EVIDENCE INTERMEDIARY ORGANISATIONS:
MOVING BEYOND A DEFINITIONAL MORASS

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INTRODUCTION

Internationally, there has been a remarkable growth in evidence intermediaries bridging research with policy and practice. These bodies come under a variety of titles – Policy Labs, Institutes, What Works Centres, Clearing Houses – and have a broad sweep of forms and functions. Despite the intensive growth of intermediaries (Oliver et al., 2022a) and growing research in this topic (Torres & Steponavičius, 2022) there has been no pause for consolidation, but instead calls for further funding, expansion, and support for yet more intermediaries (e.g. European Commission, 2021), so that they can 'step forward to fill gaps left by the government' (The Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges, 2022, p. 106).

But there remains a lot of confusion about what exactly these organisations are and what they deliver: are they effective in delivering evidence and helping decision-makers use evidence? There is little evaluation of their impact. And too many discussions on this topic suffers from a 'Groundhog Day', covering old ground, without moving the conversation forward. One indication of this lack of intellectual momentum is that we do not use the same terms. Different policy and evidence communities often use separate terminologies which adds to the inability to learn from each other. For instance, the term 'broker' is often used in the health literature, whilst 'intermediary' is used in education, or 'boundary spanner' in the environmental literature (Neal et al., 2020). There are at least twelve different labels to refer to similar types of intermediary bodies, with acronyms such as KBIs, KBOs, and RBOs (see Table A below).

This report aims to move beyond this definitional morass toward firmer ground: describing what these organisations do and offering a working definition from existing literature Along the way, we hope to show how important these diverse bodies are and make some recommendations for the future, particularly the benefits of more joined-upness and shared learning, in order to move away from what has been described as a 'rudderless mass of activity' (Oliver et al., 2022a, p. 691).

Acknowledgments

Audience, aims, and approach

This report aims to share practical insights from a range of sectors and countries to help their current and future work, combined with an occasional normative tone: making the case for more collaboration and learning, and describing what a better future might look like.

Our focus here is on *organisations*, not *individual* knowledge brokers (e.g. Geeraerts et al., 2016). Most of the literature has not focused on intermediary organisations but has been dominated by attention to knowledge processes or individual brokers (MacKillop & Downe, 2022, p. 336). An organizational perspective is key, however, because organizational relationships can be a more sturdy and sustainable bridge for bridging research, policy, and practice – and their growth makes them an interesting phenomenon to study.

The report combines insights from published research and grey literature, with a series of three international seminars run by Transforming Evidence in 2022 (Transforming Evidence, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c). The series was shaped by an expert advisory group and speakers (see Appendix A) via a series of roundtables, seminars, and informal interviews,

In addition to reviewing the literature and our series of seminars, the report is also personal: we bring our own experience from over three decades of providing leadership and advice for over 20 different evidence intermediary organisations and networks in Australia, Canada, France, UK and US (Breckon & Boaz, 2023). We have included our experience from every stage of the lifecycle of an evidence intermediary body, including scoping, commissioning, leading, advising, sustaining, researching, and evaluating new, existing, or closed organisations.

The report is aimed at anybody with an interest in evidence intermediary organisations, including researchers, funders, commissioners, and staff in existing – or planned new centres – and policy and other decision-makers who want to find out more about how to engage with these organisations.

PART 1
Identity – who are they?

Hello. My name is What Works Centre

Hello. My name is Knowledge Mobilisation Intermediary

Hello. My name is Intermediary Organisation

Hello. My name is Research-practice partnership

Hello. My name is Knowledge Brokering Organisation

Hello. Evidence Centre

Hello. My name is Evidence Broker

Hello. My name is Policy Lab

Hello. My name is Boundary Spanning Organisation

Hello. My name is Knowledge Brokering Institute

Hello. My name is Research Brokering Organisation

Hello. My name is Clearing House

Evidence intermediaries are third party, brokering organisations who play an active role as catalysts for research use between research producers and users (Cooper, 2014). All have a commitment 'to knowledge transfer and mobilisation' though their particular approaches and strategies differ (Gagnon, 2019, p. 9).

Attempts to conclusively define evidence intermediaries are unsatisfying because they are diverse, complex, and evolving entities, making it challenging to draw bright red lines around what are and are not intermediaries. We have ended up with a confusing 'plethora of definitions' in the literature (MacKillop & Downe, 2022, p. 239). This lack of clarity matters because it means that we fail to learn across different sectors. When even the labels are different (see Table A), we can miss locating and learning from other intermediaries. The lack of understanding means that discussions talk past each other, without moving the conversation forward.

Table A: Labels for evidence intermediaries from research literature

Label (with acronym if used)	Example from literature	Organisation examples
Boundary spanning organisations	(e.g. Bednarek et al., 2018; Posner & Cvitanovic, 2019)25/02/2025 10:33:00	E.g., Luc Hoffmann Institute, WWF International, Gland, Switzerland; Baltic Eye Project at Stockholm University
Evidence Broker	(e.g. Lenihan, 2015)	E.g., Washington State Institute for Public Policy, CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis
Evidence Centres	(e.g. Bazalgette, 2020)	E.g., UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence, California Policy Lab
Clearing Houses	(e.g. Soydan et al., 2010)	E.g., US What Works Clearing House, Pathways to Work Clearing House
Policy Labs	(e.g. Hinrichs-Krapels et al., 2020; Zeigermann & Ettelt, 2022)	E.g., Pulse Lab Jakarta, Policy Institute, King's College London Policy Labs
Knowledge Brokering Organisations (KBOs)	(MacKillop et al., 2023; e.g. MacKillop & Downe, 2022)	E.g., Wales Centre for Public Policy, Africa Centre for Evidence
Knowledge Brokering Institutes (KBIs)	(e.g. Gough et al., 2022)	E.g., UK International Public Policy Observatory on COVID-19, What Works Centres
Knowledge Mobilisation Intermediaries (KMIs)	(e.g. Bell & Head, 2017)	E.g., Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
Intermediary organisations	(e.g. Franks & Bory, 2017; Gagnon, 2019)	E.g., Fondation Canadienne de la Recherche sur les Services de Santé, Québec liaison and transfer center

Research Brokering Organisations (RBOs)	(e.g. Cooper, 2014)	E.g.,. Canadian Education Association, The Society for Advancement for Excellence in Education
What Works Centres	(e.g. Bristow et al., 2015; Gough et al., 2022)	E.g., Education Endowment Foundation, What Works Scotland
Research-practice partnerships	(e.g. Farrell et al., 2022)	E.g.,. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

However, we should not be too pessimistic. The lack of definitional clarity may reflect the interstitial nature of organisations that are by definition 'betwixt and between' (Tseng & Nutley, 2014) acting as trans-sectoral 'go-betweens' (Torres & Steponavičius, 2022), straddling academia, policy and others in an 'archipelago' of different communities (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2021).

Rather than trying to nail down a definition, a more productive way to understand these organisations is to look at common activities, priorities and functions – and variations between these common elements (Scott et al., 2014). This might involve a long list: such as of the variety of education knowledge broker functions in Canada (Cooper, 2014), or an exhaustive summary of all activities (Rycroft-Smith, 2022), or a more fluid list of archetypal activities (Davies et al., 2015, p. 112). Or it might be an even shorter list, such as one produced by the Wales Centre for Public Policy, drawing on a comparative study of evidence intermediaries in South Africa, Canada and the UK (MacKillop & Downe, 2022). They outline three common elements that inform the work of evidence intermediaries:

- **The centrality of evidence in their everyday work, mission, and practices.** This may seem obvious, but the evidence is a vital defining feature. Some think-tanks and lobby groups, for instance, may talk a lot about evidence, but really prioritise values, beliefs and political interests; evidence is secondary.

- **Focus on knowledge brokering.** They are not just academic units who do some communication of their work for impact, but give equal weight to communication and knowledge exchange – including staff, tools, structures, relationships and practices

- **Closeness to government, despite being separate from it.** This is partly linked to point two – the importance of knowledge brokering. But it is also one of the challenges – that these organizations need to juggle independence with proximity to government (who sometimes fund them).

Although the third element of 'closeness to government' is important, some evidence intermediaries may be somewhat removed from central government and concentrate on frontline practitioners (e.g., Canadian Society for Evidence Based Policing), businesses (e.g., Centre for Evidence-Based Management in Netherlands), judiciaries (e.g., Nuffield Family Justice Observatory in UK) or legislatures (e.g., Committee for the Future in Parliament of Finland). But they still have the same challenge: how to be impartial whilst still having close ties to their stakeholders.

In some countries like the US, practice-oriented evidence intermediaries can be technical assistance providers, implementing evidence-based interventions, such as Nurse Family Partnership or Multisystemic Therapy. Other intermediary bodies provide training, support or guidance on using research to inform practice, including for the police (Fyfe & Wilson, 2012), teachers (Torres & Steponavičius, 2022), health (Bornbaum et al., 2015), or mental health professionals (Proctor et al., 2019). Some of these organisations may be directly linked to practitioners by being professional membership associations (Breckon et al., 2019) such as the American Psychological Association, the Paediatric Association in Kenya, or the Finnish Nursing Association.

Standalone bodies – or piggybacking on others?

Another way of looking at evidence intermediaries is their organisational form. Evidence centres do not necessarily have to be stand-alone entities, with their own buildings, back-office functions, and independent legal status: they can be blended within other organisations with bigger mandates (Cooper, 2014, p. 30). Many successful evidence intermediaries piggyback on others – such as universities, public bodies, NGOs, or foundations. One of us – Jonathan Breckon – was part of an evidence centre (What Works Children's Social Care) that started life 'incubated' within a UK foundation (Nesta), that t hen became an independent registered business, then an independent charity, then merged back into another UK What Works Centre (Early Intervention Foundation). After four incarnations in five years, their new temporary name in 2022 is Foundations What Works Centre for for Children and Families. This example illustrates the potential fluid organization and legal form of evidence intermediaries, whilst still doing the same activities.

If evidence intermediaries choose to be hosted by others, there are many different potential homes. Intermediaries in the Evidence-Informed Policy Network (EViPNet) reside in hospitals, government agencies, or NGOs (El-Jardali et al., 2014). But there is no clear benefit of one home over another home. 'No one size fits all' according to Fadi El-Jardali, Director, Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center, Lebanon (Transforming Evidence, 2022c). For instance, there may be financial security in being hosted in government departments, and access to substantial skills and research expertise with other officials. But this positive financial position might conflict with the need to be impartial and fleet-of-foot..

Table B: Examples of host institutions for evidence intermediaries, adapted from El-Jardali et al, 2014 p.3

Intermediary	Host organisation
Evidence to Policy (E2P) Argentina	Non-governmental organization (NGO)
E2P Bangladesh	Private research institution
E2P Nigeria	University
EVIPNet Burkina Faso	Ministry of Health
EVIPNet Cameroon	Hospital
EVIPNet Central African Republic	University
EVIPNet Ethiopia	Ministry of Health
Regional East African Community Health Uganda	University
Sudan KTP	Ministry of Health
Zambia Forum for Health Research	NGO

PART 2
Activities – what do they do?
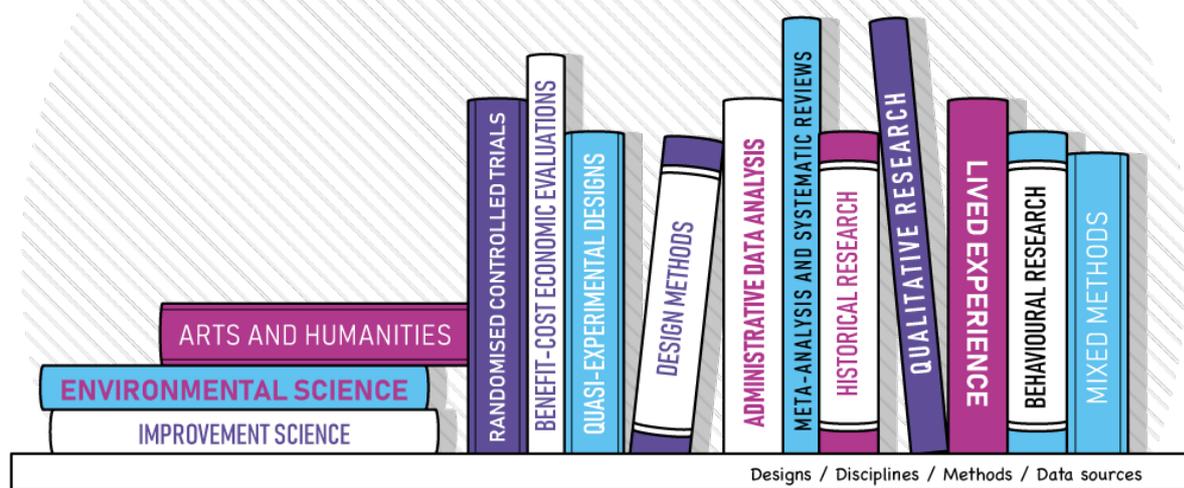
Label, definitions, typologies, and organisational forms are all very well, but examining their day-to-day activities is valuable if there are no neat categories. A descriptive approach helps get beyond the defintional morass, towards the more concrete and granular. To understand the pluralism of evidence intermediaries, you need to follow what they do. This next section describes some of the activities in the first two areas of Mackillop and Downe's common elements (2022): the centrality of evidence, and secondly knowledge brokering.

Evidence priorities: creating or curating new research?

An OECD report on education intermediaries suggested that we could distinguish between those evidence intermediaries that are research-producing – or *non*-research producing (Torres & Steponavičius, 2022). This seems an important distinction. Filling the gaps in evidence may be a job for evidence intermediaries – particularly if universities or others do not have the capacity or incentives to fill those gaps. But producing new evidence takes up significant time and resources – and may distract from the crucial business of creating change through knowledge mobilisation and evidence implementation (Abdo et al., 2021).

Some intermediaries are dominated by the production of studies or the synthesis of new evidence. The UK's Education Endowment Foundation, for instance, has put the majority of

its funding into meta-analysis and running new randomised controlled trials (Sanders & Breckon, 2023). Paucity of existing evidence has been one of the challenges of the UK's What Works Centres - with some organisations unable to give enough time on brokering or synthesising research because there was not enough research out there to summarise. Instead, resources had to be directed at filling the gaps in evidence needed by policymakers and others (Sanders and Breckon, 2023).

Inevitably, the question arises of what sort of evidence should the intermediary focus on. Which research designs, disciplines and data should be used or not (Nutley et al., 2013). In the past there has been a wide mix of approaches. Whilst far from exhaustive, this diversity of methods, designs, disciplines, and data sources is presented in Table C.

Table C: Different designs, disciplines, methods and data sources used by evidence intermediary organisations in UK and US

Types of evidence	Example intermediary organisation
Benefit-cost economic evaluations	Washington State Institute for Public Policy, US
Randomised controlled trials	Education Endowment Foundation, UK
Quasi-experimental designs	What Works Clearing House, US
Design methods	Policy Lab, UK
Administrative data analysis	Project Evident , US
Meta-analysis and systematic reviews	Cochrane Collaboration, UK
Improvement science	THIS Institute, UK
Environmental science	California Council on Science and Technology, US
Behavioural research	Behavioural Insights Team, UK
Arts and humanities	Creative Economy Policy and Evidence Centre, UK
Historical research	History and Policy, UK
Qualitative research	Family Justice Observatory, UK
Lived experience	Centre for Knowledge Equity, UK

Types of evidence	Example intermediary organisation
Mixed methods	What Works Wellbeing, UK

Being clear about what sorts of evidence to include – or exclude – has been suggested as a key early consideration for anybody thinking of setting up a new evidence intermediary (Bazalgette, 2020). Some intermediary organisations publish explicit evidence frameworks and standards – such as the international GRADE framework (Gough & White, 2018; Nutley et al., 2013; Puttick, 2018). But there can be considerable confusion about what we mean by 'evidence standards'. The language of standards is not clear and can cover everything from methodological criteria, internal quality assurance, reporting standards, single studies or meta-studies, and much more (Gough, 2021; Gough et al., 2022; Puttick, 2018).

Some intermediaries have not published formal standards, and have argued for a more inclusive approach that defies exclusive frameworks. Some organisations focus more on expertise, rather than traditional (i.e. scientific) evidence, and a more diverse array of evidence due to the lack of availability of scientific evidence in particular fields (MacKillop et al., 2023). For example, the UK's Research in Practice aims to 'occupy a space in the system where qualitative, ethnographic, observational methods are not just valued, but downright vital', according to their Director Dez Holmes (Transforming Evidence, 2022a). John Lavis at the McMaster Health Forum in Canada still looks at the quality of evidence, but has recommended an approach where 'evidence intermediaries select the [often several] forms of evidence that can help to respond to any given question that comes from the demand side' (Transforming Evidence, 2022c).

Knowledge brokering: what intermediaries do

When it comes to trying to describe the processes, structures and relationships of knowledge brokering it is useful to think of three generations of knowledge brokerage, following Best and Holmes (2010): the linear, relational, and system approaches.

For the first generation, evidence is turned into products such as websites, reports or toolkits. This is often seen as a backwards first step in communication – pushing-research out the door, an inferior move compared to second and third generation. However, few evidence intermediaries can afford to keep their evidence impenetrable. Many benefit from crafting appropriately-framed evidence narratives (Davidson, 2017), data visualisations (Harold et al., 2020), or well timed evidence products that exploit 'policy windows' (Rose et al., 2020). Examples of organisations that focus on these activities (but not exclusively – they also engage in relational and systems approaches) include the Danish Clearing House for Educational Research or Sax Institute in Australia.

For the second generation, social relationships dominate. Intermediaries give more attention to two-way sharing of knowledge among their target audiences, developing networks and partnerships. For example, we heard from the Wales Centre for Public Policy on how they nurture contacts and dialogue with government ministers and officials, particularly using roundtables with officials. According to the Director of the Centre, Professor Steve Martin, a dialogue is needed as the policymakers 'it helps them to work out how to apply evidence from elsewhere to the particular political and policy contexts they are working in.' (Transforming Evidence, 2022b). Other examples of organisations that give significant attention to growing relationships include Canadian Science Policy Centre or ACED (Actions pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable) in Benin.

For the third generation, system-informed approaches recognise that intermediaries are embedded within wider, dynamic and complex systems. It is an approach that recognised that the use of research in decision-making involves a complex web of relationships, settings, and contexts (Tseng, 2012). One important implication of this complexity is that leveraging existing pathways and mechanisms is unlikely to increase in the research being adopted (Weber & Yanovitzky, 2021). Taking a systems-informed approach includes strategic leadership, rewarding impact and creating infrastructure and posts (Oliver et al, 2022). Examples of organisations that attend to these activities include World Health Organisation's Evidence Informed Policy Network (EVIPnet). There is a great deal of interest in these system approaches, and we set up a dedicated meeting on this topic (Transforming Evidence, 2022a). Some of the key system issues are covered in Part 3.

PART 3
The future – more coordination, shared learning, and citizen engagement
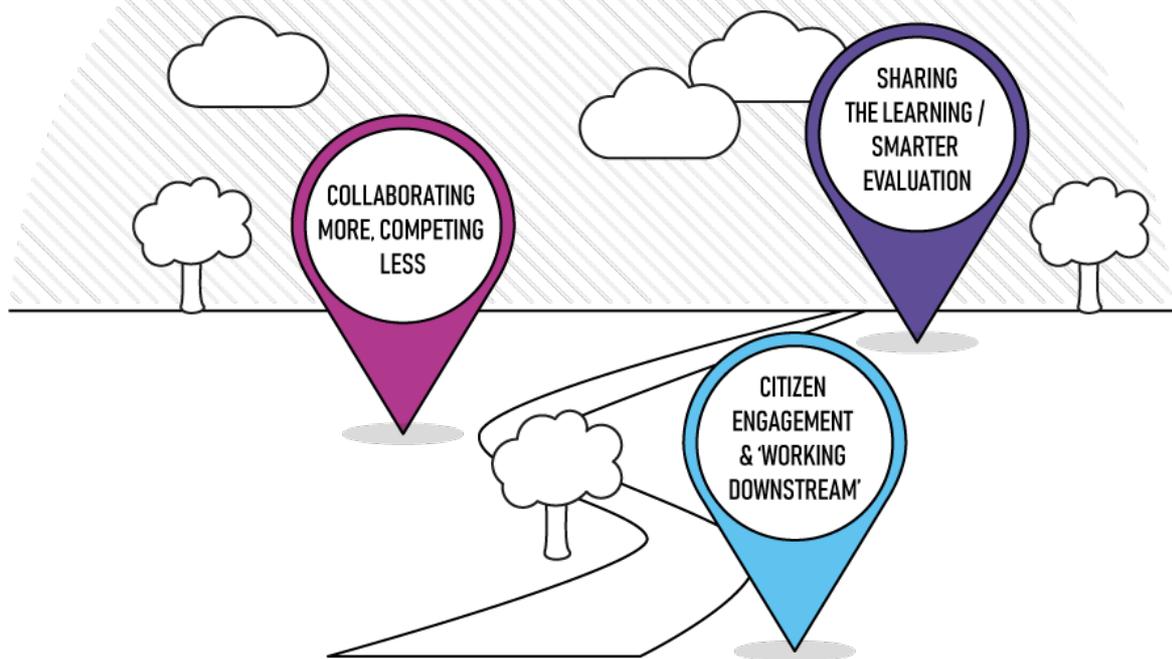
Definitions, descriptions and typologies tell us about the present and past, but what of the future? In this section we set out some recommendations for a better future, based on a dedicated session we organised (Transforming Evidence, 2022b), as well as meetings of our advisory group, and a selection of academic and grey literature.

These recommendations build on a flurry of other calls for actions. There have been declarations, summits, commissions, and manifestos on improving evidence systems, covering regions (e.g. African Evidence Network, 2021), and subject areas (e.g. Coe & Kime, 2019). In response to the Covid pandemic there were three declarations: the Cochrane Convenes action plan (Cochrane Convenes, 2022); the EVIPNet Call for Action (World Health Organisation, 2021); and the Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges (The Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges, 2022). Although we recognise the risk of adding yet another list of recommendations, these are dedicated to intermediary organisations and complement others.

Collaborating more, competing less

We heard a sense of frustration at our events about the lack of coordination between evidence intermediaries. There are issues of 'territoriality' and 'land grabbing' with some intermediaries monopolising sectors, and intense competition for limited funding (Transforming Evidence, 2022c). In the future, Intermediary centres should 'collaborate more, share lessons, share tools', according to Rose Oronje at the African Institute for Development Policy, Kenya. 'So there isn't duplication and lack of coherence' (Transforming Evidence, 2022c).

But it is not clear how to go about this collaboration to avoid us tripping over each other in a 'rudderless mass of activity' (Oliver et al., 2022b). One option is to knit together a small group of organizations into a consortia. There are a lot of such partnerships already, and we could continue to fund and foster them. PACKS Africa has, for instance, linked up with Ghana Center for Democratic Development, African Center for Economic Transformation, the University of Southampton, INASP, the Ministry of Health and Environmental Protection Agency in Ghana (Atengble, 2022). Partnering makes sense from a financial point of view, but is also what is increasingly expected from funders, and in public services that encourage inter-professional and boundary spanning delivery of public services (Sanders & Breckon, 2023, p. 240)

Alternatively, we could grow more open inclusive networks. Spurred by the lack of coordination around Covid, the Brazilian Coalition for Evidence has brought together 50 organisations to encourage cooperation. We ourselves have run networks to increase collaboration and learning, including the International Transforming Evidence Network and the Alliance for Useful Evidence in the UK

However, these partnership and networking options are time-consuming and resource intensive. Another way ahead is to tap into existing platforms, not create new ones. John Lavis from the McMaster Health Forum in Canada flagged up the range of current geographical or sectoral platforms that can help bring evidence intermediaries together, such as EVIPNet that works in 55 countries spread across many regions (El-Jardali et al., 2014) or platforms with regional coverage (e.g. the Latin American and Caribbean Evidence Hub) or a national focus (e.g. What Works Network in the UK).

An alternative way to collaborate is to promote mergers. In the UK, two What Works Centres with overlapping remits merged in 2022 (the Early Intervention Foundation and the What Works Children's Social Care). They have now created a single body – rather than one that created confusing overlaps and competition – to create Foundations, the What Works Centre for Children & Families (https://foundations.org.uk/). Such mergers may only work within national boundaries, but could be a way to reduce wasteful duplication in the future.

On balance, the future of intermediary organisations needs to be not one but a cocktail partnering, networking, and merging. But one final option is that we might consider just doing less: avoid trying to do everything within one body – be it knowledge mobilisation, evidence synthesis, new research – and instead focus on niche strengths. 'There's a tendency in our literature to suggest that brokers should do all of the roles [of evidence intermediaries]. That unicorn does not exist', according to Itzhak Yanovitzky, Professor of Communication, Rutgers University in the US. 'We need to think about division of labor here and how we cultivate this kind of partnership and structure to build that' (Transforming Evidence, 2022c).

Sharing the learning and smarter evaluation

We still don't really know what makes a successful evidence intermediary centre. And what we do know not is not shared across disciplines and divides (Oliver & Boaz, 2019). From the point of view of an evidence centre trying to plan a successful strategy there are 'few examples of organizations providing practical, enduring, and well-evidenced lessons on how to support systemic work' (Hopkins et al., 2021, p. 345). If intermediary organisations are going to become better in the future, we need to do 'more researching and documenting what we are learning', according to Rose Oranje from the African Institute for Development Policy, 'but also publishing that, sharing those lessons' (Transforming Evidence, 2022c).

A future research agenda may need better ways of measuring and defining what we mean by impact, and more studies with 'sophisticated methods—and a clear rationale—to make sure that we can pinpoint 'what works'' (Cairney et al., 2023). It is very rare for evidence centres to measure their impact beyond obvious outputs, like counting numbers of people involved or web hits (Bornbaum et al., 2015; Gough, 2021; Oliver et al., 2022a; Torres & Steponavičius, 2022).

The paucity of impact evaluation is understandable because of the methodological challenges of attributing impact to one organisation – and the lack of resources for some smaller organsiations to evaluate their impact. As Amber Mace from Council of Science and Technology mentioned at our second roundtable, 'policy has so many parents. There's so many players at the table' (Transforming Evidence, 2022b). Impacts may also be hard to measure because hidden from view. For example, Steve Martin at the Wales Centre for Public Policy told us of an occasion when the evidence they had provided 'dissuaded ministers from a course of action that they might otherwise have been embarking on, that's a a strange sort of impact, but it saves public money on stupid schemes' (Transforming Evidence, 2022b).

But despite these methodological limitations, intermediary bodies could develop smarter evaluations and new sources of insight. We could be more creative in looking at non-obvious benefits, such as the roles of intermediaries in organisational memory (Oliver et

al., 2022b). There could be more curation of lessons learnt – perhaps in an observatory (Breckon et al., 2022), or collations of individual organisational evaluations or Theories of Change (e.g. Frontier Economics, 2022 on UK What Works Centres), or learning from other research literatures, such as think-tanks (e.g. Abelson & Rastrick, 2021), innovation intermediaries (e.g. Howells, 2006), and 'policy labs' in universities and government (e.g. Hinrichs-Krapels et al., 2020). There is also more we could do to capture the experience of staff and leaders working at the interface between the boundaries of research and policy (Bednarek et al., 2018). This could lead to more explicit and codified examinations and lessons regarding the practices and skills of intermediary staff (see for example https://nnerpp.rice.edu/rpp-brokers-handbook/), perhaps informed by in-depth interviews or ethnographically-based research.

Citizen engagement and 'working downstream'

Campaigns such as #MeToo and Black Lives Matter demand answers by intermediaries about the diversity of their evidence and engagement (Doucet, 2021; University Policy Engagement Network, 2021). These challenges echo concerns around the sidelining of indigenous knowledge in research evidence, such as in Australia, New Zealand and Canada (Boaz et al, 2019).

One means to help with this is for intermediaries to invite citizens and people with more diverse backgrounds into evidence intermediary panels. If an intermediary is drafting guidance, synthesis or recommendations, they could directly involve a citizen panel of 'diverse, affected communities coming to the table' and produce 'contextualized equity focused evidence products' (Transforming Evidence, 2022c). There are range of different platforms, including 'mini-publics' like citizen juries, Delphi panels, and consensus conferences (Rickey & Breckon, 2019). However, when engaging with people with lived experience of an issue, it must not be tokenistic, but authentic – and peoples' time paid for (Transforming Evidence, 2023).T

But this citizen engagement, whilst worthy, is still relatively small scale. We may be going against a much stronger tide of anti-science culture. Christine Weidenslaufer in the Chilean Congress has found her job providing balanced information to politicians much harder: 'thanks to digital social networks, there is a general disinformation environment that has grown over time' (Transforming Evidence, 2022b). Can we, and should we, as evidence intermediaries do anything about this wider mis- and dis-information culture and be 'proselytizing' bodies (Davies et al., 2015) advocating for the value of evidence and against false information? Such a proselytizing role may be beyond the remits of intermediaries, many of which focus on targetted sectors – such as evidence-informed education or health – and outside the impartial role of 'honest brokers' (Pielke, 2007).

What we can do, is cover a broader range of topics, including showing how evidence can 'help solve issues like inflation and in economic priorities, or racism …this is not an easy connection for most people, and, and that's something we need to work on' according to Yanovistky at Rutgers University (Transforming Evidence, 2022c). The Evidence Commission has recommended putting evidence in 'the centre of everyday life', including: how families can spend money on effective products and services; or where best to volunteer or donate money to good causes (The Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges, 2022, p. 105). As well as being more inclusive of 'everyday life', intermediaries should also reconsider their gravitation towards central government. We should work 'more downtream' according to Fadi El-Jardali, Director of the Knowledge to Policy Center in Lebanon, with civil society groups, religious figures, and influencers as 'they are the real drivers of change' (Transforming Evidence, 2022c). 'Too much attention has been given to government', according to Rose Oranje Head of the Kenya Office for African Institute for Development Policy, 'and not enough to legislatures, regulators, multilateral bodies, judiciaries, arms-length bodies, agencies, servicedelivery bodies, local and other sub-national government.'

CONCLUSION

Evidence intermediaries play a vital role as catalysts for research use by working with research producers and users (Cooper, 2014). Although they are hard to define, this reflects the eclectism of bodies within this catch-all category (Bell & Head, 2017), bodies that are designed *not* to sit within a particular group, but cut across groups. We have attempted to capture this eclectism in Parts A and B of this report.

The future is likely to see the continued expansion of evidence intemediary organisations. The Evidence Commission has called for more evidence intermediaries to 'fill the gaps left by government' (The Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges, 2022, p. 106). However, such growth could benefit from the three recommendations set out in Part C: firstly, more collaboration. In some countries and sectors we may not need more new bodies, but look to what we already have: such as building on or merging into existing platforms and infrastructure, and filling gaps where some provision does not exist.

Secondly, more learning. There is much we can learn from others that may have trod a similar path. Too much of previous literature focuses on knowledge brokers as individuals or processes, or is unclear about the differences (MacKillop et al., 2020). We need to do more to share what we do know, across sectors and geographies. We also need to be more creative on impact evaluation methods – and candid about the difficulties of impact attribution and measurement.

Finally, there is potential for intermediary organisations to be more inclusive. We could do more to work with other actors in civil society and outside of central government, and look at topics that are at 'the centre of everyday life', such as how families can spend money on effective products and services (The Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges, 2022, p. 105). More evidence intermediary organisations may be welcome but we also need to work with what we have – and find better ways to share and evaluate what we do know, collaborate with existing partners whilst also reaching out to new ones outside of government. In that way, move the conversation on and the evolution towards fostering public value, improving public services, and benefiting everyday life.

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APPENDIX A:
List of speakers and advisory group members

- **Kirchuffs Atengble,** Executive Director, PACKS Africa, Ghana

- **Oliver Bennett,** Director, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, UK

- **Philippa Cordingley,** Centre for Use of Research and Evidence in Education, UK

- **Fadi El-Jardali,** Director, Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center, Lebanon

- **Sarah Foxen,** Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology, UK

- **Dez Holmes,** Director, Research in Practice, UK

- **John Lavis,** Co-Director, Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenge, Canada

- **Amber Mace,** Chief Executive, California Council on Science and Technology, US

- **Steve Martin,** Director, Wales Centre for Public Policy, Wales

- **Rose Oronje,** PhD, Director, Public Policy & Knowledge Translation, & Head of Kenya Office, African Institute for Development Policy, Kenya

- **Olivia Stevenson,** Deputy Director of UCL Public Policy, University College London, UK

- **Vivian Tseng,** Senior Vice President, WT Grant Foundation, US

- **Vicky Ward,** Research Unit for Research Utilisation, St Andrews University, Scotland

- **Christine Weidenslaufer,** Legislative Advisor, Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile

- **Itzhak Yanovitzky,** Professor of Communication, Rutgers University, US

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