid attrition?"

Although different ideas were linked to strategy and knowledge management, both centre's strategies depict a number of future programmes and processes not currently being implemented by the centres. According to Drucker (1998: ix), a 'winning strategy' demands more information on the future about events and conditions outside organizations than inside organizations, such as information on non-customers, technologies other than those currently used by the firm, and present competitors and markets not served. However, although the OW centres appear to be involved in long range planning thus in a better position to include future related information, Drucker argues that despite the organizational knowledge and wealth that comes with long-range planning, it is far more

important for an organisation to focus on strategies that are more focused and simple in order for innovation to be successful (Drucker, 1998: 44-62).

It was further noted that as strategy is related to change, organisations are at an advantage in being receptive to change as a precursor of generating new ideas. Change in the sense of adapting contrary viewpoints and criticism rather than ignoring or deflecting them was a valuable lesson in organisation learning (Figallo & Rhine, 2002: 67). However the data relating to staff attitude towards change in OWA indicated that its staff members were less receptive to organizational change due to existing factors within OWA than OneWorld.nl. For instance, OWA staff members were not as open to new ideas outside their domains due to “the fear of additional duties which could hinder the implementation of their line duties”. Contrary, OneWorld.nl staff were encouraged to take on more responsibilities due to management policies that link knowledge sharing to attaining awards (cf. Chapter of this discussion))

This could indicate that OWA staff are likely to be more comfortable in routine practices than core values and mission to implement strategy. As a result, the comfort in routine duties may breed room for bureaucratic trends that encourage boredom and lack of innovation. Therefore, if an organisation’s strategy is bound to implemented, an organisation must be open to more ideas that will enable it make wise approaches for implementing organisational objectives.

6.3.1.6 Public and political awareness of knowledge sharing techniques

The results showed that OneWorld.nl exhibited a more independent attitude on knowledge sharing than OWA. This maybe due to the higher degree of positive advantages centred on cultural, political and educational factors. The environment therefore makes it ideal for knowledge management due to the political and public awareness existing in the Netherlands and exerted on OneWorld.nl.

It was noted that a culture that is receptive to knowledge sharing facilitates knowledge generation as employees already posses and are therefore in a better

position to understand the processes within an organisation and their impact. Furthermore, management from such environments are able to improve knowledge management processes such as reflection time and create an environment that encourages experimentation. However, although sharing experiences is easy at local level, the researchers found that articulating local tacit knowledge into explicit concepts was not handled as well between centres due to difficulties experienced in capturing tacit knowledge and absence of control measures in capturing and sharing information between the centres.

6.3.1.7 Learning

There is generally a need of improving and expanding capacity across the board in regard to development and management skills, as these are generally lacking within the NGO sector (FitzGerald, 1992: 25). Therefore, although the two centres regarded their organisations as learning organisations due to their perception on the need to continuously build new knowledge and continuously build strategy (cf. Chapter 3.5.6 on learning and knowledge management), the centres exhibited a number of ways in which learning was integrated within their organisations. These methods were largely as a result of their environments and particularly

For instance although the capacity building element was regarded as an important element of learning by both centres, this element of learning came out more strongly among OWA, who felt they needed formal training than OneWorld.nl. In this context, the meaning of learning is related to gaining education that would enable the application of enriched skills in continual organisational knowledge as it enhances human skills. Therefore, capacity building is able to provide change and management of institutions through continuous learning at all levels (Odhiambo, 2005, cited in DBSA, 2005: 63).

Furthermore, apart from formal capacity building, informal participatory processes were seen as a means of enhancing learning in both centres⁶⁵. In this context, it was noted that participatory collaborative processes through direct and indirect dialogue with stakeholders was a regular process of knowledge management activities within the OW centres.

Another element related to learning that came out strongly particularly with OneWorld.nl is the issue of reflection in implementing strategy. By indicating that “*in the end, it [information and knowledge management] is all related to our overall mission and goals*”, the OneWorld.nl team admitted to being able to take time to learn.

The aspect of taking time to learn is an important element in organisational learning that requires discipline. Staff in both organisations brought this out. As staffs in both organisations appeared to be extremely busy; it can be argued that the time for learning was not available. OWA staff for instance felt that being given extra responsibilities outside their programme areas was too much for them to handle as they had more than enough tasks to handle. Empirical evidence further showed that staff had no time to ‘read’ important documents and spend time in reflection.

Furthermore, OneWorld.nl felt that they could do better in learning and reflecting, thus giving an indication that learning is not an easy task and therefore requires discipline. Significantly, these results can confirm that learning, in relation to other tasks may not have been given priority as there were ‘other pressing’ duties to be carried out. This confirms that, as in the case

⁶⁵ According to (Chambers & Petty, 1993 cited by Rodriguez, 2005), capacity building in form of training courses, seminars, research, evaluations and documentation categorized as formal learning processes, while the informal processes are associated with participative learning by doing community dialogue. The latter enables the integration of different realities of collecting knowledge and experiences from staff spread in the field. The authors further indicate that participatory processes are not enough as they serve more to provide feedback to an organization rather than to serve as actual methods of promoting learning.

with other organizations⁶⁶, pressure for immediate results, and need to provide results to various stakeholders often results to a disregard for building knowledge and institutions (Van der Kooy, 1992: 9). Therefore, the concept of responsibility to stakeholders has shaped the context in which learning organisations operate, often with negative consequences (Rodriguez, 2005:7).

It was further noted that the learning process in both organisations was structured to the interests of donors and main beneficiaries. This concurs with the observation made by Rodriguez (2005:7), confirming that the learning processes in NGOs are short-term as they are structured to the interests of donors and main beneficiaries due to ever increasing donor dependency. For instance, the need to produce immediate results was seen in the large amount of time given to produce various reports for stakeholders- particularly for donors and OWI by OWA staff.

Although the centres may have valuable documented experience, it can be argued that the reports are no use if they are not read and reflected upon. Due to these immediate results, OWA staff particularly seemed entrapped in bureaucratic behaviour that resulted from ensuring that controls are followed and relevant documents are in place. In this context, if reflection is not in place, the processes of reporting to learning have not been considered as to how standards and controls may provide an opportunity for learning, trying and moving forward.

Issues of reflection time as a learning technique are often supported in literature. For instance, Biggs and Nealme (1996: 37) argue that in order for NGOs to learn, they have “to devote time and effort to developing critique of framework and context in which accountability is constructed but are less willing to understand a thorough examination of the concrete mechanisms that both affect and are affected by those frameworks and contexts.”

⁶⁶ PRODDER commissioned a research team of the HSRC Group: Social Dynamics to try identify success elements of development project approaches. The research involved investigating a number of community –based development projects in SA and considered the significance of these development efforts. The research found key issues to be wrong with most NGO, government, projects and agencies.

Nevertheless, it was noted that embedded learning (integrating learning in organizational processes and workflow) was a target despite the limited time given for learning by both centres. The embedded method of learning can be described in the manner in which the organizations manage contact based information. Both organizations indicated to capturing contacts information while working in the field, and this information subsequently available for co-workers. OWA also indicated that their staff often share their work, with colleagues by way of job exposures. Therefore, empowering employees with different learning tools and embedding them into the workflow ensures that the workforce benefits from the many learning resources offered. Significantly, exposing co-workers to other programme tasks was seen as a useful means in ensuring the continuity of knowledge within OWA, in light of staff turnover.

It was further observed that the nature of the programmes run by both centres ensured that organisational learning was achieved. For instance, OWA displays a more revolutionary programmes route as most of their programmes are pilots and experimental in nature. If pilots are being run, it is likely that the organization is being innovative, and is thus learning. OneWorld.nl programmes are however more confirmed and have a more linear approach. Although this may explain why OneWorld.nl indicated that they are meeting partner needs due to the nature of programmes, it can also imply that OWA is at a learning stage due to their ability in knowing the type of services to provide to their partners. The ability in knowing partner requirements implies that both centres are learning from their partners and stakeholders as highlighted from the many collaborative events with their stakeholders and the importance vested in networking.

6.3.2 KNOWLEDGE MANIPULATION ACTIVITIES (PROCESSES, COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING)

The section discusses issues relating to the research question on what information and knowledge management processes are in place to culminate the achievement of learning. This presents a discussion on the identification, presentation and sharing of knowledge within and outside the OneWorld centres and therefore targets the set of questions specifically set out to establish evidence of team work, collaboration and networking via intra and inter organisational means.

6.3.2.1 Communication processes

The centres follow a number of direct and indirect communication processes to share knowledge between and amongst individuals, internal and external structures. The direct methods of communication comprise of methods like face-to-face dialogue and email discussions (Milton, 2005: 8). The use of simple technology such as the telephone, SKYPE, yahoo messenger and chat technology were common direct methods of knowledge sharing processes within and between the centres.

There was however evidence from both centres on the need to better manage tacit knowledge communication. Most employees from the two OWI centres indicated that they were not skilled in converting tacit knowledge to information. The lack of skills in capturing tacit knowledge in a standardized format reduces the efficacy of knowledge transfer and the ability to leverage tacit knowledge. Capturing it correctly is essential as tacit knowledge is often not reliable because people can forget, post-rationalize and even leave an organisation (Milton, 2005: 8). Therefore, “even if documents are in reports, they can be hard to interpret in everyday terms [as the] lessons relevant to work are hidden and kept in a donor-seeking jargon” (Rodriguez, 2005: 18). This is supported by Nissen (2006: 13) who states that direct dialogue often needs to be well managed as it has the potential to support an organisation’s know-how and know-whats.

It was further found that processes were not generally in place to map knowledge flows, or to identify knowledge needs and resources particularly at international level. According to Weidner and Rahman (2000: 7), mapping knowledge needs and resources enables an organisation to determine what substantive and process knowledge is needed by whom; what knowledge an organisation has in what format; where it is (in people, libraries and system repositories); what knowledge is missing and the best ways to obtain it. These processes would have been poorly practiced due to institutionalisation of controls from OWI.

6.3.2.2 Communication infrastructure

According to Groff & Jones (2003) technology is an important factor to ensure that knowledge management procedures function effectively, particularly in a large and/or geographically dispersed network. It was therefore important to obtain the respondents' perceptions with regard to the use of technology. It was found that technology is more effectively integrated into the processes and tasks at OneWorld.nl⁶⁷ than at OWA and as a consequence it was clear that the OWA employees were less comfortable with using the available technology than those at OneWorld.nl. This would suggest evidence of a 'digital divide' between the centres in Europe/North America and those in developing countries (c.f. Chapter 3.6).

In this context the existing digital divide and much concern in the utilization of ICTs particularly in Africa has been addressed in a number of International forums. For instance, it was highlighted at the 2005 Knowledge Management Africa (KMA) conference that although new ways and means of networking through various communication means was gaining popularity in many parts of the world, this was not happening in many African countries as the knowledge revolution was yet to take place (Khoza, 2005: viii). In 2001, Helvetas and the

⁶⁷ Examples are the contacts database and their portals, email management and the M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) functions at OneWorld.nl were more integrated into technology.

Swiss Agency for development held a joint meeting on Global knowledge sharing where they explored the usefulness of ICTs for development.

To that effect simple, but appropriate technology was indicated as a means by which knowledge sharing in developing countries could be enhanced (Thurnheer, 2001). The use of simple technology is seen as a way of bridging the digital divide. Therefore, NGOs are better off using 'simple' technology, such as the Internet, than no technology at all for knowledge sharing. Besides, it is believed that the most profound impact on knowledge management practices is that of the Internet, which offers an incredible information source direct to the end-users without the need to involve an intermediary such as information professionals (Goh, 2005: 13-14).

The OneWorld.nl respondents were, however, also critical of certain aspects of the technology infrastructure, particularly with reference to the unsophisticated, stand alone technology that was used and which created network communication problems. This confirms that unsophisticated stand-alone technology maybe a problem as it may not be able to promote the full functions of knowledge management processes (Por, 2004). OWA respondents further noted that the technology was cumbersome to use and in their view too little attention was spent on the development of technologies that enhance internal work processes.

It was further clear that although many of the respondents were using simple technology such as 'chat' for interpersonal communication, they would rather use more personal means of interaction and knowledge transfer. This is a universal problem and the reason why, according to Figallo and Rhine (2002: 184) many people, although comfortable with using simple technology such as 'chat', would rather use more relaxed and recordable means of interaction. Recordable and more explicit means of knowledge transfer was evidenced from the many reports, newsletters and the portal content that has to be produced from, to and for partners and for/ with different stakeholders. Staff in both centres felt the need for information to be presented in well-standardized formats. However, as standardized information is often hard to compose, this

may reveal why OneWorld.nl indicated that capturing tacit knowledge involved too much bureaucracy. Thus due to the difficulties and complexities relating to the capture of tacit knowledge, many organizations would rather focus on the connections (people, processes or technologies) which allow knowledge to be shared easily (Srinivas, 2005) than capture tacit knowledge. COPs are believed to be one way in which tacit knowledge may be captured (DBSA, 2000: 49)⁶⁸.

6.3.2.3 External knowledge processes: collaboration and networking

The respondents at both centres indicated the importance of obtaining external knowledge (cf. Figures 6.1 & 6.2) and indicated that this was mainly achieved by means of collaboration and networking, particularly with various stakeholders. However, this process is complex as both centres serve many stakeholders. The complexity of the situation was however felt more acutely at OWA where they were accountable to a more diverse range of stakeholders spread over a far wider geographic area than OneWorld.nl. It was however clear that, despite the complexities involved (c.f. Chapter 2.6 discussing accountability in NGOs), both OWA and OneWorld.nl maintained good relationships with their various stakeholders (e.g. donors, partners, beneficiaries, and governments) (cf. Figures 6.1 & 6.2).

The involvement of a mirage of stakeholders in the networking process showed that an organisation has to find best working actors from all angles in order to survive and meet its organizational objectives. As a result, the two centres (particularly OneWorld.nl) were seen to be involved with the private and corporate sector. This is a relatively new development among NGOs that is yet to gain acceptance due to the different objectives that are eminent between the two sectors and many NGOs still lack a clear vision regarding the role of the private sector in their activities (Elbers, 2005: 61). A partnership boom appeared to have emerged between the corporate sector and developmental NGOs in the Netherlands as roughly half the partnerships were established after 2000. This

⁶⁸ It was not possible to measure the effectiveness of COPs in this study.

may explain in part to OneWorld.nl's greater involvement with the private sector at both board and programme levels.

It was seen that teamwork and networking was a common feature and work mode at the OWI centres. This was not an unexpected outcome and as Holmen (2002) has indicated an essential means of operation for a geographically dispersed NGO network if it wishes to maintain satisfactory performance levels and avoid disintegration.

6.3.3 KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

The section discusses issues relating to the research question on how and what knowledge resources are valued at both centre and international level. The discussion therefore looks at how the knowledge management processes outlined above operated on the knowledge resources in the organisations. It was evident that the main areas of impact related to how intellectual capital and culture were embedded and valued in the knowledge management practices of the OWI network.

6.3.3.1 Intellectual capital

Intellectual capital is undisputedly one of the most important assets of any organization. The two centres, however, exhibited different views with regard to the manner in which their centres valued intellectual capital and knowledge creation.

In the instance of OneWorld.nl it was seen that employees were compensated for their contribution to the organisation's intellectual capital and it can be assumed that such compensation served as motivation for staff to contribute to the knowledge base. The literature generally indicates that firms that compensate knowledge workers for their input to the firm's intellectual capital are at a significant competitive advantage (Demarest, 1997) and that financial

rewards provide good incentives to encourage individuals, teams, etc. to contribute to the knowledge pool (Figallo & Rhine 2002).

Furthermore, the salary system based on knowledge contribution tends to be popular in the developed world. Drucker (1998: 7) proposed that consequently, more and more of the significant workforce and most of the highly paid workforce consist of people such as part-timers, consultants and experts who cannot be managed in the traditional sense of the word. Due to their intellectual contributions, Drucker is of the opinion that gradually more of such people would identify themselves by their individual knowledge rather than by the organisation that pays them.

OWA staff, in contrast, stated that their knowledge contributions were not in any way linked to monetary compensation or other rewards and it can thus be implied that staff motivation was driven by and linked to individual motivation rather than some reward system. OWA staff, were however being trained in 'Leadership' skills, a key means in which individuals are empowered to contribute to organizational learning. According to Saint-Onge and Armstrong (2004: 9), "leadership mobilises and determines the quality and rate of knowledge flow, providing a catalyst for staff to exercise their responsibilities, encourage self-initiation, trust, interdependence and partnering across an organisation".

The different motivational models and value systems for intellectual abilities, it is suggested, is the reason why OneWorld.nl staff gave higher scores for developing intellectual capital than the OWA staff (cf. Figures 6.1 & 6.2).

6.3.3.2 Culture

Since the employees at both centres indicated that an open and free knowledge-sharing environment prevailed within their organisations, it is suggested that their organisational cultures can be regarded as valuable assets that enhance the creation of new organizational knowledge. However, despite OWA's open culture, there were certain social elements and human connections lacking that

are essential to ensure that knowledge acquisitions and sharing is fully harnessed. For example, a major behavioural obstacle relates to the rigid and 'rushed' manner in which business processes are carried out by OWA staff. Such an overly organised environment leaves very little time for reflection and according to Laporta (2002) this is not an unusual situation within the NGO environment and one of the main inhibitors that contribute to the lack of learning among NGOs.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The various issues that surfaced during the study have prompted the researcher to put forward the following recommendations that they think could further strengthen the knowledge management practices both at individual centre level and within the overall OWI network. Significantly, it is worth noting that the values for knowledge management will always be purely linked to culture and type of organization as there is no formula or better way for making better ways for NGOs as each organisation is unique (Biggs & Nealme, 1996: 40). Drucker (1998: X) further notes that “there will be only organizations - as different from one othe [and they] will have to be designed for a specific task, time and place (or culture).”

From the various issues brought out in the discussion, the researcher is of the opinion that OWI centres to some degree are involved in knowledge management activities. Many of the suggestions listed below might already be in process for the OWI network, particularly as ‘knowledge sharing’ has been for a while been on the agenda of the network. The following statement supports this:

A task therefore for the OneWorld International over the coming years is to support the development of the many centres so that they can become stronger parts of the interdependent whole. Thus, it is essential that the networks many centres work together, in an interdependent and co-operative way. One of OneWorld International’s major tasks is to ensure this global interchange, both at the practical level of technology, and through teamwork and knowledge sharing (OneWorld.Net, 2006).

However, it should be noted that the preceding recommendations act only as a guide to more effective knowledge creation and sharing within the network. The problem with setting set 'standards' is not possible as to date there is no general approach to managing knowledge, although several isolated, and at times diverging notions are being advanced (Wiig, 1997: 1). Despite the above-mentioned problems inherent in managing knowledge, Demarest (1997: 375) proposes that for an organization to effectively participate in the knowledge – intensive sectors of the global economy, they have to answer the following questions:

What does our culture and our actions as managers say about the value of knowledge in the firm, and what do we ourselves believe about the value, purpose and role of knowledge? How is knowledge created, embodied, disseminated and used in this firm, and what is the relationship between knowledge and the innovations and performance this firm requires to succeed in its strategic objectives? What strategic and material commercial benefits do we expect to gain from effective knowledge management and the performances created by effective knowledge management? Where is our firm in terms of the maturity of its knowledge systems? How must we organize for knowledge management? What role does information technology play in our knowledge management program?

Thus, a starting point in answering the above questions is the introduction of the following knowledge management strategies for the OWI network:

7.1.1 Implement a knowledge management framework and strategy

In general terms it is suggested that the network should implement a network-wide policy document that would serve as a framework for knowledge management in the network. Such a framework should outline the vision, aims and objectives for knowledge management at both the general network level and at centre level. A more directed and focussed approach to knowledge management would be achieved, knowledge sharing throughout the network

would be facilitated and structures that are currently impeding knowledge sharing and knowledge creation could be streamlined.

OWI should further institute a knowledge management strategy that would cover critical components to empower employees in human resource areas (e.g. training and learning); to create incentives to promote a knowledge sharing culture; to identify processes to embed knowledge (e.g. mapping knowledge flows, identifying best practices and promoting innovation); and to effectively utilise technology (e.g. for collaboration and knowledge sharing purposes). A strategy will ensure that the basic knowledge transfer processes are co-ordinated in a coherent way.

7.1.2 Implement a knowledge management structure

OWI should also recognise the complexities of operating knowledge management programmes in a decentralized network environment. One solution would be to implement a more rigorous knowledge management framework that could serve as a platform to facilitate knowledge sharing at both local and international levels. The authors further propose that high quality, multidisciplinary experts be trained or hired at local level to enhance the various knowledge management functions, particularly networking between centres.

It is further recommended that to achieve a more unified approach to knowledge management, a network manager be employed at OWI to coordinate and facilitate the knowledge management duties of the local experts. This person should be tasked to institute an awareness campaign among all stakeholders to ensure that the network has a uniform vision of the role of knowledge management and further create awareness among employees of the value of knowledge sharing and the benefits that it creates for an organisation.

It is further recommend that a knowledge management council consisting of various staff representatives with diverse skills be constituted to drive the knowledge management processes. This is to avoid knowledge management

being relegated to being, for example, purely 'a technology' or 'human resource' affair. Such a council would draw expertise from key stakeholder groups; technology representatives; human resources; board and top management representation; partner representation; and, not least of all, knowledge management expertise.

7.1.3 Map information and knowledge flows

The diversity of the network suggests that it should have an ongoing programme to identify knowledge and information gaps; bottlenecks in the flow of knowledge; information about present and future knowledge required; and the formats and location where information may be found within the network. The function of knowledge auditing and mapping should therefore be introduced into the network. The auditing and mapping process should be extended to include the creation of a network-wide 'best practice' database containing lessons learned from the various centres. It was evident that OneWorld.nl and OWA could have benefited from the lessons learned within each centre and which are currently 'hidden' from each other.

7.1.4 Capacity enhancing activities

Congruent with the previous point is the necessity to implement capacity enhancing activities where centres that are better endowed (e.g. for example those in North America & Europe) share 'best practices' and expertise with those that are relatively disadvantaged (e.g. certain African, Asian and Latin American Centres). For instance, OWI should consider staff exchange programmes as a means of sharing best practice. Such programmes could be mutually beneficial as NGOs operating in disadvantaged areas (e.g. OWA) could learn technical skills and media knowledge, while NGOs from the developed world (e.g. OneWorld.nl) could obtain first hand knowledge about development issues, and thus present them more accurately to donors (Hudock, 1997). Furthermore, exchange programmes in form of study tours are highly

recognised as knowledge sharing mechanisms (Hage, 2006: 88-92). In this instance, study tours maybe more cost effective in view that annual staff meetings at OWI cannot be organized due to costs.

Furthermore, OWI centres should consider alternative but interesting and non-bureaucratic methods of enhancing knowledge sharing in a more free, open and trustworthy environment. More face-to-face interactions should be encouraged among OWI centre staff. This will increase the role of COPs and enhance the transfer of tacit knowledge among employees and will therefore assist the centres to retain organizational memory.

The learning process should ensure that employees have the skills needed to share knowledge. According to Srinivas (2005), employees within an organisation need to know what it means to share and use knowledge in order to create value to an organisation.

Skills building and knowledge development should also be directed at board members and donors so that they can appreciate the meaning and importance of effective governance and its contribution to NGO accountability. For example board members should be encouraged to attend strategic meetings and they should be included in strategic planning and capacity building interventions.

7.1.5 Investigate technology functionality and use

OWI should take advantage of the array of technologies that are constantly emerging to enhance knowledge management processes. They should implement critical assessment strategies to evaluate new technologies to establish whether they are suitable and able to facilitate knowledge management activities or whether they require adaptation to suit local requirements.

For instance, OWI centres should continually challenge the preferred global programmes, such as the MDGs, which according to Heeks (2005) often narrow the meaning of development by trapping NGOs into the modern thinking of

development. Mitlin, Hickey & Bebbington (2006: 38) propose that organizations should therefore broaden their thinking to look at ways in which ICTs can contribute to socio-economic development. A step ahead of the 'MDG hegemony', which the centres and network could consider, is to focus on what Feeks (2005) calls "the data centre and not the telecentre." The network should take advantage of its position as "an NGO facilitator" by also introducing or facilitating the introduction of back office applications for NGO use. Therefore by introducing knowledge related aspects of integrating technology for planning and not just ICT for Development use, OWI might be promoting other effective programmes that may draw more partners as the programmes target better planning, decision making and management. Although this approach is on paper, for the OW network, it does not seem to be a top priority⁶⁹.

7.1.6 Strengthen the finance base of the centres

Due to the complexity of financial challenges, OWI centres should consider adopting creative financing strategies. For example, centres should investigate the viability of consortium funding, endowments, partnerships with the corporate sector, and more effectively using infrastructures such as office buildings to save on overhead costs. They should create a position of "grants compliance officer" for the network and/or the centres to assist with financial reporting and resource acquisition. This would free managers and project staff from burdensome financial responsibilities. They would then be able to focus on roles they are better equipped to fill and in the process costs could further be reduced.

⁶⁹ Information from the The OneWorld portal (2006) indicates that the network is involved in helping other NGOs with their knowledge management functions

7.1.7 Strengthen relationships between the various NGOs in the network

If the differences that occur between the various NGOs, particularly between those that operate in Europe and North America and those in other less developed countries are to be respected, a more open and transparent debate needs to take place among them. The purpose of such interaction would be to strengthen relationships, promote debate, improve practice, and to seek common grounds with others engaged in the same activities. Monitoring systems proposed by Charlish and other (2003: 2) such as increasing stakeholder involvement and internal scrutiny, and increasing learning, downward accountability and transparency should be considered.

7.1.8 Strengthening the human resource management elements

Enhancing the human resource management element of the centres would ensure that staff are encouraged to share knowledge. Although the executive directors of the organisations showed more enthusiasm of knowledge management activities, staff members must also come to a point where they assume ownership of knowledge sharing efforts and ensure that knowledge sharing enhances organizational objectives by making sure that the knowledge base is developed, relevant and constantly useful. The performance review system for instance should have specific categories of attributes associated with knowledge creation and sharing to make knowledge sharing an incentive. If staff are encouraged to share at local level, the chances of them sharing at international level would be greater.

7.1.9 Review institutional and management structures

The OWI network should review all institutional and management structures to ensure that impediments to reinforce knowledge building are removed. Human resource management should be strengthened by encouraging staff members to assume ownership of knowledge sharing efforts, be involved with the development and quality control of the knowledge base; and to ensure that knowledge sharing enhances organizational objectives incentives should be put in place to encourage knowledge creation and sharing. The network should strengthen staff and board contributions through active and relevant recruitment. The learning processes should be strengthened by including alternative but interesting and non-bureaucratic methods of enhancing knowledge sharing in a more free, open and trustworthy environment. More face to face interaction should be encouraged among all OWI staff. This will enhance the transfer of tacit knowledge among employees and will therefore assist the centres to grow and better utilise organizational memory.

7.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study has identified that in the interest of survival, networked organizations and developmental NGOs often have no choice but to interact with their environment in order to be free themselves from the various challenges that often hinder effective knowledge sharing among development NGOs. According to Prof van Wyk (1992: 1) this freedom is essential as it frees NGOs from “restrictions of ignorance, lack of facilities, and lack of power to achieve [their] given potential [and] enabling them to develop their ideas and abilities.”

Therefore, in seeking room to manoeuvre, NGO staff members need to acknowledge and understand the meaning of knowledge management and its effects. By integrating learning in all organizational processes, NGOs are therefore better able to understand the deeply rooted changes that are bound to emerge within their organisations and respond to them (Commins, 2000: 73). It

is in this light that knowledge management practices should be examined in NGOs, particularly networks with their complex structures and often reoccurring and unavoidable problems.

For international organisations or NGOs part of an organisational network, there is no other way of attaining organisational objectives than through knowledge management processes as emphasized by Littlejohn (2006).

The importance of integrating learning in organizational processes and workflow is that as knowledge is too vast and dynamic to formalize, the ability to capture and store the exchange de facto, formalizes this knowledge.

It is therefore hoped that the preceding recommendations could serve as a guide to achieving more effective knowledge creation and sharing within the OWI network. It is suggested that by adopting a more rigorous and standardised knowledge management framework, OWI would be empowered to implement better knowledge management practices and be equipped to participate as a knowledge-intensive member of the global economy. Networked NGO's and specifically OWI could operate more efficiently and incrementally enhance service provision if they are given the tools to more effectively leveraged knowledge (both at an individual and organisational level).

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APPENDIX A

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The questions below aim to obtain *individual* attitudes and perceptions of the information and knowledge management processes in your organization. There are no right or wrong answers at this stage. Your assistance in providing your viewpoint is essential as the answers will be used as a guide to generate a questionnaire at a later stage.

Managerial, Resource and environmental aspects

1. Are there systems and managerial practices in place to coordinate the information and knowledge management activities in your organization? If so, how are these systems coordinated? [Activities encouraging knowledge sharing, resources – infrastructure, communication structures, human resources].
2. What effect does financial management have on the information and knowledge management activities in the organization? [Support of mission, budget and knowledge activities].
3. What impact do economic, political, social and education factors have on information and knowledge management? [external factors]
4. What impact do the needs of the partners have on the information and knowledge management practices in your organization?

Knowledge Manipulation activities

5. How is individual and organizational information and knowledge disseminated and represented so that others that need may have access to it? [Internal knowledge, external knowledge, location, tacit knowledge].
6. How does the organization ensure that it gets external information and knowledge to meet its knowledge needs?
7. How does the organization ensure that external recipients are aware of organizational objectives, services and information of the organization? [collaboration, networking, COPs].

Knowledge Resources

8. How do the information and knowledge management activities relate to the organization's strategy and overall mission? [knowledge management strategy; encouraging reflection, creating artifacts, learning, innovation, competitive edge, services].
9. How does the organization show that value is attached to the knowledge that individuals possess? [Intellectual capital, measures of attracting, organizing and deploying knowledge retention and sharing individual knowledge]

10. How does the organization use information systems to create wealth and value from information and knowledge for the organization? [Enhancing knowledge sharing].

11. Is there a culture of knowledge sharing? If so, how is it done? [Practices for enhancing knowledge sharing].

** Prompts are provided in square brackets.*

APPENDIX B

INDIVIDUAL ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE

Your Name (Optional)	
Your Project (Optional)	
Your Country of base	
Number of Years with OWA	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Please email the completed questionnaire to timpat001@mail.uct.ac.za, or timpat@hotmail.com

Please read through each of the following statements and place a tick in the box that best describes your organisation. Give an answer for EVERY question (one cross per line). Additional information in the form of examples is welcome.

Characteristic	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Comments (Optional)
1. OWA has offline and online mechanisms in place to enhance knowledge and information sharing.						
2. Programme managers are in control and are involved in financial planning activities.						
3. Decision making and relationships in the organization are not based on a strict hierarchical top to bottom structure.						
4. OWA uses systematic procedures for the regular monitoring, review and evaluation of all its project programme and partnership activities.						
5. All OWA staff that have dealings with the outside world are expected to gather and share relevant information.						
6. Monitoring and evaluation reports are routinely analyzed to identify what has been learned from the work and what lessons could be applied in future.						
7. Information flows freely throughout the OneWorld Network as people do not hold on to information which would be useful to others.						
8. OWA technology is well built to support the organisation's information and knowledge management processes when staff are out of station.						
9. The development of strategy is deliberately organized as a learning process. Feedback loops are incorporated to enable continuous improvement of strategies.						
10. OWA systematically uses its learning to improve its own practice and/ or to improve the policy and practice of other organisations; such as partner organizations in order to avoid the repetition of previous mistakes.						
11. Special emphasis is placed on referencing and standardizing non-bureaucratic / verbal and						

Operational information						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Comments (Optional)
2. Obtaining outside help from volunteers and consultants takes precedence when specialist knowledge is lacking in the organization.						
3. The lack of time, human and material resources hinders information and knowledge sharing between staff, volunteers and partner organizations.						
4. Donors have direct communication with the organization, or the project in the field in order to assess project impact.						
5. OWA has enough built in capacity to encourage staff to take periods off from their daily operational responsibilities in order to reflect on their work experiences.						
6. OWA has an open cooperation relationship with other centres that encourage knowledge sharing and mutual learning of experiences.						
7. OWA is skilled at converting raw information from internal evaluations and research into usable knowledge that can be applied for strategy implementation.						
8. OWA has a wide range of mechanisms for sharing experiences between staff in different teams, sections, departments and locations.						
9. Information captured on OWA technology is well classified and enables one to easily locate documents.						
10. Policy and strategy making involves people at most levels in the organisation, according to what they can contribute to the process and not simply their status.						
11. The learning gained by one part of the OneWorld Network is quickly available to others even if it may appear to be of little immediate relevance						
12. Staff who leave the organization go through systematically recorded debriefing to ensure that the organization retains as much as possible of their knowledge and contacts.						
13. OWA provides opportune times for personal feedback between staff and board and management.						
14. Resources and facilities for individual and organization development are made available to all members of OWA E.g. guidance through management supervision, staff development, training events and conferences.						
15. Partners and / or beneficiaries are represented and participate in the formulation of the project.						
16. OWA creates and encourages informal and formal opportunities for individuals within the organization to share with others the lessons they have learned.						
17. External networking is seen as an important and legitimate activity and time is allowed for						

8. OWA regularly focuses on a theme of its work and draws conclusions based on an analysis of all its experience and understanding of the current issues in development.						
9. The organization has a wide range of mechanisms for sharing experiences between peer to peer staff in different teams, sections, departments and locations.						
10. The OneWorld Network supports a common communication platform by providing common infrastructure and the means to easily find and join a relevant COP (Community of Practice).						
1. The organization has a strategy for 'scaling up' its impact which reflects the learning it has developed on 'what works' and 'what does not'.						
2. The systems of planning, accounting, budgeting, financial reporting and other management processes are organized to assist learning.						
3. The organization has a systematic database (not necessarily electronic) of all its main areas of work activity which can enable staff and outsiders' to identify where expertise resides.						
4. Knowledge retention is built into performance management systems as an indication of growth of knowledge and intellectual capital.						
5. Financial limitations do not affect key information and knowledge management systems. E.g. costs of running technology network.						
6. Feedback is obtained by the populations who are/ were impacted by the project before sending information coming from the field to the centre manager or relevant donors.						
7. Individuals and teams view each other as working partners and constantly strive to freely criticize, find out and meet each other's expectations and needs.						
8. Work experiences learned are particularly shared with peers/ teams based in other centres on a regular basis.						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Comments (Optional)
9. OWA has just in time access to specific information concerning the countries where their partner organisations will (or already have) a mission						
10. It is easy to access information on the lessons learned from other parts of the organization and network as a whole						
11. The technology provides access to both general and specific interactive tools, such as a best practice databases, collaborative tools (discussion forums), and knowledge libraries.						

2. Learning is built into the organization through the development and updating of systems, operational procedures and other ways of sharing lessons gained from individual's experience.					
3. The organization is constantly building its capacity and innovations based on what it learned.					
4. The information function is given sufficient prominence and is resourced adequately to enable the organization to keep its information system and record keeping up to date.					
5. Staff is awarded for the contribution they make to the organization's learning. (Through positive feedback, time off for study, employee-employer recognition, task allocation)					
6. Donor agencies do not dictate how funds may be used. What is important is that the organization's mission is followed.					
7. Government policies do not interfere with CI and development goals at country level.					
8. Learning is built into job descriptions and workplans and forms an important part of supervision and staff appraisal agenda.					
9. OWA uses its contacts with other organisations to gather useful knowledge and skills to benchmark itself against best practice.					
10. OWA has just in time access to specific information concerning manuals or checklists of managing information in order to enhance the project formulation and implementation.					
11. OWA staff is skilled at communicating their personal knowledge and wisdom available to others.					
12. The technology used at centre level is familiar and not too advanced nor basic than the technology partner organisations use.					
13. Proposal writing involves close consultation between donors, OWA, beneficiaries and stakeholders.					
14. Learning from experience is seen as everyone's business and not left to specialized units or senior managers.					
15. Information obtained from field visits, partnerships trips and events, external meetings and conferences is not personalized in order to avoid non accounted overheads.					

APPENDIX C

GUIDE TO ATTITUDE STATEMENTS: THEME, CATEGORIES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The following questions show the attitude statements used in Likert scale. The numbers in brackets dictate the corresponding number in Likert scale. Each statement is placed under its respective category and major theme. These in turn fall under the respective research question. The numbers in parenthesis correspond to attitude statement.

1. What influences the Knowledge Management policies and practices at centre and international level?

1.1 *Managerial influences*

1. OWA has offline and online mechanisms in place to enhance knowledge and information sharing.
- 2 (12). Obtaining outside help from volunteers and consultants takes precedence when specialist knowledge is lacking in the organization.
- 3(23). OWA provides opportune times for personal feedback between staff and board and management.
- 4(34). Knowledge retention is built into performance management systems as an indication of growth of knowledge and intellectual capital.
- 5(45). Staff is awarded for the contribution they make to the organization's learning. (Through positive feedback, time off for study, employee or employer recognition, task allocation).

1.2 *Resource influences*

- 6(2). Programme managers are in control and are involved in financial planning activities.
- 7(13). The lack of time, human and material resources hinders information and knowledge sharing between staff, volunteers and partner organizations.
- 8(24). Resources and facilities for individual and organization development are made available to all members of OWA . E.g. guidance through management supervision, staff development; training events and conferences.
- 9(35). . Financial limitations do not affect key information and Information and knowledge management systems. E.g. costs of running technology network.
- 10(46). Donor agencies do not dictate how funds may be used. What is important is that the organization's mission is followed.

1.3 Stakeholder (Environmental) influences

Communication between centre to centre and main office (donor, north south relationships)/ Communication between OWI and Stakeholders, Wider circle of NGOs/ partners and potential partners

11(3). Decision making and relationships in the organization are not based on a strict hierarchical top to bottom structure.

12(14). Donors have direct communication with the organization, or the project in the field in order to assess project impact.

13(25). Partners and / or beneficiaries are represented and participate in the formulation of the project.

14(36). Feedback is obtained by the populations who are/ were impacted by the project before sending information coming from the field to the centre manager or relevant donors.

15(47). Government policies do not interfere with ICT and development goals at country level.

2. What Information and knowledge management processes are in place to culminate the achievement of learning?

2.1 Internal knowledge processes

16(4). OWI uses systematic procedures for the regular monitoring, review and evaluation of all its project, programme and partnership activities.

17(15). OWA has enough built in capacity to encourage staff to take periods off from their daily operational responsibilities in order to reflect on their work experiences.

18(26). OWA creates and encourages informal and formal opportunities for individuals within the organization to share with others the lessons they have learned.

19(37). Individuals and teams view each other as working partners and constantly strive to freely criticize, find out and meet each other's expectations and needs.

20(48). Learning is built into job descriptions and work plans and forms an important part of supervision and staff appraisal agenda.

2.2 External knowledge processes

21(5). All OWA staff that has dealings with the outside world is expected to gather and share relevant information.

22(16). OWA has an open cooperation relationship with other centres that encourage knowledge sharing and mutual learning of experiences.

23(27). External networking is seen as an important and legitimate activity and time is allowed for this.

24(38). Work experiences learned are particularly shared with peers/ teams based in other centres on a regular basis.

25(49). OWA uses its contacts with other organisations to gather useful knowledge and skills to benchmark itself against best practice.

2.3 Identification of knowledge needs (mechanisms for drawing conclusions)

26(6). Monitoring and evaluation reports are routinely analyzed to identify what has been learned from the work and what lessons could be applied in future.

27(17). OWA is skilled at converting raw information from internal evaluations and research into usable knowledge that can be applied for strategy implementation.

28(28). OWA regularly focuses on a theme of its work and draws conclusions based on an analysis of all its experience and understanding.

29(39). OWA has just in time access to specific information concerning the countries where their partner organizations will (or already have) a mission.

30(50). OWA has just in time access to specific information concerning manuals or checklists of managing information in order to enhance the project formulation and implementation.

3. How are knowledge resources valued at both centre and international level?

3.1 Communication processes

31(7) OWA has just in time access to specific information concerning manuals or checklists of managing information in order to enhance the project formulation and implementation.

32(18). OWA has a wide range of mechanisms for sharing experiences between staff in different teams, sections, departments and locations.

33(29). The organization has a wide range of mechanisms for sharing experiences between peer to peer staff in different teams, sections, departments and locations.

34(40). It is easy to access information on the lessons learned from other parts of the organization and network as a whole.

35(51). OWA staff is skilled at communicating their personal knowledge and wisdom available to others.

3.2 Communication Infrastructure

36(8). OWA technology is well built to support the organisation's Information and knowledge management processes when staff are out of station.

37(19). Information captured on OWA technology is well classified and enables one to easily locate documents.

38(30). The OneWorld Network supports a common communication platform by providing a common infrastructure and the means to easily find and join a relevant COP (Community of Practice)⁷⁰.

39(41). The technology provides access to both general and specific interactive tools, such as a best practice databases, collaborative tools (discussion forums), and knowledge libraries.

40(52). The technology used at centre level is familiar and not too advanced nor basic than the technology partner organisations use.

3.3 Strategy and Policy Formulation

41(9). The development of strategy is deliberately organized as a learning process. Feedback loops are incorporated to enable continuous improvement of strategies.

42(20). Policy and strategy making involves people at most levels in the organisation, according to what they can contribute to the process and not simply their status.

43(31). The organization has a strategy for 'scaling up' its impact which reflects the learning it has developed on 'what works' and 'what does not'.

44(42). Learning is built into the organization through the development and updating of systems, operational procedures and other ways of sharing lessons gained from individual's experience.

⁷⁰ An informal group of people who share common problems and interests and their knowledge and expertise in specific areas on an ongoing basis.

45(53). Proposal writing involves close consultation between donors, OWA, beneficiaries and stakeholders.

3.4 *Applying learning*

46(10). OWA systematically uses its learning to improve its own practice and/ or to improve the policy and practice of other organisations; such as partner organizations in order to avoid the repetition of previous mistakes.

47(21). The learning gained by one part of the OneWorld Network is quickly available to others even if it may appear to be of little immediate relevance.

48(32). The systems of planning, accounting, budgeting, financial reporting and other management processes are organized to assist learning.

49(43). The organization is constantly building its capacity and innovations based on what it learned.

50(54). Learning from experience is seen as 'everyone's businesses and not left to specialized units or senior managers.

3.5 *Developing Organisational Memory (Intellectual capital)*

51(11). Special emphasis is placed on referencing and standardizing non bureaucratic / verbal and operational information.

52(22). Staff who leave the organization go through a systematically recorded de briefing to ensure that the organization retains as much as possible of their knowledge and contacts.

53(33). The organization has a systematic database (not necessarily electronic) of all its main areas of work activity which can enable staff and 'outsiders' to identify where expertise resides.

54(44). The information function is given sufficient prominence and is resourced adequately to enable the organization to keep its information system and record keeping up to date.

55. Information obtained from field visits, partnerships trips and events, external meetings and conferences is not personalized in order to avoid non accounted overheads.

APPENDIX D

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ONE WORLD INTERNATIONAL

Governance structure and principle objectives

OneWorld International (OWI⁷¹) is an NGO international network currently comprising eleven centres that are distributed in Europe, Northern and Central America, Asia and Africa. OWI Foundation is the governing body of the OWI Network and the guardian of OneWorld's vision and values.⁷² The network's goal is to build a more just, global society through its partnership with the community by providing access to information and enabling connections between hundreds of organisations and tens of thousands of people around the world. OWI is driven by the people and organisations it supports. The network supports over 1600 civil society organisations and development and/or human rights based NGOs. A key way in which the network does this is by encompassing all types of communication media, namely ICTs in their development and human rights advocacy programmes.

⁷¹ See the OneWorld International Portal for more information on the network. Unless otherwise referenced, all OWI information has been obtained from the OWI portal.

⁷² OWIF was established in December 1999 as a registered charity. It has an International Board of Trustees composed democratically of trustees nominated, one per centre, by the OneWorld centres.

OWI Network and Centres by Region



Implementation of strategies

General implementation of the OWI strategies entails that the network has a number of strategic alliances and corporate relations. For instance, ItrainOnline, an ICT resource and training portal is a collaborative project of OneWorld, IAO, Bellenet, IICD, INASP, UNESCO and Telecentre.Org (iTrainOnline.Org, 2006). The network attempts to provide four main services to its partners. These

relate to portal management, content management, knowledge management and technology services and solutions.

Although the OWI centres are a part of the OWI network, centres have their own missions and strategies. For instance, OneWorld.nl focuses on advisory services on and about the development of websites, web applications and online campaigns. OWA's key strategic areas of focus are on: local knowledge for development, capacity building, IT access, and policy advocacy (OWA, 2006).

Management of activities at OWI

Although a support team consisting of the founding members of the network, Finance and Technology and Development Team work from the London headquarters to keep the OWI centres going, each centre has its own core of staff (part-time, full-time and volunteers) that attend to the various projects that are in season. Overall, each centre is responsible for managing an Edition and a thematic channel that best represents concerns in that region. For instance, the AidsChannel⁷³ is managed by OWA. Each centre houses an editorial team that puts together their local editions. The editors make available, each day, their local partners' material to all the world's global section, for example the OneWorld.nl portal is the biggest Dutch online portal on the web about global issues. An independent team of editors brings daily news, background, stories, analysis, opinions and interviews, and there are discussions, polls and blogs. Likewise, the OWA Edition selects from OWI's vast network of NGO development-oriented news service, foundations and research institutions the news and views considered to be of the greatest interest to an African audience.

Each of the centres in the network houses a Partnership Manager who administers partners in the centres locality. Key roles of the Partnership Manager involve managing NGO Networking Events, and partnership

⁷³ The AidsChannel is a multimedia portal facilitating exchange of information on HIV/AIDS among NGOs, CBOs and a global community of producers and broadcasters using radio to help fight HIV/AIDS.

recruitment. However OWT looks after those partners who do not have a local centre to belong to.

MANAGERIAL STAFF AT OWA AND ONE WORLD NETHERLANDS (2006)

Centre name	Paid staff		(Current) Total	Programme staff positions and length of service a) OneWorld.nl	Volunteers
	Full time	Part time			
OWA	0	-	0	Executive Director (5 yrs) Finance manager (+4 yrs, handing over) Programme Officer (-1) Editor (+4 yrs) MDG Editor (+1) ESNET Coordinator (-1) Office Manager (+1) Radio Editor (+1)	3
OWNL	1	5 (three to four days a week)	6	Executive Director (7 yrs) Editor in chief (+3) Editor (-1 yr) Partnership Manager (13 yrs) Project Manager (+3 yrs) Office manager (-1 yr)	0

**CHARACTERISTICS OF OWA AND ONEWORLD NETHERLANDS IN
2006**

Centre	Founded	Nr. of Partner Organisations	Type of partners	Geographical spread	Programme Areas	Main Income sources
OWA	2000	400	Civil society organizations, CBOs, NGOs and institutions working on human resource and sustainable development	target is for whole of Africa. In process of decentralizing services and operations	Local content for development, Capacity building, Advocacy and policy & ICT access.	Hivos DGIS
OneWorld.nl	2001	180	Civil society organizations, institutions, companies and individuals working on sustainable development, international cooperation and human rights	Netherlands based	News aggregation on via portal; advisory services about web applications and online campaigns, develops websites,	Hivos and National Committee on Sustainable Development and International Cooperation (NCDO) ⁷⁴

⁷⁴ The NCDO is an independent and neutral organisation uniquely positioned in Dutch society. It aims to support international cooperation, sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals so that to promote and campaign for greater social involvement in such countries.