Enablers and constraints of creation and sharing of knowledge assets:

A case of NGO policy advocacy

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LIST OF ACHRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCI	Colombian Agency for International Cooperation
CCEEU	Colombia Europe United States Coalition
CCONG	Colombian Confederation of NGOs
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
SLC	Social Learning Cycle
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commission for Human Rights

ABSTRACT

Title of thesis: Enablers and constraints of creation and sharing of knowledge assets: A case of NGO policy advocacy

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This dissertation aims to develop and validate a conceptual framework about the enablers and constraints for the creation and sharing of knowledge assets. Knowledge assets are understood as a subset of dispositions to act that is embedded in individuals, groups or artefacts and that allows us to economise the consumption of resources for a given amount of effort (Boisot 1998). The creation of knowledge assets within organisations is seen as a knower-dependent, social and non-linear process of learning that builds on information. Enablers and constraints can be found at any part of this learning process and differ from one information environment to another. The theoretical framework integrates Boisot's Social Learning Cycle (SLC) with an Information Ecology model in order to identify the potential enablers and constraints within specific information environments.

The empirical setting chosen for this research is a group of leading international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and their domestic NGO partners, pursuing a policy advocacy strategy in the context of a high-level international donors conference. Policy advocacy refers to a set of activities directed towards influencing decision makers in a way that contributes to benefiting disadvantaged populations. Advocate INGOs and their domestic NGO partners (advocacy communities) gain influence by

becoming alternate sources of information to decision makers (Keck and Sikkink 1998); their ability to create and share knowledge assets is then critical.

The research is based on an in-depth case study and qualitative analysis techniques (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 1989; Marshall and Rossman 1995), focusing on two levels: Intra-organisational and inter-organisational. The collection of data covers a one-year period (February 2003 to February 2004).

The focus on a complex information environment, represented here by transnational advocacy communities, proves valuable in expanding existing theory about the dynamics of the creation and sharing of knowledge assets in and between organisations. The data collected suggests that most constraints are of internal nature and are centred on the value exploiting stage of the SLC. Constraints associated with organisations' cultures, individuals' information processing preferences, and politics are prominent.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Contents

- Literature about knowledge and learning in organisations
- Main research question
- Advocacy communities: The empirical setting for this research and its potential contributions
- How research about non-profit organisations contributes to the management literature
- Research methods and analysis
- Key findings
- Major limitations
- Motivations and personal assumptions behind this research
- Dissertation structure

1.1 LITERATURE ABOUT KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING IN ORGANISATIONS

A growing body of literature has explored how organisations learn and create knowledge, and whether knowledge enhances organisational outcomes (Argyris and Schon 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Denton 1998). Some authors have even argued that the primary role of organisations, and the essence of organisational capabilities, is the integration of knowledge (Grant 1996; Spender 1996).

Since March made popular the distinction between exploration and exploitation (March 1991)[1], researchers have been more aware of the importance of understanding the processes through which knowledge is created and shared (Nevis, DiBella et al. 1995; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995). Nevertheless, much remains to be done, as knowledge

[1] This distinction was originally made by Holland (1975).

processes are not clearly defined in the literature and the dichotomy between its acquisition and use requires further clarification (Grant and Baden-Fuller 2004).

Literature has focused on knowledge acquisition by organisations, and less on knowledge use and institutionalisation (Nevis, DiBella et al. 1995). The use of broad concepts such as *knowledge transfer* (Kogut and Zander 1992; Teece 2000) makes it difficult for researchers to analyse the complex dynamics of learning, offering less explanatory power than more detailed learning frameworks, e.g (Boisot 1995).

Learning across organisational boundaries has received increasing attention from researchers, and the role of alliances in learning is well documented (Inkpen 1998; Khanna, Gulati et al. 1998). However, most of this research focuses on how alliances are structured and managed (Powell 1998), and on how they acquire knowledge (Soekijad and Andriessen 2003). Less is known about the process of knowledge creation and use among alliance members (Lubatkin, Florin et al. 2001). The literature has also been more concerned about alliances in which members have face-to-face contact, and less about transnational alliances with multiple members (Lane and Lubatkin 1998). Static views of learning in alliances have been predominant and dynamic views such as learning cycles have been ignored (Cegarra-Navarro 2005).

Most studies focus on the organisational, inter-organisational or industry levels, and fewer focus on the individual level (Hargadon 1998; Empson 2001). The link between individual and organisational experience and learning needs to be analysed further, as several knowledge processes take place in inter-personal groups of knowledge workers (Soekijad and Andriessen 2003). The dynamics of power in organisational learning have

also received little attention. Recent contributions (Lawrence, Mauws et al. 2005) have equated politics to decision making processes, without considering other political factors (e.g. legitimacy).

A significant section of the research has been concerned with identifying the enabling conditions for learning in organisations. Some contributions focus on the role of personal beliefs, organisational relationships, and formal procedures (Krogh and Roos 1996); higher codification of knowledge (Teece 2000); or technology, culture, leadership and measurement (O'Dell and Grayson 1998). Nevertheless, this literature has been primarily focused on identifying and analysing particular enabling conditions, without paying much attention to the interaction between these conditions and the distinct phases of the knowledge creation process.

This research aims to expand existing understanding about the enablers likely to be most effective in unblocking the learning dynamics in organisations. The research is concerned not only with the acquisition but also with the use and embedding of that knowledge; and with attempts to integrate learning at the individual and the inter-organisational levels in the context of a transnational advocacy community. This research aims to provide further insights into why some organisations are better learners than others, **by undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the distinct phases of knowledge creation and sharing, and by assessing how particular enablers and constraints impact each of these phases**[2].

[2] In the context of this research, a constraint is a factor that limits the achievement of higher performance versus a goal (Goldratt 1990). By contrast, an enabler facilitates that achievement.

1.2 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

This research integrates two distinct academic sources: Boisot's Information Space (I-Space) and Social Learning Cycle (SLC) (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998) and an Information Ecology model (Davenport and Prusak 1997), in order to develop and validate a framework about the enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge in and between organisations, and their effect on the effectiveness of the organisations involved.

I propose that the creation and sharing of knowledge is enabled or constrained by the variables identified in the Information Ecology model. The effective sharing of knowledge in and between organisations will be a function of the prevailing information ecologies within those organisations, and the differences among them.

1.3 ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES: THE EMPIRICAL SETTING FOR THIS RESEARCH AND ITS POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The empirical setting chosen for this research is a group of leading international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and their domestic NGO partners, pursuing a policy advocacy strategy in the context of a high-level international donors conference[3]. For the purpose of this research, these INGOs, NGOs and their alliances will be called

[3] This research focuses on NGOs working with development issues. Overall, these NGOs are defined as private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development. Source: The World Bank. See http://www.worldbank.org

advocacy communities. The complex information environment represented here by advocacy communities provides an appropriate setting to explore the conditions in which the creation and sharing of knowledge assets contribute to the effectiveness of organisations where knowledge plays a central role.

In recent years, NGOs have emerged as an important player in the effort to find solutions to problems that societies face. Although these organisations have existed for a long time, only recently have they attracted the interest of policy makers and academia. A comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence them is still lacking, which reduces their potential for impact (Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003).

NGOs are part of the broader non-profit sector, which accounts for a significant share of national expenditures and employment. A study of the sector in 35 countries calculated its aggregate expenditure to be US$1.3 trillion as of the late 1990s. It employed 39.5 million full-time equivalent workers - i.e. on average, 4.4% of the economically active population in these 35 countries. This represents ten times more people than the utilities and textile industries in these countries, five times more people than the food manufacturing industry, and about 20% more people than the transportation industry (Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003).

NGOs are increasingly taking part in policy advocacy activities, partly due to their belief that traditional approaches of development assistance have not been effective in tackling the structural causes of poverty (Edwards, Hulme et al. 1999; Eade 2002). Policy advocacy refers to a range of activities aimed at persuading decision makers to design, adopt, and change policies and practices in ways that are expected to favour

disadvantaged communities (Bryer 1999; Hudson 2002). These activities can range from lobbying and public campaigning to education and media work. In parallel, there has been progressive recognition of that advocate role by governments and multilateral bodies, some of which have set up dedicated units for managing relationships with non-governmental organisations.

Recent publications show an increasing academic interest in NGO policy advocacy. There have been significant contributions towards understanding the evolution of NGOs' roles - from relief to advocacy work (Korten 1987; Senillosa 1998); the factors likely to contribute to effective advocacy (Edwards 1993; Fowler 1997; Hudson 2002); the role played by emerging collaborative work (Alger 1990; Fisher 1993; Keck and Sikkink 1998); the participation of grassroots communities (Annis 1987); the governance of advocacy (Young 1992); and the evaluation of its impacts (Roche and Bush 1997; Chapman and Fisher 2000).

Several academic works have underlined the importance of information and knowledge sharing for advocacy effectiveness. Practitioners and researchers have uncovered some of the factors that constrain the sharing of knowledge (Edgren 2000; King 2000; Mawdsley, Townsend et al. 2002). However, these factors have been only superficially analysed. The literature also lacks empirical studies that test the validity of constraints identified in specific settings. A significant part of the literature has been more concerned with traditional development programmes (Malena 1995; Ashman 2001; Mancuso Brehm 2001) than with advocacy initiatives.

This research aims to make a contribution to the NGO management literature by providing insights into particular challenges to achieving a greater impact that INGOs and NGOs face, as well as offering some recommendations about how these challenges could be met.

1.4 HOW RESEARCH ABOUT NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTES TO THE MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

Research in the field of economics has questioned the belief that the non-distribution constraint of non-profit organisations reduces their incentive for efficiency. Galaskiewicz, for example, argues that similarities and differences in the managerial priorities and tactics of non-profits and for-profits can be better explained by looking at the structural conditions and institutional frameworks in their respective *niches* than by reference to their legal forms[4]. For-profits and non-profits behave similarly in the same niche and differently when in different niches. So many non-profit organisations have priorities and tactics similar to for-profits, while others remain distinct (Galaskiewicz and Bielefeld 2003). Similarly, DiMaggio argues that differences between for-profits and non-profits are a product of particular environmental conditions (DiMaggio 2003).

As management research does not analyse for-profit firms as a uniform group, we cannot do that with non-profits (Brody 2003). In this sense, the results of this research are likely to be useful for both profits and non-profits that share similar conditions.

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[4] Niches are understood as '*the sites where resources are located and where organisations compete for capital, revenues, labour, materials, and technology*'. Sometimes these sites are geographically bounded; sometimes they are highly institutionalised. Source: Galaskiewicz, J. and W. Bielefeld (2003).

1.5 RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS

In order to describe and explain the enablers and constraints to knowledge creation and sharing in advocacy communities, it will be necessary to look in depth into informal and unstructured processes (Marshall and Rossman 1995), to discover and assess causality (Miles and Huberman 1994) and to develop a hypothesis and theory (Eisenhardt 1989). This indicates that a qualitative research approach is more appropriate for this research than a quantitative one.

This research follows a strategy based on an embedded case study that focuses on two levels of data collection and analysis. The first level refers to the creation and sharing of knowledge within and from a single member of the advocacy community studied. This is the intra-organisational level. The second level refers to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets among various members of that advocacy community. This is the inter-organisational level. Simultaneous collection and analysis of data at these two levels allow contrasting sources, and increases the reliability of the single case study.

The analysis of data is based on content coding and the use of displays. Inductive and deductive analyses are integrated to compare iteratively the findings with the collected data and with the existing theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The coding of data employs analyst-constructed typologies and is done using software for qualitative data management. There are two main phases of the analysis: A first phase of 'within-case' analysis and a second phase of 'cross-case' analysis. For the purposes of this research, each type of respondent corresponds to a case study.

1.6 KEY FINDINGS

This research shows that when the Social Learning Cycle (SLC) (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998) is considered within an Information Ecology model, **it can explain comprehensively how specific factors influence particular stages of the creation and sharing of knowledge**.

The variables of our Information Ecology model have been adapted and extended from Davenport and Prusak's contribution (1998). Our model identifies five variables for the study of enablers and constraints: Knowledge workers; knowledge politics; knowledge behaviour and culture; knowledge strategy and knowledge assets architecture. Potential enablers and constraints are identified for each of these variables.

The resultant framework has a descriptive and a predictive character. It can be used to identify key knowledge flows and knowledge assets in a specific setting. The Information Ecology model is seen as a means towards increased effectiveness of the SLC. The predictive character of the framework is associated with its potential to envisage which particular enablers and constraints are likely to be found in settings where particular cultures dominate; in specific phases of the SLC; and in certain information flows.

Advocacy communities can be described as centripetal cultures, those whose knowledge assets and transactions are concentrated on a narrow region of the I-Space (Boisot 1995). In the case of advocacy communities, these concentrate at low levels of

codification and abstraction. In contrast, decision makers' cultures are less centripetal and their knowledge assets are likely to be located at higher codification and abstraction levels than those of advocates. This difference accounts for a number of constraints associated with the sharing of knowledge between these two groups. The increasing pressure on advocacy communities to take part in global policy debates is pushing them to make more investments in knowledge assets with higher levels of codification and abstraction, in the areas of the I-Space where decision makers operate.

This research extends existing ideas about how particular enablers and constraints have an impact on specific phases of the SLC. Most enablers and constraints are of internal nature, and focus on the value exploiting stage of the SLC (i.e. the diffusion, absorption and impacting phases). Besides factors related to knowledge workers (e.g. preferences towards codification and abstraction, and levels of trust) this study draws attention to the importance of cultural (e.g. organisational ideologies and message framing) and political (e.g. alliances and legitimacy) issues in influencing knowledge processes - see Table 1.

Table 1. Nature of external and internal enablers and constraints to the SLC in advocacy communities

SLC	Information Ecology model	Most significant enablers or constraints
Scanning	Knowledge workers	• Level of trust
	Knowledge architecture	• Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction
Codification and abstraction	Knowledge workers	• Preferences towards codification and abstraction
	Knowledge behaviour and culture	• Organisational ideologies
Diffusion	Knowledge behaviour and culture	• Advocacy message framing
	Knowledge politics	• Legitimacy
Absorption	Knowledge workers	• Preferences towards codification and abstraction
	Knowledge behaviour and culture	• Organisational ideologies
Impacting	Knowledge architecture	• Knowledge assets' substrata
	Knowledge politics	• Alliances and partnerships

1.7 MAJOR LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

> '*There are multiple perspectives and representations of reality, each of them based on the limited purchase that one mind can have upon truth about reality*' (Stewart 1998).

The epistemological orientation of this research is based on a constructionist perspective. The world, then, is not considered as pre-given but the result of a history dependent, context sensitive creative process (Krogh and Roos 1996). The understanding of knowledge, its creation and sharing, is then closely linked to how people involved in this study (i.e. researchers and respondents) perceive it.

This research does not aim to evaluate the effectiveness of advocacy work *per se*. To assess the effects of advocacy on decision makers, or the extent to which decision makers have understood and acted upon the knowledge communicated by advocates, is

beyond the scope of this dissertation, as is the discussion about advocacy as a 'good' or 'bad' activity.

As this research focuses on INGOs and domestic NGOs, the views of stakeholders such as affected populations or the media are not covered. Finally, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of potential SLCs to be found in advocacy communities, and their likely obstacles, and does not aim to provide a single representation of advocacy communities' learning processes.

1.8 MOTIVATIONS AND PERSONAL ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND THIS RESEARCH

Since my undergraduate course in Media Studies, I have felt concern about the potential impact that communication can have on social development processes. After my course I worked with one of the leading non-profit organisations in Colombia, developing communication strategies in impoverished urban communities to support social projects; co-ordinating a proprietary information system for monitoring and evaluation; and directing the systematisation of best practices.

This experience motivated me to undertake an MSc in Management of Information Systems at the Universidad Politecnica de Madrid, where I first examined in detail the concept of knowledge management. My MSc dissertation was focused on discussing the potential of knowledge management in non-profit organisations. It left more questions

unresolved that answers. The decision to pursue a PhD course is the result of this personal and academic journey.

Two core assumptions underline this research. First, I see knowledge management as a contributor to the effectiveness of organisations where knowledge is at the core. Second, I believe that non-governmental and civil society organisations working in social development have the potential to contribute positively to disadvantaged communities, and that their further organisational development - particularly in relation to information and knowledge management - can have a favourable effect on their capacity for impact. These assumptions may have influenced this research to some extent (see discussion about the tactics used to achieve veracity, objectivity and perspicacity in Chapter 10: Conclusions), but they also provided a powerful *raison d'être* for it.

1.9 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

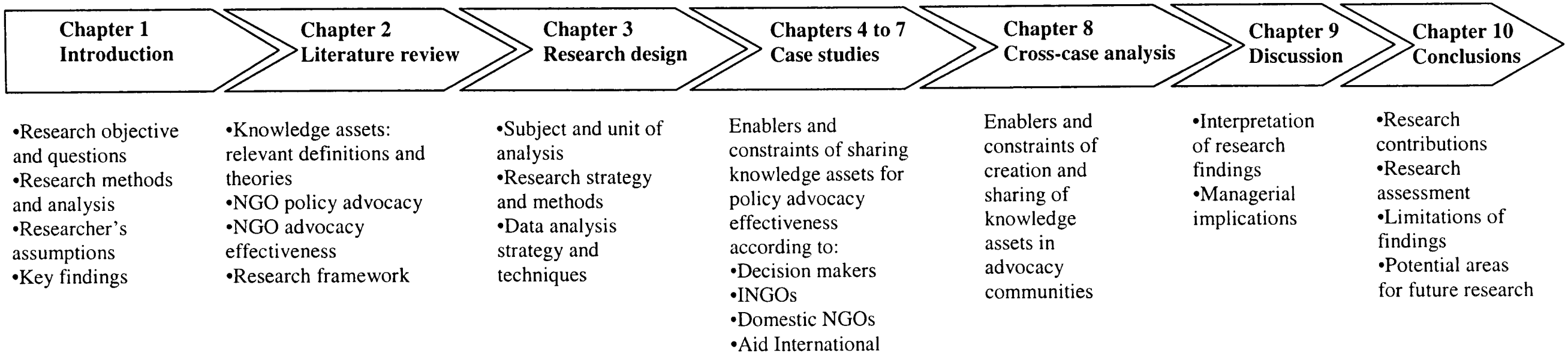
The material is divided into ten chapters (see Figure 1). Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the topic of research, outlines its importance, and presents in brief the research methods, the major limitations, the researcher's personal assumptions and some key findings. Chapter 2 discusses definitions and theories concerning knowledge and knowledge assets. It also presents the Information Ecology model, which is used as a base for defining the enablers and constraints for the creation and sharing of knowledge assets in advocacy communities, and current debates about NGO advocacy effectiveness. The literature review concludes with the suggested research framework.

Chapter 3 presents the research design and methods. The chapter starts by discussing the subject and unit of analysis. The research strategies and methods are then presented, as well as the data analysis approach. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the potential limitations of this research.

Chapters 4 to 7 present the data collected for each of the embedded case studies. The enablers and constraints identified by each group of respondents are analysed under both the SLC and the Information Ecology model. Each chapter concludes with a synthesis of the findings for each group. Chapter 8 shows the results of the cross-case analysis. The enablers and constraints for each of the phases of the SLC are presented according to their importance.

Chapter 9 discusses the research findings and some managerial implications. Chapter 10 presents the contributions of this research in view of existing theory. An assessment of this research and its limitations is provided, followed by some potential areas for future research.

Figure 1. Dissertation structure



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Contents

- Introduction
- Knowledge assets: Relevant definitions and theories
- NGO policy advocacy and the debates around advocacy effectiveness
- Research framework: NGO advocacy communities and the creation and sharing of knowledge for advocacy effectiveness
- Conclusions

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review chapter is organised into three main sections: Definitions and theories concerning the concept of knowledge and knowledge assets; NGO policy advocacy and the current debates around advocacy effectiveness; and the proposed research framework for the study of creation and sharing of knowledge assets. An outline of this material is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Outline of literature review chapter

Sections	Theories and concepts discussed
Knowledge assets	• Data, information and knowledge • Organisational knowledge strategies • The Information Ecology model
NGO policy advocacy	• Definitions: INGOs and domestic NGOs • NGO policy advocacy • NGO policy advocacy effectiveness • Debates around NGO advocacy effectiveness
Research framework	• Information and knowledge supporting advocacy effectiveness and the SLC • Advocacy communities' information ecologies and potential enablers and constraints

2.2 KNOWLEDGE ASSETS: RELEVANT DEFINITIONS AND THEORIES

Researchers from various disciplines - management, sociology and economics among them - have made important contributions to the understanding of how organisations learn and create knowledge, and whether knowledge enhances organisational outcomes. However, without a clearer definition of the learning process, the explanatory power of studies about particular enablers and constraints of knowledge in organisations remains limited (see in Introduction Chapter, section 'Literature about knowledge and learning in organisations').

The I-Space (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998), offers a comprehensive conceptual tool to explore the distinct phases of knowledge creation and sharing within and among organisations. Boisot suggests that blockages take place at any moment of the learning process, but he does not explore these blockages further. Davenport and Prusak's ecological approach to the study of information (1998) has the potential to provide useful insights into understanding the blockages to social learning. In their Information Ecology model they suggest a set of variables that affect how information is created and used.

This literature review focuses on building the theoretical framework that guides this research by identifying a) relevant definitions of knowledge and b) those issues most likely to impact its creation and sharing. Existing literature on knowledge in

organisations will, then, be discussed to the extent that they contribute to these key definitions[5].

2.2.1 DATA, INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE ASSETS

In relation to the concept of knowledge, two broad perspectives in the academic management literature have been identified: The first views knowledge as a commodity, and the second views knowing as a process (Empson 2001). On one hand, as Empson says, research that adopts the 'knowledge as a commodity' perspective seeks to identify valuable knowledge within organisations and to develop mechanisms for managing it effectively. Thus, knowledge is seen as a source of competitive advantage (Cohen and Levinthal 1990; Conner and Prahalad 1996; Spender 1996; Teece 2000).

On the other hand, research that adopts the 'knowing as a process' perspective views knowledge as a social construct that is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations (Brown and Duguid 1991; Alvesson 1993; Krogh and Roos 1996; Tsoukas 1996). As Empson says:

> *'Rather than consider explicit models of knowledge transmission, this perspective emphasises the process of interaction between individuals and the role this plays in the creation, legitimation and dissemination of knowledge on an ongoing basis'* (Empson 2001).

Researchers from the 'knowing as a process' perspective have emphasised the ambiguity of the concept of knowledge and of its role in organisations. Knowledge is

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[5] In relation to identifying definitions, Anheier's statement is inspiring: '*In methodological terms, definitions as such are neither true nor false, and their utility is judged by the extent to which they lead to new insights and improved understandings of such highly complex and diverse phenomena*' (Anheier 2004).

attributed a highly interactive, provisional and controversial nature in contrast with traditional understandings of knowledge as true, verified and non problematic (Lanzara and Patriotta 2001). However, although the 'knowing as a process' perspective has refreshed understanding about the role of knowledge in organisations, the idea that knowledge may be a functional resource cannot be easily denied.

Taking into account the ambiguous and problematic nature of knowledge and the difficulty of defining it (Alvesson 1993), some definitions on which this research is based on are provided next. As some authors have argued, the use of data, information and knowledge as interchangeable concepts has contributed to obscuring even more the debate around knowledge (Boisot 1998; Davenport and Prusak 1998). The first set of definitions acknowledges the distinction between data, information and knowledge as key for the understanding of knowledge in organisations.

In the context of this research, data is seen as the discrimination between physical states - e.g. black, white, heavy, light - that may or may not convey information to an agent (Boisot 1998). Information is seen as the '*subset of the data residing in things that activates an agent*' (Boisot 1995). Information is filtered from the data by the agent's perceptual or conceptual apparatus and supposes a relationship - a process of interpretation (Krogh and Roos 1996) - between things and agents.

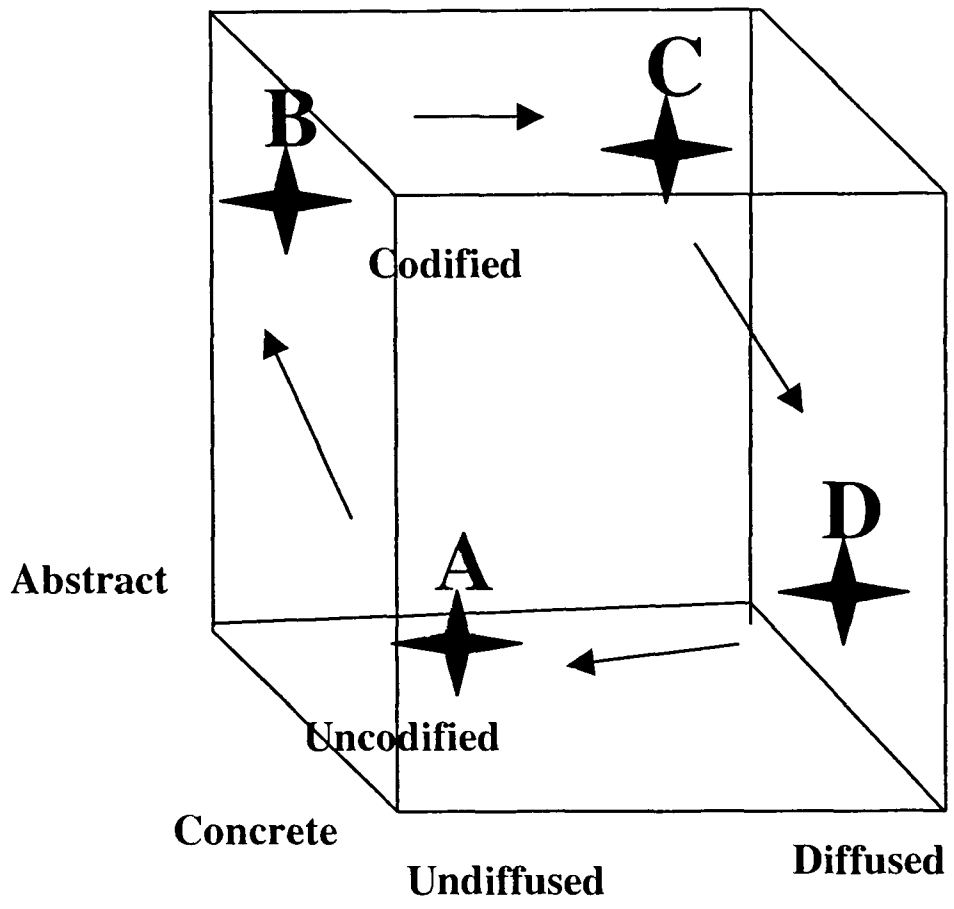
Knowledge builds on information that is extracted from data (Boisot 1998; Davenport and Prusak 1998). Whereas data can be characterised as a property of things, knowledge is a set of expectations that an agent holds with respect to an event, which orient his or her actions, and it is modified with the arrival of new information (Boisot 1998). In that

sense, knowledge cannot be directly observed; its existence can only be inferred from the actions of agents.

If knowledge is the set of expectations that an observer holds with respect to an event, knowledge assets can be thought of as '*a subset of dispositions to act that is embedded in individuals, groups or artefacts (objects) and that has value-adding potential*', in the sense that knowledge assets allow us to economise the consumption of resources, e.g. energy, space, and time, for a given amount of effort (Boisot 1998).

Knowledge assets can be classified along three dimensions: Formalisation or codification (i.e. how far they can be given form); abstraction or conceptualisation (i.e. to what extent the new codified insights are applicable to a wider range of situations beyond those where they originate); and diffusion (i.e. to what extent newly created insights are shared with a target population). These three dimensions - codification, abstraction and diffusion - are combined in a framework that Boisot calls the **Information Space** or **I-Space** (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The movement of knowledge in the I-Space



A. Personal knowledge
B. Proprietary knowledge
C. Textbook knowledge
D. Common sense

(Source: Boisot 1998)

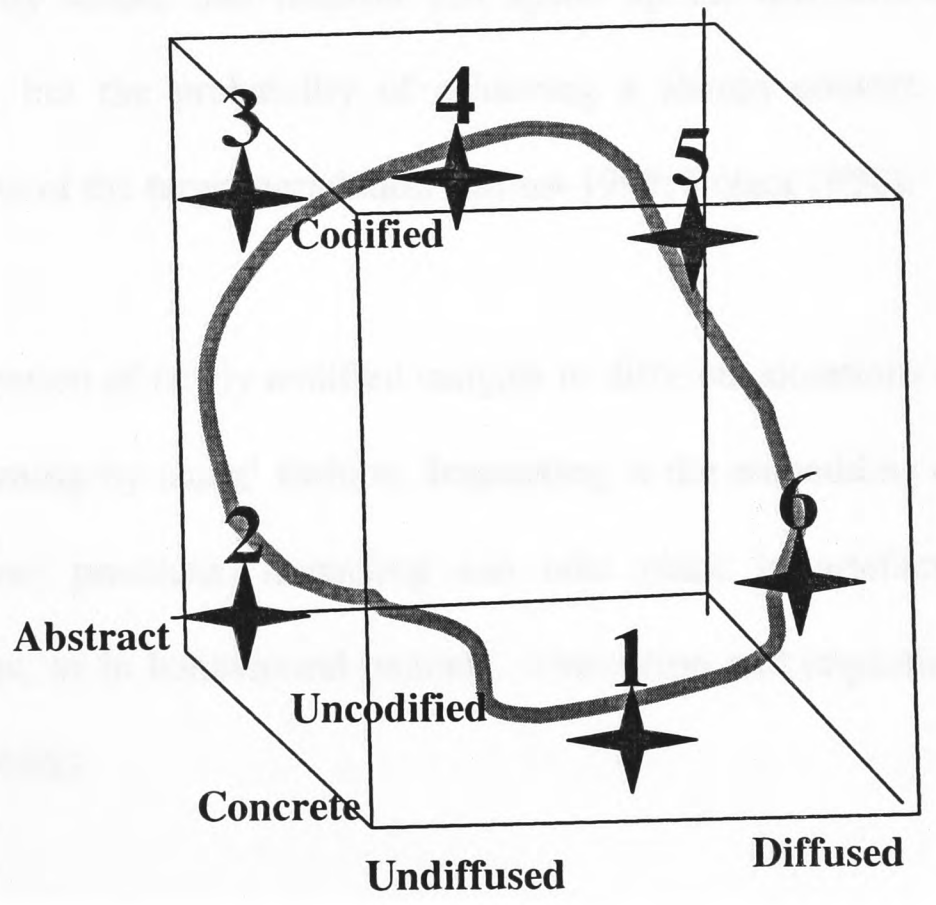
Codification aims to differentiate finite sets of discrete elements, while abstraction aims to bring those elements into a specifiable relationship with each other. **Codification and abstraction make it possible to economise in the processing and transmission of data** (Boisot 1995). At lower codification, knowledge is less structured and codes are more ambiguous than at higher codification. At higher abstraction, the number of categories that will be used to filter data are reduced by the creation of suitable concepts (i.e. generalisation). Abstraction, then, aims to achieve predictive value.

The degree of abstraction is linked to '*the extent to which these concepts or generalisations are removed from the specific instance to which they are applied or to the concrete data from which they may be derived*' (Boisot 1995). But although

codification and abstraction help to make knowledge more diffusible, they do not necessarily convert it into valid knowledge (Boisot 1995).

Boisot suggests that the creation and diffusion of knowledge assets take place in a particular sequence called the Social Learning Cycle (SLC), which is composed of six phases: Scanning threats and opportunities, codification or problem solving, abstraction, diffusion, absorption, and impacting or embedding (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. The Social Learning Cycle (SLC)



1. Scanning threats and opportunities
2. Codification or problem solving
3. Abstraction
4. Diffusion
5. Absorption
6. Impacting or embedding

(Source: Boisot 1998)

Scanning is defined as the process of identifying threats and opportunities in available - but often fuzzy - data. '*Scanning patterns such data into unique or idiosyncratic insights that then become the possession of individuals or small groups*' (Boisot 1998).

Codification or problem solving refers to the process of giving structure and coherence to those insights, while **abstraction** refers to generalising the application of newly codified insights to a wider range of situations. This involves reducing them to their most essential features (conceptualising them). '*The ability to abstract and to codify are intimately related*' (Boisot 1995).

Diffusion is sharing the newly created insights with a target population. As Boisot suggests, the diffusion of well-codified and abstract data to a large population is technically less problematic than the diffusion of uncodified and context-specific data. The prior sharing of context by sender and receiver can speed up the diffusion of uncodified and concrete data; but the probability of achieving a shared context is inversely proportional to the size of the target population (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998).

Absorption refers to the application of newly codified insights to different situations in a 'learning-by-doing' or a 'learning-by-using' fashion. **Impacting** is the embedding of abstract knowledge in concrete practices. Impacting can take place in artefacts, technical or organisational rules, or in behavioural patterns. Absorption and impacting often work in tandem (Boisot 1998).

Knowledge assets are built up through this process of learning, which feeds on the information environment. **Enablers and constraints differ from one information environment to another and can be found at any part of the SLC**. This learning process is non-linear and the acts of codification and abstraction are incomplete: '*They are, at best, hypotheses about the structure of the world that will always remain*

provisional and subject to revision' (Boisot 1998). Knowledge is progressive but not necessarily cumulative.

These definitions of data, information and knowledge assets have the following implications for this research. First, the views of knowing as a process and knowledge as a commodity are integrated within the same framework. Knowledge assets can be understood using the view of knowledge as a commodity. The SLC can be understood in the context of knowing as a process.

A second implication is that the creation of knowledge assets is seen as a knower-dependent process. The same piece of data can convey different meanings - different information - for different agents, and the knowledge created from the same piece of data varies from agent to agent.

A third implication is that the notion of knowledge assets implies the existence of a stock of knowledge - still knower dependent - but that can be embedded in objects and documents in some partial way. If it is embedded, it can be shared, marketed or stored, and can be absorbed, applied and embedded in other concrete practices such as artefacts, organisational rules or behavioural patterns (Boisot 1998). The incompleteness of this process of embedding is acknowledged: '*Even if knowers cooperate to articulate their knowledge and disseminate it, a large residue of knowledge - perhaps the most important part - will remain with them*' (Boisot 1998). When knowledge assets are given a structure, they become data in the organisation's environment, which might or might not convey information and knowledge to another agent. We might expect to share with other agents - or knowers - just data, instead of

information or knowledge. Books, films, lectures, papers, computer programs, memos, etc. are better understood as data in the organisational environment, not as information.

A fourth implication is the relationship between knowledge assets and the consumption of resources. If knowledge assets allow us to economise the consumption of resources, e.g. energy, space and time, for a given amount of effort, it is possible to think that these economies enable organisations '*to bring superior products or services to market faster and in greater volumes than their competitors*' (Boisot 1998). Although, as Boisot argues, the possession of knowledge assets does not necessarily lead to competitive advantage, the link between knowledge assets and effectiveness could be better understood within the context of this economy of resources.

2.2.2 INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

From a perspective of 'knowledge as a commodity', organisational knowledge has been defined as those organisational rules and routines that become institutionalised through encoding and embedding in the organisational memory (Lyles, Krogh et al. 1996). The organisation's members enact particular performances from those routines and those particular performances are themselves enabled or constrained by a variety of organisational, social, physical and cognitive factors (Pentland and Reuter 1994).

From a perspective of 'knowing as a process', organisational knowledge occurs to the extent that people disseminate their individual learning by speaking, gesturing or writing to others (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Krogh and Roos 1996); or to the extent

that organisational members form communities of practice where expertise is constantly developed and exchanged (Brown and Duguid 1991).

Tsoukas and Vladimirou attempt to integrate the individual and organisational dimensions of knowledge (Tsoukas and Vladimirou 2001). They argue that knowledge, in organised contexts, becomes organisational in the sense that individuals create knowledge in the process of carrying out their work, taking into account the contextuality of their actions and the rules produced by the organisations, whose application depends on historically evolved collective understandings and experiences.

In the context of this research, **organisational knowledge assets** are those created by an individual or group of individuals within a particular organisational context and whose application depends on the historically evolved collective understandings and experiences in which those individuals are embedded. The SLC is then understood as a process with individual and social dimensions.

2.2.3 ORGANISATIONAL KNOWLEDGE STRATEGIES

Organisational knowledge strategies refer to those conscious organisational attempts to possess and to apply those knowledge assets embedded in objects, documents and within the heads of the organisation's members in order to enhance organisational performance through economising the consumption of organisational resources. Organisations may attempt to do so in two main ways: Codification or personalisation strategies (Morris and Empson 1998; Hansen, Nohria et al. 1999). In the former,

knowledge gets articulated (i.e. codified) and embedded in organisational procedures or in the organisation's memory. In the latter, knowledge sharing through direct person-to-person contact is promoted.

Organisational attempts to structure and make use of organisational knowledge assets face two ambiguities: a) the ambiguity of determining the role that knowledge has in the work of the organisation's members; and b) the ambiguity of evaluating the results of knowledge use (Alvesson 1993; Alvesson 2001).

Subjective orientations and person-bound talents are more significant than formal knowledge and specialised work-role experiences and skills in most organisations (Alvesson 1993; Salmon 1994). There are several obstacles related to the difficulties of knowing the non-occurring alternative; of determining causality; and of measuring results (Denton 1998). Thus, as Alvesson points out, rhetoric and image management become vital substitutes for the ambiguities in establishing those effects. In that sense, organisational knowledge, to a large degree, becomes a matter of beliefs, impressions and negotiations of meaning (Alvesson 1993; Alvesson 2001).

In sum, organisational knowledge assets are built up through a process of learning that has both individual and collective dimensions. The perspective of 'knowing as a process' contributes to understanding the creation and sharing of knowledge assets as a social process, highly influenced by people's perceptions and interests. However, there is a 'commodity' as a result of that social process that has been a key element of organisational problem solving, decision making and performance enhancement. The

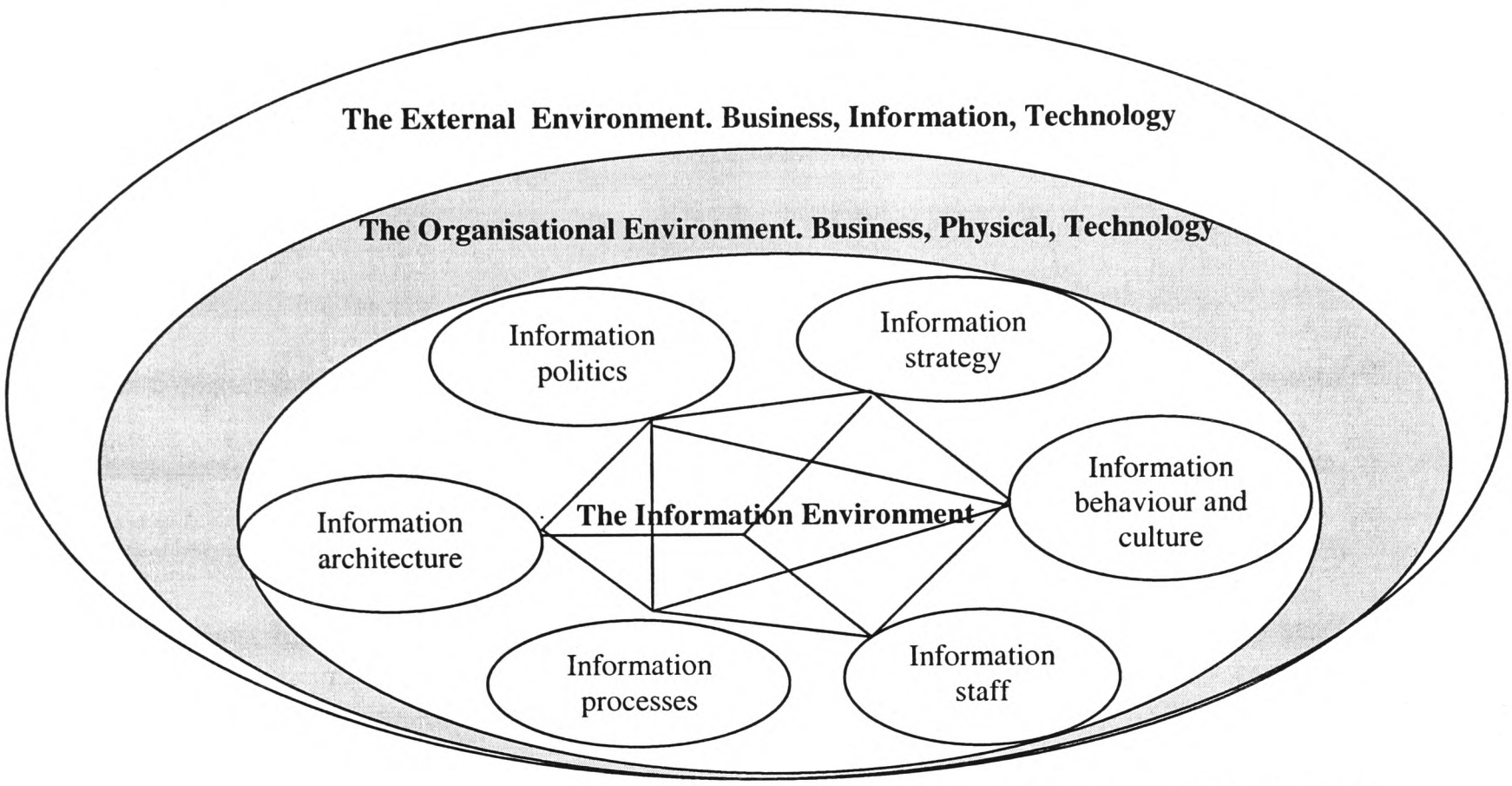
creation and sharing of this 'commodity' are enabled and constrained by different organisational factors, as discussed next.

2.2.4 THE INFORMATION ECOLOGY MODEL

The Information Ecology model provides a useful basis for exploring the enablers and constraints of creation and sharing of knowledge assets. This model, proposed by Davenport and Prusak, aims to understand how people create, distribute, and use information within the organisational environment (Davenport and Prusak 1997).

There are two main contributions of this model that are relevant for this research. The first contribution is the identification of three environments in order to understand the overall landscape in which information is used: The information environment, the broader organisational environment surrounding it, and the external environment. These environments have fuzzy boundaries (see Figure 4) (Davenport and Prusak 1997).

Figure 4. Davenport and Prusak's Information Ecology model



Source: Davenport and Prusak, 1997

The second contribution of this model relevant for this research is the identification of six variables that affect the way information is created at both internal and external levels. These variables are information politics, information strategy, information behaviour and culture, information staff, information processes, and information architecture.

Information politics refers to the power and governance structures of information management and use. Examples of such information governance structures are 'information monarchies', where decision making is concentrated in one person, and 'information federalism', where a broader group reaches a consensus. Information strategy is the high level intent of an organisation in relation to information, which

should be consistent, according to Davenport and Prusak, with an organisation's information governance structures:

> *'Several firms are trying to create an information environment of greater sharing, without realising that they have a feudal information environment in which business unit executives hoard information as a matter of principle'* (Davenport and Prusak 1997).

Information behaviour and culture refers to the way people value information, share it across organisational boundaries, disclose it internally and externally, and make use of it. Davenport and Prusak argue that these two factors may be the toughest to change. Information staff are the people who handle the organisation's information. Information staff structure, interpret and synthesise this information. Examples of information staff are librarians, market researchers and designers of information bases.

Information processes refer to those activities in which information staff identify, acquire, understand and act on information. Information architecture is the '*guide to the structure and location of information within an organisation*'. This structure, Davenport and Prusak say, can be descriptive, involving a map of the current information environment, or prescriptive, offering a model of the information environment at some future date.

If the enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge differ from one information environment to another, it is necessary at this stage to analyse the literature about NGOs and NGO advocacy, in order to identify those elements that characterise NGO information environments. This is the topic of the next section.

The creation and sharing of knowledge assets in and between INGOs and national NGOs in the context of policy advocacy are enabled or constrained by the variables identified in the Information Ecology model. ***The effective sharing of knowledge assets within advocacy communities will be a function of the prevailing information ecologies within those communities, and the differences among them.*** *This research will explore the specific information ecologies for INGOs and NGOs and the way those information ecologies affect the dynamics of creation and sharing of knowledge assets.*

2.3 NGO POLICY ADVOCACY: RELEVANT DEFINITIONS AND DEBATES

The aim of this section is to identify the main debates in the literature about the effectiveness of NGO policy advocacy. If the enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge differ from one information environment to another, this discussion will help to identify particular characteristics of advocacy communities' organisational environments that subsequently may affect their sharing of information and knowledge.

2.3.1 INTERNATIONAL NGOs AND DOMESTIC NGOs: SOME BASIC DEFINITIONS

The empirical setting chosen for this research is a group of NGOs working with development issues[6]. These NGOs have been defined as '*private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the*

[6] Development refers to the fulfilment of the necessary conditions for the realisation of the potential of human personality. It is usually translated into improvements in social indicators and indicators of the physical quality of life, such as life expectancy. See Burnell, P. (2003).

environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development'[7]. Some of them are headquartered in developed countries but carry out their work in more than one developing country, with funds obtained from sponsor organisations, donations and their own economic activities, and usually in partnership with domestic NGOs in the recipient country. In this research, these organisations are called **international NGOs or INGOs**.

NGOs working in development have traditionally been seen as tools for channelling international aid; as organisations supporting community work in developing countries; or as service contractors to the state. However, in recent years, there has been increasing interest in NGOs as international policy actors (Lewis and Wallace 2000; Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003).

This new role has been accompanied by new definitions: NGOs are private organisations that aim to improve the living conditions of poor communities in developing countries *and increase their social and political participation*[8], while, at the same time, *raising awareness among their fellow citizens* about the causes and nature of poverty, and *challenging those public and private authorities* whose decisions are constraining the development of a global society in which human rights are respected (Senillosa 1998). At the core of this definition is the advocate role that INGOs and NGOs are increasingly playing.

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[7] Source: The World Bank. See http://www.worldbank.org
[8] The italics are mine.

Following this, in the context of this research, NGOs are understood as private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote community development, and advocate for the benefit of disadvantaged groups or populations.

The term **domestic NGOs** refers to those organisations originated and based in developing countries, some of which work in partnership with INGOs to achieve their goals[9]. INGOs and domestic NGOs are part of the broader non-profit, non-governmental or civil society sector. In the context of this research, these three last expressions are used interchangeably.

2.3.2 WHAT IS NGO POLICY ADVOCACY?

NGO policy advocacy has been defined as '*a range of activities aimed at persuading decision makers to design, adopt, and change policies and practices to secure direct and lasting benefits*' (Bryer 1999). At the centre of this definition is the assumption that the implementation of policies favourable to those disadvantaged communities contributes to maximising the effectiveness and impact of development programmes.

Some authors argue that beyond influencing policies, advocacy is about influencing systems and structures (Edwards 1993), as well as decision makers' ideas, attitudes and practices (Clark 1992). Nevertheless, it is commonly agreed that the result of advocacy activities must translate into benefits for disadvantaged groups or communities. Linked

[9] In the NGO literature, the terms 'Northern NGOs' and 'Southern NGOs' are commonly used to distinguish INGOs and domestic NGOs. These terms are not used in this research as they are geographical referents, and bypass the fact that disadvantaged as well as better-off populations live in both 'Northern' and 'Southern' countries. These terms also emphasise the differences between developed and developing nations, rather than the relationships and inter-dependences between them.

to this ultimate impact is the concept of advocacy as a political activity (Crosby and Orsini 1996), in the sense that it seeks to influence existing power relationships.

In the context of this research, policy advocacy refers to a set of activities directed towards influencing decision makers' policies, ideas and practices in a way that contributes to benefiting disadvantaged communities, in particular in developing countries. The political nature of advocacy is acknowledged. This will have specific implications for how knowledge is created and shared within NGO advocacy communities, as discussed later.

2.3.3 FROM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO POLICY ADVOCACY

Since the 1990s, NGOs have been increasingly interested in advocacy. Before the 1990s, advocacy was seen as secondary to operational work, and was poorly understood (INTRAC 2003). Development NGOs were most focused on service delivery and local-level interventions (Clark 1992). However, some researchers think that NGOs have a longer history of significant influence on policy and institutional changes (Korten 1987) (Eade 2002), which goes back to anti-slavery campaigning and women's movements.

NGOs' current interest in policy advocacy has been linked to economic and cultural globalisation, which creates opportunities for civil action (Edwards, Hulme et al. 1999); and to the realisation by the NGO community that poverty is connected to political and economic dynamics (e.g. trade, debt, or the policies of governments and multilateral institutions), which traditional development and humanitarian relief projects are not able to address by themselves (Eade 2002).

NGOs have acquired significant authority in some areas, such as the environment and human rights (Clark 1995; Krut 1997). Governments and multilateral organisations are increasingly opening spaces for NGOs to present their cases in policy debates. However, many NGOs still appear reluctant fully to embrace their emerging role (Edwards, Hulme et al. 1999).

An indicator of this is presented in Salomon et. al, in a comparative study of non-profit organisations (Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003). Their research shows that just 6% of non-profit organisations' workforces in the countries studied is *primarily* involved in advocacy related activities, whereas service functions such as education, health and housing still occupy 60% of workers. Nevertheless, as the study points out, it is likely that a substantial portion of non-profit organisations, especially those involved in development activities, are also engaged in advocacy.

2.3.4 DEBATES ABOUT NGO ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS

Broadly, advocacy effectiveness refers to the extent to which advocates achieve their policy goals through either direct or indirect influence on decision makers (Covey 1998). For Keck and Sikkink, the achievement of advocacy goals comprises five stages: a) issue creation and agenda setting; b) influence on discursive positions; c) influence on institutional procedures; d) influence on policy changes; and e) influence on state behaviour (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Other authors emphasise that the concept of advocacy effectiveness needs to go beyond influence on policy changes to comprise the implementation of those policies (Chapman and Fisher 2000), as well as the impact that those policies have on the lives of affected communities (Roche and Bush 1997; Hudson 2000), e.g. impact on the strength of communities' institutions and organisations, and on the nature and quality of community participation in the policy process.

There are plenty of concerns about the effectiveness of NGO advocacy. Some authors argue that NGO advocacy has been more successful at gaining international attention and setting the agenda than in getting results (Krut 1997). Other authors have noted that most of the achievements in advocacy have been obtained at the level of detailed policy, especially on issues where NGOs have not found strong resistance from other interest groups, but least progress has been made in challenging policy makers' attitudes and ideologies (Edwards and Hulme 1992; Edwards 1993).

2.3.4.1 The political nature of NGO advocacy: The debate about the sources of legitimacy

Advocacy is seen as a political activity (Crosby and Orsini 1996; Senillosa 1998), as it aims to influence the political arenas where decisions are made[10] (Minear 1987; Jordan and Tuijl 2002). The political nature of advocacy requires NGOs to demonstrate their legitimacy (or authority) for advocating on behalf of others. The fact that NGOs are not elected but 'self-appointed' bodies (Pearce 1997) makes them particularly vulnerable to

[10] The political nature of advocacy does not necessarily mean that advocate NGOs are associated with political parties (Nelson 2000). On the contrary, association with political parties can be detrimental to advocacy work (Dolan 1992).

scrutiny from governments, academics, multilateral organisations - or even from within the NGOs themselves - about the sources of their legitimacy (Hudson 2002).

Legitimacy is of great value to NGOs, as it has been linked to the persuasiveness and credibility of advocacy, and therefore to its effectiveness (Hudson 2000). A significant part of the literature has focused its attention on discussing the diverse sources of legitimacy, among them the moral mandates recognised within society (e.g. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights); other members in alliances or networks; expertise and research on a particular issue; and linkages to grassroots (Chapman and Fisher 2000; Eade 2002). These diverse bases of NGO advocacy legitimacy tend to conflate among themselves (Eade 2002).

Hudson found in his research that 50% of organisations based their legitimacy on the links that they have to grassroots organisations in developing countries, while 15% of organisations claimed that their legitimacy is based on their history. Another 15% based their legitimacy on a basic right, a moral or ethical principle or value. 10% said that their legitimacy comes from their democratic membership structures (Hudson 2002). It is particularly interesting to note that the NGOs studied did not mention knowledge or research as one of their main sources of legitimacy.

2.3.4.1.1 Legitimacy through advocacy alliances: The strength of unity

Members of an alliance gain legitimacy from a) being associated with other members that are regarded as legitimate (Chapman and Fisher 2000); and b) by forming an

alliance with broad support, where a significant number of members work towards the same advocacy purpose (Fowler 1997). Because of a), INGOs prefer to work in partnership with domestic NGOs to influence domestic policy. In relation to b), Fowler argues that the '*breadth of support*' determines how many fronts of pressure policy makers have to deal with at once. So a broad representation, in terms of number of allies, has a positive effect on the persuasiveness of advocacy.

2.3.4.2 NGOs' workforces: Advocacy requires special skills

Much of the INGO community is new to the international advocacy arena. For 59% of the respondents of a survey, their first experience at an international conference was in the 1990s (Krut 1997). The NGO community therefore has to deal with a relatively inexperienced workforce.

Authors have described a range of skills necessary for advocacy effectiveness, e.g. technical knowledge (Korten 1987); the ability to establish and develop working relationships with decision makers (Clark 1992); and the capacity to build alliances (Edwards, Hulme et al. 1999). As well as these, two other skills are of particular interest for this DPhil research: **Documentation** and **personal analytical capabilities**.

Documentation skills are important because advocates need to research and use evidence from affected communities (Madon 2000), and prove what decision makers have said (Fowler 1997). The role of analytical capabilities has been less discussed in the literature, but some authors have pointed at its significance. Clark and Korten were

among the first to call attention to the importance of developing staff skills in analysis, research and strategic planning (Korten 1987; Clark 1992). Fowler states that the ability to conceptualise complex processes, and the ability to reason based on a clear analytical framework, are vital requisites for being heard by policy makers:

> *'INGO staff have to be able to use compelling arguments, which usually calls for high levels of abstraction and analytical powers often spanning more than one discipline'* (Fowler 1997).

In a similar line, Madon argues that direct, experiential learning (e.g. field experience) is the building block of INGO advocacy. However, this experience and learning must be '*generalised to have any influence in wider policy circles*' (Madon 2000).

2.3.4.2.1 Tensions among staff and ideologies

NGOs are recruiting people with advocacy skills and locating them in parts of the organisation that interface with policy makers (Fowler 1997). At the same time, these NGOs continue with their relief and development programmes, which are usually organised by geographical area. The skills needed for advocacy differ from those needed for relief and development. As a result, cultural tensions between advocacy and operative staff are emerging:

> *'Staff functioning at grassroots levels may feel exploited when their work, and the information and insights that it brings, elevates their colleagues into the limelight of the national or international arena'* (Fowler 1997).

In 1987, Korten commented that NGO staff have relied on 'high moral purpose', goodwill and hard work, and that the application of professional management techniques was not seen as relevant. He argued that this may be explained in part

because some NGOs fear that professionalisation would mean that they would become more like government bureaucracies, which many NGOs believe are ineffective (Korten 1987). The literature does not substantiate or reject this, but Korten's suggestion leaves the door open for considering the role of ideologies in constraining the acquisition of key skills relevant for advocacy.

2.3.4.3 Increasing use of ICTs in advocacy initiatives

ICTs have played a key role connecting geographically dispersed NGOs; facilitating the formation of advocacy alliances (Annis 1987; Madon 2000); and the sharing of knowledge and information in particular to and from developing countries (Krut 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998). ICTs have also enabled less hierarchical modes of organisation and communication, contributing to more equal partnership relations between INGOs and domestic NGOs (Edwards, Hulme et al. 1999). In sum, ICTs have provided a favourable context for civil society organisations to emerge and develop (Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003).

The Internet, in particular, has become a space where advocates can disseminate information that would not be possible to disseminate by other means (Krut 1997). Lower costs, compared to other forms of publication, and the facility to reach wider audiences are two of the main reasons for the increasing use of the Internet in advocacy strategies (Rodgers 2001). However, as Rodgers explains, the assessment of the Internet's effectiveness for advocacy remains to be developed.

2.3.4.4 Advocates' relationships with decision makers: The increase of contracting and official funding, and the autonomy of advocacy

Relationships between NGOs and decision makers are crucial as the latter are key actors in the definition of political changes. These relationships can take different forms, from pressure and protest to partnership approaches - working within the structures of decision making organisations, providing policy advice and technical assistance (Edwards and Hulme 1992).

Some decision makers, especially governments, see NGOs' work as competing with their own (Fowler 1999), or as a threat to their sovereignty, and seek to block advocacy activities (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Some NGOs see governments as incompetent and hostile, preferring to bypass them (Korten 1987), or have doubts about the extent to which they should cooperate with them (Stremlau 1987). This mutual suspicion is particularly strong in developing countries.

A recent shift in advocates' relationships with decision makers is the increasing of contracts and partnerships with governmental organisations, especially for the provision of social services. Although these partnerships represent an important step in the positioning of the non-governmental sector in public policy (Kendall and Knapp 1996; Hudson 2002), some authors are still sceptical about the effects that contracting with governments, and receiving official money, may have on advocacy (Dolan 1992; Edwards 1993; Taylor 1999).

2.3.4.5 Advocacy strategies: Communicating the advocacy message

Definitions of advocacy are often confused with its diverse strategies and approaches (Hudson 2002). Advocacy strategies range from direct lobbying, staff exchanges and collaborative work, to public campaigning, development education[11], media work, and capacity building in affected communities. Chapman distinguishes outsider and insider strategies (Chapman and Fisher 2000), according to the degree of access to policy makers. Edwards and Hulme differentiate the incrementalist or reformist approach, based on constructive dialogue, from the abolitionist approach, based on confrontation (Edwards, Hulme et al. 1999).

Strategies such as insider lobbying and collaborative work rely more on expertise, are likely to be more cooperational than confrontational, and focus on influencing policy makers directly, usually in relation to specific policies and programmes. Other strategies, such as public campaigning, rely more on massive support and are likely to be more confrontational or publicly critical (Edwards 1993; Nelson 2000).

A single strategy is unlikely to be effective for all issues or decision makers; a combination of strategies is usually more suitable (Crosby and Orsini 1996; Hudson 2002). As Nelson explains:

> *'Sustained public pressure may help NGOs secure access to high ranking officials, and a successful report, press release, or public event that draws media attention can inspire further public confidence and action. Public pressure may*

[11] Development education consists of informing the general public in developed countries about the implications of policies and actions on developing countries (Korten 1987). For Dolan, development education is related to effective advocacy work, as the latter depends on popular support in order to influence policy and politicians. NGO lobbying capacity will not increase '*until they have more informed constituents*' (Dolan 1992).

lead to a point at which high-level negotiation is necessary to secure the political gains made possible by public actions' (Nelson 2000).

The choice of approach depends on whether advocates believe that decision makers are likely to be influenced (Edwards and Hulme 1992); and on advocates' capacity to mobilise massive support (Fowler 1997), e.g. 'behind the doors' lobbying techniques such as informal pressure on key personalities, are more appropriate when advocates do not have strong massive support. Advocacy strategies must change according to the political situation, and the simultaneous use of different advocacy strategies has a limit:

'Once an NGO has been admitted to the dialogue, the high-volume, public critique is at best background noise, at worst a distraction from serious dialogue' (Nelson 2000).

2.3.4.5.1 NGOs' advocacy strategies

Although the literature underlines the importance of having clear advocacy strategies, few NGOs have them (Edwards 1993; Fowler 2002; Hudson 2002). NGOs are increasingly interested in strategic planning, but the adoption of this discipline is not yet widespread. According to Fowler, the lack of strategies is rooted in relatively few NGOs having a coherent and well-articulated understanding of why the problems they seek to address actually arise: '*Put it differently, they lack a theory or analysis of why poverty exists*' (Fowler 2002).

Some authors express the difficulty of planning strategies for advocacy work. As Roche comments, even when the objectives are clear, strategies need to be adapted over time, making it difficult to draw up predetermined plans and select progress indicators (Roche 1999).

2.3.4.6 The advocacy message: Framing the issues persuasively

If advocates gain leverage over decision makers by being alternate sources of information (Keck and Sikkink 1998), how the advocacy message is framed is key for effectiveness (Krut 1997), e.g. calls for changes in policies are likely to be more successful if they are supported by a reasonable set of alternative options (Bryer 1999; Eade 2002). The focus on denunciation *per se* is increasingly discarded as a counterproductive approach to advocacy (Taylor 1999) (Lewis and Wallace 2000).

The use of shorter, focused messages also contributes to the persuasiveness of advocacy. Chapman and Fisher demonstrate in their study that a narrow focus is more effective in getting an issue formulated than a wider one (Chapman and Fisher 2000). Hudson reached a similar conclusion in his research, as many of the NGOs interviewed reported that a tight focus on specific issues, perhaps as a way into wider themes, is the key to successful advocacy (Hudson 2002).

Persuasive advocacy messages are also characterised by the use of 'strong human interest' stories, which are able to generate sympathy and anger, and opportunities for media exposure (Bryer 1999). In contrast, other authors state that it is more a matter of using expert and technical knowledge that is '*highly selective, condensed and digestible*', so it is credible for decision makers and offers them a useful resource that they can consult when drafting policies (Crosby and Orsini 1996).

2.3.4.7 The emergence of advocacy alliances

In most cases, a single organisation cannot have the contacts, obtain the information and the evidence to back up a case, and make use effectively of different advocacy approaches at different levels of decision making. In response to this, NGOs have established collaborative relationships among them - more or less institutionalised - ranging from alliances and federations to temporary and issue-specific coalitions and loose networks (Hudson 2000). In the context of this research, these collaborative efforts are called **alliances** or **networks**.

NGOs form alliances for diverse reasons, among them a) to share technical expertise, research and evidence (i.e. information and knowledge) among members (Fisher 1993; Hudson 2002); and b) because of the perceived strength or 'collective weight' that alliances bring to advocacy. By developing common positions, alliances can present a common front to policy makers, which may be more persuasive, as well as bring a sense of protection to advocates (Hudson 2002; INTRAC 2003). So **the production, exchange and use of information is at the core of advocacy alliances** (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

2.3.4.7.1 Obstacles for NGO alliances in advocacy work

The failure to build strong alliances is seen as one of the main weaknesses of the NGO sector in relation to international advocacy (Edwards 1993; Jordan and Tuijl 2002) (Korten 1987).

Alliances' members are bound together by shared ideas or values, and a common discourse (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Among the factors that threaten that bond are cultural diversity, differing ideologies, and jealousies among members. The latter has been linked to competition among NGOs for both funds and profiles (Dolan 1992), and members' concerns about their autonomy and identity when taking part in alliances (Hudson 2002).

It has been argued that networks are more effective when they are 'strong and dense' (Keck and Sikkink 1998). According to Keck and Sikkink, network strength and density relates to the total number and size of organisations in the network, and the regularity of exchanges among them. However, others argue that there is a limit to the strength of networks, as NGOs face a dilemma when expanding their relationships:

> *'The more relationships an NGO is involved in, the more it becomes possible that one alliance will at a certain moment articulate a position that contradicts another alliance in which the same NGO is involved'* (Jordan and Tuijl 2002).

Other alliances' limitations include slow decision making and a tendency to create positions *'that reflect the need for internal compromises rather than relevance to the external world'* (Leipold 2000). Edwards argues that so far the function of alliances has been limited to sharing information and to organising joint events at donors meetings, rather than coordinating action in global campaigns over the longer term (Edwards 1993).

2.3.4.7.2 Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs

INGO-NGO partnerships are considered vital for the effectiveness of advocacy. From an INGO's perspective, these partnerships bring legitimacy and first-hand information from communities affected by particular policies (Senillosa 1998; Hudson 2002), as well as enabling them to influence developing countries' governments without being directly involved (Bryer 1999). From a domestic NGO's perspective, partnerships with INGOs facilitate their work and even their survival, especially if they operate under repressive governments, and help them in their advocacy efforts at national and international levels because of the funding, advocacy experience and contacts that INGOs can provide (Clark 1995).

The possibility of NGOs in recipient countries establishing strong and sustainable linkages with their local constituencies gives domestic NGOs more leverage in their relationships with INGOs (Malena 1995). Traditional forms of partnership for advocacy, in which the INGOs take part in international conferences, while domestic NGOs just provide evidence, are beginning to change (Clark 1992), as domestic NGOs are increasingly taking part in deciding the focus, strategies and resource allocations of advocacy efforts[12].

Nevertheless, the extent of this change is questioned. For domestic NGOs, it is still difficult to access international scenarios (Krut 1997); power imbalances are still

[12]According to a comparative study of European INGOs, Latin Americans NGO partners are seen as the most expressive and critical by INGOs, as Latin Americans discussed more openly the issues related to power imbalances in the donor-recipient relationship than was the case of NGO partners from Asia and Africa (Mancuso Brehm 2001).

present in INGO-NGO partnerships (Fowler 1997); the move from funding relationships to joint advocacy is not yet widespread (Bryer 1999); and INGOs have not paid sufficient attention to building capacity for advocacy work in domestic NGOs in recipient countries (Edwards 1993).

2.3.4.8 The funding of NGO advocacy

In relation to the funding of NGO advocacy, three issues are relevant for this research. The first refers to the reluctance that still exists on the part of some donors and INGOs to divert resources from development and relief programmes to advocacy. This is partly due to public opinion that diverting resources to advocacy will take money away from those in need (Minear 1987). The public prefers to see its investment producing tangible results rather than being spent on intangible advocacy initiatives (Dolan 1992).

The second issue is in relation to NGO institutional development, which is constrained by limited resources and the increasing competition for funding. Some organisations, especially in developing countries, do not have enough resources to build their advocacy capacity.

The third issue refers to unequal access to funding for INGOs and domestic NGOs, and the influence that this funding imbalance may have on the way information and knowledge is created and shared between them. Some authors argue that domestic NGOs' dependence on INGOs' resources makes it difficult for domestic NGOs to challenge the views and analysis of INGOs, and critical dialogue - which is important

for learning - does not take place (Berg 2000; Edgren 2000). Other authors state that competition for funding may encourage both INGOs and domestic NGOs to prioritise their public images over self-assessment, analysis and learning, generating success stories for the public in order to attract funding (Edwards 1997; Britton 1998).

2.3.4.9 The monitoring and evaluation of NGO advocacy

Monitoring is the continuous process of collecting and analysing information to measure the progress of a specific project toward expected results. Evaluations are periodic assessments of effectiveness and impact that also document what lessons are being learned from experience[13].

Researchers and practitioners agree on the need to assess NGO advocacy, however ambiguous and debatable the results of that assessment (Nelson 2000), particularly in the context of the growing debate about the cost-effectiveness of advocacy and the balance of resources to be allocated to it (Roche and Bush 1997; Anderson 2000). The evaluation of advocacy is also seen as an opportunity to learn from mistakes; to identify better strategies; and to enhance NGOs' credibility and accountability (Nelson 2000; Hudson 2002).

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[13] Source: The United Nations Development Programme (see http://www.undp.org). Generally, individuals involved in managing a project are responsible for monitoring. By contrast, individuals independent of the project conduct evaluations. Reporting is the systematic and timely provision of essential information and is an integral part of the monitoring and evaluation function. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation are management functions that could also be described as observing project progress (monitoring), documenting the observed information (reporting) and assessing on the basis of the above (evaluating).

Nevertheless, evaluation of NGO advocacy is still limited. According to a survey of 23 INGOs, half of respondents reported that their advocacy is formally evaluated. Of these, four indicated that their advocacy was always evaluated. The survey responses also indicated little dissemination of advocacy evaluations within NGOs' own networks, nor among donors, NGO partners, researchers or the media (Anderson 2000).

2.3.4.9.1 The difficulties of evaluating advocacy work

Among the challenges of evaluating NGO advocacy are the difficulties of attributing results; the existence of multiple objectives; the long-term timescales of work; and the practical constraints of being accountable to all stakeholders (Eade 2002). A substantial part of advocacy work takes place through alliances working at international and national levels, making it very difficult - and counterproductive - for a particular organisation to say exactly how its own efforts contributed to the final outcome (Roche and Bush 1997; Chapman and Fisher 2000). In addition, decision makers are generally reluctant to acknowledge that policy change came about as a result of NGO pressure (Hudson 2002).

The unfocused nature of some INGOs' and NGOs' organisational purposes has been identified as another reason why evaluation is particularly difficult in these organisations. Edgren provides a critical picture of what a development organisation can be: *'It resembles the old-fashioned department store, catering to every human need imaginable'*. The same organisation can work towards *'stimulating economic growth, a socially acceptable distribution of incomes, gender equality, protecting the*

environment, and contributing to the development of democracy and respect for human rights' (Edgren 2000). He suggests that the existence of such diverse objectives makes it difficult to gain an idea of how well the job is being done.

2.4 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK: NGO ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES AND THE CREATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS

This section presents the framework upon which this research is based. It starts by discussing the role that information and knowledge have in advocacy, and particularly what the key knowledge bases for advocacy effectiveness and the sources and flows of information that feed them are. After this, the flows and bases of information and knowledge in advocacy is linked to the SLC. The blockages to the SLC identified by Boisot (Boisot 1995) are then complemented with enablers and constraints identified from the debates about NGO advocacy effectiveness. The research framework concludes with the suggested enablers and constraints that may affect the creation and sharing of knowledge within advocacy communities, for each of the variables of the Information Ecology model.

2.4.1 *INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE SUPPORTING NGO ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS*

> *Advocates are not 'powerful' in a traditional sense and they must use their information and ideas to alter the information contexts within which decision makers make policies (Keck and Sikkink 1998).*

In the context of this research, advocacy effectiveness refers not only to changes in policy, and the implementation of the new policy, but also to the impact that the implementation of new policies has on the lives of affected communities. As previously discussed, the growth of NGO policy advocacy has been significant, but its effectiveness remains modest.

Two main areas where knowledge plays a vital role in achieving effectiveness can be identified: The **message** for advocacy, and the **approach** or strategy used to disseminate that message. A single approach is unlikely to be effective for all advocacy messages or for all decision makers. This suggests that a learning process may take place in relation to which particular approaches are likely to be more effective with specific messages and specific populations of decision makers. The resulting knowledge from this learning process may be embedded in individuals, documents, or artefacts within the organisation and, ideally, will feed future advocacy strategies. In the context of this research, this knowledge is called the **advocacy approach knowledge base**: Those individual or organisational knowledge assets (e.g. expertise and ideas) concerning strategies or approaches that are expected to work best when disseminating a particular advocacy message to a particular population of decision makers.

How the issue is framed is also essential for advocacy effectiveness, as advocates try to influence policy outcomes by becoming alternate sources of information and by transforming the terms and nature of the debate. Advocates frame concerns to make them comprehensible to their audiences, to attract attention and encourage action, and to 'fit' with those spaces where decision making is made (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Advocacy organisations have gone through a learning process in relation to how best to frame advocacy messages (e.g. balancing denunciation with proposals, or using short and focused messages). The resulting knowledge from this learning process is embedded in individuals, documents and artefacts within the organisation, and, ideally, will feed future advocacy strategies. In the context of this research, this knowledge is identified as the **advocacy message knowledge base**: Those individual or organisational knowledge assets concerning the evidence, analysis and arguments used to communicate and defend the advocacy case.

Three main sources of information that feed the advocacy message and advocacy approach knowledge bases can be distinguished: a) the affected communities - or populations affected by particular policies; b) the decision makers in charge of those policies; and c) other advocates.

Affected communities are a key source of information for feeding advocacy knowledge bases, as advocates use first-hand experience and evidence about how policies are affecting these specific communities. However, evidence *per se* is not enough. In most cases, it needs to be matched by robust analysis about which particular policies and/or decision makers bear responsibility and should be influenced. In doing this, advocates

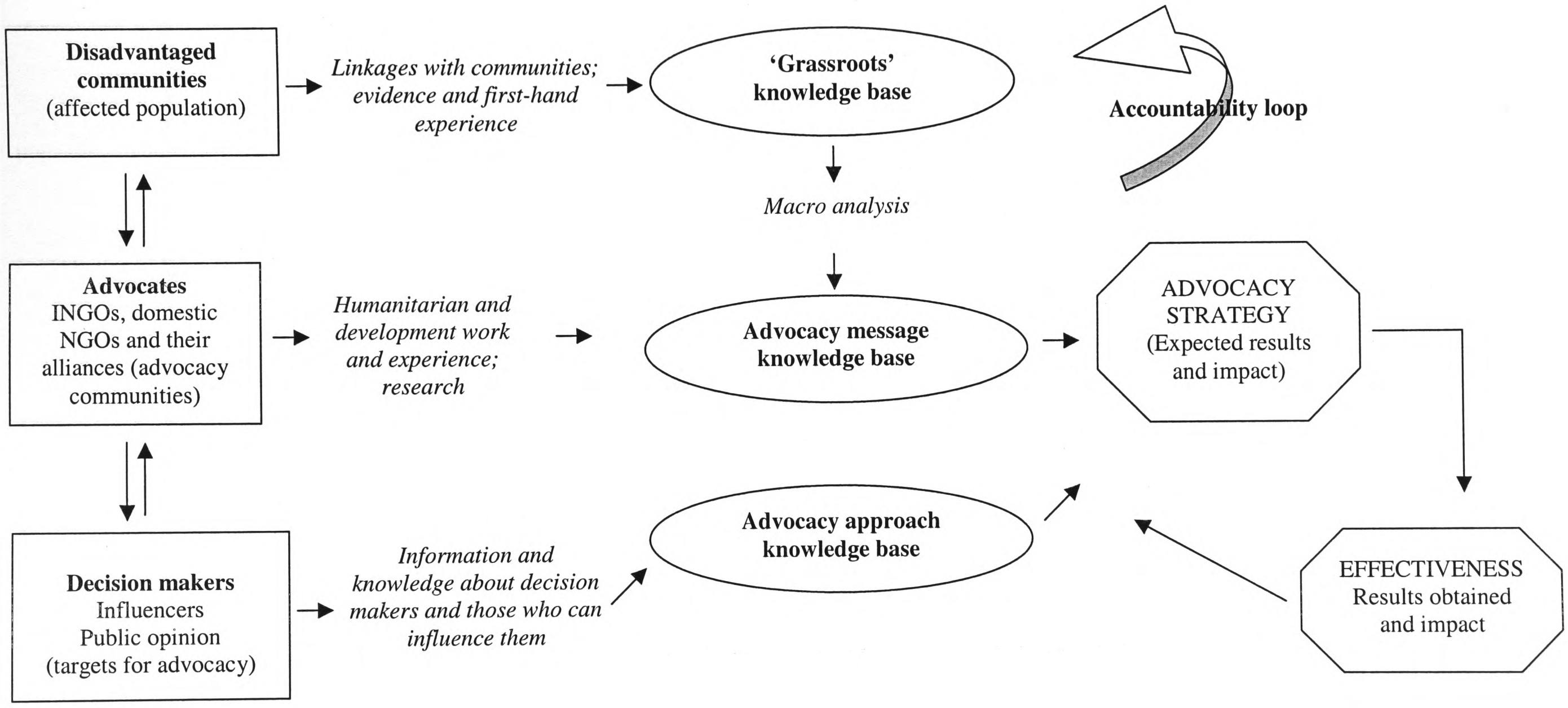
need to know, among other things, how policy decision making works and who is involved in it; what motivates decision makers; what makes them vulnerable; what would most influence them to change their policies; and what makes a message attractive for them.

Information from affected communities, decision makers, and other advocates feed the advocacy message and approach knowledge bases, which in turn feed the overall advocacy strategy. As a result of the implementation of this strategy, advocates expect to obtain specific results and to influence decision makers in a certain way. Monitoring and evaluation have the potential to provide the organisation with feedback about the cost-effectiveness of that particular advocacy strategy, and to offer advocates an opportunity to learn from that experience. This learning would then feed the advocacy message and approach knowledge bases, which would in turn contribute to future advocacy strategies.

In sum, ***INGOs' and NGOs' ability to create, analyse and disseminate information and knowledge is critical for advocacy****. Therefore, we might expect that an improvement in the way advocates create and share information and knowledge would contribute to the overall effectiveness of advocacy work, not only by strengthening its credibility and legitimacy, but also by allowing advocates to economise resources when pursuing their goals.*

Figure 5 shows the sources and flows of information and knowledge supporting advocacy effectiveness.

Figure 5. Information and knowledge supporting NGO advocacy effectiveness



2.4.2 THE SOCIAL LEARNING CYCLE IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES

As discussed before, the creation and diffusion of knowledge assets take place in a particular sequence called the Social Learning Cycle (SLC). The SLC is composed of six phases: Scanning threats and opportunities; codification or problem solving; abstraction; diffusion; absorption; and impacting. The SLC could be manifested in advocacy communities as follows:

Scanning takes place when advocates look into data from diverse sources - such as disadvantaged communities, decision makers, academic research, other advocates, and internal sources - in order to create new insights that will support the advocacy case.

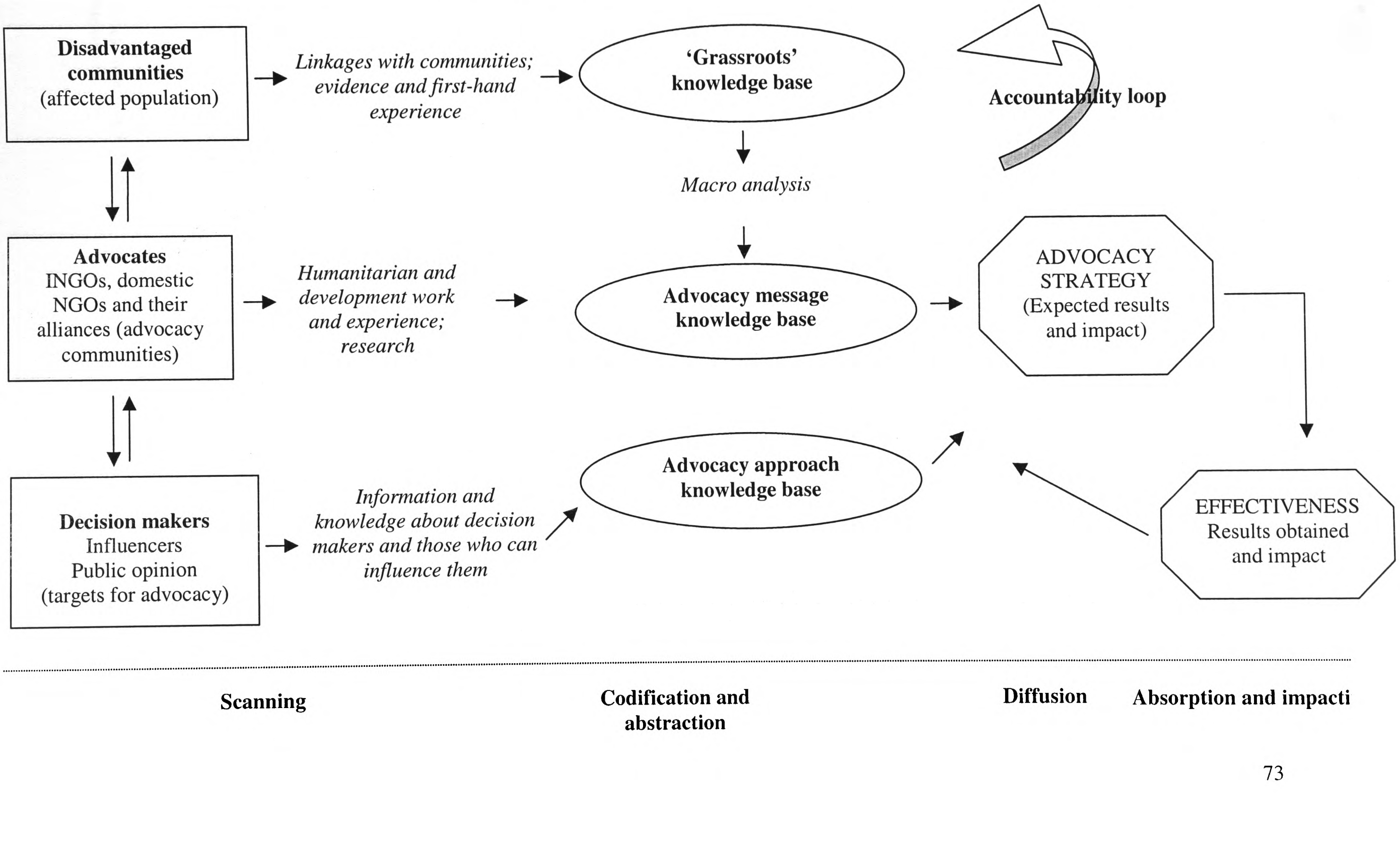
Codification and abstraction, which often work in tandem, take place in the building and shaping of both individual and organisational knowledge bases for the message and approach of advocacy work, and, ultimately, in the formulation of an advocacy strategy.

Diffusion refers to the implementation of the advocacy strategy and particularly to the diffusion of the advocacy message to the target audiences.

The **absorption** and **embedding** of knowledge assets relevant to the effectiveness of advocacy take place during and after the implementation of advocacy strategies, and refer to the use of advocates' learning in situations different to those that originated that learning, and the embedding of that learning in advocates' artefacts, organisational rules or behavioural patterns (e.g. knowledge bases and advocacy strategies).

The linkages between the information and knowledge supporting NGO advocacy effectiveness and the Social Learning Cycle are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Information and knowledge supporting NGO advocacy effectiveness and the Social Learning Cycle (SLC)



2.4.3 *POTENTIAL BLOCKAGES FOR THE CREATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE ASSETS*

Enablers and constraints can be present at any part of the SLC (Boisot 1995). Boisot identifies some blockages to each of the six phases that compose the SLC, as follows[14]:

Scanning:

> *'Individuals may filter out or block those incoming stimuli that do not square with their* ***prior expectations or cognitive commitments***[15] *where the* ***emotional stakes*** *for them are high. Instead of adjusting what they think to what they see in order to respond to the world in an adaptive way, they try to adjust what they see to what they think'. '****Scanning in the lower part of the I-Space*** *is fraught with problems (...) Where scanning is conducted through social exchange, for example, through casual conversation or the observation of others, the propensity to accept an improbable signal rests either on the interpersonal familiarity or on an act of faith, which presupposed that an acceptable* ***level of trust*** *already exists between communicating parties. Hence the need for a prior investment in face to face interaction or trust-building alternatives when transactions, or the information that underpins them, cannot be codified.' 'Where signals are weak or have to be teased out of the noise that enshrouds them,* ***time*** *is required for both detection and interpretation, and often in unpredictable quantities. Before we know it, therefore, the event is upon us'. 'As one moves towards the* ***upper part of the I-Space****, scanning gains in confidence and efficiency (...) the relationship between the sign and what it stands for becomes less tenuous'.*

Codification or problem solving:

> *'Codification calls for successive acts of choosing or selecting between alternatives. If these are all* ***strongly valued****, whether positively or negatively, the need to decide, to select, and by implication to reject, may provoke personal anguish and emotional upheaval. If others are affected by his decision, an individual's cognitive freedom to choose may be inhibited by the* ***fear of any hostility*** *he might encounter from those who might have to suffer its consequences. This is why political choices are sometimes so difficult and why politicians often appear so ready to postpone difficult decisions. Alternatively, an individual's choice may be distorted by an undue* ***concern with the personal***

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[14] All extracts from Boisot (1995).
[15] Bolding is mine.

rewards *he might reap from those who stand to benefit from the way he exercises it'.*

Abstracting:

Abstracting skills are facilitated by a certain ***cognitive style****. The development of* ***abstracting skills*** *'can also be blocked by certain* ***habits of thought that stress immediacy and discourage reflection****. Because abstractions are less tangible than concrete facts, they are often dismissed by 'practical' people as empty theorising and irrelevant to real issues. Perhaps the greatest external obstacle to the process of abstraction, besides cognitive ones that are innate, is the* ***denial of its value and of the time*** *- often considerable - necessary for its performance'.*

Diffusion:

'Differences in ***coding ability*** *apart, a key obstacle appears to be an* ***unwillingness either to communicate on the part of transmitters, or to listen on the part of receivers****. Often, as in the case of proprietary knowledge, transmitters feel that more is to be gained by holding on to knowledge than in sharing it. Conversely, some receivers may perceive themselves to lose more than they gain in accepting new knowledge if its application is disruptive of established routines or of new social relationships that have crystallised around existing knowledge'. 'Blockages to diffusion are not all attributable to a lack of codification. They are sometimes associated with a* ***message's degree of codification and abstraction*** *- the very attributes designed to speed up diffusion (...) the further to the right we place a recipient with respect to knowledge emanating from the left of the diffusion scale, the more diluted and impoverished becomes the message she is likely to receive, however codified. It has either been purged of its idiosyncratic richness through the acts of codification that render it transmissible, or, if left uncodified, it has been transmitted slowly through interpersonal processes that have drowned large chunks of the message in noise'. 'Recipients allocate a limited* ***time budget*** *to various message sources. What factors will direct their attention towards one source rather than another? What conscious or unconscious cost-benefit calculation drives their allocation decision?'*

Absorption:

'The absorption of new knowledge will be slowed down or blocked when it threatens deeply and unconsciously ***held values or cherished attitudes and beliefs*** *concerning the nature of the world we live in (...) Unblocking the situation requires either that the new knowledge be modified or rejected, or that existing values and beliefs undergo a major transformation'. 'At times the problem is a* ***cultural*** *one (...) Many technologies impose forms of social organisation and thinking that may be quite at odds with those sanctioned by local values and beliefs. The result is frustration, underperformance, and sometimes outright*

rejection of such knowledge by the recipients'. 'At other times the problem resides in the ***cognitive orientation*** *of particular individuals'.*

Impacting:

'Impacting takes place when information at varying degrees of abstraction gets embedded in a physical system - whether this be a technical artefact, a document, or brain cells - through which it finds some application in the real world. Finding a suitable physical application for itself constitutes an empirical test of the viability of new knowledge, which, if successful, enhances its survival prospects. Physically embedding such knowledge, however, is a prerequisite for testing it and success is not guaranteed. The ***lack of a suitable physical substrate*** *available for its embedding can become a source of blockage, which limits its use and hence the opportunities that it presents for learning'.*

These blockages are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Boisot's potential blockages for the SLC

Scanning	Codification	Abstraction	Diffusion	Absorption	Impacting
• Prior expectations or cognitive commitments • Emotional stakes • Message's degree of abstraction and codification • Level of trust • Time	• Values and beliefs held • Fears of hostility • Concerns about personal rewards	• Cognitive orientation • Abstracting skills • Immediacy • Denial of value and time for reflection	• Coding ability • Unwillingness to communicate • Unwillingness to listen • Message's degree of abstraction and codification • Time	• Values and beliefs held • Culture • Cognitive orientation	• Lack of suitable physical substrate for knowledge assets

2.4.4 ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES' INFORMATION ECOLOGIES AND THEIR POTENTIAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS

Knowledge assets are built up through a process of learning, and that learning feeds on the information environment (Boisot 1995). However, **enablers and constraints differ from one information environment to another**. This section examines the group of enablers and constraints to the SLC likely to be found in **information environments of advocacy communities**.

Although the importance of information and knowledge in supporting advocacy work has been widely acknowledged by researchers and practitioners, the literature about NGO policy advocacy does not offer further research on this topic. However, the various debates about advocacy effectiveness can help to characterise advocacy communities' information ecologies, and to point at their potential enablers and constraints.

Drawing on Davenport and Prusak's Information Ecology framework (Davenport and Prusak 1997), five variables for the study of those enablers and constraints within advocacy communities are proposed: **Knowledge workers**; **knowledge politics**; **knowledge behaviour and culture**; **organisational knowledge strategy**; and **knowledge assets architecture**. Davenport and Prusak's '*information processes*' variable is not included in our model, as the SLC accounts in a more comprehensive way for what this variable attempts to analyse.

This research does not aim to test Davenport and Prusak's Information Ecology model as such. Although the variables of their model are taken as the basis for defining potential enablers and constraints, both the names of the variables in our model and many of the concepts behind them differ from Davenport and Prusak's, as shall now be shown.

2.4.4.1 Knowledge workers

Drawing on Davenport and Prusak's work (Davenport and Prusak 1997), knowledge workers are understood as the people who handle (e.g. collect, analyse, synthesise and disseminate) the organisation's knowledge. As shown, advocacy is a knowledge intensive activity; the handling of information and knowledge is, therefore, not exclusive to few, but done by most staff within advocacy organisations. It follows that workers' skills in handling information and knowledge are vital for the creation and sharing of knowledge assets and for the overall effectiveness of advocacy.

If the creation of knowledge assets is a knower-dependent process, individuals' limitations affect that process, e.g. limitations to the amount of data that individuals can handle. These limitations are known as bounded rationality, and refer to neurophysiological and language limits inherent to the human mind's capacity for formulating and solving problems, and, in general, for retrieving, storing and processing information (Williamson 1983). These limitations have consequences in individual learning: '*Learning needs to be seen as an integral part of a boundedly rational*

decision problem, and the manner by which we assume individuals learn is justified in that context' (Salmon 1994).

The concept of bounded rationality has implications for what has been considered to be the role of people's knowledge in organisations' work. When there is a lower possibility of rationality (i.e. clarifying means-ends relationships), subjective orientations and individual talents (e.g. interpersonal and communication skills, or personal commitment) are more significant than formal knowledge (Alvesson 1993). In a similar line of argument, Leonard-Barton states that workers' mindsets - or signature skills as she names them - bond workers' professional identities, but at the same time act as a barrier to learning and change. Individuals will resist change to the extent that new procedures and technologies challenge their previous mindsets (Leonard-Barton 1995).

Subjective orientations and workers' mindsets (e.g. moral values and ideologies) have played a significant role in NGO work. They may even have constrained the application of management skills relevant for the processing of information and knowledge (e.g. IT, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and project management). In a context where workers have traditionally relied on '*high moral purpose*' (Korten 1987); and where some fear professionalisation and are relatively new to international advocacy, it is necessary to consider the role of **subjective orientations and mindsets** (e.g. individual ideologies and beliefs) in both the creation and sharing of knowledge assets, and in the acquisition of skills relevant for that creation and sharing of knowledge.

The literature mentions a particular set of skills that are directly linked to information processing: Personal analytical capabilities: e.g. the ability to conceptualise complex

processes, and the ability to reason based on a clear analytical framework, are vital requisites for being heard by policy makers, and this ability usually calls for high levels of abstraction and analysis (Fowler 1997). However, some authors have described INGOs' and NGOs' staff as highly action-oriented, in contrast to reflection-oriented (Pople 1999).

If codification (giving form to phenomena or to experience) and abstraction (theory building) enable economies in data processing and facilitate communication processes (Boisot 1998), it is necessary to consider the role of **NGO workers' preferences towards codification and abstraction** (i.e. analytical skills) in the creation and sharing of knowledge assets. If individual, bounded, learning is the base for organisational learning, then the question emerges about whether NGO workers' action-oriented preferences are constraining the conversion from daily experience into knowledge assets that can be disseminated and shared with other staff members and embedded in organisational systems. Such action-oriented preferences could also be increasing development organisations' data overload.

Following this discussion, I will consider - without excluding other factors that may emerge during the research - two main variables in relation to knowledge workers, in enabling or constraining the creation and sharing of knowledge assets. These variables are: ***Knowledge workers' subjective orientations and mindsets*** *(e.g. individual ideologies) and* ***knowledge workers' preferences towards codification and abstraction*** *(i.e. analytical skills).*

2.4.4.2 Knowledge politics

Knowledge politics refers to the power and governance structures of information management and use (Davenport and Prusak 1997). As shown before, INGOs are increasingly moving towards decentralised governance structures, establishing field offices in developing countries, and strengthening their partnerships with domestic NGOs and grassroots. The way power is distributed within NGOs affects how they create and share information and knowledge (Fowler 1999; Carlsson and Wohlgemuth 2000). This suggests the need to look at the role of **governance structures** and **decision making processes** within advocacy communities in relation to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets.

NGOs are also increasingly taking part in advocacy alliances. The production, exchange and use of information have been seen as the core of the relationship within these alliances (Keck and Sikkink 1998). However, some authors suggest that power imbalances still affect the way in which information and knowledge is created and shared within alliances, e.g. by constraining critical dialogue and self assessment among allied organisations. This suggests the need to look at the role of **advocates' alliances and INGOs' partnerships with domestic NGOs** in enabling or constraining the creation and sharing of knowledge assets.

Decentralisation and alliances are not only stimulated by the need to improve the sharing of information and expertise, but by legitimacy concerns. Policy advocacy is

seen as a political activity, where legitimacy (or authority) for advocating on behalf of others is linked to the persuasiveness, credibility and effectiveness of advocacy.

In order to claim legitimacy based on alliances, advocates need to be able to demonstrate the strength of those alliances. This in turn highlights the need for appropriate accountability systems for interacting with other alliance members, e.g. other INGOs, domestic NGOs, or grassroots communities (Hudson 2000). It seems that the mechanisms for information sharing and decision making are fundamental to fostering accountability (Covey 1998). Following this, it could be suggested that the way NGOs and their alliances create and share information has an effect on their accountability to key advocacy stakeholders, and therefore on the legitimacy of their advocacy. This suggests looking at the potential linkages between **legitimacy** and **accountability**, and the creation and sharing of knowledge assets within advocacy communities.

I will consider - without excluding other factors that may emerge during the research - five main variables in relation to knowledge politics in enabling or constraining the creation and sharing of knowledge assets. These variables are: ***Governance structures****;* ***decision making processes****;* ***advocates' alliances*** *and their* ***partnerships*** *with domestic NGOs and grassroots communities;* ***legitimacy****; and* ***accountability****.*

2.4.4.3 Knowledge behaviour and culture

For Davenport and Prusak, information behaviour and culture refers to the way an organisation values, shares and uses information (Davenport and Prusak 1997). One of the approaches to the study of culture views it as a patterned cognitive order that has evolved historically: A set of norms and roles - cognitive variables - that regulate behaviour and are transmitted by symbols (Boisot 1995). In the context of this research, knowledge behaviour and culture refer to the collective set of norms and roles - formal and informal - that have evolved historically, and that regulate the way in which individuals or groups within an organisation create, share and use information and knowledge.

The nature of NGO work provides satisfaction among many staff and a sense of identity with organisations' missions. However, NGOs can also be a welcoming environment for strongly held beliefs and radicalisms (Hailey 1999), and when people become emotionally attached to their mindsets it becomes a constraint for the creation of knowledge (Leonard-Barton 1995). When certain beliefs become the norm within the organisation it is likely that they would affect the creation and sharing of knowledge on a larger scale than if these beliefs were held by few individuals within the organisation. This suggests the need to look at the role of **organisational ideologies** in the creation and sharing of knowledge assets.

NGO culture has been described as 'activist', where reflection is seen as a luxury; time and space for learning are difficult to protect; and incentives for learning are weak and diffuse. As Edwards says:

> *'Failures are disguised or punished; inertia, defensiveness, complacency and territoriality may override openness; 'risk-aversion' is commonplace; and job insecurity and short-term contracts make staff less likely to invest time in learning because they lack a stake in the long-term future of the organisation, or feel that they cannot influence the outcome of events'* (Edwards 1997).

This suggests looking at the formal and informal **collective incentives** that organisations provide to their staff to promote the creation, sharing and use of information and knowledge.

The advocacy literature has pointed out that some NGOs are recruiting people with advocacy skills and locating them in parts of the organisation that interface with policy makers (Fowler 1997), while these NGOs continue with relief and development programmes. Cultural tensions between advocacy and operative - relief and development - staff are emerging. This suggests the need to look at **tensions between advocacy and operative staff** as a potential constraint for information sharing between these two areas.

The highly diverse and multicultural staff of advocacy communities is an advantage in some areas, but it might be a disadvantage when sharing knowledge across organisational, and, especially, across geographical boundaries (Edwards 1997). The existence of different languages, jargons and narratives makes the sharing and use of information among organisations difficult. The prominence of English as a second language is reducing the opportunities for non-English-speaking staff to participate in

sharing activities. In view of this, it is necessary to look at the role of language, particularly in two senses: **Advocacy message framing** (e.g. use of words, tones and styles); and the potential difficulties that the existence of **different languages** within advocacy communities may pose to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets.

I will consider - without excluding other factors that may emerge during the research - five main variables in relation to knowledge behaviour and culture in enabling or constraining the creation and sharing of knowledge assets. These variables are ***organisational ideologies****;* *the* ***collective incentives for reflection and learning****;* ***tensions between advocacy and operative staff****;* ***advocacy message framing****; and the existence of* ***different languages****.*

2.4.4.4 Organisational knowledge strategy

As discussed previously, organisational knowledge strategies refer to those conscious organisational attempts to possess and apply knowledge assets embedded in objects, documents, and within the heads of the organisation's members in order to enhance organisational performance through economising the consumption of organisational resources. Organisational knowledge strategies can be divided into codification and personalisation strategies (Morris and Empson 1998; Hansen, Nohria et al. 1999).

Limited financial resources have made institutional development difficult, because NGOs need to keep overhead costs to a minimum. Although 69% of UK NGOs have a formal policy to encourage their staff to undertake training and learning opportunities,

training is under-resourced in time and money (Pople 1999; Jas 2002). In a context where many staff are new to advocacy, and where significant gaps in management and communication skills have been uncovered by surveys (NCVO 1996), it is necessary to look at the role of **training** in enabling or constraining the creation and sharing of knowledge assets.

A growing number of researchers and practitioners see monitoring and evaluation not only as vital in light of the growing debate about the cost-effectiveness of advocacy (Roche and Bush 1997; Anderson 2000), but as an opportunity to learn from advocates' experiences, and to identify better strategies for future advocacy work (Nelson 2000; Hudson 2002). However, as discussed, NGO monitoring and evaluation of advocacy is still very limited, and advocates still see it as difficult and challenging. **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)**, then, will be looked at as an important factor for the creation and sharing of knowledge assets within advocacy communities.

Investment in advocates' organisational knowledge strategies will be facilitated if these strategies show tangible positive effects on organisations' performance. This suggests to look not only at monitoring and evaluation of advocacy work, but **monitoring and evaluation of organisational knowledge strategies**, as a potential enabler of the creation and sharing of knowledge assets.

I will consider - without excluding other factors that may emerge during the research - three main variables in relation to knowledge strategies in enabling or constraining the creation and sharing of knowledge assets. These variables are ***staff training****,*

monitoring and evaluation of advocacy work, *and* ***monitoring and evaluation of organisational knowledge strategies***.

2.4.4.5 Knowledge assets architecture

Drawing on Davenport and Prusak's definition of 'information architecture' (see section 2.2.4. 'The Information Ecology model'), knowledge assets architecture refers to the structure and location of knowledge assets within an organisation.

In the context of this research, the structure of knowledge assets in an organisation refers to their degree of codification and abstraction, and to the substrata where these knowledge assets are embedded (e.g. objects, documents or people's heads) (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998). If at higher levels of codification and abstraction knowledge assets are more likely to be disseminated and applied to different situations - consequently contributing to learning - it is necessary to look at these two factors in particular: Advocates' knowledge assets' **degree of codification and abstraction**, and advocates' **knowledge assets' substrata**.

ICTs play a key role in the structuring of knowledge assets, increasing an organisation's capacity to capture, process, transmit and store data (Boisot 1998). ICTs have played a crucial role in the emergence and development of advocacy communities, facilitating the formation of alliances (Annis 1987; Madon 2000); the sharing of knowledge among advocates (Krut 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998); less hierarchical modes of organisation and communication (Edwards, Hulme et al. 1999); and a more effective dissemination

of their messages to wider audiences (Rodgers 2001). Nevertheless, the use of ICTs is not equally distributed among NGOs, and there are suggestions that a significant proportion of the sector is failing to exploit the potential of ICTs in areas such as governance, knowledge management, and the strengthening of alliances. It is necessary, then, to look at the role of **ICTs** in the creation and sharing of knowledge within advocacy communities.

I will consider - without excluding other factors that may emerge during the research - three main variables in relation to knowledge architecture in enabling or constraining the creation and sharing of knowledge assets. These variables are ***advocates' knowledge assets' degree of codification and abstraction****; advocates' knowledge assets substrata; and ICTs.*

2.5 CONCLUSION

Based on the literature debates about NGO advocacy effectiveness, advocacy communities' information ecologies have been characterised and the factors that could potentially enable or constrain the creation and sharing of knowledge have been identified. These factors are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Potential enablers and constraints in advocacy communities' information ecologies (from analysis of the literature)

Knowledge workers	Knowledge politics	Knowledge behaviour and culture	Knowledge strategy	Knowledge architecture
• Individual mindsets • Preferences towards codification and abstraction	• Governance structures • Decision making processes • Alliances and partnerships • Legitimacy • Accountability	• Organisational ideologies • Incentives for learning • Tensions between advocacy and operative staff • Advocacy message framing • Different languages	• Staff training • M&E advocacy • M&E knowledge strategies	• Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction • Knowledge assets' substrata • ICTs

As shown previously, Boisot identifies some blockages for the creation and sharing of knowledge assets (these were summarised in Table 3). Boisot's blockages have some similarities to the enablers and constraints identified as a result of the NGO literature review, especially in relation to knowledge workers and knowledge behaviour and culture. There are, however, some suggestive differences, particularly in relation to knowledge strategy (e.g. monitoring and evaluation) and knowledge politics (e.g. alliances and partnerships, and legitimacy). These divergences may indicate the existence of particular enablers and constraints within advocacy communities' information ecologies, and the possibility to extend current understanding about blockages to the SLC.

Table 5 integrates Boisot's blockages with the enablers and constraints identified as a result of the literature review. These enablers and constraints guide the collection and analysis of data.

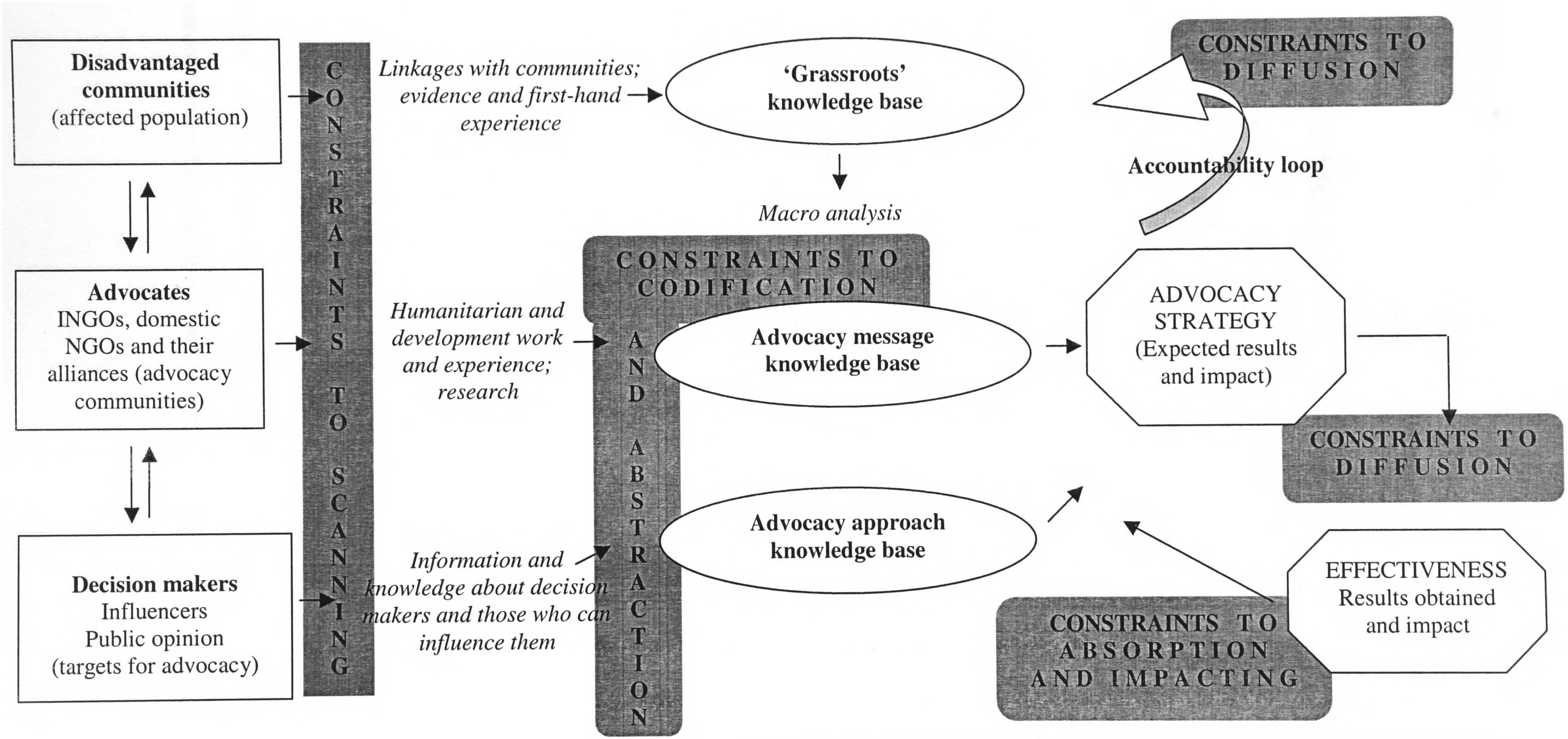
Table 5. Enablers and constraints for the creation and sharing of knowledge assets within advocacy communities

Knowledge workers	Knowledge politics	Knowledge behaviour and culture	Knowledge strategy	Knowledge architecture
• Subjective orientations and mindsets (e.g. prior expectations, emotional stakes, unwillingness to communicate / listen, values and beliefs held) • Preferences towards codification and abstraction (e.g. analytical skills, cognitive orientation, coding ability) • Level of trust	• Governance structures • Decision making processes • Alliances and partnerships • Legitimacy • Accountability	• Organisational ideologies (e.g. hostility towards certain alternatives, immediacy, other values and beliefs held within the organisation) • Incentives for learning (e.g. value and time) • Tensions between advocacy and operative staff • Advocacy message framing • Different languages	• Staff training • M&E advocacy • M&E knowledge strategies	• Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction • Knowledge assets' substrata • ICTs

The creation and sharing of knowledge assets in and between INGOs and domestic NGOs in the context of policy advocacy are enabled or constrained by the variables shown in Table 5.

Figure 7 shows the potential location of the enablers and constraints in relation to advocacy communities' SLC.

Figure 7. Potential location of enablers and constraints to information and knowledge supporting advocacy effectiveness



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Contents

- Introduction
- The subject of analysis
- Unit of analysis
- Research strategy and methods

3.1 INTRODUCTION: CHOOSING QUALITATIVE, RATHER THAN QUANTITATIVE, RESEARCH

The topic of this research has scarcely been explored before. On one hand, the existing literature has been more focused on identifying and analysing particular enablers and constraints, instead of undertaking a more comprehensive analysis of these constraints in relation to the distinct phases of knowledge creation and sharing. On the other hand, advocacy communities have barely been studied, and there is a lack of empirical work on them.

The potentially significant variables identified in the research framework underlined the complexity of the creation and sharing of knowledge assets in general, and within advocacy communities in particular, and the role that factors such as politics, culture and individual beliefs and behaviour may have in it. However, it is not clear yet what the relationship among these variables is and what their dynamics are.

The purpose of this research is to *describe* and to *explain* those variables (the enablers and constraints affecting the creation and sharing of knowledge assets within advocacy communities), and their potential linkages with effectiveness. In order to do this, it will be necessary to delve in depth into informal and unstructured processes (Marshall and Rossman 1995), to discover and assess causality (Miles and Huberman 1994) and to develop a hypothesis and theory (Eisenhardt 1989). This indicates that a qualitative research approach is more appropriate for this research than a quantitative one.

3.2 THE SUBJECT OF ANALYSIS

Advocacy communities are composed of INGOs, domestic NGOs, grassroots organisations, and their alliances, which take part in the design and implementation of advocacy initiatives. Within such a complex environment it is necessary to make sampling decisions about the type of organisations on which to focus.

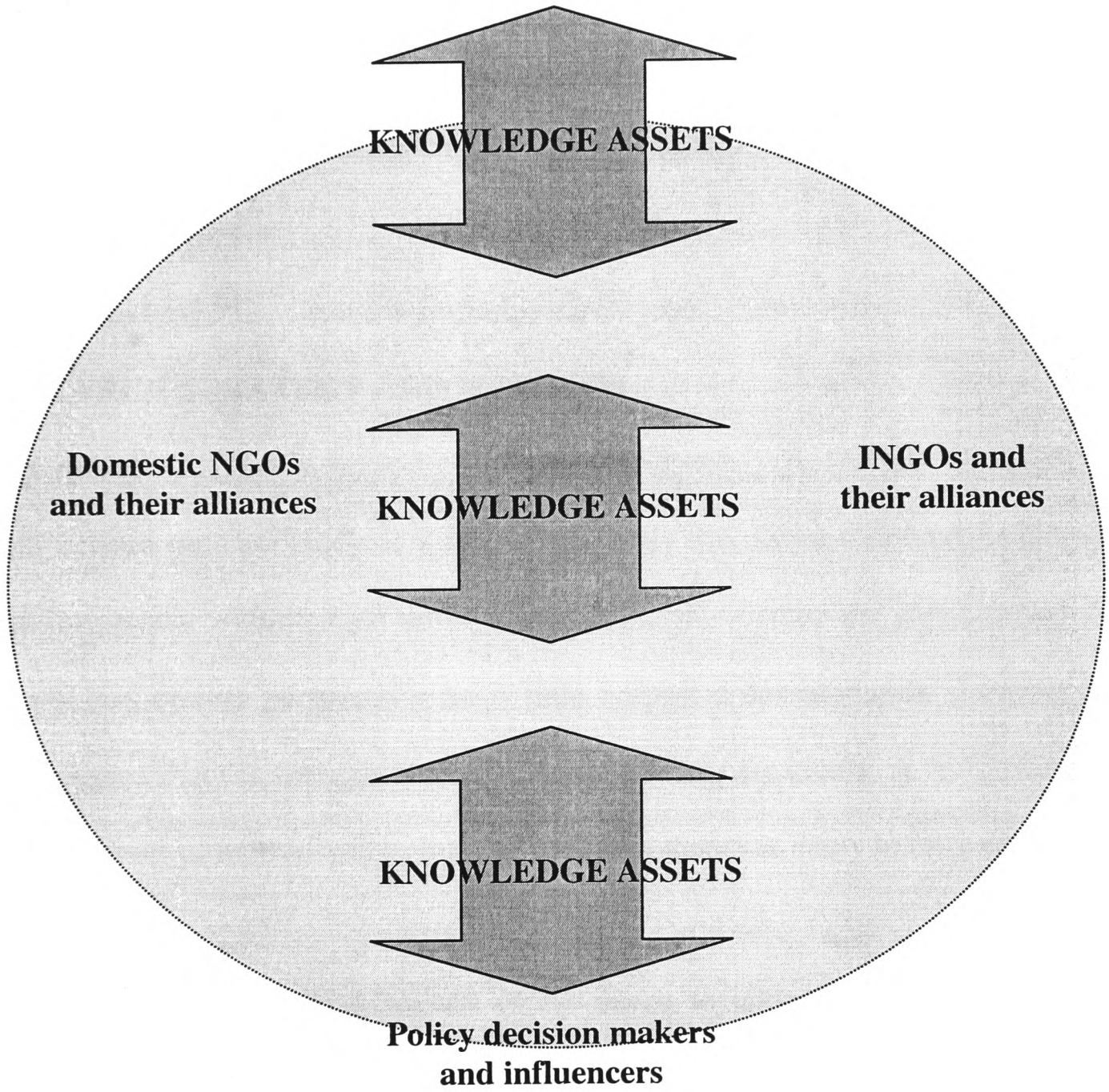
The strength of INGOs lies in their simultaneous access to grassroots experience in developing countries and to decision makers in developed countries. This places INGOs in a privileged position for communicating between these two levels (Edwards 1993; Madon 2000). INGOs therefore have an intermediary - and key - role in the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for the effectiveness of advocacy.

Analysis of how advocacy by INGOs works needs to look at INGOs' relationships with both affected populations and policy decision makers (Roche 1999). INGOs may establish a direct relationship with decision makers e.g. through direct lobbying. In the

case of affected populations, relationships are often mediated by domestic NGOs. So INGOs' relationships with domestic NGOs play a vital role in the acquisition, processing, diffusion and use of knowledge assets, to and from affected communities. Because of this, the creation and sharing of knowledge assets between INGOs and domestic NGOs receives special attention in this research.

Although advocates' sponsor organisations (e.g. bilateral official agencies or multilateral organisations) also affect the dynamics of enablers and constraints within advocacy communities, their role will be analysed from the advocates' perspective. The focus of this research is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Focus of this research: Creation and sharing of knowledge assets in advocacy communities



3.3 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis is the sharing of knowledge assets related to organisational effectiveness, particularly between INGOs and domestic NGOs. If knowledge assets can be thought of as '*a subset of dispositions to act that is embedded in individuals, groups*

or artefacts, technical or organisational rules, and that has value-adding potential' (Boisot 1998) and if advocacy effectiveness refers to achievement of impact on policies and on the lives of affected communities, with an appropriate level of effort and cost, then examples of knowledge assets related to effectiveness of advocacy include: Advocacy strategies, evidence to support the advocacy case, research methods for gathering information that supports advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation reports.

3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODS

Eisenhardt defines the case study as a research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings. It is appropriate when the phenomenon is little known and current perspectives have little empirical substantiation (Eisenhardt 1989). She argues that the strength of theory building from case studies is its likelihood of generating novel theory, as well as that the emergent theory is likely to be testable.

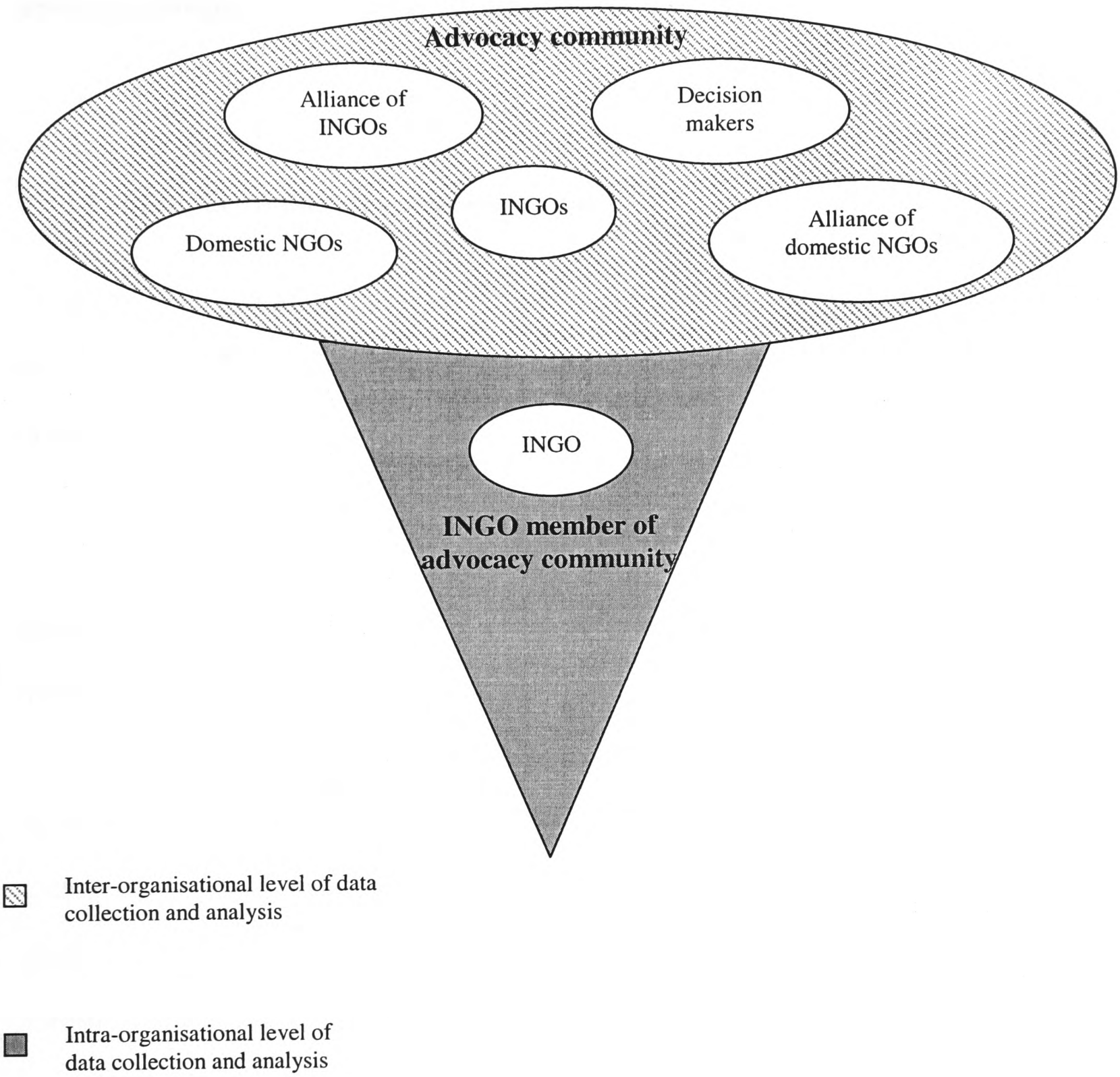
Yin states that the case study arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena, and defines it as an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Case studies can employ an embedded design, that is, multiple levels of analysis within a single study (Yin 1989).

A research strategy based on an embedded case study that focuses on two levels of data collection and analysis is followed. The first level refers to the creation and sharing of

knowledge assets within and from a particular INGO. This is the intra-organisational level, and potentially offers insights into particular dynamics within organisations. The second level refers to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets among the members of an advocacy community. This is the inter-organisational level, and potentially offers insights into the differences in the dynamics of advocates' information ecologies.

The simultaneous collection and analysis of data at these two levels offers an opportunity for contrasting sources, for increasing the reliability of the single case study, and for reducing the risk that the original phenomenon of interest (knowledge creation and sharing within advocacy communities) becomes the context and not the target for the study (Yin 1989) if the research is focused on only one organisation. The research design is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. 'T' shaped research design in advocacy communities



3.4.1 SAMPLING FOR DATA COLLECTION

Two main sources of data are distinguished: a) the INGO selected as the main case study (intra-organisational level); and b) other members of the advocacy community

(inter-organisational level). The latter includes three sources in particular: Other INGOs, domestic NGO partners, and the policy decision makers that are the 'targets' of the advocacy initiative.

3.4.1.1 Sampling at the intra-organisational level

An INGO based in the UK is selected as the main case study for the intra-organisational level of analysis. Because of the need to keep anonymity, this INGO will be known as **Aid International**.

Advocacy initiatives are rarely linear processes that can be grabbed at one time in their entirety; but insights can be gained by a focus on specific moments (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Chapman and Fisher 2000). Keck and Sikkink develop their case studies focused on particular advocacy campaigns, and conclude that this allows them to gain an understanding of the relationships among actors; the information resources that circulate among these actors; and the structures that enable the activities of these actors to take place. Conferences and other forms of international contact offer opportunities for the formation and strengthening of advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998). In the same way, Schwartzman argues that meetings and gatherings must be understood as communication events that, being embedded within a socio-cultural setting, offer an opportunity to understand the production and reproduction of the structures of everyday life (Schwartzman 1993).

An international meeting in which INGOs and domestic NGOs are undertaking a particular advocacy initiative can offer a good opportunity to gain an understanding of the factors affecting the creation and sharing of knowledge assets in advocacy communities. It is expected that during the preparation and participation in such a meeting, the creation and sharing of knowledge assets among advocates is going to be manifested intensively.

Following this, the initiative selected for study is the **advocacy work on an international donors meeting for Colombia**. Aid International aims to influence the outcome of this international meeting in a specific way. The choice of this particular advocacy work is supported by two additional factors:

- Willingness: Aid International was very keen that the advocacy around the donors meeting for Colombia becomes the case study. They were willing to offer access to internal information and to allied INGOs and domestic NGOs.

- Previous experience and personal contacts: During the researcher's professional experience, she worked with several people from domestic NGOs in Colombia. This proves useful during the data collection, as trust and personal references highly influence the degree of access that a researcher can have.

Data collection is focused on a one-year period of advocacy work, from February 2003 to February 2004, during which Aid International is involved in influencing a particular meeting of donor countries to Colombia held in London in July 2003. In the context of

this research, this meeting will be referred to as **the London meeting** (see Appendix 1, section 'Donor meetings and international aid to Colombia).

The London meeting is a key event in the whole process of donors meetings for Colombia, which goes back to 2000. Intense sharing of knowledge within advocacy communities occurs before, during and after this type of events, offering the opportunity to explore enablers and constraints as they are found in a contemporary situation.

The selection of this single advocacy initiative (the London meeting) guides the theoretical sampling[16] about which areas and staff to interview within Aid International. Considerations such as intensity (see above) and reputation (instances chosen on the recommendation of an 'expert') apply (Miles and Huberman 1994). The sampling is supported by the use of organisational charts and internal email lists. Data collection, then, focuses on three main settings within Aid International:

- The area in direct charge of the particular advocacy work around the donors meeting for Colombia
- The areas supporting the area in charge of the particular advocacy work, such as Advocacy, Research, and Media areas
- Other information intensive areas that support advocacy work, such as Information Systems, Monitoring and Evaluation, Publications, and Knowledge Management areas.

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[16] Theoretical sampling: '*Sampling should be entirely governed by the selection of respondents who will maximise theoretical development. The sampling should be designed to locate strategic data, which may refute emerging hypotheses. Theoretical sampling directs the researcher to collect, code, analyse and test hypotheses during the sampling process. This goal is quite different from that of a researcher seeking a representative sample*'. Original definition from Glaser and Strauss (1967) cited by Arber (1993).

3.4.1.2 Sampling at the inter-organisational level

Sampling at the inter-organisational level is also guided by the selection of a single advocacy initiative (i.e. the donors meeting for Colombia). For this specific advocacy work, there is a group of decision makers to be influenced (i.e. the donor countries' representatives and relevant international organisations), and there are networks of other INGOs and domestic NGOs - working in partnership with Aid International. Table 6 shows the stakeholders (decision makers and advocates) involved in the donors meeting for Colombia.

Table 6. Stakeholders involved in the process of the London meeting

Decision makers
Governments (G24): Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil*, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands*, Ireland, Italy*, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico*, Norway, Portugal, Spain*, Sweden*, Switzerland*, United Kingdom*, United States*. International organisations: European Commission*, European Council, Andean Development Corporation, Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations, World Bank. Colombian Government: Ambassador to the UK, Director of the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation (ACCI), Director of the National Planning Department, Foreign Minister, High Commissioner for Peace, Vice President *Members of the operative committee of the G24, known as the G10
Advocates
International NGOs (INGOs): Amnesty International, Benposta, Cafod, Caritas, Christian Aid, Civis Sweden, Consejería en Proyectos PCS, Diakonia Sweden, Intermón, Oxfam International, Misereor, Norwegian Refugee Council, Peace Brigades International, Save the Children, Trocaire International NGOs' alliances: ABC Group, Coordinación DIAL (Diálogo Inter-Agencial en Colombia), OIDHACO, PADEC (Plataforma de Organizaciónes de Desarrollo), US Office on Colombia, WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America). Domestic NGOs in Colombia and other civil society organisations: INGOs' partner organisations, including religious and non-denominational groups; human rights organisations; black and indigenous communities; environmental groups; and groups working with refugees, children, poverty and peace. Among those organisations are: Antioquia Indigenous Organisation - OIA (Organización Indígena de Antioquia), Casa de la Mujer, Cinep (Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular), Colombian Comission of Jurists - CCJ (Comisión Colombiana de Juristas), Codhes (Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento), Ecofondo, Enda, Fundación Carvajal, Fundación Corona, Fundación Social, Minga, National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia - ONIC (Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia), Pastoral Social, Permanent Civil Society Assembly for Peace (Asamblea Permanente de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz), Podium, Popular Institute of Education - IPC (Instituto Popular de Capacitación), Sisma Mujer, Viva la Ciudadanía. Domestic NGOs' and civil society organisations' alliances: Colombian Confederation of NGOs - CCONGs (Confederación Colombiana de ONGs); Colombia Europe United States Coalition - CCEEU; Entrepreneurs for Peace (Empresarios por la Paz), La Alianza, Planeta Paz, Redepaz.

Aid International's advocacy alliances are the base for sampling data collection in other INGOs in the UK and in domestic NGOs in Colombia. The criteria used for selecting

the organisations to be interviewed are: Their role in the donors for Colombia process, their knowledge about it; and their willingness, accessibility and communicability (Burgess 1994; Fetterman 1998).

In relation to decision makers, sampling is guided by the list of decision makers that Aid International and its allies have compiled for their advocacy strategy. As with other stakeholders, the decision to interview depends on theoretical criteria, as well as the willingness and accessibility of the decision makers.

3.4.2 RESEARCH METHODS

The embedded case study is based on semi-structured interviews and reviews of documents. The use of these two different data collection methods enables triangulation and adds confidence to findings (Miles and Huberman 1994).

- *Semi-structured interviews*: Interviews are recorded and transcribed in order to prevent the omission of information due to the limitation posed by selective memory. The use of a semi-structured interview protocol enables the manageability of data collection, cross-case comparison, and internal validity - to obtain comparably measured responses from different people (Miles and Huberman 1994). Answers are triangulated with respondents in other organisations, as well as with the review of documents.

Semi-structured questions are used in order to give interviewees the opportunity to answer with content that is significant to them. Particular attention is given to stories that interviewees use to illustrate specific points. According to Schwartzman, individuals use stories to make sense of their world and their life at work. Contrasting individual stories and official organisational accounts can offer interesting insights into the phenomena being studied (Schwartzman 1993).

- *Review of documents*: This unobtrusive method consists of reviewing archival data of an organisation, e.g. minutes of meetings, announcements, and formal policy statements. The use of this method supplements interviewing, provides contextual information, and facilitates analysis, validity checks and triangulation (Marshall and Rossman 1995).

In the context of this research, documents to be reviewed are those directly related to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets supporting advocacy, such as research reports; collected evidence of how policies are affecting communities; monitoring and evaluation reports; and advocacy strategies. The main sources for these documents are the intranet and the interviewees. In addition, some attention is given to electronic information, such as email. As Fetterman argues, email is often less inhibited than general correspondence and, therefore, quite revealing about office relationships and power struggles (Fetterman 1998).

3.4.3 DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY AND TECHNIQUES

Case studies use analytical generalisation, in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study (Yin 1989). Miles and Huberman describe the analytical progression as follows: First, telling a story about a specific situation to construct a map of the phenomenon (i.e. formalising the elements of the story, locating key variables); and second, building a theory or model (i.e. how the variables of the phenomenon are connected, and how they influence each other). For Miles and Huberman, the idea of 'display' is central to this analytical progression. By display they mean a visual format that presents information systematically, so the researcher can draw conclusions. Displays are arranged to permit comparisons and noting of patterns, and fall into two major families: Matrices, with defined rows and columns, and networks, with a series of nodes with links between them (Miles and Huberman 1994).

The analysis of data in this research is based on content coding and the use of displays. The aim is to integrate inductive and deductive analysis in order to compare iteratively the findings with the originally collected data and with the existing theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990). In the context of this research, codes refer to the tags or labels used for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during the study (Miles and Huberman 1994). Content coding is the operation by which data is broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways, in order to reveal the central phenomenon and its set of relationships (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

The coding of data is done using software for qualitative data management in order to facilitate its sorting and retrieval. An additional advantage of coding using software is that it provides a systematic form of triangulation, by noting the frequency of an item instantly (Fetterman 1998). The start list of codes is shown in Table 7. The codes are based on the theoretical framework.

Table 7. Start list of codes (from research framework)

Knowledge workers	Knowledge politics	Knowledge behaviour and culture	Knowledge strategy	Knowledge architecture
• Subjective orientations and mindsets (e.g. prior expectations, emotional stakes, unwillingness to communicate / listen, values and beliefs held) • Preferences towards codification and abstraction (e.g. analytical skills, cognitive orientation, coding ability) • Level of trust	• Governance structures • Decision making processes • Alliances and partnerships • Legitimacy • Accountability	• Organisational ideologies (e.g. hostility towards certain alternatives, immediacy, other values and beliefs held within the organisation) • Incentives for learning (e.g. value and time) • Tensions between advocacy and operative staff • Advocacy message framing • Different languages	• Staff training • M&E advocacy • M&E knowledge strategies	• Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction • Knowledge assets' substrata • ICTs

'Analyst-constructed typologies' are used to reflect participants' testimonies, instead of 'indigenous typologies' (Marshall and Rossman 1995), because the study is undertaken in two different countries - the UK and Colombia - which use different languages. In addition, even within the same country, typologies used by NGOs differ from one organisation to another.

3.4.3.1 Embedded case study analysis strategy

The analysis strategy for the embedded case study is divided into two main phases: A first phase of 'within-case' analysis and a second phase of 'cross-case' analysis. The 'within-case' analysis phase is focused on each of the four groups in which the sources of data collection can be distributed. This means that Aid International, for example, is considered as a case study for the purpose of analysis. The group of INGOs is considered as another case study. The other two 'cases' are the group of domestic NGOs and the decision makers, making a total of four 'cases' for the purpose of analysis.

The analysis is undertaken by groups of interviewees because each of them has a particular role in the creation and sharing of knowledge (see Figure 5: Information and knowledge supporting advocacy effectiveness). That role influences the enablers and constraints that each group of interviewees may perceive.

Within-case analysis is used prior to cross-case analysis, and involves detailed case study descriptions for each group, which enable the researcher to become familiar with the data from each case before generalising patterns across cases (Eisenhardt 1989). Cross-case analysis looks for within-case similarities and differences. Miles and Huberman's strategy of '*stacking compartable cases*' (Miles and Huberman 1994) is used, which consists of joining the case level displays together in 'meta displays' to allow for the systematic comparison of the data. The emerging insights are then

compared to both the evidence from each case - in order to assess how well or poorly it fits with case data - (Eisenhardt 1989) and to the existing theory (Stewart 1998).

3.4.3.2 Displays and tactics for data analysis

Several tactics for analysis can be used with displays. Miles and Huberman distinguish between tactics for generating meaning, and tactics for testing or confirming findings. Tactics for generating meaning include noting patterns and themes, building a logical chain of evidence, noting relations between variables, making comparisons, counting, finding intervening variables, and subsuming particulars into the general. Tactics for testing or confirming findings include checking for representativeness, checking for a researcher's effects, triangulating, weighing the evidence, looking for negative evidence, and getting feedback from informants (Miles and Huberman 1994). In the context of this research, the use of counting does not mean to be statistically reliable. Counting is used as a tool to identify patterns in the data and to prevent the researcher from being falsely impressed by that data (Eisenhardt 1989).

There are case-ordered displays and variable-ordered displays. Case-ordered displays order all cases according to the main variable being examined. In variable-ordered displays, the analysis is focused on variables and their relationships. Displays used in this research include conceptually clustered matrices (for making comparisons between two or more variables); and clustered meta-matrices, which assemble data from several cases (Miles and Huberman 1994). Some examples of displays used in the data analysis are shown in the Appendix section.

DATA CHAPTERS

Chapters four to seven present and discuss the data collected in interviews and analysis of documents from the four groups of stakeholders involved in the process of the donors meeting: Decision makers, INGOs, domestic NGOs, and the INGO selected as the main case study, Aid International (see Appendix 1: Background to case study, for information about these stakeholders and the process of donors meetings for Colombia).

A total of 61 interviews were undertaken from November 2003 to February 2004, as shown in Table 8. Complementary sources of information such as internal documents and emails focus on the period from February 2003 to February 2004.

Table 8. List of interviews by group and type of informant

Group	Type of informants	Sub total	Total
Decision makers	Diplomatic missions in Colombia	6	**14**
	International organisations in Colombia	5	
	Colombian government representatives	3	
Domestic NGOs and civil society organisations in Colombia	Staff of domestic NGOs	6	**8**
	People in charge of domestic NGO alliances	2	
INGOs	Staff based in the UK	3	**11**
	People in charge of INGO alliances	3	
	Staff based in Colombia	5	
INGO main case study	Staff directly involved in the advocacy work around the donors meeting for Colombia	8	**28**
	Staff taking part in other supporting advocacy work	8	
	Staff working with information and knowledge management activities	12	
Total			**61**

CHAPTER 4

ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS OF CREATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE ASSETS FOR POLICY ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS: THE DECISION MAKERS' PERSPECTIVE

Contents

- Introduction
- Enablers and constraints to scanning
- Enablers and constraints to diffusion
- Application of the model: External and internal environments in advocacy communities

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4.1 INTRODUCTION: THE DECISION MAKERS THAT THE ADVOCATES AIM TO INFLUENCE

The advocacy efforts of INGOs and domestic NGOs are focused on three groups of decision makers: The **donor countries' representatives** (the 'International Cooperation Board for Colombia' or G24); the **Colombian government**; and the representatives of the **international organisations** involved (see Table 9). These groups of decision makers have far from homogeneous interests: a) donor governments aim for better coordination of aid to Colombia, but they are also concerned about defining the

conditions for that aid; b) international organisations play diverse roles, from consultative bodies to the Colombian government, to promoters of consultation with civil society organisations; and c) the Colombian government has a dual role, as a 'target' of advocates' efforts, but also as another advocate for donor countries' funds and political support. The diversity of decision makers' interests makes this a complex scenario for the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for advocacy (see Appendix 1: Background to case study, for more details about these stakeholders).

Because of the nature of decision makers' participation in the advocacy process around the London meeting, the data they provide focuses on the phases of scanning and diffusion. As explained in Chapter 2, advocates collect information to create insights that support the advocacy case; this corresponds to the scanning phase of the SLC. The implementation of the advocacy strategy and the diffusion of the advocacy message to target audiences correspond to the diffusion phase of the SLC. Phases such as codification, abstraction, absorption and impacting are mostly beyond decision makers' examination. Interviews with domestic NGOs, INGOs and Aid International provide data about codification, abstraction and impacting, as will be shown in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Table 9. Group of decision makers involved in the donors meeting for Colombia

Decision makers involved in donors meeting process
Governments (G24): Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil*, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands*, Ireland, Italy*, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico*, Norway, Portugal, Spain*, Sweden*, Switzerland*, United Kingdom*, United States*. International organisations: European Commission*, European Council, Andean Development Corporation, Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations, World Bank. Colombian government: Ambassador to the UK, Director of the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation (ACCI), Director of the National Planning Department, Foreign Minister, High Commissioner for Peace, Vice President. *Members of the operative committee of the G24, known as the G10
Decision makers interviewed
Governments: Six interviews (Three ambassadors; three officials) International organisations: Five interviews (Four general directors; one official) Colombian government: Three interviews (one member of parliament; one government official; one adviser)

A total of 14 interviews were conducted with decision makers, most of them in Colombia. 21 documents provided by interviewees were reviewed. Additional data was collected through observation during the eight-hour La Alianza[17] meeting on 26 November 2003. External sources such as web sites and organisational reports were also used. Anonymity has been granted to all interviewees and pseudonyms are used for all individuals and organisations. General descriptions are provided about the source of quotations when applicable.

[17] La Alianza is formed by 150 Colombian domestic NGOs and civil society organisations. It includes peasant organisations, trade unions, indigenous and afro-Colombian organisations, peace, development, environment and human rights organisations. Source: La Alianza and CCEEU (2004).

4.1.1 THE MOST RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE FOR THE SUCCESS OF ADVOCACY WORK, AND THE ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO OBTAINING IT ACCORDING TO DECISION MAKERS

For governments' and international organisations' representatives, relevant knowledge for the success of INGOs' and domestic NGOs' advocacy work refers to three areas in particular:

- Donors meetings mechanisms: e.g. knowledge about the objective and operation of donors meetings.

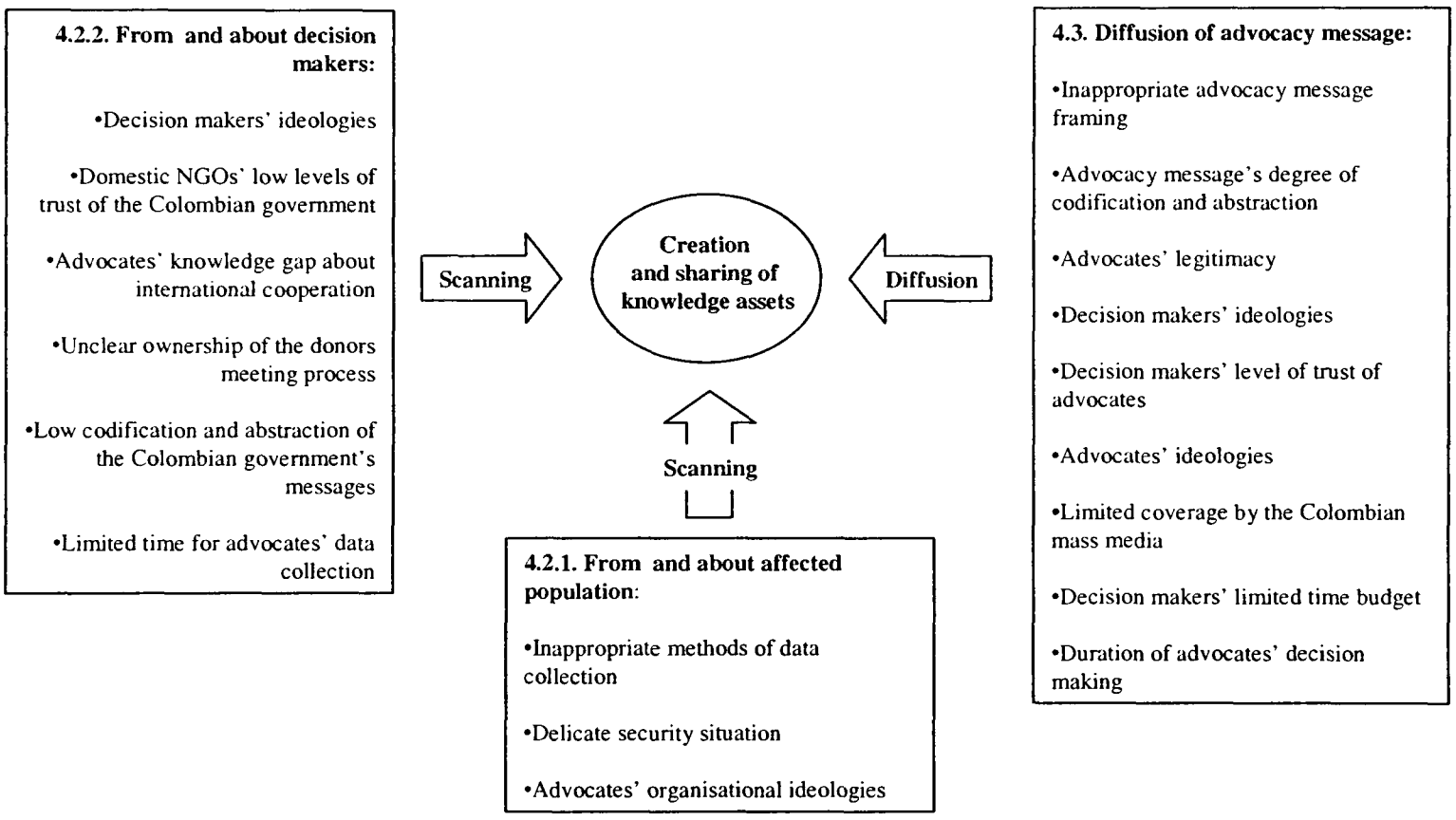
- Donor countries' roles and agendas for international cooperation: Knowledge about donor countries' current policies in relation to Colombia and the state of bilateral relations; the possibilities and limitations of international cooperation from each country, as well as knowledge about donor governments' representatives.

- Efforts and investments of the Colombian government: A more general perspective on the situation in Colombia that goes beyond advocates' particular areas of work; and knowledge about Colombian government programmes and results in social areas.

Interviewees considered that INGOs and domestic NGOs did achieve significant results in their advocacy efforts for the donors meeting, especially in four areas: a) obtaining access to the London meeting (and to decision makers); b) convincing the UN to accept the role of coordinator of the consultation process with civil society after CEPEI was rejected by advocates; c) the fact that the London Declaration placed emphasis on the

implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations as a criterion for international aid to Colombia; and finally d) the formation of La Alianza, as a key coordinator of civil society organisations during this process. Nevertheless, for the decision makers interviewed, the creation and sharing of knowledge for the effectiveness of advocacy are affected by several diverse factors, as shown in Figure 10. The numerals in the figure indicate the sections where these factors are discussed.

Figure 10. Summary conceptual map of enablers and constraints of knowledge creation and sharing in advocacy communities: Decision makers' perspective

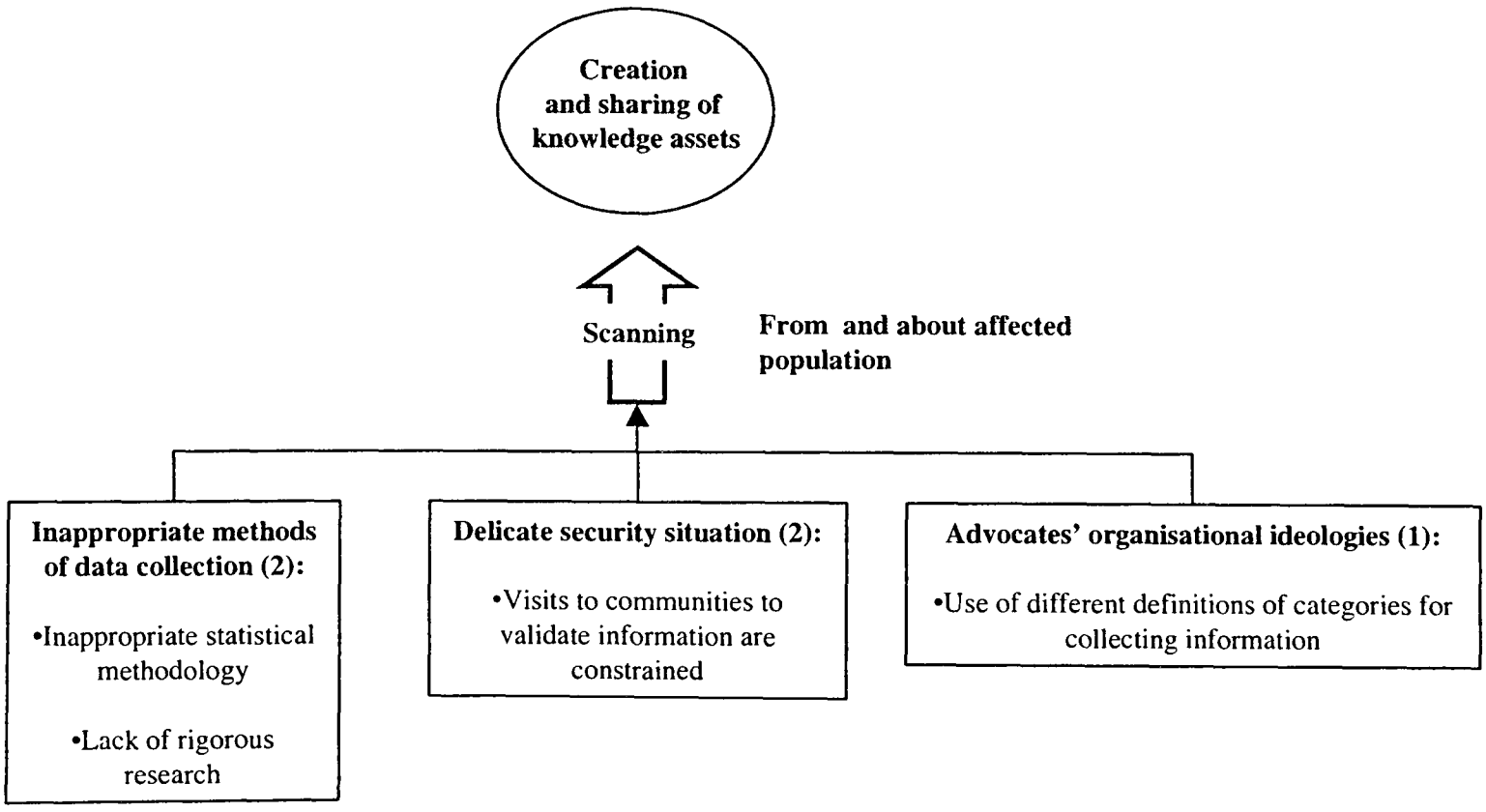


4.2 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING

Scanning is understood as the process of identifying threats and opportunities in available data (Boisot 1995). Advocates scan data from diverse sources, such as affected populations, decision makers, academic research, other advocates, and internal sources, in order to support their advocacy case. Decision makers identify a series of constraints to advocates' scanning in relation to the acquisition of information and knowledge from two main sources: a) affected populations and b) decision makers.

4.2.1 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

Figure 11. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to affected populations - Decision makers' perspective



Note: The numbers in parentheses in Figure 11 and in the following figures indicate the number of responses for each enabler or constraint.

Eight interviewees are concerned about the low quality of data collected in affected communities. Two interviewees (DM5, 14) [18] argue that advocates' data is not based on facts, whereas five interviewees (DM1, 4, 5, 9, 14) consider that the quality of INGOs' and domestic NGOs' data varies from organisation to organisation. As one of them explains:

> *'The core of (domestic) NGOs are professional, serious and committed to their responsibilities, and this contrasts with other countries; however it is also true that some NGOs are not like that. You have to be careful when analysing statements and information from some sectors of civil society' (DM1).*

Decision makers think that the quality of data collected by INGOs and domestic NGOs is threatened by **inappropriate methods of data collection**[19] (two interviewees); the **delicate security situation** in some areas of the country that limits access to researchers (two interviewees); and by **advocates' organisational ideologies** (one interviewee).

4.2.1.1 Inappropriate methods of data collection

In relation to the **methods of data collection** from affected populations, one interviewee argues that:

> *'One of the difficulties is the lack of any attempt (by advocates) to find a better statistical methodology for putting forward some of their arguments' (DM14).*

Another interviewee (DM2) states that although some of the collected data cannot be tested, the importance of **rigorous research** and the search for precise and true facts needs to be underlined. He thinks that rigorous research does not take place in all cases.

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[18] Interviewees are identified with letters and numbers, e.g. DM1 means decision makers group, interviewee number one.
[19] Bold text indicates an enabler or constraint.

An internal report by a donor country's embassy in Colombia argues that the Colombian government bases its data on information reported to government authorities, press reports, and confirmable NGO statistics. NGOs, on the other hand, rely primarily on citizen complaints and press reports that satisfy the particular NGO's own standards of credibility. The report concludes that:

> *'The Colombian government's reliance on official reports undoubtedly leads to an under-reporting of violations', whereas NGO statistics 'undoubtedly over-report violations since they rely heavily on unsubstantiated claims that may be subject to manipulation' (Document 21)*[20].

4.2.1.2 The delicate security situation

Constraints associated with the **delicate security situation** in Colombia are linked mainly to the illegal armed groups, both guerrillas and paramilitaries. A report by the United States Department of State observes that:

> *'Paramilitaries subjected human rights groups to intense pressure in the form of obvious surveillance, harassing telephone calls, graffiti campaigns, and death threats'* (US Department of State 2003).

A subsequent report says that in 2003, 16 human rights activists were killed (US Department of State 2004).

According to two interviewees (DM3, 6), the security situation impedes advocates from **visiting affected communities to validate the information** they receive:

> *'I think that access to information is missing. There are many places in the country (Colombia) where the state is not present, and so we cannot obtain the information...' (DM3).*

[20] For confidentiality reasons, decision makers' internal documents are identified with numbers. The list of documents was included at the end of each data chapter for the viva examination. After the viva, the list was removed from the final version of the thesis.

No interviewee suggests that the security forces exert pressure on domestic NGOs; however, the United States Department of State's report comments on the case of five members of the Medellin police's anti-kidnapping unit (GAULA) being charged with illegally tapping the telephone lines of 2,000 individuals and NGOs between 1997 and 2000 (US Department of State 2004).

4.2.1.3 Advocates' organisational ideologies

Advocates' organisational ideologies lead to the **use of different definitions of categories for collecting information** by INGOs and domestic NGOs, which is seen by one interviewee (DM3) as a significant constraint for data quality, and particularly as a threat to the dialogue between the Colombian government and domestic NGOs. As he, a member of a diplomatic representation, points out:

> *'The statistics depend on the definitions you are working with, and not all stakeholders use the same definitions' (DM3).*

This issue is also commented on in a report by a donor country's embassy in Colombia, which provides specific examples of the use of different definitions for key categories of data collection, such as 'arbitrary detentions', 'massacres' and 'human rights violations', which are used by domestic NGOs to lobby national and international decision makers. According to the report:

> *'The Colombian government characterised detentions based on compliance with legal formalities, while NGOs typically applied other criteria that often had a political basis... Some NGOs considered captured guerrillas to be detained for political reasons (...) Colombian human rights NGOs considered nearly all detentions carried out by military forces in the former Rehabilitation and*

Consolidation Zones[21] *to be illegitimate, in spite of the fact that such detentions were authorised by law and, unless outstanding arrest warrants were discovered, usually lasted a maximum of 36 hours' (Document 21).*

According to the United States Department of State's report on Colombian human rights, the Colombian government defines a 'massacre' as the intentional killing of four or more persons at the same time and place, while NGOs define a 'massacre' as the deaths of three or more persons. The report explains that some NGOs follow legal conventions that define 'human rights violations' as crimes that can only be committed by the state or state-sponsored actors (as some NGOs presume paramilitaries to be). This definition led these NGOs to attribute, directly or indirectly, all 'human rights violations' to the Colombian government. Human rights crimes by guerrillas are categorised as violations of 'international humanitarian law' (IHL) or common crimes, which government authorities and paramilitaries can also commit. The Colombian government, on the other hand, defines human rights violations to encompass crimes by all illegal armed groups, whether paramilitaries or guerrillas, as well as by the state (US Department of State 2004).

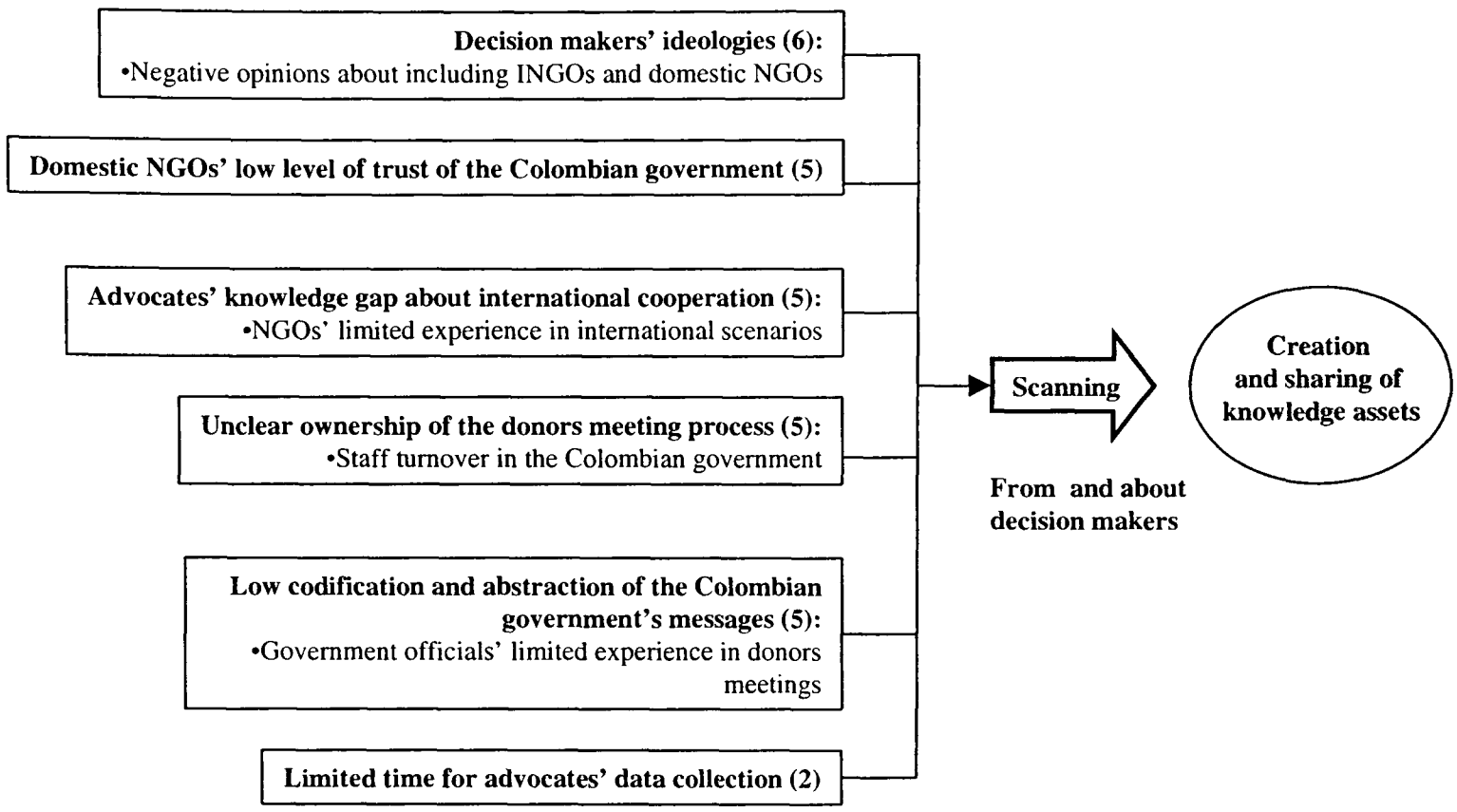
[21] The Colombian government established the Rehabilitation and Consolidation Zones in 2002 in the provinces of Arauca, Sucre and Bolivar. These zones were under the direct command of the armed forces, which had special powers to fight rebel groups. These powers included imposing curfews, restricting civilian movement, arresting suspects without a warrant, and searching vehicles and houses. See BBC at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2273680.stm.

4.2.2 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO DECISION MAKERS

In relation to advocates' acquisition of information and knowledge from decision makers, six of 14 interviewees (DM1, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14) consider that their relationships with INGOs and domestic NGOs are positive and fluid, and that there are no problems for advocates to obtain information and knowledge from decision makers. However, three respondents (DM8, 6, 10) consider that more access to information - particularly from the Colombian government - is needed, and an equal number of respondents (DM7, 11, 14) explain that INGOs' access to their governments is easier than domestic NGOs' access to the Colombian government.

Interviewees mention six factors that constrain advocates' access to decision makers' information and knowledge: **Decision makers' ideologies** (six interviewees); **domestic NGOs' low level of trust of the Colombian government** (five interviewees); **advocates' knowledge gap about international cooperation** (five interviewees); an **unclear ownership of the donors meeting process** (five interviewees); **low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages** (five interviewees); and **the limited time for advocates' data collection** (two interviewees).

Figure 12. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to decision makers - Decision makers' perspective



4.2.2.1 Decision makers' ideologies

The existence of different expectations, values and beliefs among both decision makers and advocates seems to play a key role in constraining advocates' acquisition of information and knowledge from and about the decision makers they want to influence. In relation to decision makers' ideologies, the answers refer to **decision makers' negative opinions about the need and value of including INGOs and domestic NGOs in the donors meeting process** (six interviewees). Three interviewees (DM4, 12, 14) think that donors meetings are events primarily intended for donor countries, not for NGOs:

> *'If there was the thought that it was not transparent, it was never the intention that it should be. It was not a meeting that involved NGOs' (DM14).*

Two interviewees (DM7, 9) believe that domestic NGOs do not play a prominent role in public opinion in Colombia, in contrast to INGOs in their home countries. One interviewee (DM9) comments that some decision makers believe that a meeting between domestic NGOs and the Colombian government is likely to be an unproductive one.

In contrast, three interviewees (DM2, 10, 11) consider that INGO and domestic NGO participation in events such as donors meetings are not only important but also politically necessary. In a similar line, an embassy representative (DM12) points out that the Colombian government has made considerable efforts to engage in dialogue with civil society organisations and that there are no similar experiences in other countries.

4.2.2.2 Domestic NGOs' low level of trust of the Colombian government

In relation to advocates' ideologies, five answers refer to **domestic NGOs' low level of trust of the Colombian government** (DM3, 8, 9, 10, 13) as a potential constraint in obtaining information from and about the Colombian government.

Two interviewees (DM3, 13) argue that some NGOs strongly believe that it is impossible to work with the Colombian government. For two respondents (DM3, 10), domestic NGOs' low trust in the government leads them to focus on collecting information about the government's failures and disregarding information about the government's positive efforts and results:

'I think that there are some people within some NGOs who were not interested in listening and whose position was already decided' (DM10).

4.2.2.3 Advocates' knowledge gap about international cooperation

Five interviewees (DM5, 10, 11, 12, 14) identify as a constraint **advocates' knowledge gap about how the mechanisms for international cooperation operate**. This knowledge gap refers to the objective and nature of donors meetings, as well as donor countries' roles and agendas for international cooperation:

'They (NGOs) should also know the strategic areas on which the international community is working (in Colombia) (...) what the possibilities and limitations of the international cooperation are, what the real reach of donor countries is, and what their real policies are' (DM10).

For one interviewee (DM10), at the heart of the advocates' knowledge gap is the **limited experience that domestic NGOs have** in international scenarios.

4.2.2.4 Unclear ownership of the donors meeting process

Five interviewees (DM3, 7, 8, 10, 11) argue that the **unclear ownership of the donors meeting process** (i.e. the uncertainty about which Colombian governmental entity was in charge) was a constraint for advocates to obtaining information from decision makers, in particular from and about the Colombian government:

'There was the Colombian Ministry of External Relations, and the Colombian Vice Presidency, but there was no entity to coordinate, and most of the tasks were left to the UNDP and CEPEI. There were some moments where people had questions for the government and (the government) replied 'ask UNDP or CEPEI'... it was a never-ending circle' (DM10).

For four interviewees (DM3, 7, 8, 11), the unclear ownership of the process is caused by **staff turnover in the Colombian government**, particularly when the director of the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation (ACCI), German Bula, left his position.

4.2.2.5 Low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages

Five interviewees (DM1, 3, 9, 10, 11) refer to what could be described as the **low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages**. As one of them explains:

> *'The (Colombian) government never produced an official press release about the objective, who the stakeholders are, what the methodology is (...) The government does not have a coherent long-term strategy in relation to each donor country. The government has not analysed what has been done before (in previous donors meetings), nor the results obtained' (DM10).*

For two interviewees (DM9, 10), the unclear messages sent by the Colombian government are linked to its **limited experience** in this type of event.

4.2.2.6 Limited time for advocates' data collection

In relation to the **limited time for advocates' data collection**, two embassies' representatives comment:

> *'I remember we started talking about NGOs' participation in May and the meeting was on 10 July. It was a short time, a working period of maybe four or five weeks' (DM3).*

'The decision to incorporate civil society organisations was a wise but late decision' (DM11).

Another representative (DM14) has contrasting views in relation to the importance of limited time as a constraining factor for the advocates' work:

'Colombian NGOs that are constantly feeding into the diplomatic community, feeding into the Colombian government, and feeding into the international press their news about Colombia, would need two months to get together to deliver a message to the governments? I find that very hard to understand' (DM14).

A personal communication by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Bill Rammell to John Battle MP, dated 24 June 2003, just over two weeks before the meeting on 9-10 July, suggests that the UK government's position at that date is still that there are not going to be NGO 'observers' at the London meeting (Document 13).

4.3 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE DIFFUSION OF THE ADVOCACY MESSAGE

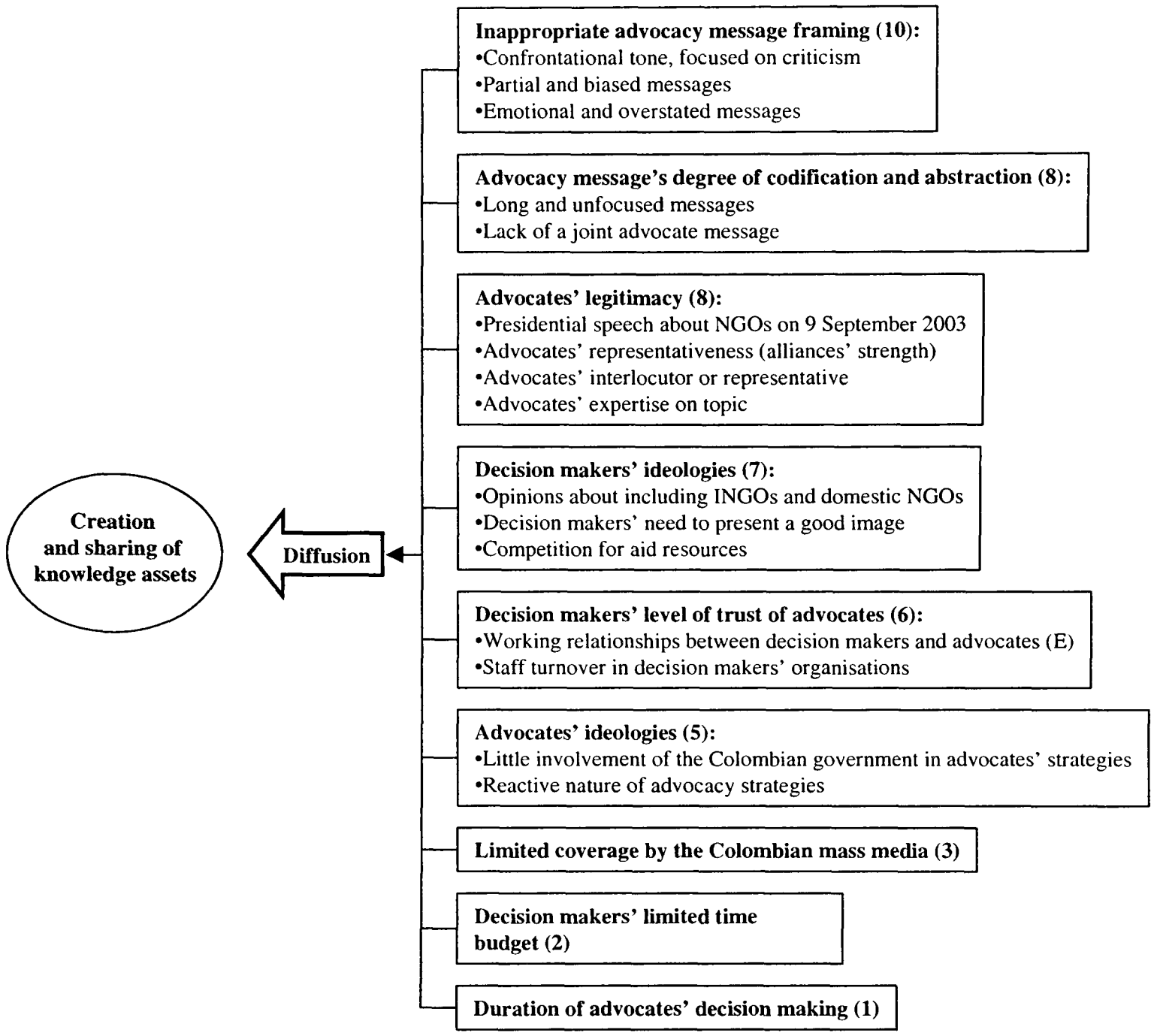
Diffusion refers to the sharing of newly created insights with a target population (Boisot 1995). In the context of advocacy communities, diffusion refers to the implementation of the advocacy strategy and particularly to the dissemination of the advocacy message to the target audiences.

Due to the way that the advocacy message was disseminated in the context of the donors for Colombia meeting (i.e. more through direct lobbying than through public mobilisation or media coverage), the constraints identified by decision makers in

relation to the diffusion of advocates' messages are in most cases linked to getting direct access to decision makers.

The factors that interviewees see as constraining the diffusion of advocacy messages to relevant decision makers are grouped into the following areas: **Inappropriate advocacy message framing** (mentioned by 10 of 14 interviewees); the **advocacy message's degree of codification and abstraction** (eight interviewees); **advocates' legitimacy** (eight interviewees); **decision makers' ideologies** (seven interviewees); **decision makers' level of trust of advocates** (six interviewees); **advocates' ideologies** (five interviewees); **limited coverage by the Colombian mass media** (three interviewees); **decision makers' limited time budget** (two interviewees); and the **duration of advocates' decision making** (one interviewee).

Figure 13. Enablers and constraints to the diffusion of the advocacy message - Decision makers' perspective



Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

4.3.1 INAPPROPRIATE ADVOCACY MESSAGE FRAMING

Ten interviewees (DM1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14) consider that the potential diffusion of a message is threatened by the way that advocates are currently shaping their messages, as this affects their credibility. At the centre of the comments about

inappropriate advocacy message framing are three main constraints: A **confrontational tone, focused on denunciation and criticism** (six interviewees); **partial or biased messages** (seven interviewees); and the use of **emotional and overstated messages** (three interviewees).

Six interviewees (DM2, 4, 5, 10, 12, 14) comment that the regular use in advocates' messages of a **confrontational tone, focused on denunciation and criticism**, is creating resistance and frustration between embassy and Colombian government representatives:

> *'I do not like to listen always to what they (INGOs and domestic NGOs) are not going to do, or are not going to support, but (they should) put something on the table, what they can do and what they are going to support... I see at this moment meetings where they question the (Colombian) government; they question the programme of government. The (Colombian) government questions the NGOs... we are moving in cycles and I do not think there is a successful exit at the moment, because there is no constructive dialogue' (DM10).*

> *'The facts could be the same, but in relation to the analysis, for the UN there is some progress, although much more can be done; for the NGOs the same cases are actions against the UNHCHR recommendations (...) There is some resistance among embassies to becoming boxes for complaints on human rights and to assuming a responsibility that is not ours' (DM12).*

That decision makers expect a more positive tone, and a focus on proposals from advocates' messages is confirmed by a communication between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Bill Rammell and the ABC Group[22]:

> *'We very much want to see an input from civil society (at the London meeting) that has a practical dimension, highlighting those areas of assistance for Colombia that it believes the international community should concentrate upon. We also wish to hear what role civil society believes it should play in helping the international community and the Colombian government in their efforts, e.g. identifying suitable projects' (Document 14).*

[22] The ABC Group is a coalition of six international aid, humanitarian and development organisations (INGOs) that work in Colombia in partnership with over 70 domestic NGOs and civil society organisations.

A report by a donor country's embassy in Colombia argues that:

> *'Colombian human rights NGOs' selective emphasis on bad news frustrates Colombian government officials, who cite their own statistics demonstrating that the human rights situation in Colombia is actually improving' (Document 21).*

The comments by seven interviewees (DM1, 5, 9, 10, 12, 12, 14) about the **use of partial and biased messages** refer mainly to what they consider an excessive focus on a political debate around development cooperation to Colombia (particularly in relation to human rights in detriment to technical subjects), and a bias towards denouncing governmental and paramilitary human rights abuses while ignoring guerrilla abuses:

> *'There is concern if behind (the message) there is a political message and a discourse that is not totally objective and is partial. This perception varies according to the person or the embassy' (DM12).*

> *'The NGOs appear to focus on human rights abuse by the paramilitary groups, almost to the exclusion if you like of the civilian human rights atrocities that are committed by the other groups, particularly by the FARC. There is an imbalance' (DM14).*

Three interviewees (DM 1, 5, 13) think that some NGOs seemed to be more interested in 'making politics', acting more like political adversaries to the (Colombian) government, than like advocates. These comments about the use of partial and biased messages are supported by a report by the United States Department of State:

> *'Prominent local NGOs made an effort to be fair and objective in their analysis of a serious and complex human rights situation. However, their coverage of human rights abuses tended to focus on the (Colombian) government and right-wing paramilitaries, rather than leftist guerrillas. For example, the Colombian embassy in Canada noted that only three of 5,000 letters generated in 2001 by alerts disseminated by Colombian human rights groups specifically condemned the FARC' (US Department of State 2003).*

According to the same report, INGOs are considered to devote equal attention to (Colombian) government forces, guerrillas and paramilitaries; however, they held the government to a higher standard than the illegal armed groups.

As regards the use of **emotional and overstated messages,** three interviewees (DM 2, 3, 14) think that some messages are exaggerated and the main idea is lost:

> *'I think that a lot of times messages are exaggerated... Civil society organisations have to be much more careful with the data that they are presenting. Reality is serious enough, it is not necessary to exaggerate' (DM3).*

> *'I think we see some of the problems in a less passionate manner than some of the NGOs do (...) There is a degree of concern being expressed by NGOs that I believe is exaggerated. Very often, how can I say, the reality of the situation does not always match the way it is being presented by NGOs... they say things and then they are investigated and they are not true. And if they do that more often, their credibility becomes lost' (DM14).*

4.3.2 ADVOCACY MESSAGE'S DEGREE OF CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Eight interviewees (DM2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14) mention factors related to the advocacy message's degree of codification and abstraction. For three respondents (DM11, 12, 13), using **long and unfocused messages** is not appropriate for this type of international scenario. They argue that shorter and more focused messages would contribute to improving their diffusion. As one of the respondents states:

> *'If you (advocates) want to be taken seriously, you have to focus. In the meeting on 26 November, the (domestic) NGOs spent five precious hours of the diplomatic community's time, too many words. That was too long. At a maximum they should be able to express their views in one hour. The paper was very long too. It should have been two pages at most (...) Local NGOs have to be more effective. There were too many words in that meeting. The diplomatic community was able to agree on a two-page declaration in London. We were 24 countries, very diverse,*

and we agreed a common approach. They presented 34 pages. Nobody is going to read all that. They have to be precise and concise' (DM13).

Five interviewees (DM 2, 3, 8, 10, 14) state that the **lack of a joint advocate message** has made its diffusion difficult:

'In London there was an ample group of civil society organisations with a shared position (...) The most valuable thing for us was the agreement among civil society organisations [23] *(...) (NGOs) have to make an effort to agree on minimum points, without thinking that they will agree on everything' (DM8).*

A communication between FCO Bill Rammell and the ABC Group about the participation of civil society organisations in the meeting on 9 July confirms the importance of joint messages:

'We wish this to be presented as a consolidated view with a common approach ... a number of disparate presentations by several groups during the limited time for our London meeting would not serve our purpose and could dilute any strong message civil society wishes to send the meeting' (Document 14).

Despite these comments, three interviewees (DM3, 11, 14) acknowledge progress in the focus of advocates' messages, especially in relation to the meeting on 26 November 2003:

'They have improved a lot. The first meetings that we had with the G24, there was one that was quite bad, because (advocates) extended it and did not focus. In the last meetings (advocates) were better' (DM11).

[23] At the meeting on 9 July, domestic NGOs and the representatives of the Colombian church and the business sector agreed to present a common statement and to have a common representative for the meeting with donor countries' representatives the next day. The document '*Coincidencias de la Sociedad Civil Colombiana*' (2003) contains the agreed points.

4.3.3 ADVOCATES' LEGITIMACY

Issues related to **advocates' legitimacy** are mentioned by eight of 14 interviewees as a factor that influences the diffusion of messages to decision makers. Two interviewees (DM7, 9) consider that INGOs' legitimacy with European governments is in good shape. As one interviewee describes it:

> *'(International) NGOs are already powerful... I am talking about Europe. They have opinions and collect money. You cannot think about (international) NGOs as a group of youths that come here and ask for help...' (DM9).*

In contrast, one interviewee explains that some decision makers think that it is not the role of NGOs to take part in this type of event:

> *'The official space to monitor the UNHCHR recommendations on human rights is the same UN office of human rights. However, it was not the UN, but the Colombian NGOs, who invited us to the event on 26 November. Because of this, some governments' representatives were a bit resistant, because for them the official source on this topic is the UN' (DM12).*

Three interviewees (DM1, 3, 6) comment that the legitimacy of NGOs, particularly of domestic NGOs, was negatively affected by the **presidential speech about NGOs on 9 September 2003**. Because of this speech, they argue, some domestic NGOs have now been marked as guerrilla supporters.

Five interviewees (DM3, 8, 11, 12, 14) consider that legitimacy is increased by **advocates' representativeness** (the diversity of views and sectors represented and the number of members represented), which they think is enabled by the **strength of advocates' alliances**, such as La Alianza. These interviewees emphasise the need to

involve other sectors of civil society in advocates' alliances, in order to strengthen their representativeness:

> *'We think that the formation of La Alianza is an important step, is a good thing, but there are other civil society organisations, and there is something that everybody insists on, especially the G24, and that is the need to widen and widen the representation. There are other civil society organisations that it is necessary to include, for example, the CCONGs[24], the foundations, the business sector' (DM11).*

Interviewees mention three factors that constrain NGOs' advocacy alliances: The actual **number of domestic NGOs in Colombia** (DM11, 14); the **distrust among domestic NGOs** (DM1, 3, 14) and a **lack of clear representational procedures** (DM10):

> *'In Colombia there are approximately 6000 NGOs, and you cannot invite all of them to the meetings. Always there is going to be one that says it was not invited' (DM14).*

> *'One of the things that surprised me to a certain extent is that there seemed to be as many problems among the NGOs as between the NGOs and the (Colombian) government, and there was a good deal of interaction between the NGOs before the meeting took place, a good deal of mutual suspicion. There are a lot of discrepancies between NGOs, and there are those that are quite extreme in their views: They are extreme in their advocacy of what they think should be done - particularly in terms of their views of the (Colombian) government and its activities - which does not match with the views of other NGOs' (DM14).*

> *'There was no methodology to choose which (NGOs) went to London (...) They did not define a criterion about who could go, or how they could go. At the end, people were chosen, I do not know under which criteria honestly, because that was left up to them' (DM10).*

Two interviewees (DM3, 11) state that the diffusion of advocates' messages is constrained when decision makers are 'bombarded' with multiple messages from multiple advocates. These interviewees think that if advocates were to have a **clear**

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[24] The Colombian Confederation of NGOs, formed by 1,000 small to medium-sized NGOs. See http://www.ccong.org.co/index.htm

interlocutor/ representative (person or organisation) who takes their views to decision makers, that constraint would be significantly reduced:

> *'In Guatemala, civil society has a mechanism of representation and coordination called 'Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil'. There you have trade unions, NGOs, social movements, churches, etc. They elect representatives through assemblies and have a board of directors, so when you are going to speak to civil society you have a concrete interlocutor to speak to; you have a point of reference (DM11).*

It is interesting to note that just one interviewee commented on the importance of expertise on a specific topic as an enabler of legitimacy. As he explains:

> *'NGOs have been more focused on denying links with rebel groups than on positioning themselves as an authority on the human rights situation in the country, able to verify whether a denunciation of human rights is real. NGOs could be the first to be called, I mean, to be a serious consultative body for the United Nations or for the embassies' (DM6).*

4.3.4 DECISION MAKERS' IDEOLOGIES AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN

Seven interviewees (DM3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14) mention decision makers' ideologies. Six respondents refer, in particular, to **decision makers' negative opinions about the need and value of including INGOs and domestic NGOs in the donors meeting process.**

Two interviewees (DM3, 7) consider that decision makers' willingness to listen to advocates' messages is also constrained by their **need to present a good image** to the international community:

> *'Not only in Colombia but also in other countries, governments want to present a good image. It is not very comfortable for a government to admit the problems of human rights violations' (DM3).*

Decision makers' need to present a good image is also commented on in the Human Development Report for Colombia:

> *'As for government, its receptivity to the NGOs depends on whether or not their policies coincide with official ones. In fact, very often the government perceives the NGOs merely as part of the opposition'* (UNDP 2003).

One interviewee (DM7), a government representative, mentions that many donor governments choose to give resources to NGOs instead of to the Colombian government. Although no other interviewee discusses this, it may suggest that, to some extent, the **competition for aid resources** may be one of the reasons for mutual suspicion between the Colombian government and domestic NGOs. However, no further evidence confirms this point.

4.3.5 DECISION MAKERS' LEVEL OF TRUST OF ADVOCATES

Six interviewees (DM1, 3, 7, 8, 12, 13) mention **decision makers' level of trust of advocates** as a factor affecting the diffusion of advocates' messages. Two interviewees (DM1, 11) underline the role of existing **working relationships** between them and advocates (e.g. in the context of the implementation of projects in Colombia), as an enabler of trust.

According to four interviewees (DM3, 7, 8, 11), these relationships are constrained mainly by **staff turnover in decision makers' organisations**. These interviewees consider the departure of the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation (ACCI)'s director German Bula as a major constraint for developing further

relationships between advocates and the Colombian government, as the ACCI was one of the agencies in charge of the consultation process with civil society groups. As one of the interviewees put it: *'That Bula had left does not help to have a consistent process' (DM3).*

4.3.6 ADVOCATES' IDEOLOGIES

Another factor identified by interviewees as constraining access to decision makers refers to **advocates' ideologies**. This was mentioned by five interviewees (DM2, 6, 8, 9, 10), whose comments centre on the **little involvement of the Colombian government in advocates' strategies** (DM2, 6, 8); and on the **reactive nature of advocacy strategies** (DM6, 9, 10).

In relation to the **little involvement of the Colombian government in advocates' strategies**, one interviewee explains:

> *'Domestic NGOs have their strategy mistaken in the sense that they look to convince those who do not need to be convinced, those who are already convinced about what must be done (...) they come to reinforce themselves with the members of the opposition but do not approach those who are in (Colombian) government' (DM6).*

Three decision makers (DM6, 9, 10) are critical about the **reactive** - instead of proactive - **nature of advocacy strategies**:

> *'I do not see a real strategy, that they divide themselves by areas, go and work with the regions to analyse what opportunities and options exist... I do not believe that a letter signed by 20, 100 or 1000 NGOs is going to have the impact that an efficient lobby in Brussels or Washington can have' (DM10).*

One interviewee mentions as an example of the reactive nature of advocacy strategies the low attendance of donor country representatives at the 9 July 2003 meeting (six in total):

> *'If civil society wanted a meeting with donor government representatives, they should have insisted on this' (DM9).*

4.3.7 LIMITED COVERAGE BY THE COLOMBIAN MASS MEDIA

In relation to the **limited coverage by the Colombian mass media**, three interviewees (DM5, 6, 11) comment that there is not enough coverage about what domestic NGOs are doing: '*The big media have the power to veto them*' (DM6). An embassy representative pointed out that the limited coverage of NGO advocacy by the media may be exacerbated by the fact that the media have not reported the London meeting extensively, and Colombian public opinion has not been well informed about this event from the start (DM5).

> *'More marketing is necessary. There are a lot of people who do not know about La Alianza: Politicians, journalists, mass media, lots of civil society stakeholders do not know what La Alianza is'. (DM11)*

4.3.8 DECISION MAKERS' LIMITED TIME BUDGET

Two interviewees (DM5, 14) state that decision makers' willingness to listen is constrained by **decision makers' limited time budget**, and not by of lack of interest:

> *'It is sometimes very hard to get people for more than one day (...) It is the difficulty in some respects of getting the time of senior people and foreign ministers who are not only responsible for the relationship with Colombia, but many of them for the whole of the Americas, and some of them for much of the rest*

of the world as well, and at the time when there was much going on as well in other parts of the world' (DM14).

4.3.9 DURATION OF ADVOCATES' DECISION MAKING

One interviewee (DM11) argues that INGOs' and NGOs' decision making procedures are not agile, take a long time and use consultation too much: '*It seems that NGOs have to put more trust in delegating*' (DM11).

4.4 APPLICATION OF THE MODEL: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES - THE DECISION MAKERS' PERSPECTIVE

In their Information Ecology model, Davenport and Prusak distinguish three overlapping environments: The information environment; the broader organisational environment surrounding it; and the external environment (Davenport and Prusak 1997). As Davenport and Prusak acknowledge, these environments have fuzzy boundaries. As the main purpose of this research is to identify the prevailing information ecologies of advocacy communities, and the enablers and constraints most likely to affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets, enablers and constraints are grouped into two categories: Those **enablers and constraints that are beyond the direct control of the organisation**, and those **enablers and constraints that are under direct control of the organisation** and that could be modified by management, and particularly by information and knowledge management.

Following this, the enablers and constraints identified are categorised according to two environments: The **external environment** - which includes the factors beyond the organisation's control (e.g. government policies or a country's political situation) - and the **internal environment** - which includes the factors under direct control of the organisation. The internal environment refers to both factors related to a broader organisational level (e.g. the organisation's strategy or its physical arrangements) and factors particularly related to the five variables suggested for the study of the enablers and constraints (knowledge workers; knowledge politics; knowledge behaviour and culture; organisational knowledge strategy; and knowledge assets architecture).

To get some sense of the patterns in the data, the number of responses for each enabler or constraint has been counted - this number is shown in Figures 13 to 15. Based on our definitions, each enabler or constraint is associated with the external or to the internal environment. Its number of responses is allocated accordingly. When a particular enabler or constraint is linked to both the internal and the external environments, its number of responses is distributed between the two environments according to the number of responses and the researcher's interpretation of them. Despite the limitations of this sort of analysis, the counting of responses gives us a way to identify and cluster the issues that interviewees find significant.

After distributing the responses, we obtain that 46% of them refer to external enablers and constraints, while 54% refer to internal ones. 40% of responses refer to scanning, while 60% of responses refer to diffusion (see Table 10).

Table 10. Distribution of decision makers' responses by SLC phases and internal and external environments (number of responses and percentages)

SLC phases	External environment	Internal environment	Totals
Scanning	20	13	**33**
Diffusion	18	32	**50**
Totals	**38**	**45**	**83**

SLC phases	External environment	Internal environment	Totals
Scanning	24%	16%	**40%**
Diffusion	22%	38%	**60%**
Totals	**46%**	**54%**	**100%**

4.4.1 THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Table 11 shows the external factors that affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets, according to the data collected from decision makers. The last column to the right shows the **importance** of each external factor. This importance is the fraction obtained when dividing the number of responses for a particular enabler or constraint by the total number of interviewees in that group - 14 in the case of decision makers. This importance shall be used in the cross-case chapter to compare the responses from all groups of interviewees, which have different sizes.

Table 11. External enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness: Decision makers

External enablers and constraints	Total	Importance*
SCANNING		
Decision makers' ideologies Negative opinions about including INGOs and domestic NGOs	6	0.42
Unclear ownership of the donors meeting process Staff turnover in the Colombian government	5	0.35
Low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages Government officials' limited experience in donors meetings	5	0.35
Limited time for advocates' data collection	2	0.14
Delicate security situation Visits to communities to validate information are constrained	2	0.14
DIFFUSION		
Decision makers' ideologies Opinions about including INGOs and domestic NGOs Decision makers' need to present a good image Competition for aid resources	7	0.50
Decision makers' level of trust of advocates Working relationships between decision makers and advocates Staff turnover in decision makers' organisations	4	0.28
Limited coverage by the Colombian mass media	3	0.21
Decision makers' limited time budget	2	0.14
Advocates' legitimacy Presidential speech about NGOs on 9 September 2003	2	0.14

*Note: The total number of interviewees in the decision makers group is 14.

As shown in Table 11, the most evident external constraint is **decision makers' ideologies**. Decision makers' trust of advocates also emerges as a significant external factor and seems to be influenced by working relationships. The development of working relationships is still partially beyond the direct control of INGOs and domestic NGOs (e.g. because of governmental regulations and contract schemes). That is why this factor is considered within both the external and the internal environments.

The limited coverage of advocates' messages by the Colombian mass media may depend on several factors: External ones, such as political considerations; and internal ones, such as the framing and length of the message. However, the data collected from

decision makers does not refer to internal factors. Because of this, the limited coverage of advocates' messages by the Colombian mass media is considered as an external factor.

If, as the literature suggests, a single advocacy strategy (e.g. direct lobbying) is unlikely to be effective (Crosby and Orsini 1996; Hudson 2002), the limited coverage by the mass media may place serious constraints on the diffusion of the advocacy message. The choice of advocacy approach depends on whether the advocate believes that decision makers are likely to be influenced (Edwards and Hulme 1992). The analysis of INGOs' and NGOs' data may provide more insights about whether advocates opted consciously for an advocacy strategy based on direct lobbying of key people, or whether the limited coverage by the mass media is a real constraint for the diffusion of advocates' knowledge assets, in the sense that it restricts the number of people accessing that message.

As domestic NGOs are just establishing themselves as legitimate actors in the policy debate, it is not surprising that some interviewees consider that the presidential speech about NGOs on 9 September 2003 had negative consequences for incipient NGO legitimacy in Colombia. Nevertheless, three other factors mentioned by interviewees as affecting legitimacy (advocates' representativeness; advocates' interlocutor or representative; and advocates' expertise on the topic advocated) are considered within the internal environment.

4.4.2 THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Most of the enablers and constraints identified (54%) are internal ones (see Table 10). Based on our definitions of the variables in the Information Ecology model (e.g. knowledge workers, knowledge culture, etc), each enabler or constraint, and its number of responses, is allocated into a specific variable of the Information Ecology model in order to see the quantity and consistency of the patterns in the data (see Table 12). The allocation of the number of responses is based on the nature of responses of interviewees - e.g. which factors they emphasise and which they do not - and on the researcher's interpretation of the data.

Table 12. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness and the Information Ecology model: Decision makers

Internal enablers and constraints*	Total	KW	KC	KP	KA	KS
SCANNING						
Domestic NGOs' low level of trust of the Colombian government	5	5				
Advocates' knowledge gap about international cooperation NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios	5	5				
Inappropriate methods of data collection Inappropriate statistical methodology Lack of rigorous research	2					2
Advocates' organisational ideologies Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information	1		1			
DIFFUSION						
Inappropriate advocacy message framing Confrontational tone, focused on criticism Partial and biased messages Emotional and overstated messages	10		10			
Advocacy messages' low codification and abstraction Long and unfocused messages Lack of a joint advocate message	8				8	
Advocates' legitimacy Advocates' representativeness (alliance's strength) Advocates' interlocutor or representative Advocates' expertise on topic	6			6		
Decision makers' level of trust of advocates Working relationships between decision makers and advocates	2	2				
Advocates' ideologies Little involvement of the Colombian government in advocates' strategies Reactive nature of advocacy strategies	5		5			
Duration of advocates' decision making	1			1		
Total		12	16	7	8	2

*Note: The variables of our Information Ecology model are: Knowledge workers; knowledge behaviour and culture; knowledge politics; knowledge architecture; and knowledge strategy.

Most internal factors identified from decision makers' data refer to **knowledge culture** and **knowledge workers**. The most manifest internal constraints are **inappropriate advocacy message framing** and the **advocacy message's low codification and abstraction**. Does our Information Ecology model explain these enablers and constraints? The theoretical framework is validated by the data as shown in Table 13. The importance of each enabler or constraint is also presented in Table 13, for later use in the cross-case analysis chapter.

Table 13. Research framework as validated by the data from decision makers (with importance for each enabler or constraint)

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	SLC phases affected
Advocacy message framing (0.71)	KC	**Inappropriate advocacy message framing** Confrontational tone, focused on criticism Partial and biased messages Emotional and overstated messages	0.71	Diffusion
Knowledge assets degree of codification and abstraction (0.57)	KA	**Advocacy messages' low codification and abstraction** Long and unfocused messages Lack of a joint advocate message	0.57	Diffusion
Level of trust (0.49)	KW	**Domestic NGOs' low trust of the Colombian government**	0.35	Scanning
		Decision makers' trust of advocates Working relationships between decision makers and advocates	0.14	Diffusion
Legitimacy (0.42)	KP	**Advocates' legitimacy** Advocates' representativeness (alliance's strength) Advocates' interlocutor or representative Advocates' expertise on topic	0.42	Diffusion
Organisational ideologies (0.42)	KC	**Advocates' ideologies** Little involvement of the Colombian government in advocates' strategies Reactive nature of advocacy strategies	0.35	Diffusion
		Advocates' organisational ideologies Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information	0.07	Scanning
Subjective orientations and mindsets (0.35)	KW	**Advocates' knowledge gap about international cooperation** NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios	0.35	Scanning
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.14)	KS	**Inappropriate methods of data collection** Inappropriate statistical methodology Lack of rigorous research	0.14	Scanning
Decision making processes (0.07)	KP	**Duration of advocates' decision making**	0.07	Diffusion

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology model. The other initials indicate the following: KW: Knowledge workers; KC: Knowledge culture; KP: Knowledge politics; KA: Knowledge architecture; and KS: Knowledge strategy.

Table 13 shows that the research framework explains all the enablers and constraints, except one: **Methods of data collection**. Following our definition of knowledge strategy, methods of data collection is allocated under this variable. Whether this is a new potential constraint to be incorporated will depend on the analysis of the data from the other groups of respondents.

In sum, most of the internal enablers and constraints are associated with either knowledge culture (35%) or knowledge workers (27%); and most of them concentrate on the diffusion phase (71%). Knowledge culture factors affect diffusion significantly, while knowledge workers affect mostly scanning (see Table 14).

Table 14. Distribution of decision makers' responses on internal environment by the SLC and variables of the Information Ecology model

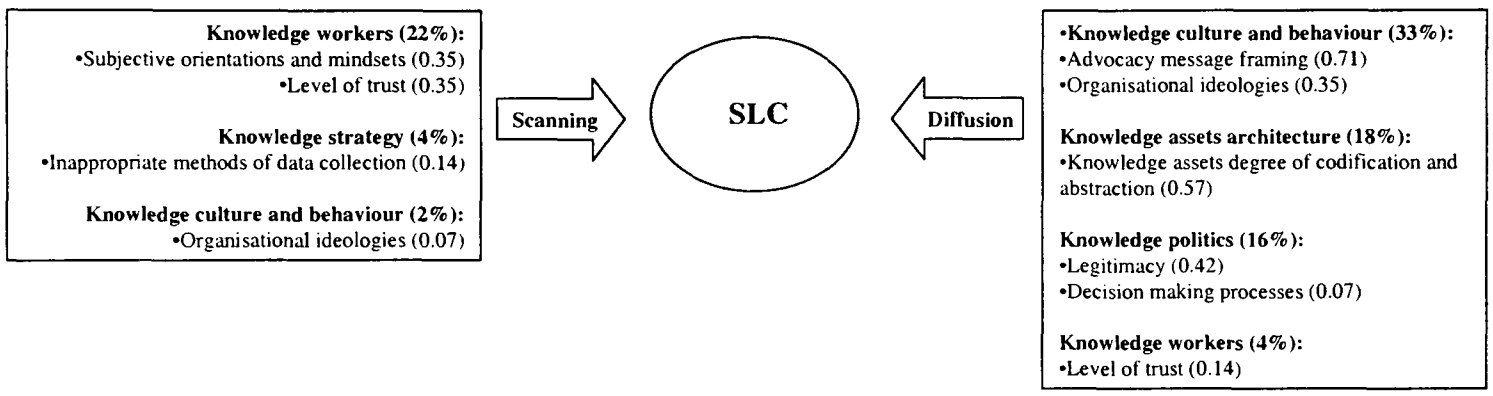
SLC phases	Information Ecology variables					Totals
	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy	
Scanning	10	1	-	-	2	13
Diffusion	2	15	7	8	-	32
Totals	**12**	**16**	**7**	**8**	**2**	**45**

SLC phases	Information Ecology variables*					Totals
	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy	
Scanning	22%	2%	-	-	4%	29%
Diffusion	4%	33%	16%	18%	-	71%
Totals	**27%**	**35%**	**16%**	**18%**	**4%**	**100%**

*Note: The percentages in this table are based on the total number of responses that refer to internal enablers and constraints (45).

Figure 14 shows a summary of the internal enablers and constraints, with their importance, identified from decision makers' data. The enablers and constraints are distributed by the phases of the Social Learning Cycle and by the variables of the Information Ecology model.

Figure 14. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness: The decision makers' perspective



The data collected shows that:

- Most enablers and constraints are of **internal nature** and focus on **diffusion**. The latter could be linked to decision makers' positions as receivers of advocacy messages.

- External factors concentrate on **diffusion**. The most prominent of these is **decision makers' ideologies**, which affects both scanning and diffusion.

- Factors associated with knowledge **culture** and knowledge **workers** constitute the majority of internal enablers and constraints (61%).

- The two most evident constraints are linked to the **advocacy message** *per se* i.e. its framing and its low degree of codification and abstraction. Decision makers perceive that the use of emotional, confrontational and long advocacy messages is not effective.

- In relation to knowledge workers, domestic NGOs' **low trust of decision makers** (i.e. the Colombian government) appears as a significant constraint, particularly in relation to scanning. Advocates' scanning is also affected by **knowledge gaps** about international cooperation.

- It is not surprising that the data from decision makers does not refer to factors such as collective incentives for learning and internal tensions between advocacy and operative staff, as these are more likely to be perceived by interviewees from INGOs and domestic NGOs.

These preliminary results will be refined after comparison with the data from the other stakeholders involved in the donors meeting process.

CHAPTER 5

ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS OF CREATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE ASSETS FOR POLICY ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS: DOMESTIC NGOS' PERSPECTIVE

Contents

- Introduction
- Enablers and constraints to scanning
- Enablers and constraints to codification and abstraction of advocacy knowledge bases
- Enablers and constraints to diffusion of the advocacy message
- Enablers and constraints to the absorption of knowledge for advocacy
- Enablers and constraints to the impacting of knowledge for advocacy
- Application of the model: External and internal environments in advocacy communities, domestic NGOs' perspective

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5.1 INTRODUCTION: THE DOMESTIC NGOS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS OF THE DONORS MEETING FOR COLOMBIA

This chapter presents and discusses the data collected in interviews and documents from the group of domestic NGOs and other civil society organisations in Colombia involved in the donors meeting process. Although there are significant divergences among domestic NGOs, their objectives in relation to the donors meeting process - and in particular to the London

Meeting - can be summarised as follows: Firstly, domestic NGOs state that international aid to Colombia must be guided (or 'conditioned') by the need to improve the human rights situation in the country and by progress in political negotiations around the internal conflict. Secondly, domestic NGOs emphasise the importance of including civil society's point of view in relation to international aid (e.g. the priorities for aid and how that aid should be invested).

Because of the nature of domestic NGOs' participation in the advocacy process around the London Meeting, questions to them focus on three main areas: a) the collection of information and knowledge to feed the advocacy message and strategy; b) the diffusion of that message to decision makers; and c) the subsequent use and impacting of the knowledge that results from their advocacy work (i.e. lessons learnt) in their organisations.

The reader will note that most of the evidence collected from domestic NGO respondents about impacting concerns the presence or absence of documents either in paper or in electronic format. This is also the case for INGOs and Aid International. Because of the research methodology used, the perception of enablers and constraints to impacting that do not refer to documentary substrata was limited. The exception to this is the role of domestic NGOs' alliances (see also in Chapter 10, section 'An assessment of this research and its limitations).

Eight interviews were undertaken for this group of stakeholders: Six with members of domestic NGOs (general directors in most cases), and two with members of domestic NGO

alliances (see Table 15). A total of eighteen documents provided by interviewees were reviewed[25]. Additional data was collected through observation during visits to these NGOs and during an eight-hour meeting hosted by La Alianza on 26 November 2003. Sources such as web sites and organisational reports were also used. Anonymity has been granted to all interviewees.

Table 15. Group of domestic NGOs involved in Donors Meeting for Colombia

Domestic NGOs involved in donors meeting process
Domestic NGOs and other civil society organisations in Colombia: INGOs' partner organisations, including religious and non-denominational groups; human rights organisations; black and indigenous communities; environmental groups; and groups working with refugees, children, poverty and peace. Among those organisations are: Antioquia Indigenous Organisation - OIA (Organisación Indígena de Antioquia), Casa de la Mujer, Cinep (Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular), Colombian Commission of Jurists - CCJ (Comisión Colombiana de Juristas), Codhes (Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento), Ecofondo, Enda, Fundación Carvajal, Fundación Corona, Fundación Social, Minga, National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia - ONIC (Organisación Nacional Indígena de Colombia), Pastoral Social, Permanent Civil Society Assembly for Peace (Asamblea Permanente de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz), Podium, Popular Institute of Education - IPC (Instituto Popular de Capacitación), Sisma Mujer, Viva la Ciudadanía. Domestic NGOs' and civil society organisations' alliances: Colombian Confederation of NGOs - CCONGs (Confederación Colombiana de ONGs); Colombia Europe United States Coalition - CCEEU; Entrepreneurs for Peace (Empresarios por la Paz), La Alianza, Planeta Paz, Redepaz.
Domestic NGOs interviewed
Domestic NGOs and other civil society organisations in Colombia Six interviews (five general directors, one member of staff) Domestic NGOs' and civil society organisations' alliances Two interviews (one general director; one member of staff)

[25] Of the 18 documents analysed, 13 are directly related to the process of the London Meeting. The remaining five documents include explanations about the nature and objectives of domestic NGOs or their alliances, and human rights reports that were not written exclusively for the London Meeting but that are used for other policy advocacy work.

5.1.1 THE MOST RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE FOR THE SUCCESS OF ADVOCACY WORK, AND THE ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO OBTAINING IT ACCORDING TO DOMESTIC NGOS

For domestic NGOs' representatives, relevant knowledge for the success of their advocacy work refers to two areas in particular: Knowledge about the affected populations and knowledge about the decision makers.

In relation to the affected populations, domestic NGOs consider it essential to know about:

- Local needs and problems, specifically the human rights situation in the communities affected by the internal conflict and the overall effects that government policies are having on these communities.

- The local civil society organisations that are in contact with affected communities: Which are these organisations? What type of work they are doing? What relationship do they have with local communities?

In relation to decision makers, domestic NGOs consider the following to be relevant knowledge:

- Donor countries' agendas of cooperation with Colombia: Donor countries' current policies in relation to Colombia, and their main interests and concerns in relation to that cooperation.

- Donor countries' representations (embassies) in Colombia: In particular, knowledge about who the representatives are; what capacity of decision making they have; what knowledge about Colombia they have; what the power balances between different countries' representations in Colombia are (i.e. who leads and who follows); and what their real commitment is to the respect of human rights and a political negotiation to the Colombian conflict.

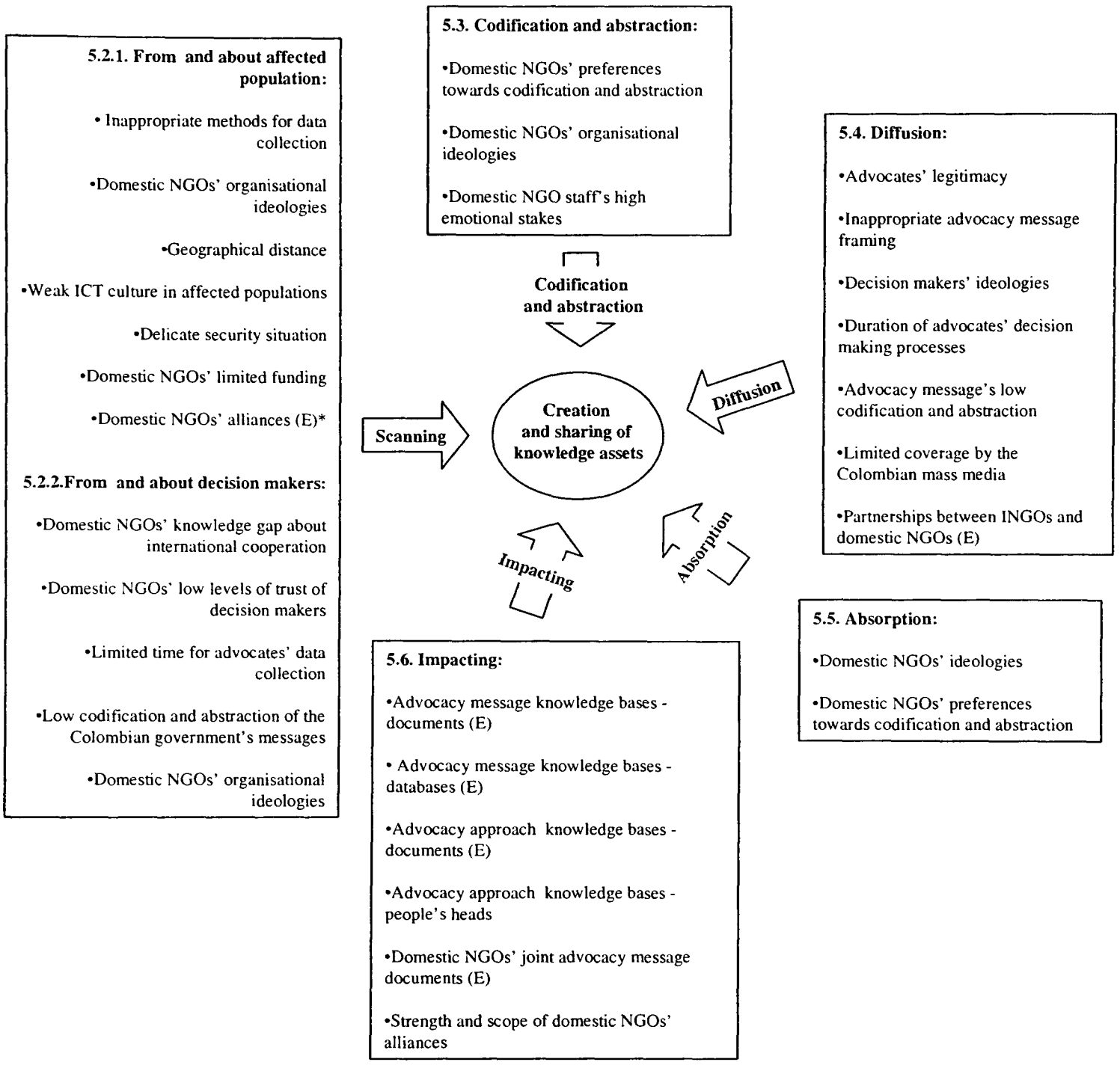
- Donors meetings mechanisms: Interviewees were not specific about this topic.

Contrary to decision makers, domestic NGOs do not mention knowledge about Colombian government programmes and results as significant for the success of their advocacy.

Interviewees considered that domestic NGOs did achieve significant results in their advocacy efforts for the Donors Meeting, especially in three areas: a) the increasing legitimacy of domestic NGOs' participation in debates about international cooperation; b) the emphasis in the London Declaration on the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations as a criterion for international aid to Colombia; and c) the increased quality of domestic NGOs' participation in the process. This latter point contradicts some decision makers' opinions.

Still, some domestic NGOs' representatives opine that the low attendance of donor governments' representatives in the 9 July meeting was unfortunate for their advocacy; and that the London Declaration does not oblige the Colombian government to fulfil its recommendations, limiting the Declaration's effectiveness. Overall, for the domestic NGOs interviewed, the creation and sharing of knowledge for the effectiveness of advocacy are constrained by diverse factors, as shown in Figure 15. The numerals in the figure indicate the sections where these factors are discussed.

Figure 15. Summary conceptual map of enablers and constraints of knowledge creation and sharing in advocacy communities: Domestic NGOs' perspective



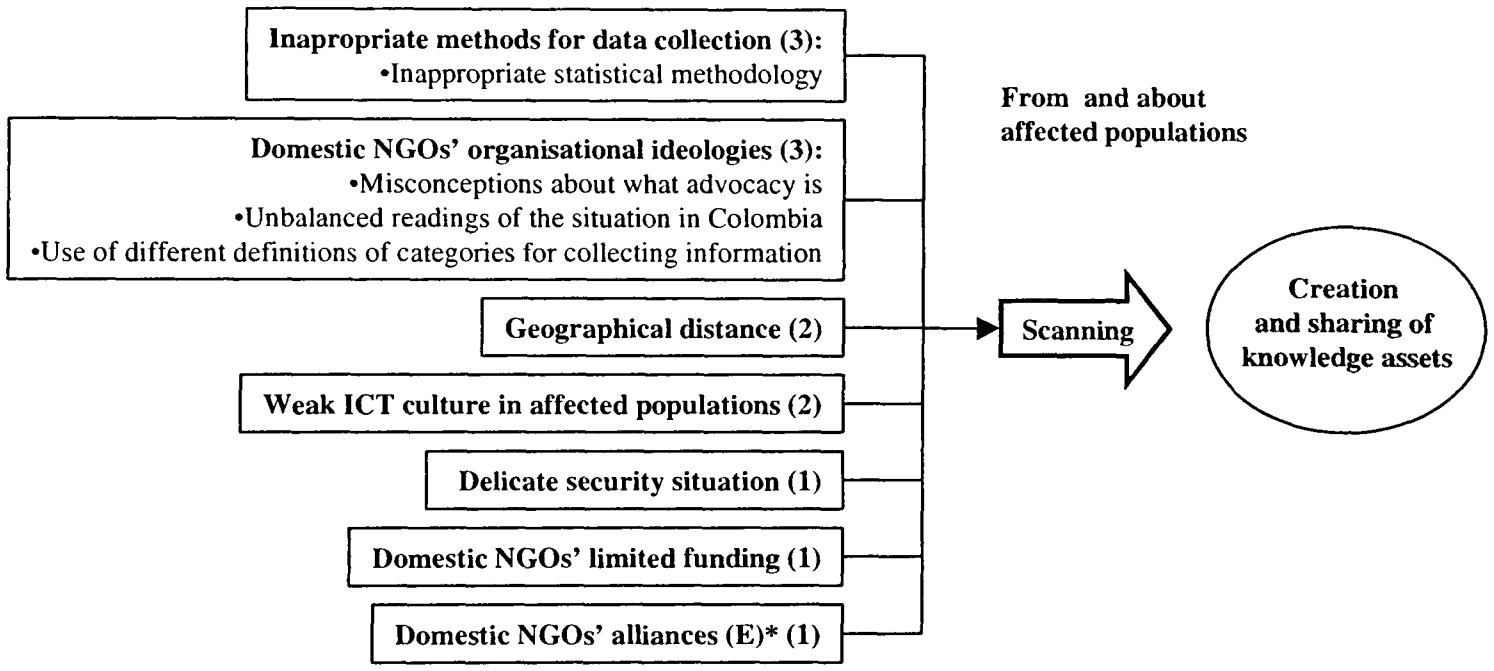
*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

5.2 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING

The constraints identified by interviewees refer to the acquisition of information and knowledge from both affected populations and decision makers.

5.2.1 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

Figure 16. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to affected populations - Domestic NGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

Five interviewees (DN2, 5, 6, 7, 8) are concerned about the quality of data collected in affected communities and think it needs to be improved. The factors affecting domestic

NGOs' scanning in relation to affected populations are: **Inappropriate methods for data collection** (three interviewees); **domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies** (three interviewees); **geographical distance** (two interviewees); **weak ICT culture in affected populations** (one interviewee); the **delicate security situation** (one interviewee); **limited funding** (one interviewee); and **domestic NGOs' alliances** (one interviewee).

5.2.1.1 Inappropriate methods for data collection

In one of the documents analysed, a domestic NGO explains the methods used to collect and validate data from affected populations:

> *'Our information comes from 20 national and local newspapers, two national journals, denunciations directly collected by us, denunciations collected by other human rights organisations, both national and local, which monitor the human rights and International Humanitarian Law situation, and reports by the authorities (...) We have implemented a system of information sharing with the authorities in charge of monitoring the human rights and International Humanitarian Law situation, with two main objectives: To validate the facts, and to establish the state of the research about human rights violations in the country (...) We also consult the local civil society organisations that work in the field and, in many cases, have direct knowledge of the events' (Document 1).*

Nonetheless, two interviewees (DN5, 6) argue that **methods for data collection** need to be more systematic and regular, as one of them explains:

> *'The quality of information is linked to the research procedures... that the information is well substantiated and produced on time (...) We need more context analysis and better monitoring' (DN5).*

According to two respondents (DN6, 8), domestic NGOs '*must make their statistics better*'.

5.2.1.2 Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies

Two interviewees (DN3, 6) consider that **organisational ideologies**, specifically misconceptions about what advocacy is, may constrain a number of domestic NGOs, especially local ones, from taking part in advocacy work:

> *'There are certain radical ideologies about the UN system that see it as an empire that wants to intervene (in Colombia) in favour of the Uribe government, and that the international human rights organisations ultimately represent the powerful states, and that is interventionism, imperialism ... so (domestic NGOs) are not interested' (DN6).*

Two directors (DN6, 7) consider that certain domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies are linked to **unbalanced readings of the situation in Colombia**:

> *'Traditional human rights organisations and peace organisations have radicalised their positions a lot, so this makes their readings about what is happening in Colombia polarised' (DN7).*

For one interviewee (DN6), the low quality of data is related to the **use of different definitions of categories for collecting information**. As he explains:

> *'I think that there are a lot of problems with the statistics. I think it is true what some people say about the (a domestic NGO's) statistics of politically motivated murders... that is barbaric. It worries me that (another domestic NGO's) database does not include kidnapping as a violation of International Humanitarian Law. This is ridiculous, and that is what the international community criticises of us, that we are not balanced, that we have our left eye closed, and that.... each of us produces a different thing (DN6).*

5.2.1.3 Geographical distance

For interviewees, consultation with affected populations is important; however, the **geographical distance** between domestic NGOs and affected populations constrains advocates from obtaining information from affected communities, which are generally located in isolated areas. Two interviewees (DN2, 5) think that this is partly why consultation is usually focused on organisations based in the capital, Bogotá.

5.2.1.4 The weak ICT culture in affected populations

In relation to the role of ICTs in consultation processes, two interviewees (DN2, 7) suggest that the constraint is not so much about lack of access to ICTs but about the **weak ICT culture in affected populations**, where access to ICTs is in place:

> *'The Internet has helped when we need to take a decision. For example, for The Alianza meeting (on 26 November), we sent to the regions a blank table, so they could fill it in with their experiences. The result is that not many of them did it - very few did it - and we have seen that most of them are interested, but do not have the time to work on it... there is not yet a strong Internet culture, so you cannot trust that they are going to check the Internet daily and that (their input) is going to contribute to the decisions' (DN2).*

5.2.1.5 The delicate security situation

The delicate security situation as a constraint was mentioned by just one interviewee (DN2). He comments that various local civil society organisations and NGOs have had their telephones tapped. He did not comment on who could be behind this.

5.2.1.6 Domestic NGOs' limited funding

According to one interviewee (DN2), **domestic NGOs' limited funding** constrains the consultation process in the sense that it restricts the number of meetings that domestic NGOs can undertake with representatives from affected populations. As he explains:

> *'We can't hold regular meetings because of funding constraints, especially meetings with NGOs in the regions. To bring those people to Bogotá is expensive and we could do it at a maximum every two or three months, therefore this also affects our speed for decision making' (DN2).*

5.2.1.7 Domestic NGOs' alliances

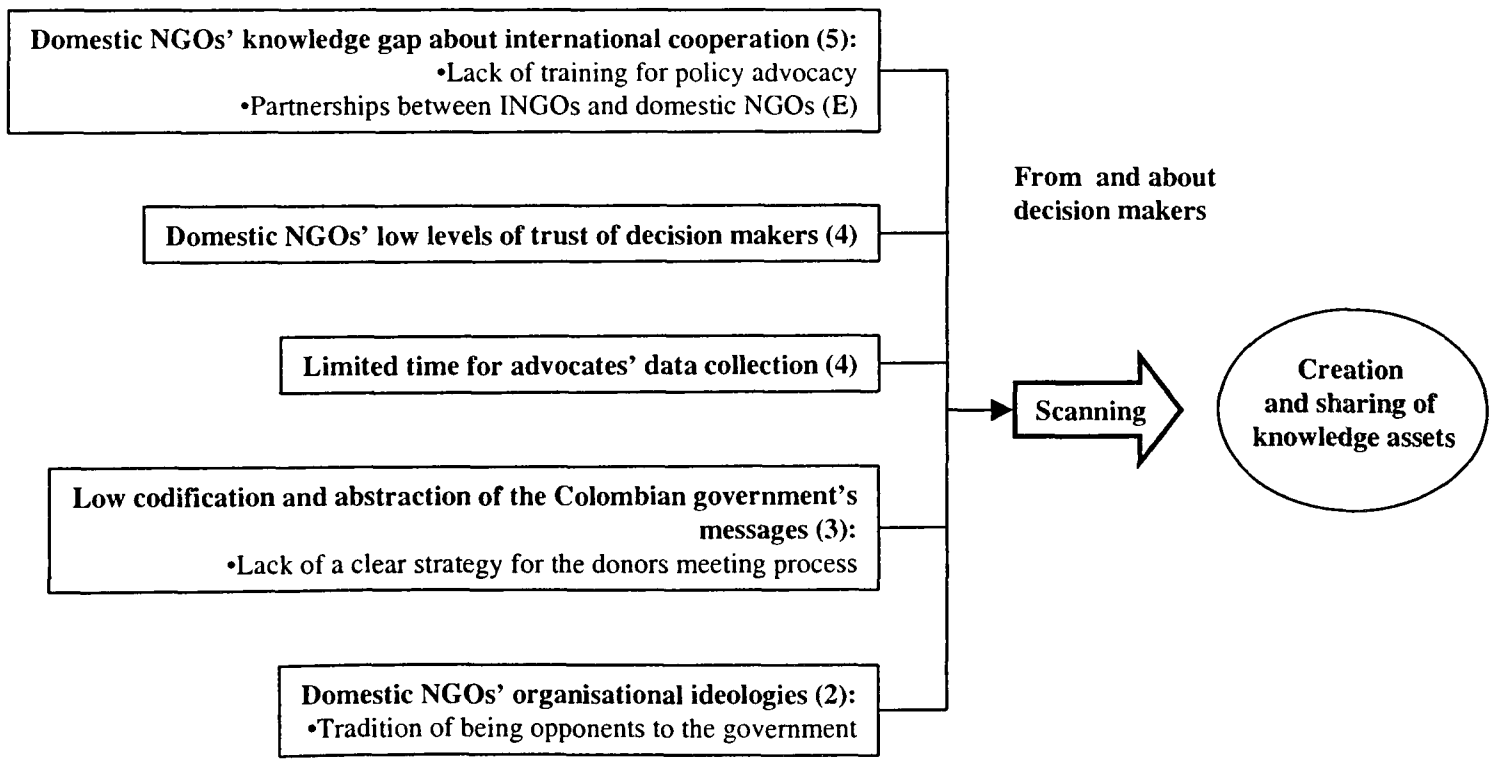
For the director of a domestic NGO (DN5), **domestic NGOs' alliances** have the potential to benefit the consultation process with the regions:

> *'I hope that the 'La Alianza' process leads to a more ample consultation. The first agreement (the domestic NGO document for the London Meeting) was an elite thing of some political sectors of (domestic) NGOs, most in Bogotá. The participation in another donors meeting should reflect a more ample consultation in the regions' (DN5).*

5.2.2 *ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO DECISION MAKERS*

Domestic NGOs' acquisition of information and knowledge from decision makers is affected by the following factors: **Domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation** (five interviewees); **domestic NGOs' low levels of trust of decision makers** (four interviewees); **limited time for advocates' data collection** (four interviewees); **low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages** (three interviewees); and **domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies** (two interviewees).

Figure 17. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to decision makers - Domestic NGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint

5.2.2.1 Domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation

Five interviewees (DN2, 3, 5, 6, 8) refer to **domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation**. A director of a domestic NGO comments:

> *'We have little information about the places we want to influence. Now we are asking ourselves how to influence European civil society. Well, we have problems there because we do not have the appropriate information about the countries, about their governments, what they are doing, what is the state of their (international) cooperation' (DN5).*

One interviewee (DN2) thinks this knowledge gap is caused by a **lack of training for policy advocacy** in domestic NGOs. For two interviewees (DN5, 6), the **partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs** contribute to closing that knowledge gap. However, these **partnerships are concentrated in Bogotá-based domestic NGOs** (DN6) and seem **focused just on the technical aspects of cooperation** (DN5), leaving aside discussion of the political issues that domestic NGOs consider so relevant for advocacy:

> *'I think that the number of people really informed (about decision makers) is three or four, a small group of people that direct human rights or peace organisations. These people have a permanent relationship with European INGOs, which do a systematic monitoring of the European Union's policies and have a permanent contact with the UN system in Bogotá. A good volume of information is concentrated there. I think that local (domestic NGOs) do not have that information' (DN6).*

5.2.2.2 Domestic NGOs' low levels of trust of decision makers

Four interviewees' answers (DN 5, 6, 7, 8) refer to the existence of domestic NGOs' **low levels of trust of decision makers** - especially the Colombian government, as some of them comment:

'I, for example, do not read Uribe's policies in such a radical way as some (domestic NGOs) do. These organisations, all the reading that they do is that the President favours paramilitaries, favours impunity, does not respect human rights, is against popular communities... they read it all within that framework (...) they are organisations that all their lives have seen the government as the enemy' (DN7).

'Many of the (domestic) NGOs felt that their participation was used to demonstrate to European governments that the Colombian government consults with everybody' (DN8).

In 10 of the 18 documents analysed, domestic NGOs' low level of trust of the Colombian government is manifest. Nevertheless, there are significant differences among domestic NGOs about this topic, as these examples show:

'We trust and believe in the commitment of the Colombian government to put into practice the recommendations of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and to advance in the reform of the Colombian institutions towards a democratic state in the whole national territory, with full participation and protection of civil society and its leaders' (CCONG 2003).

'The current (Colombian) government actions are linked to a systematic effort to neutralise trade union forces' (Document 2).

'The government (is developing) a propagandistic policy designed to disqualify social, peace, and human rights organisations for their analysis of the reality of the country and their denouncements of human rights and humanitarian law violations' (Colombian popular sector 2003).

5.2.2.3 Limited time for advocates' data collection

According to four interviewees (DN2, 3, 4, 8), another factor that constrains the acquisition of knowledge about decision makers is the **limited time for advocates' data collection**. These respondents think that the limited time is aggravated by the fact that the Colombian government gives more priority to dialogue with representatives of international governments than with domestic NGOs:

'There would be no obstacle if we wanted to find out about (decision makers), because with time we can visit the embassies (...) But in this case, first, there was no time to do this, and second, we did not know really how the participation (in the 9 July meeting) was going to be, whether the ambassadors were going to attend' (DN8).

5.2.2.4 Low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages

In a similar line to decision makers, three respondents (DN5, 6, 8) complain about the absence of a clear position of the Colombian government on its international cooperation policy. Interviewees' comments suggest that what they perceive as a **lack of a clear strategy of the donors meeting process** is linked to the **low degree of codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages** about the London Meeting. As two interviewees explain:

'There was no clear information that (the Colombian government) was interested that we took part. We do not know of a web page, something to inform... it continues to be little transparent' (DN5).

'The information from the (Colombian) government about what was going to happen (in the London Meeting), what its interests were there, and why they called civil society, was minimal (...) The official information was not clear... there was not enough information and therefore rumours emerged. If this had been much clearer and much more explicit, in an official document, possibly the rumours would not have happened ' (DN8).

5.2.2.5 Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies

In relation to **domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies**, two interviewees (DN2, 4) acknowledge that domestic NGOs and decision makers, especially the Colombian

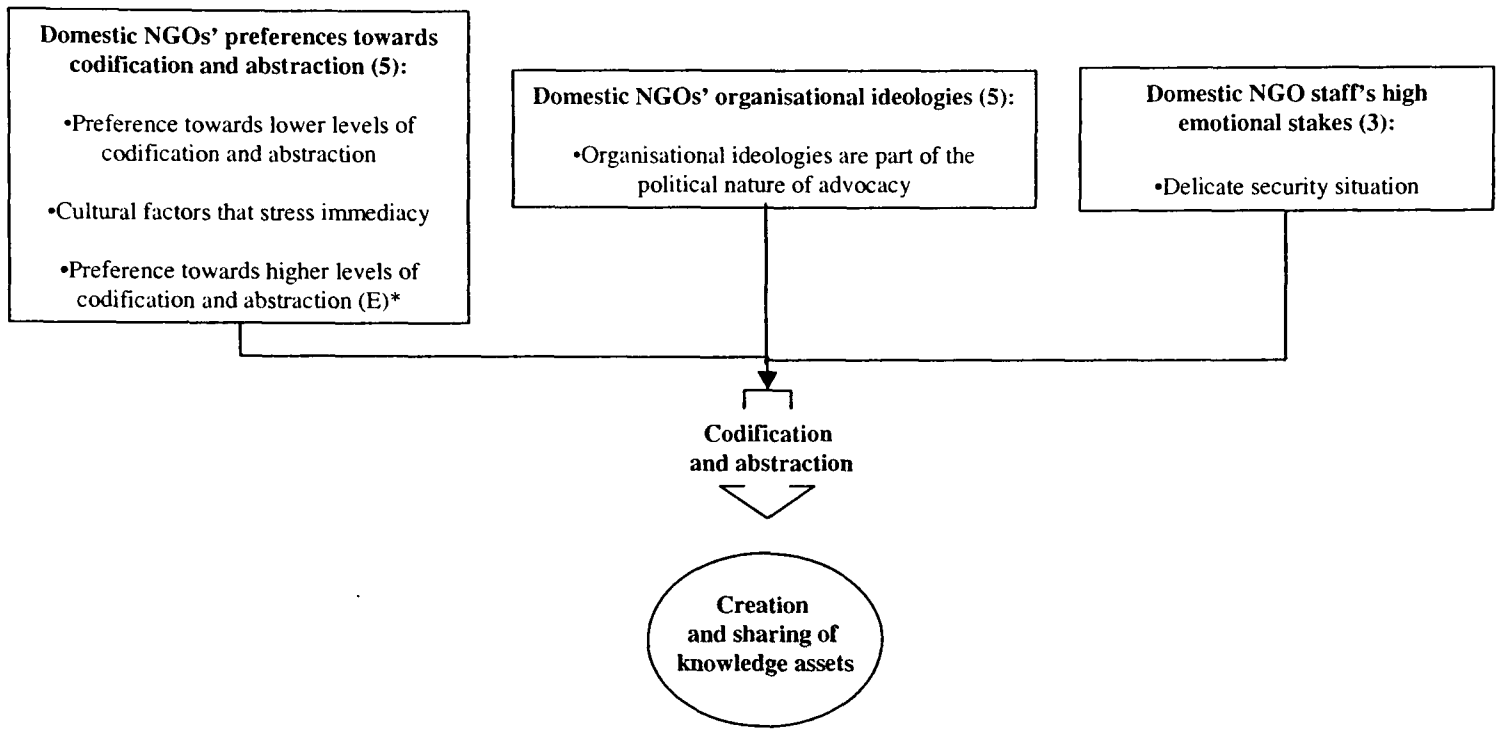
government, have different perspectives about the situation in Colombia. For DN2, there is a **tradition of opposing** the government (DN2).

5.3 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION OF ADVOCACY KNOWLEDGE BASES

Codification and abstraction often work in tandem [26]. For that reason, the findings in relation to codification and abstraction are discussed simultaneously. Factors that seem to constrain domestic NGOs' codification and abstraction processes are: Their **preferences towards codification and abstraction** (five interviewees); **domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies** (five interviewees); and **domestic NGO staff members' high emotional stakes** (three interviewees).

[26] Codification refers to the process of giving structure and coherence to insights. Abstraction refers to generalising the application of newly codified insights to a wider range of situations, reducing them to their most essential features (Boisot 1995). It was suggested previously that codification and abstraction take place in the building and shaping of knowledge bases for the advocacy message and approach, and ultimately, in the formulation of an advocacy strategy. See in Chapter 2, section: 'The Social Learning Cycle in advocacy communities'.

Figure 18. Enablers and constraints to the codification and abstraction of advocacy knowledge bases - Domestic NGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint

5.3.1 DOMESTIC NGOS' PREFERENCES TOWARDS CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

In relation to domestic NGOs' **preferences towards codification and abstraction**, the comments of three interviewees (DN2, 6, 7) suggest that knowledge relevant to advocacy tends to have **lower levels of codification and abstraction**, i.e. it is not very articulated and structured, and it is context-specific:

> *'We do an intuitive map about the conversations (with decision makers) we have here and there. But obviously that information is not very systematic and we manage it more - well, that happens in all countries - informally, more through personal relationships, friends, dinners, cocktails... so, it is difficult to socialise (this information) sometimes' (DN2).*

> *'(Domestic NGOs) that are talking based on particular anecdotes know that they are using particular anecdotes, know that they are presenting isolated cases, but they are not going to accept that, because for them it is the violated right of a human being, and that alone has ended all the rights (...) Knowledge is built when I am able to generalise based on big trends, but I cannot conclude something based on an isolated case. Of course (some domestic NGOs) do that, and they stick to those isolated cases as they were the only thing they had' (DN7).*

Two interviewees (DN7, 8) imply that domestic NGOs' preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction could be associated with **cultural factors that stress immediacy**: '*We (Colombians) like immediate results' (DN7).*

Just one of the documents analysed emphasises the value of reflection and learning within domestic NGOs. The other documents do not discuss this topic.

There is also evidence of domestic NGOs' **preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction**. Not surprisingly, this evidence comes from the directors of two domestic NGOs (DN5, 8), whose databases on poverty and human rights are renowned:

> *'We are based on research and monitoring. When we talk about the internal conflict, about employment and poverty, about development, we do that based on research that we do, and on our publications (...) all that we do has to do with our data. We have spent a good number of years producing (that data). This is our source (of information)' (DN5).*

In the documents analysed, there is evidence of three additional databases in the group of domestic NGOs interviewed, but interviewees did not refer to them. Two of those databases focus on monitoring of human rights (DN2, 6); the other focuses on successful

development projects (DN7). Nevertheless, no evidence was found about domestic NGO databases focused on methods and approaches for advocacy.

5.3.2 *DOMESTIC NGOS' ORGANISATIONAL IDEOLOGIES*

Organisational ideologies seem to play a significant role in the building and shaping of individual and organisational advocacy knowledge bases. For three interviewees (DN2, 6, 7) values and beliefs held by domestic NGOs do influence their analysis:

> *'Some groups of (domestic) NGOs, especially human rights groups, have a very strong 'anti-Uribism'. For them it is impossible to present a reasonable position, or rational position, about this government. It is an intense hate...' (DN6).*

In the document presented by a group of domestic NGOs to the London Meeting, the group acknowledges its differences with the Colombian government in the analysis of the conflict:

> *'Fundamental differences exist between our organisations' and the government's proposals in the area of (international) cooperation. This disagreement arises from a different assessment regarding the causes of the serious conflict in Colombia as well as solutions proposed to respond to the crisis' (Colombian popular sector 2003).*

An example of the role of ideologies in influencing domestic NGOs' analysis is seen in a document concerning human rights violations against trade union workers. In relation to the decrease of 73% in the number of union workers murdered during the first five months of 2003, compared with the same period of 2002, the authors comment:

'This decrease indicates, certainly, an advance in union workers' human rights. However, to the union workers', NGOs' and our political institutions' misfortune, this decrease is basically related to the changes in the strategies of war, the mobility of the actors and, therefore, with the resolution or decrease of the armed territorial disputes in some domestic regions - and not to institutional and government policies' (Document 18).

Three interviewees (DN4, 5, 6) state that the existence of **diverse ideologies is part of the political nature of advocacy**; that objectivity in political scenarios is not possible, and that ideologies should not be considered wrong *per se*:

'The (Colombian) government is not objective. It has a political agenda, it has a political discourse, and it has some allies and some political parties that support it. Let's say we are on the other side of politics. We are organisations with a progressive discourse; we come from the left; we are not involved with political parties but we have a very politicised language; and we identify ourselves with the discourse of the left. So, all that about objectivity is rubbish because they (the governments) are not objective either' (DN6).

5.3.3 DOMESTIC NGO STAFF MEMBERS' HIGH EMOTIONAL STAKES

The third factor, mentioned by three interviewees (DN2, 6, 7), that constrains codification and abstraction is the existence of **high emotional stakes** among domestic NGO staff members, which are linked to the threats that a number of them, especially human rights NGOs, have experienced in the context of the **delicate security situation**:

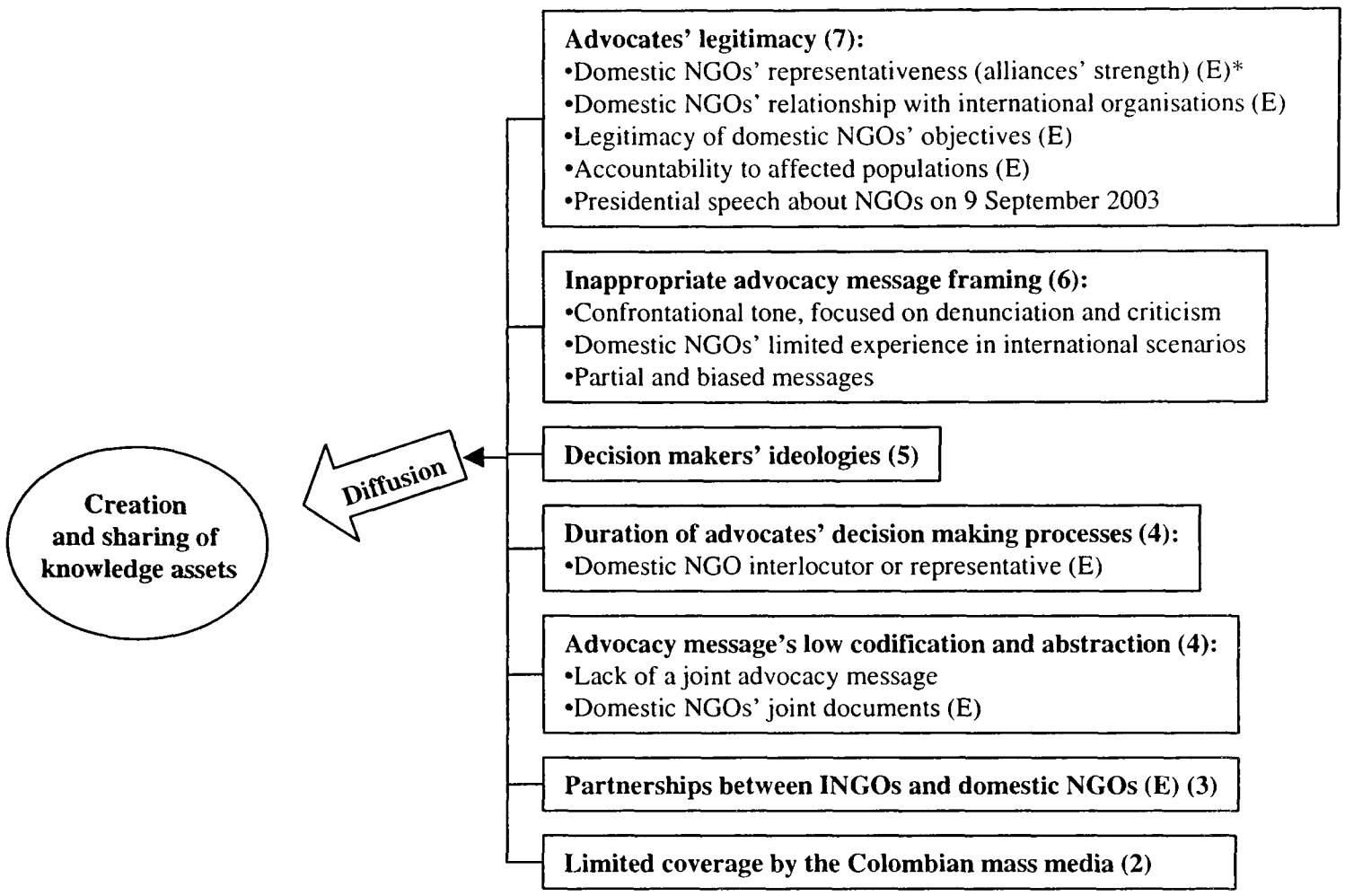
'Human rights organisations have dedicated their lives to defending their cause... for them this is their life project. People from these (human rights) organisations have been threatened, they have had to leave the country' (DN7).

In four of the 18 documents analysed, the high emotional stakes of some domestic NGOs' staff members is evident in the tone and words used.

5.4 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE DIFFUSION OF THE ADVOCACY MESSAGE

The factors affecting the diffusion of the advocacy message that emerge from domestic NGO interviews can be grouped as follows: **Advocates' legitimacy** (seven interviewees); **inappropriate advocacy message framing** (six interviewees); **decision makers' ideologies** (five interviewees); **duration of advocates' decision making processes** (four interviewees); **advocacy message's low codification and abstraction** (four interviewees); **limited coverage by the Colombian mass media** (three interviewees); and the **partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs** (two interviewees).

Figure 19. Enablers and constraints to the diffusion of the advocacy message - Domestic NGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint

5.4.1 ADVOCATES' LEGITIMACY

Constraints associated with advocates' legitimacy are mentioned by seven of the eight interviewees. For domestic NGOs, their legitimacy is a key leverage factor when seeking access to decision makers or disseminating their advocating message. Five factors influencing domestic NGOs' legitimacy are identified from interviewees' answers: **Domestic NGOs' representativeness** (five interviewees); **domestic NGOs' relationships with international organisations** (three interviewees); the **legitimacy of domestic NGOs'**

objectives (one interviewee); the **accountability to affected populations** (one interviewee); and the **presidential speech about NGOs** on 9 September 2003 (one interviewee).

5.4.1.1 Domestic NGOs' representativeness

As interviewees explain, decision makers question advocates' legitimacy on the ground of their level of **representativeness -** or the **strength and scope of their alliances**. For five interviewees (DN1, 2, 3, 4, 7), there has been some progress as domestic NGOs aim to increase their legitimacy by coordinating themselves and by involving other sectors of civil society in those alliances:

> *'Always (our) legitimacy is questioned. They (decision makers) say: 'Well, you are 100 organisations, but there are 3,000 civil society organisations' (...) Our way to overcome those questions is by saying: 'We are not representative of all civil society'. It is to acknowledge what we are, without pretending to be more than what we are. We are a sector of civil society, and we are legitimate, not only because we are a very representative sector, but, in our case (a domestic NGO alliance), we consider ourselves to be a very representative sector because of our diversity: Peasants, the black and indigenous communities; women and trade union organizations, etc... there is a lot of diversity' (DN2).*

Despite some progress, the polarisation of the non-profit sector in Colombia is evident in Uribe's government. Roughly, domestic NGOs are divided among those with supportive or moderate views about government policies and those with more critical views. In this climate, constraints on the strength of NGO alliances and their representativeness still remain. Respondents refer specifically to **domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies** (DN1, 3, 7, 8), and to the **distrust among domestic NGOs** (DN1, 2, 3, 7). Differences in

domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies are manifested specifically in their position on the conditionality of international aid to Colombia, and in how organisations analyse the internal conflict:

> *'We cannot be ambiguous about the humanitarian topic. We cannot be ambiguous, or be silent, or ignore guerrilla activities that affect the life of communities, while only emphasising the activities (violations of human rights) of one side (paramilitaries). This has been a problem in our alliances' (DN1).*

In relation to **distrust among domestic NGOs**, interviewees think either that distrust is understandable in a context of war, or that it is competition for leadership that creates distrust and affects alliances:

> *'In Colombia, trust has decreased a lot. First, because the war makes us trust others less; and second, because of competition for leadership (...) La Alianza and the Colombia Europe United States Coalition (CCEEU[27]) are competing for leadership of this (donors for Colombia) process. Many times, because of the need for prominence, or simply jealousy, we stop important processes' (DN1).*

5.4.1.2 Domestic NGOs' relationships with international organisations

Domestic NGOs' relationships with international organisations such as the UN are a significant source of legitimacy for them, according to three respondents (DN1, 3, 7). In the document 'Colombian civil society's coincidences', which contains the common points between domestic NGOs and representatives of the private sector, the meaning of the role of the UN is highlighted:

[27]The CCEEU is a coalition of 94 Colombian and international human rights NGOs formed in 1995, whose mandate is to report to the UNHCHR regarding the situation in Colombia. Source: http://www.ddhhcolombia.org

'Civil society organisations acknowledge the UN as a global entity, with ample experience in helping in conflict resolution and war. The UN's presence in Colombia is of first importance...' (2003).

5.4.1.3 Other factors affecting domestic NGOs' legitimacy

One interviewee (DN2) underlines that domestic NGOs' legitimacy is based on the **legitimacy of domestic NGOs' objectives** (e.g. the protection of human rights). As he explains:

'We do not need to be 3,000, 4,000 or 10,000 people to defend legitimate interests that the world community is defending. If we are defending international treaties of human rights, we do not need to be 4,000 to be listened to' (DN2).

For another interviewee (DN3), domestic NGOs' legitimacy comes from involving the affected local populations in the debate (i.e. **accountability to affected populations**).

5.4.2 INAPPROPRIATE ADVOCACY MESSAGE FRAMING

Six interviewees (DN1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8) consider that the diffusion of the advocacy message is threatened by **inappropriate advocacy message framing**. Three main constraints are underlined: A **confrontational tone, focused on denunciation and criticism** (six interviewees); **domestic NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios** (three interviewees); and the use of **partial or biased messages** (one interviewee).

In contrast to decision makers, interviewees from domestic NGOs do not mention the use of emotional and overstated messages as a constraint. However, of the 18 documents analysed, four make use of overstated messages, for example:

> *'Considered as a whole, (Colombian) government policy is based on the non-compliance of agreements established with the international community in the area of human rights and humanitarian law' (Colombian popular sector 2003).*

> *'Since Uribe has been president, a radical change in relation to the treatment of industrial disputes has happened: Instead of dialogue and negotiation with trade unions, the government has made illegitimate and declared illegal all trade union actions' (Document 2).*

5.4.2.1 Confrontational tone focused on denunciation and criticism

According to one interviewee (DN2), some domestic NGOs think that criticism is likely to have more 'political impact' than proposals. Nevertheless, six interviewees (DN1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8) consider that the regular use of criticism and the focus on denunciation has a negative effect on the impact of their advocacy message:

> *'The tone (of the message) is very important. The problem is that civil society organisations here (in Colombia) suffer a lot of social and political repression, so when they have a space like this (the London Meeting), they have anger accumulated (...) Obviously we have to work with them about that, to make them understand that this is not the space to do this type of thing' (DN2).*

> *'A mistake that I think happened there was that we did not go (to the London Meeting) with clear proposals, but with some diagnoses and some denunciations that were very difficult to share (among us) (...) They (a sector of domestic NGOs) attack the (Colombian government) a lot. There was a certain tone, style, phrases, dogmas and extremisms... I read them (the denunciations) and thought that there are some true things, but not all of them are true' (DN7).*

For three of these six interviewees (DN1, 2, 8), the use of a confrontational tone is linked to **domestic NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios.**

Of the 18 documents analysed, five of them use a confrontational tone and are focused on denunciations. Yet, 14 of them include some sort of proposal for action in addition to the denunciations. During the Alianza meeting on 26 November 2003, domestic NGOs were more focused on presenting evidence against the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations by the Colombian government than on lobbying for a particular proposal (Document 6).

5.4.2.2 Partial and biased messages

One interviewee (DN6) considers that domestic NGOs' advocacy messages are partial (i.e. too focused on human rights) and that that may be affecting their impact. As he states:

> *'The document (by domestic NGOs for the London Meeting) was presented more like a document about human rights. The perspective (of a domestic human rights NGO) weighed a lot on this. They do not manage to see things from a more global political framework and are too focused on the human rights situation' (DN6).*

Of the 18 documents analysed, nine focus on human rights.

5.4.3 DECISION MAKERS' IDEOLOGIES

According to five interviewees (DN1, 2, 3, 6, 7), some decision makers are not interested in listening to what domestic NGOs have to say. Evidence of this is the low attendance of donor governments' representatives at the meeting on 9 July 2003, or the low level of

interest of Colombian government officials in 'engaging in dialogue' when they attend NGO meetings:

> *'This is a (Colombian) government that does not admit criticism. It is a government that does not listen to you, that is constantly seeing the enemy in you. This government has not been the most favourable towards the organisation or the capacity of NGOs' (DN7).*

In some of the documents analysed there is additional evidence of decision makers' unwillingness to listen, as one of a NGO alliance document states:

> *'During the last years, diverse civil society initiatives have promoted humanitarian agreements (...) The Colombian government has shown little interest in this type of proposals. On 27 October (2003), German Bula said in relation to the agreements of the London Meeting: 'If there is any agreement, that is not an agreement by the Colombian government'. In addition, Bula said that the London Declaration is 'unilateral' (...) On 4 November (2003), the Defence Minister said before Congress that the London Declaration was not a legally binding document' (Document 6).*

According to three interviewees (DN2, 3, 7), examples of ideas and beliefs held by decision makers that constrain the diffusion of NGOs' advocacy messages are the **prejudices against NGOs**; the **'naïve' ideas about the conflict in Colombia**; and officials' **firm belief in the positive impact of government policies**.

5.4.4 DURATION OF ADVOCATES' DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

For four interviewees (DN 1, 2, 3, 5), the need to achieve consensus among domestic NGOs requires considerable amounts of time. Consensus is seen as a source of legitimacy, but respondents argue that it becomes a significant constraint when defining joint messages:

'Sometimes when in these spaces (domestic NGO alliances) there is no consensus, we cannot advance. Just one (domestic NGO) can damage the will of fifty. That does not work (...) the need for consensus must not stop us. There have been spaces where people have not been able to agree on a first declaration because in five years they have not achieved consensus' (DN1).

According to the director of a domestic NGO (DN5), decision making processes of NGO alliances would be improved by electing a **domestic NGO interlocutor or representative**.

5.4.5 ADVOCACY MESSAGE'S LOW CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Three interviewees (DN2, 3, 8) think that a **lack of a joint advocacy message** is a significant constraint. As one of them explains:

'We need a minimum political agreement... some initial points to put on the table. I think that there is no useful agreement about these things yet' (DN8).

Two respondents (DN1, 8) consider that **domestic NGOs' joint documents** have facilitated the diffusion of their message. For the London Meeting, representatives of domestic NGOs prepared two documents: 'Political settlement and democracy: The way forward' by human rights and peace NGOs (Colombian popular sector 2003); and 'Some criteria and proposals for international cooperation with Colombia' (CCONG 2003) by the CCONG. The role played by the former document in strengthening La Alianza is evident in the following extracts from La Alianza's official presentation and from a document presenting its working plan, respectively:

'(La Alianza) is an inclusive coalition of non-governmental organisations, social movements and peace initiatives that exists for undertaking international action based on a common document presented at the London Meeting (...) This group (La

Alianza) is formed by the organisations that took part in the London Meeting and is open to those organisations that share the views of the initial document[28]*, the character and objectives of this invitation' (La Alianza 2003).*

'(Describing the short-term strategy): To consolidate and widen the group of civil society organisations that participated in different scenarios and spaces of the London Meeting, which already has a document of agreement as the axis of the internal relationships of the group and of its external relationships' (La Alianza 2003).

5.4.6 LIMITED COVERAGE BY THE COLOMBIAN MASS MEDIA

Three interviewees (DN3, 5, 6) refer to the **limited coverage by the Colombian mass media** of both the advocacy message and the process of the donors meeting. Two interviewees state that when there is coverage, there have been inaccuracies about the events reported (DN5, 6).

5.4.7 PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN INGOS AND DOMESTIC NGOS

According to two interviewees (DN5, 8), the **partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs** enable domestic NGOs to gain access to the London Meeting, in terms of both facilitating participation in the debates and providing the necessary funding for the trip to the UK. Nevertheless, according to one interviewee (DN7), that funding was not fairly distributed among domestic NGOs.

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[28] That document is: Colombian Popular Sector (2003) 'Political settlement and democracy: The way forward', London. It was presented for the London Meeting on 9 and 10 July 2003.

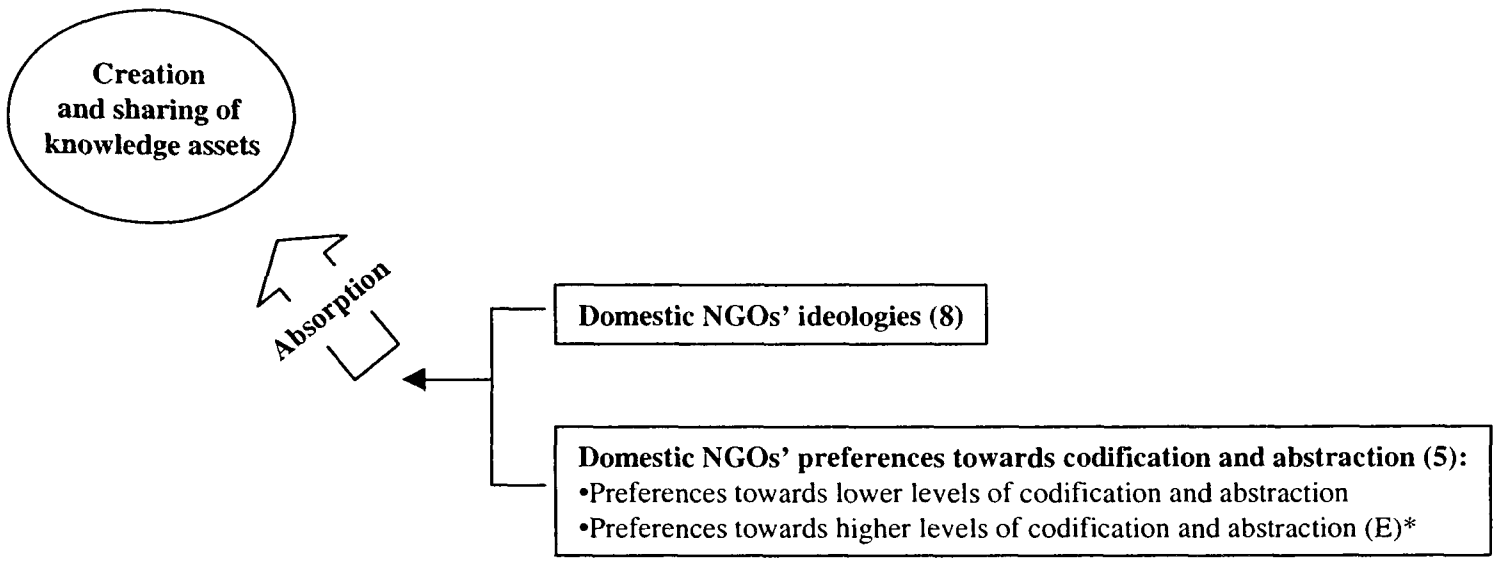
According to a director of a domestic NGO (DN8), INGOs in Colombia should have a more active role in improving the advocacy capabilities of domestic NGOs.

5.5 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE ABSORPTION OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ADVOCACY

In relation to advocacy, absorption refers to the use of knowledge relevant to the effectiveness of advocacy in situations different to those that originated that knowledge (Boisot 1995). Absorption takes place during and after the implementation of the advocacy strategy. Boisot argues that the absorption of new knowledge is slowed down or blocked when it threatens values and beliefs held (ideologies). On other occasions, the blockages originate in the cognitive orientation of individuals (e.g. preferences towards codification and abstraction).

The factors affecting the absorption of knowledge from domestic NGOs are: **Domestic NGOs' ideologies** (eight interviewees), and **domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** (five interviewees).

Figure 20. Enablers and constraints to the absorption of knowledge for advocacy - Domestic NGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint

5.5.1 DOMESTIC NGOS' IDEOLOGIES

As seen before, **domestic NGOs' ideologies** play a significant role in constraining the acquisition of knowledge from and about decision makers, according to six interviewees (DN2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Constraints are particularly a result of NGOs' traditional opposition to governments, and the low level of NGOs' trust of decision makers. These ideologies appear to influence the building and shaping of advocacy knowledge bases (five interviewees). They also affect domestic NGOs' representativeness by restricting the strength and scope of NGOs' alliances (four interviewees). It is expected that such ideologies may be affecting the absorption of knowledge that is significant for the effectiveness of advocacy.

5.5.2 PREFERENCES TOWARDS CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

In relation to preferences towards codification and abstraction, a trend is difficult to discern: Interviewees' answers give evidence of **preferences towards both higher** (DN5, 8) **and lower** (DN2, 6, 7) **levels of codification and abstraction**. Nevertheless, there is further evidence that supports the existence to blockages of knowledge absorption:

- Domestic NGOs' advocacy strategies are still considered reactive and unsystematic by four interviewees (DN2, 3, 6, 8):

> *'A lot of times we are confident that things are going to happen just like that... that we are going to call a meeting with the international community and that they are going to attend, and that all ambassadors are going to attend (i.e. as a result, NGOs fail to take action to ensure that this does in fact turn out to be the case)' (DN2).*

- The regular use of criticism and denunciation instead of proposals in advocacy messages, although most interviewees consider that this negatively affects the diffusion of their messages (DN1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8).

- The duration of domestic NGOs' decision making processes, which affects the performance of alliances and the chances of their messages succeeding (DN1, 2, 3, 5).

- The few references about mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of advocacy in the domestic NGOs' interviewed. There is only one reference to M&E for advocacy in the documents analysed (Document 11).

- The differences of knowledge and experience in advocacy between Bogotá-based domestic NGOs and local domestic NGOs (DN2, 5, 6), which may suggest that absorption constraints are affecting local domestic NGOs more that their counterparts in Bogotá.

The data collected shows examples of successful absorption of knowledge for advocacy effectiveness. The following evidence supports this:

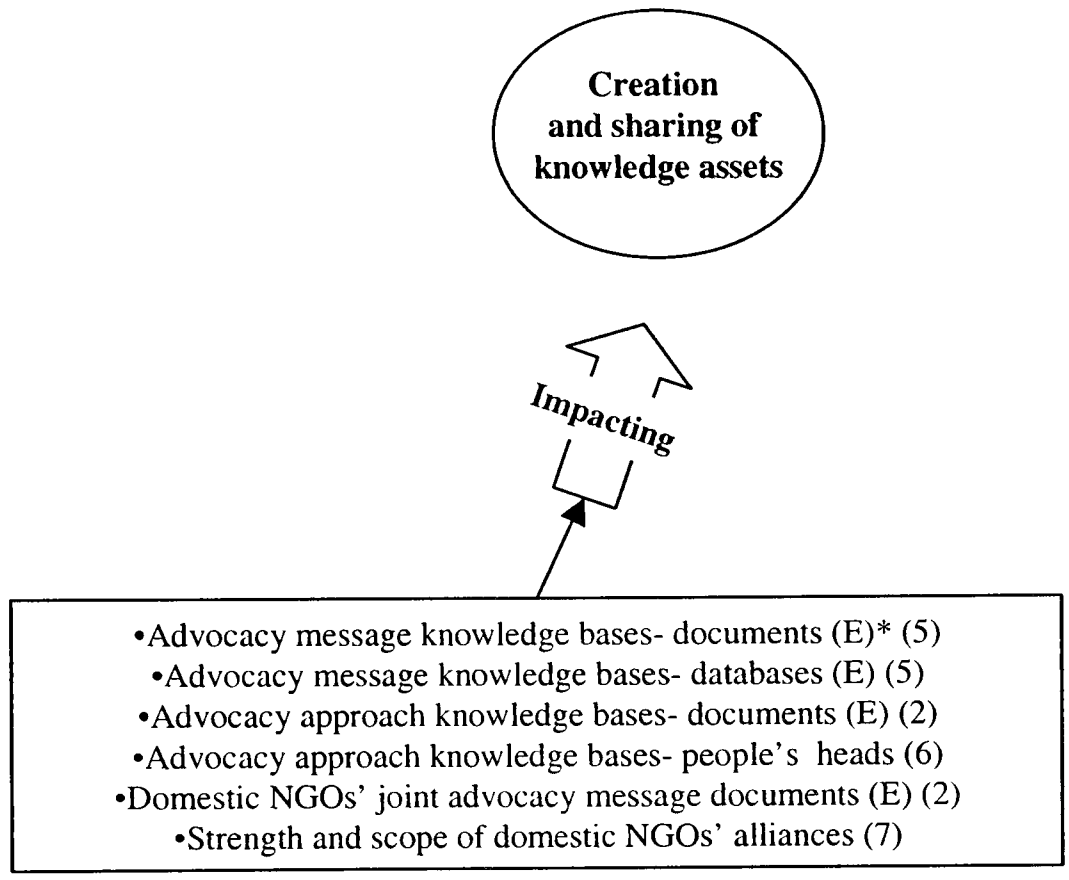
- Domestic NGOs increased awareness (after the London Meeting) of the need to obtain specific knowledge about decision makers in order to increase their potential for influencing them (DN2, 3, 5, 8).

- Domestic NGOs' efforts (after the London Meeting) to increase their legitimacy and representativeness by strengthening their alliances (DN1, 2, 3, 4, 7).

5.6 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE IMPACTING OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ADVOCACY

Impacting refers to the embedding of knowledge in artefacts, rules or in behavioural patterns (Boisot 1995). In advocacy communities, impacting takes place during and after the implementation of the advocacy strategy. According to Boisot, the lack of a suitable physical substrate can become a source of blockage for the impacting of knowledge.

Figure 21. Enablers and constraints to the impacting of knowledge for advocacy - Domestic NGOs' perspective



Note: (E) indicates an enabler; the absence of (E) indicates a constraint

In relation to impacting, the data collected shows the following:

- In five cases (DN1, 2, 3, 6, 7), advocacy message knowledge bases are mainly based on filed **documents and reports**. In two cases (DN5, 8), advocacy message knowledge bases take the form of **databases**. As seen before, in the documents analysed there is evidence of three additional databases within the domestic NGOs interviewed (DN2, 6, 7). All five databases are focused on knowledge relevant for the advocacy message.

- There is evidence of advocacy approach knowledge bases in two of the domestic NGOs interviewed (DN3, 7), in the form of documents with guidelines about how to advocate.

- There is no additional evidence of the embedding of advocacy approach knowledge (e.g. advocacy methods and strategies) in documents, databases or explicit organisational rules. It is assumed that this knowledge is embedded in the heads of organisations' staff.

- The **use of joint advocacy message documents by domestic NGOs** in the London Meeting is underlined by two interviewees (DN1, 8). However, three interviewees (DN2, 3, 8) think that domestic NGOs still need to agree a joint advocacy message.

- The **creation and strengthening of La Alianza** could be seen as a way in which domestic NGOs' knowledge concerning the need to increase their legitimacy and representativeness has been embedded. As seen before, five interviewees (DN1, 2, 3, 4, 7) consider that there has been progress in coordinating themselves, and in involving other sectors of civil society. However, six interviewees (DN1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8) mention serious constraints to the strength of those alliances, such as different ideologies and distrust among domestic NGOs.

5.7 APPLICATION OF THE MODEL: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES - DOMESTIC NGOS' PERSPECTIVE

As in Chapter 4, the enablers and constraints identified in the data are allocated into the external or the internal environment, based on whether the specific enabler or constraint is, respectively, beyond or under direct control of the advocacy communities. The number of responses for each enabler or constraint is allocated accordingly in order to get a sense of the patterns in the data. When a particular enabler or constraint is linked to both the internal and the external environments, its number of responses is distributed between the two environments.

While 26% of responses refer to external enablers and constraints, 74% refer to internal ones. 27% of responses refer to scanning, and an equal percentage of responses refer to diffusion (see Table 16).

Table 16. Distribution of domestic NGOs' responses by SLC phases and internal and external environments

Number of responses			
SLC phases	**External environment**	**Internal environment**	**Totals**
Scanning	13	18	31
Codification and abstraction	7	6	13
Diffusion	10	21	31
Absorption	-	13	13
Impacting	-	27	27
Totals	**30**	**85**	**115**

Percentages			
SLC phases	**External environment**	**Internal environment**	**Totals**
Scanning	11%	16%	27%
Codification and abstraction	6%	5%	11%
Diffusion	9%	18%	27%
Absorption	-	11%	11%
Impacting	-	23%	23%
Totals	**26%**	**74%**	**100%**

5.7.1 THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The external factors that affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets - and their importance[29] - according to the data collected from domestic NGOs, are:

Table 17. External enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness: Domestic NGOs

External enablers and constraints	Total	Importance*
SCANNING		
Limited time for advocates' data collection	**4**	0.50
Low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages Lack of a clear strategy for the donors meeting process	**3**	0.37
Geographical distance	**2**	0.25
Weak ICT culture in affected populations	**2**	0.25
Delicate security situation	**1**	0.12
Domestic NGOs' limited funding	**1**	0.12
CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION		
Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies Organisational ideologies are part of the political nature of advocacy	**3**	0.37
Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction Cultural factors that stress immediacy	**2**	0.25
Domestic NGO staff members' high emotional stakes Delicate security situation	**2**	0.25
DIFFUSION		
Decision makers' ideologies	**5**	0.62
Limited media coverage by the Colombian mass media Media coverage is not accurate	**3**	0.37
Advocates' legitimacy Domestic NGOs' relationship with international organisations (E) Presidential speech about NGOs on 9 September 2003	**2**	0.25

*Note: The total number of interviewees in the domestic NGOs group is eight.

The most evident external constraint in the domestic NGO data is **decision makers' ideologies**, which mainly affects diffusion. This result coincides with the data from

[29] The importance is obtained by dividing the number of responses for each enabler or constraint by the total number of interviewees in that particular group. For domestic NGOs, the total number of interviewees is eight.

decision makers. In second place is the limited time for advocates' data collection, which affects scanning.

Low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages emerges again as a constraint to scanning, as well as the limited media coverage by the Colombian mass media. The influence of external factors in what can be considered internal constraints also emerges. These include the role of cultural factors in influencing domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction, and the pressure of the delicate security situation on domestic NGO staff members' emotional stakes.

5.7.2 THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Once again, most of the enablers and constraints identified (74%) are internal ones, compared to 26% that are external. After allocating each enabler or constraint, and its number of responses, into a specific variable of the Information Ecology model, we obtain Table 18. When an enabler or constraint is linked to two or more variables of the Information Ecology model, the relation between a specific component of that enabler or constraint and an Information Ecology variable is indicated, and its number of responses is allocated accordingly.

Table 18. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness and the Information Ecology model: Domestic NGOs

Internal enablers and constraints*	Total	KW	KC	KP	KA	KS
SCANNING						
Domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation	5	2		2		1
Lack of training for policy advocacy						1
Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)**				2		
Domestic NGOs' low levels of trust of decision makers - especially the Colombian government	4	4				
Inappropriate methods for data collection	3					3
Inappropriate statistical methodology						
Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies (scanning from affected populations)	3		3			
Misconceptions about what advocacy is						
Unbalanced readings of the situation in Colombia						
Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information						
Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies (scanning from decision makers)	2		2			
Tradition of opposing the government						
Domestic NGOs' alliances (E)	1			1		
CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION						
Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction	3	3				
Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction						
Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E)						
Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies	2		2			
Domestic NGO staff members' high emotional stakes	1	1				
DIFFUSION						
Inappropriate advocacy message framing	6		6			
Confrontational tone, focused on denunciation and criticism						
Domestic NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios						
Partial and biased messages						
Advocates' legitimacy	5			5		
Domestic NGOs' representativeness (alliances' strength)						
Domestic NGOs' relationship with international organisations (E)						
Legitimacy of domestic NGOs' objectives (E)						
Accountability to affected populations (E)						
Duration of advocates' decision making processes	4			4		
Domestic NGO interlocutor or representative (E)						
Advocacy message's low codification and abstraction	4				4	
Lack of a joint advocacy message						
Domestic NGOs' joint documents (E)						
Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)	2			2		
ABSORPTION						
Domestic NGOs' ideologies	8		8			
Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction	5	5				
Preferences towards lower levels of codification and abstraction						
Preferences towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E)						
IMPACTING						
Strength and scope of domestic NGOs' alliances	7			7		
Strength and scope of domestic NGOs' alliances (some progress) (E)						
Strength and scope of domestic NGOs' alliances (constraints)						
Advocacy approach knowledge bases - people's heads	6				6	
Advocacy message knowledge bases - documents (E)	5				5	
Advocacy message knowledge bases - databases (E)	5				5	
Advocacy approach knowledge bases - documents (E)	2				2	
Domestic NGOs' joint advocacy message documents (E)	2				2	
Total	85	15	21	21	24	4

*Note: The variables of our Information Ecology model are: Knowledge workers; knowledge behaviour and culture; knowledge politics; knowledge architecture; and knowledge strategy.

**Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint

Most of the internal enablers and constraints identified from domestic NGO data refer to **knowledge architecture** - mainly knowledge assets substrata. Knowledge culture and knowledge politics have an equal number of responses. Does the Information Ecology model explain this new set of data? Table 19 shows how the theoretical framework is validated by the evidence collected in domestic NGOs. The importance of each enabler or constraint is presented, for later use in the cross-case analysis chapter.

Table 19. Research framework as validated by the data from domestic NGOs (with importance for each enabler or constraint)

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	SLC phases affected
Knowledge assets' substrata (2.49)	KA	**Advocacy approach knowledge bases - people's heads**	0.75	Impacting
		Advocacy message knowledge bases - documents (E)	0.62	Impacting
		Advocacy message knowledge bases - databases (E)	0.62	Impacting
		Advocacy approach knowledge bases - documents (E)	0.25	Impacting
		Domestic NGOs' joint advocacy message documents (E)	0.25	Impacting
Organisational ideologies (1.87)	KC	**Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies**	1.00	Absorption
		Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies Misconceptions about what advocacy is Unbalanced readings of the situation in Colombia Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information Tradition of opposing the government	0.62	Scanning
		Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies	0.25	Codification and abstraction
Alliances and partnerships (1.49)	KP	**Strength and scope of domestic NGOs' alliances** Strength and scope of domestic NGOs' alliances (some progress) (E) Strength and scope of domestic NGOs' alliances (constraints)	0.87	Impacting
		Domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)*	0.25	Scanning
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)	0.25	Diffusion
		Domestic NGOs' alliances (E)	0.12	Scanning
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (0.99)	KW	**Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction**	0.62	Absorption
		Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction	0.37	Codification and abstraction
Advocacy message framing (0.75)	KC	**Inappropriate advocacy message framing** Confrontational tone, focused on denunciation and criticism Domestic NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios Partial and biased messages	0.75	Diffusion
Legitimacy (0.62)	KP	**Advocates' legitimacy** Domestic NGOs' representativeness (alliances' strength) Domestic NGOs' relationship with international organisations (E) Legitimacy of domestic NGOs' objectives (E) Accountability to affected populations (E)	0.62	Diffusion
Knowledge assets degree of codification and abstraction (0.50)	KA	**Advocacy message's low codification and abstraction** Lack of a joint advocacy message Domestic NGOs' joint documents (E)	0.50	Diffusion
Level of trust (0.50)	KW	**Domestic NGOs' low levels of trust of decision makers**	0.50	Scanning
Decision making processes (0.50)	KP	**Duration of advocates' decision making processes** Domestic NGO interlocutor or representative (E)	0.50	Diffusion
Subjective orientations and mindsets (0.37)	KW	**Domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation**	0.25	Scanning
		Domestic NGO staff members' high emotional stakes	0.12	Codification and abstraction
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.37)	KS	**Inappropriate methods for data collection** Inappropriate statistical methodology	0.37	Scanning
Staff training (0.12)	KS	**Domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation** Lack of training for policy advocacy	0.12	Scanning

The research framework explains this set of data, except **methods of data collection**. As in Chapter 4, this factor is allocated under knowledge strategy.

The majority of the internal enablers and constraints are associated with either knowledge architecture (28%), knowledge culture (25%) or knowledge politics (25%). Several of the internal enablers and constraints focus on impacting (32%), followed by diffusion (25%). Knowledge architecture factors affect impacting significantly. Knowledge culture affects mainly absorption, while knowledge politics concentrates on diffusion (see Table 20).

Table 20. Distribution of domestic NGOs' responses on internal environment by SLC and variables of the Information Ecology model

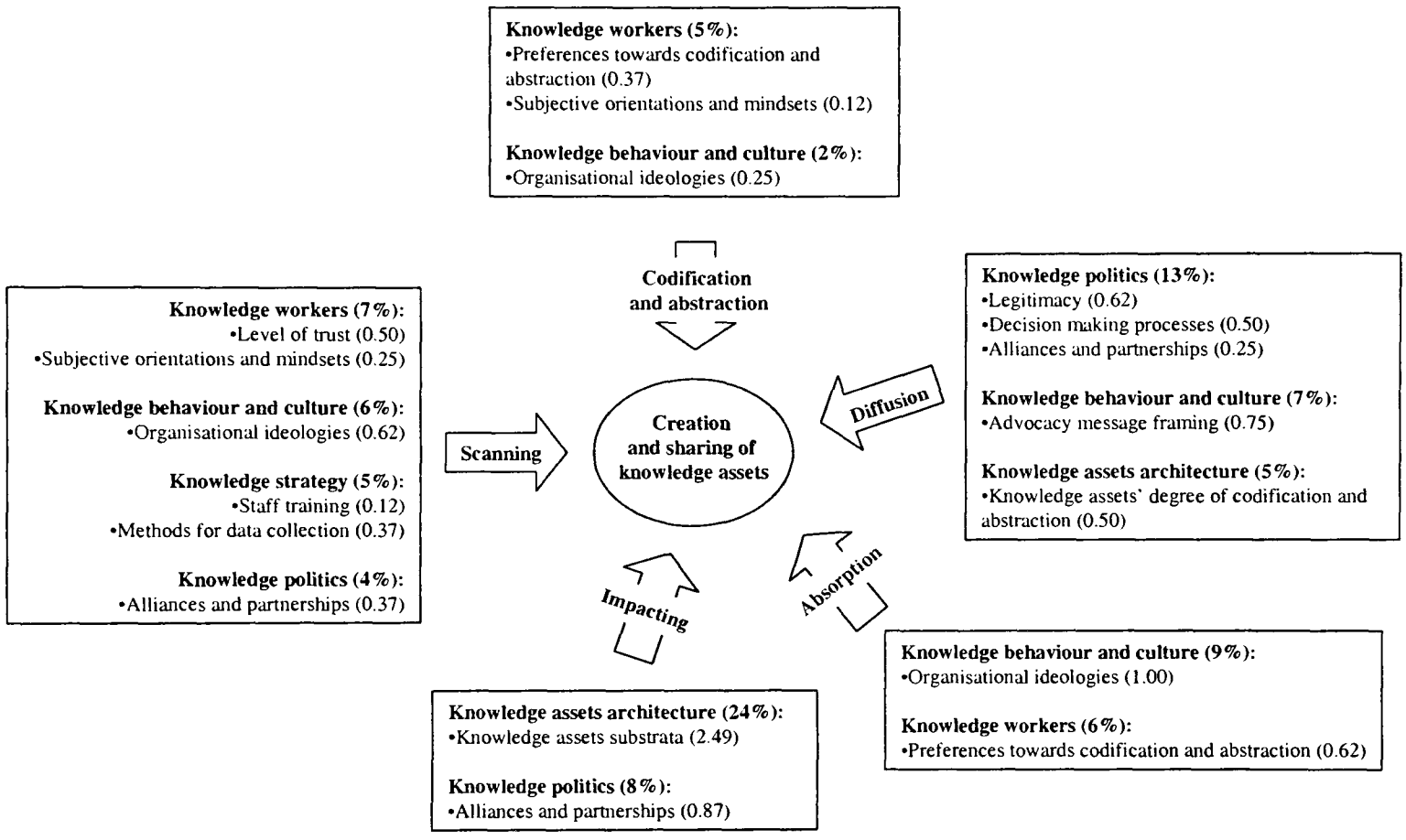
SLC phases	Information Ecology variables					Totals
	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy	
Scanning	6	5	3	-	4	18
Codification and abstraction	4	2	-	-	-	6
Diffusion	-	6	11	4	-	21
Absorption	5	8	-	-	-	13
Impacting	-	-	7	20	-	27
Totals	**15**	**21**	**21**	**24**	**4**	**85**

SLC phases	Information Ecology variables*					Totals
	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy	
Scanning	7%	6%	4%	-	5%	21%
Codification and abstraction	5%	2%	-	-	-	7%
Diffusion	-	7%	13%	5%	-	25%
Absorption	6%	9%	-	-	-	15%
Impacting	-	-	8%	24%	-	32%
Totals	**17%**	**25%**	**25%**	**28%**	**5%**	**100%**

*Note: The percentages in this table are based on the total number of responses that refer to internal enablers and constraints (85).

Figure 22 shows a summary of the internal enablers and constraints, with their importance, identified from domestic NGOs' data. The enablers and constraints are distributed by the phases of the Social Learning Cycle and by the variables of the Information Ecology model.

Figure 22. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness: Domestic NGOs' perspective



The data collected shows that:

- Most enablers and constraints are of **internal nature**, as with decision makers' data, and focus on **scanning** and **diffusion**. All enablers or constraints associated with the phases of absorption and impacting are internal. Scanning is slightly more affected by external factors than any other phase of the SLC.

- **Decision makers' ideologies** is the most significant external constraint.

- Knowledge **architecture** factors are the most cited internal enablers and constraints (28%), followed by knowledge **culture** and knowledge **politics** (25% each). Most of the internal constraints concentrate on **impacting** (32%) and on **diffusion** (25%).

- **Knowledge assets substrata** is the most prominent internal constraint and affects mainly impacting. The data indicates that knowledge assets concerning the advocacy approach appear to have lower levels of codification and abstraction than knowledge assets concerning the advocacy message.

- In relation to knowledge culture, **domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies** is the constraint highlighted most, affecting scanning and absorption. An example of these ideologies is the use of different definitions of categories for collecting information. Limited experience in international advocacy work seems to be at the root of some ideologies. As with decision makers, **inappropriate advocacy message framing** emerges as a prominent constraint to diffusion, and seems to be linked to organisational ideologies (e.g. domestic NGOs' tradition of opposing the Colombian government).

- The third most highlighted factor is **alliances and partnerships**. Domestic NGOs' alliances can be thought of as knowledge assets: In alliances, advocates embed their knowledge about the importance of representativeness when influencing decision makers. Alliances appear to be facilitated and strengthened by the use of joint advocacy documents - another way in which advocates' knowledge is embedded. Both alliances

and joint documents are associated with a move towards higher levels of codification and abstraction.

- The data does not show a clear preference for domestic NGOs in terms of codification and abstraction. However, as seen before, domestic NGOs' knowledge bases tend to be less codified and abstract. Only two documents analysed contain advocacy approach knowledge; and data from six respondents indicate that this knowledge is mostly kept in people's heads.

- **Legitimacy** is linked to the strength and the scope of alliances and partnerships. It is surprising to note the low number of references made by respondents regarding accountability to affected populations, and expertise on the topic, as sources of legitimacy.

CHAPTER 6

ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS OF CREATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE ASSETS FOR POLICY ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS: INGOs' PERSPECTIVE

Contents

- Introduction
- Enablers and constraints to scanning
- Enablers and constraints to codification and abstraction of advocacy knowledge bases
- Enablers and constraints to diffusion of the advocacy message
- Enablers and constraints to the absorption of knowledge for advocacy
- Enablers and constraints to the impacting of knowledge for advocacy
- Application of the model: External and internal environments in advocacy communities - INGOs' perspective

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6.1 INTRODUCTION: INGOS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS OF THE DONORS MEETING FOR COLOMBIA

This chapter presents and discusses the data collected in interviews and documents from the group of INGOs involved in the donors meeting process. Overall, INGOs' objectives in relation to the donors meeting process focus on drawing attention to the human rights situation in Colombia and the '*increasing militarisation of the internal conflict due to current governmental policies*' (IN3). Nevertheless, INGOs have

different opinions about the degree of conditionality that international aid should have upon the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations to Colombia. INGOs also emphasise the importance of including civil society's views in relation to international aid.

The questions to INGOs focus on three main areas: The collection of information and knowledge to feed the advocacy message and strategy; the diffusion of that message to decision makers; and the subsequent use and impact in their organisations of the knowledge that results from their advocacy work (i.e. lessons learnt). A larger number of respondents from INGOs may be associated to the larger number of enablers and constraints identified in INGOs' data, in comparison to domestic NGOs' data (see also in Chapter 10, section 'An assessment of this research and its limitations).

A total of ten interviews in the UK and Colombia were undertaken for this group of stakeholders: Seven with INGO staff in charge of activities in Colombia, and three with directors of INGOs' alliances (see Table 21). A total of 30 documents provided by interviewees were reviewed[30]. Sources such as internal emails, minutes of meetings and web sites were also used. Anonymity has been granted to all interviewees.

[30] Of the 30 documents analysed, 16 are directly related to the process of the London Meeting. The remaining documents include other advocacy documents.

Table 21. Group of INGOs involved in Donors Meeting for Colombia

INGOs involved in donors meeting process
INGOs: Amnesty International, Benposta, Cafod, Caritas, Christian Aid, Civis Sweden, Consejería en Proyectos PCS, Diakonia Sweden, Intermón, Misereor, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam International, Peace Brigades International, Save the Children, Trocaire. INGOs' alliances: ABC Group, Coordinación DIAL (Diálogo Inter-Agencial en Colombia), OIDHACO, PADEC (Plataforma de Organisaciónes de Desarrollo), US Office on Colombia, WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America).
INGOs interviewed
INGOs: Seven interviews (four staff based in Colombia, three staff based in the UK) INGOs' alliances: Three interviews (three directors of alliances)

6.1.1 THE MOST RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE FOR THE SUCCESS OF ADVOCACY WORK, AND THE ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO OBTAINING IT ACCORDING TO INGOS

For INGOs' representatives, relevant knowledge for the success of their advocacy work focuses on three main areas: The affected populations, other advocates, and the decision makers.

From affected populations, INGOs consider key knowledge to be:

- Domestic NGOs' priorities and interests in relation to advocacy: What domestic NGOs' main interests and concerns are.

- Colombian political context: Specifically the human rights situation in the areas affected by the internal conflict and the overall effects that governmental policies are having on communities in those areas.

In relation to other advocates, INGOs consider key knowledge to be:

- Other advocates' relevant experience in advocacy work: Their focus of advocacy work; their analysis of the situation in Colombia; their political position and proposals; and how they frame their advocacy messages.

In relation to decision makers, INGOs consider the following to be relevant knowledge:

- Donor countries' agendas of international cooperation with Colombia: Donor countries' current policies on Colombia, and their main interests and concerns about that cooperation.

- Donor countries' representations (embassies) in Colombia: Who the representatives are; their backgrounds, personal interests and motivations; what capacity of decision making they have; who the key people to influence are; and what their opinions about INGOs and domestic NGOs are.

- Knowledge about the donor meeting process: Objectives and procedures (e.g. who the host is); main topics for discussion; real available funds; opportunities and rules of participation for civil society organisations; the Colombian government's arguments

and proposals; and the mechanisms in place for following up the implementation of the London Declaration and the donors process.

- Advocacy message impact: Use that decision makers make of INGO advocacy messages, and whether they act upon them.

In contrast to domestic NGOs, INGOs emphasise the importance of obtaining knowledge about others' advocacy experiences, and knowledge about the impact of their messages on decision makers. Decision makers' personal interests and motivations also appear to be important knowledge for INGOs.

Interviewees considered that advocacy efforts have achieved significant results: The emphasis in the London Declaration on the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations as a criterion for international aid to Colombia; the participation of domestic NGOs in the London Meeting when this was not originally envisaged; the common position that advocates managed to agree despite political divergences; support for civil society organisations as key stakeholders; and support for a negotiated solution to the internal conflict.

> *'The recurrence of human rights and international humanitarian law in the document (London Declaration), and the importance given to the role of the UN and to civil society groups, seem to be direct results of the lobbying process that has taken place in Colombia, Europe and the USA over the last year. Using the pledge to implement UNHCHR recommendations as leverage - conditionality, even - in the next donor meeting will be important' (Document 1).*

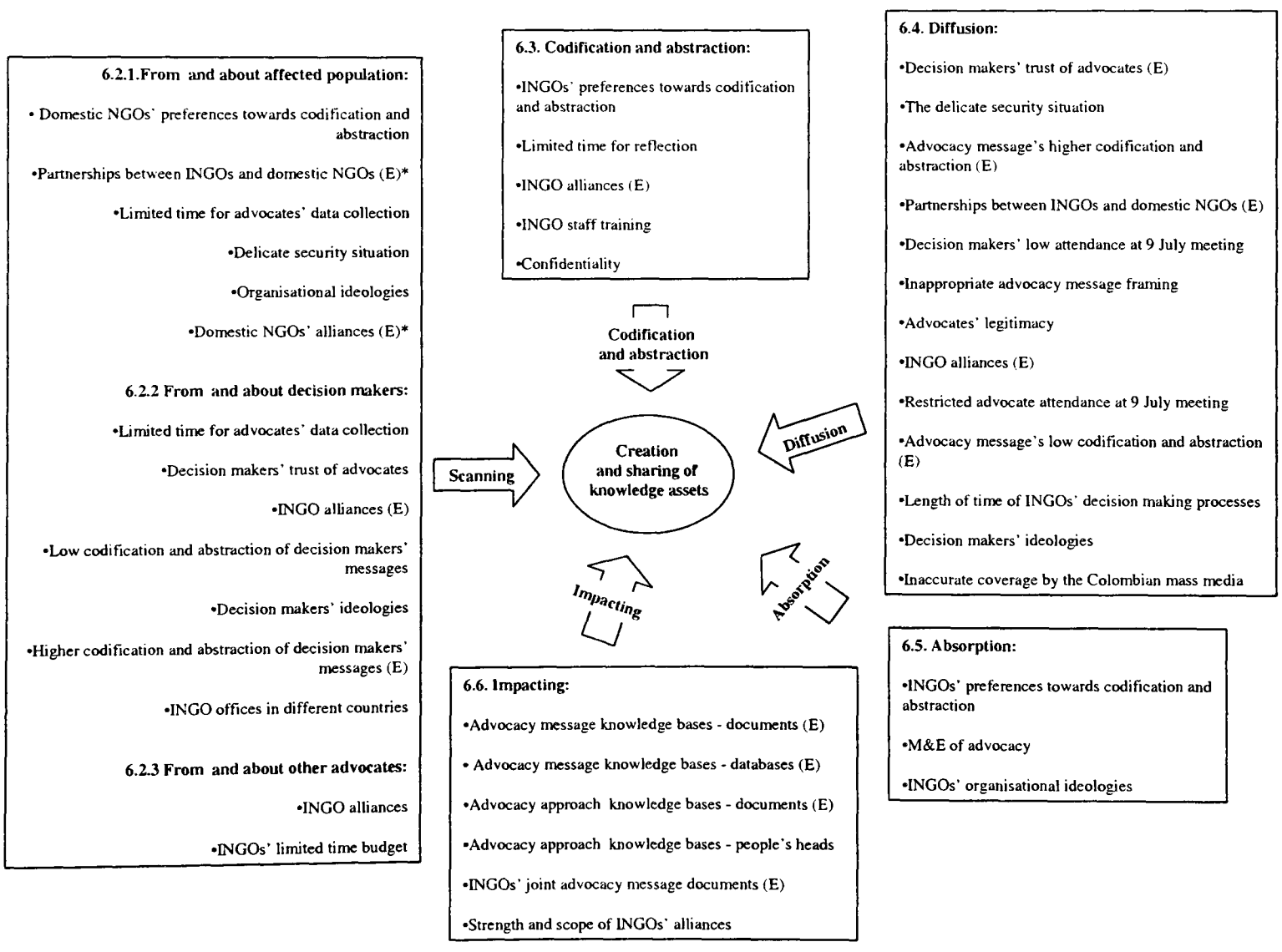
Still, INGO respondents think that there is some room for improvement, in particular as regards the low attendance of donor governments' representatives at the 9 July meeting; the lack of human rights conditionality for international cooperation; and the limited and

'government centred' media coverage of the donors meeting process. An INGO alliance document states that there was:

> *'An overall message of great support for a government that is dismantling human rights mechanisms and pushing through policies that are leading to the militarisation of Colombian society' (Document 1).*

Figure 23 shows a summary of the enablers and constraints of knowledge creation and sharing among advocacy communities from INGOs' perspective. These enablers and constraints are discussed in detail in the next section, as indicated by the numerals.

Figure 23. Summary conceptual map of enablers and constraints of knowledge creation and sharing in advocacy communities: INGOs' perspective



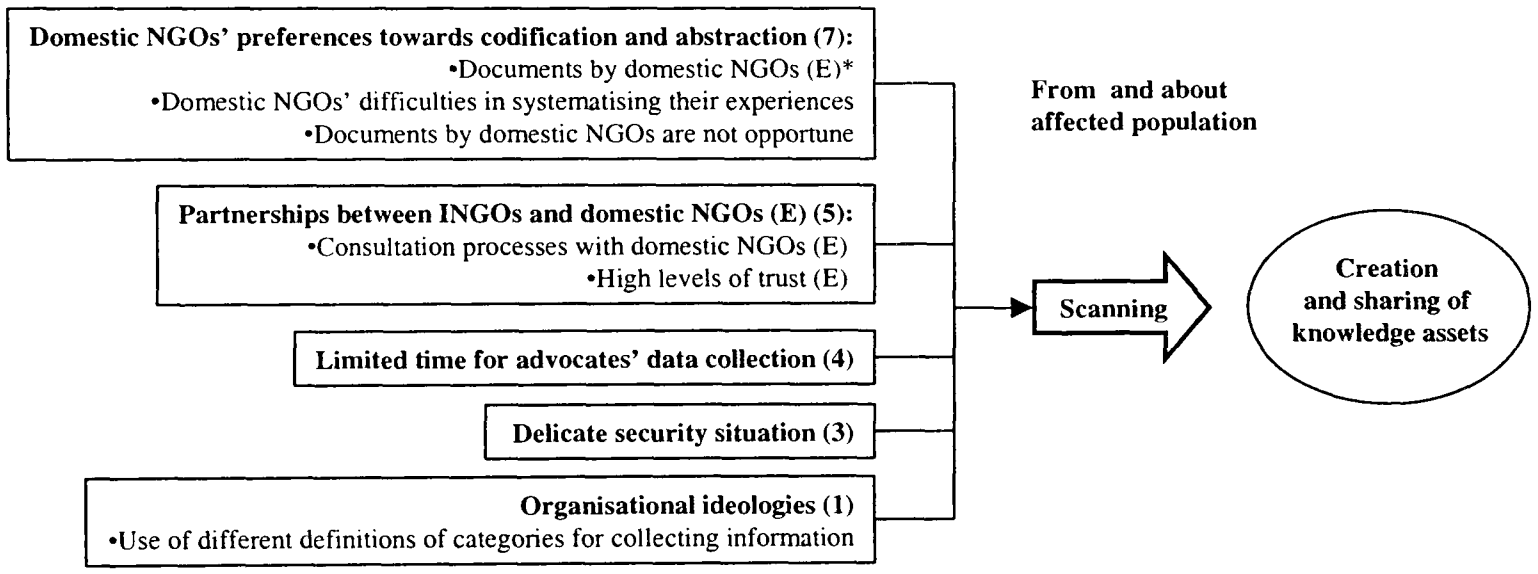
*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

6.2 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING

The constraints identified by interviewees refer to the acquisition of information and knowledge from affected populations, decision makers and other advocates.

6.2.1 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

Figure 24. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to affected populations - INGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

The factors affecting INGOs' scanning in relation to affected populations are: **Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** (seven interviewees); **partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs** (five interviewees); **limited time for advocates' data collection** (four interviewees); the **delicate security situation** (three interviewees); and **organisational ideologies** (one interviewee).

6.2.1.1 Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction

Seven interviewees (IN2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10) state that one of their main sources of information about affected populations is the **documents by domestic NGOs**. Nevertheless, five interviewees (IN2, 3, 6, 9, 10) think that **domestic NGOs still have some difficulties in systematising their experiences** and producing credible statistics. As one of them explains:

> *'At the beginning they (a domestic NGO) made a series of denunciations that do not always have the same weight. We have managed (to ensure) that they are achieving systematisation in their information, and (that they are introducing) a series of procedures to collect information, avoiding making denunciations without knowing what has happened, without being there... they have improved their information a lot, to the point that the Colombian government itself now uses their statistics much more' (IN10).*

One interviewee (IN2) states that the **documents by domestic NGOs are not as opportune** as they should be:

> *'Two weeks before the event we (the INGO) had not received anything concrete (from domestic NGOs) that we could use to present the views of civil society representatives' (IN2).*

6.2.1.2 Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs

For five interviewees (IN1, 4, 5, 6, 9), **partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs** have facilitated obtaining information from affected populations, as INGOs promote and support **consultation processes** with their domestic NGO partners and their communities:

> *'What was quite interesting was what was going on in Colombia around this event, and the mobilisation of the NGOs in Colombia. Very much sort of supported by two or three of the INGOs there, who took very strong leading roles*

in pushing forward meetings and also (having) a support role to the Colombian NGOs' (IN5).

One interviewee (IN5) comments that partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs make possible **high levels of trust** and the development of interpersonal relationships with domestic NGOs and communities in Colombia.

6.2.1.3 Limited time for advocates' data collection

Four interviewees (IN1, 3, 4, 5) state that the **time for advocates' data collection was limited**. Preparations for the London Meeting coincided with the annual UN Human Rights Commission meeting, a central event for domestic NGOs.

'When we found out about the meeting, there was little time for preparation, and that caused complications of coordination for both INGOs and domestic NGOs' (IN4).

6.2.1.4 Delicate security situation

According to three interviewees (IN1, 3, 4), the **delicate security situation** is a significant constraint when obtaining data from affected populations. INGOs have difficulties visiting certain areas of Colombia and affected communities are afraid of giving testimonies:

'... There were some sort of (army) checkpoints and we were held there for an hour, it was just a waste of our time. This disrupted our agenda. We had permission to be in the area, but our time was wasted. They (army officials) don't have the right to restrict human rights delegations. This makes it more difficult for people to provide their testimonies. They (army officials) were asking questions about who you are, who you are going to be meeting and that sort of thing (...) Those are the sort of restrictions, and obviously these are affecting the people on the ground in Colombia' (IN3).

In a statement to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, a group of INGOs explain that domestic NGOs are concerned about accessing information produced by illegal armed groups because the security forces may consider this as evidence of links with these illegal groups. This group of INGOs argues that:

> *'It is a necessary part of our work and that of the organisations we support, to be as well informed as possible about the situation in Colombia. It is impossible to operate responsibly in Colombia if organisations do not have access to up to date information. This includes information about current thinking and statements produced by illegal armed groups' (Document 7).*

6.2.1.5 Organisational ideologies

For one interviewee (IN4), obtaining data from affected populations is constrained by the **use of different definitions of categories** by domestic NGOs and the Colombian government:

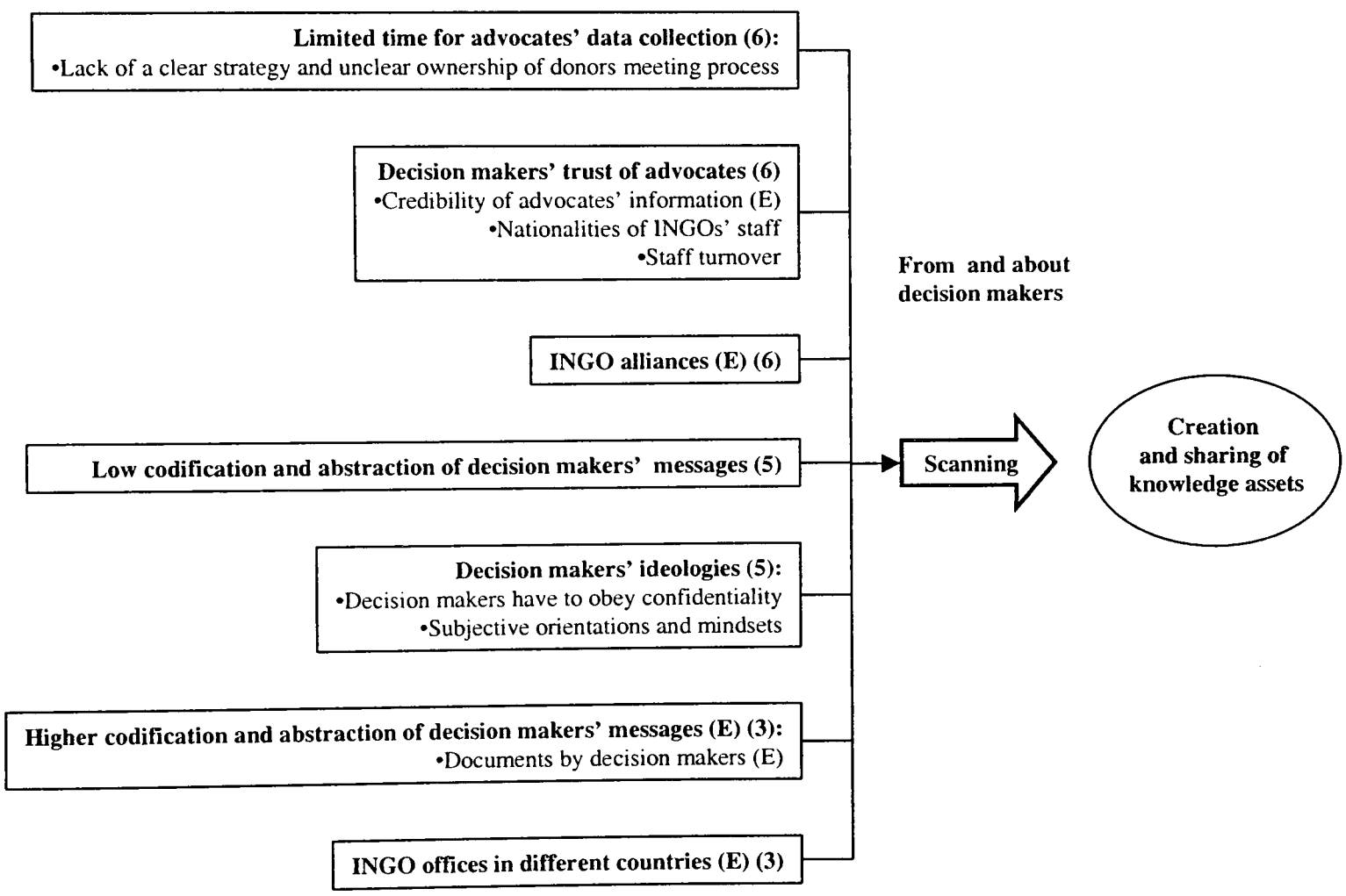
> *'There is a disagreement over how to define categories, e.g. what is forced displacement? It seems absurd, but you can really get very different statistics, and those definitions are a question of politics above all, and not because somebody got it wrong, or is suspicious; it is simply a question of definition, and the lack of common definitions of categories is a problem' (IN4).*

6.2.2 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO DECISION MAKERS

INGOs' acquisition of information and knowledge from decision makers is affected by the following factors: **Limited time for advocates' data collection** (six interviewees); **decision makers' trust of advocates** (six interviewees); **INGO alliances** (six

interviewees); **low codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages** (five interviewees); **decision makers' ideologies** (five interviewees); **higher codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages** (three interviewees); and **INGO offices in different countries** (three interviewees).

Figure 25. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to decision makers - INGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

6.2.2.1 Limited time for advocates' data collection

Six INGOs interviewed (IN1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10) believe that the **limited time for advocates' data collection** constrains the acquisition of knowledge about decision makers. All of

them link the limited time for data collection with the **lack of a clear strategy and the unclear ownership of the donors meeting process**, in particular by the Colombian government:

> *'This was a very quick and improvised process. We had two months and we had to spend a big part of the process looking for where the real messages were, and who was inviting ... For the meeting on 9 July nobody knew who was hosting the meeting (...) We needed a lot of time to get their message clear, their agenda clear...we never did' (IN6).*

6.2.2.2 Decision makers' trust of advocates

For advocates pursuing a lobbying strategy rather than a campaigning one, **decision makers' trust of advocates** is essential for obtaining access and knowledge about them. For three interviewees (IN5, 7, 8), this trust is enabled by the **credibility of advocates' information**, which may in turn lead decision makers to use advocates as a source of information:

> *'Our relationship with the British government has been nurtured for over six or seven years... we are now a point of reference for them in terms of their human rights policy' (IN5).*

One interviewee (IN4) comments that INGOs also had access to diplomatic representations on the basis of the **nationalities of their staff**.

Five interviewees (IN1, 4, 5, 6, 8) think that decision makers' trust of advocates is directly related to the existence of interpersonal relationships with staff in decision making organisations; however, these relationships are significantly constrained by **staff turnover** in both advocate and decision making organisations:

> *'In the UK Foreign Office there were a lot of staff changes, so relationships that have been built up have changed (...) We (the interviewee and a member of staff in the FCO) worked together for five years. He left almost immediately after I left.*

So the whole thing fell apart in terms of relationships (...) You can't hand over those relationships, you have to rebuild them' (IN8).

6.2.2.3 INGO alliances

For six interviewees (IN1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10), **INGO alliances** have enabled the acquisition of relevant knowledge about decision makers while making more effective use of scarce resources, allowing INGO members to focus on their non-advocacy work:

'They (INGO alliances in the UK and in Brussels) generally warn us about things. They were the ones who warned us about the donors meeting (...) They do continuous lobbying and manage to get access to the information that we do not (manage to get in Colombia). They can because they meet the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Latin America Committee' (IN6).

6.2.2.4 Low codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages

In a similar line to decision makers and domestic NGOs, five INGO respondents (IN5, 6, 7, 9, 10) argue that **decision makers' messages were unclear** and gave space to **rumours**: '*It was more like informal passing of comments*' (IN5). Another respondent explains:

'The whole process was full of rumours, about how the meeting is going to be organised, whether there is going to be participation (of domestic NGOs), how the 'working groups' are working, how they are going to take part in the second meeting (after the London meeting)... I mean, there are a lot of questions' (IN9).

In their statement for the London Meeting, a group of INGOs portrays the situation as follows:

'We consider that, given the strategic significance of this (London) meeting, the mechanisms for information and participation, and the principle of transparency, have been deficient. Improvisation, unclear messages and the contracting as facilitator of an organisation not known or acknowledged by most of Colombian

civil society, nor even by the delegation of the European Union in Colombia, takes importance away from a meeting that would have deserved a wide, inclusive participative process' (Organizaciones no gubernamentales de cooperacion internacional 2003).

6.2.2.5 Decision makers' ideologies

According to one interviewee (IN9), the UK embassy in Colombia did not inform British INGOs about the London meeting. Two other interviewees (IN7, 10) state that decision makers - particularly from the Colombian government - are not interested in engaging in dialogue, as has been shown during meetings where officials limit themselves to listening without giving feedback to advocates.

One interviewee (IN5) thinks that, in some cases, what constrains decision makers from communicating is the **confidentiality** of some of their information[31]. According to a document by an INGO alliance, the lack of information regarding the nature of British military cooperation to Colombia adds to human rights concerns, because advocates do not know how the British government is evaluating the impact of this cooperation (Document 4).

Two interviewees (IN5, 6) link decision makers' unwillingness to communicate with **subjective orientations and mindsets**, e.g. some decision makers' believe that

[31] On the FCO website, the confidential character of British military aid to Colombia is confirmed: '*We do not give public details of all the support we (the FCO) provide. Information about military training assistance provided by the UK to Colombia contains details that are confidential between governments or that could put at risk service personnel, civilian support staff and their families*'. Source: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2004).

advocates will be in a weaker position if they are not provided with relevant knowledge.

However, IN6 describes this not only as a belief but also as a 'political strategy':

> *'We don't have the information because, first of all, intentionally that information was not given; and secondly, before the London meeting, it was not wanted that the local organisations knew... there were a lot of wrong messages and there was solidarity with the Colombian government by certain governments of course (...) It was a political strategy. There is no culture of participation, but it is also a political strategy. This is not a participative government - none of the Latin America governments are - but let's say that here there is a more serious closedness. The elite is very closed' (IN6).*

6.2.2.6 Higher codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages

Three interviewees (IN6, 7, 9) emphasise the importance of **decision makers' documents** (e.g. public documents or laws) when obtaining relevant knowledge for advocacy.

6.2.2.7 INGO offices in different countries

This factor is not mentioned by other groups of interviewees. According to three respondents (IN3, 4, 6), **INGO offices in different countries** enable access to knowledge about decision makers:

> *'Our offices in London and Brussels can monitor this (the London meeting), and can support that process more (than the Colombian office) (...) We have offices in different countries, they have the contacts with the external relations ministries in each country' (IN4).*

6.2.2.8 INGOs' ideologies

Although none of the respondents in INGOs mention it as a constraint, the documents analysed suggest that **INGOs' ideologies** may influence the acquisition of information and knowledge, in particular **INGOs' low trust of the Colombian government**, as shown in the following extracts:

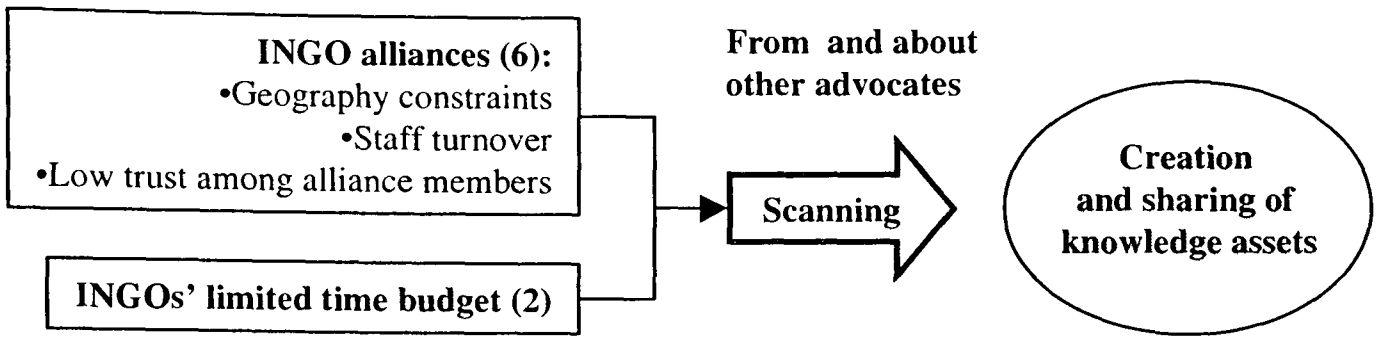
> *'Vulnerable sectors of civilian society are not victims of generalised violence as the Colombian Government tries to argue, but are affected by coordinated military operations and systematic campaigns of harassment and intimidation (...) 'One could think that part of Uribe's strategy is to polarise the Colombian community as well as the international community. Measures implemented by the government are geared towards demonstrating the existence of good and bad NGOs; those who dissent and those who don't' (Document 6).*

> *'Some organisations (domestic NGOs and INGOs) take the position that this is rubber-stamping a process (the London meeting) that is merely manipulative and cannot/will not result in democratic dialogue within the context of the current Colombian administration' (Document 1).*

6.2.3 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO OTHER ADVOCATES

According to interviewees, there is a good deal of knowledge sharing happening among INGOs. However, it seems that more sharing is needed, in particular about INGO advocacy work. Respondents identify two main factors influencing knowledge sharing among advocates: **INGO alliances** (six interviewees), and **INGOs' limited time budget** (two interviewees).

Figure 26. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to other advocates - INGOs' perspective



6.2.3.1 INGO alliances

According to six respondents (IN1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), INGO alliances help advocates to obtain relevant knowledge, especially for those INGOs that do not have an office in Colombia (IN10). Nevertheless, knowledge sharing does not always happen, as one respondent explains:

> *'One of the things to improve is members' feedback: When the alliance sends documents it does not always receive feedback from its members' (IN6).*

Interviewees identify three factors influencing the acquisition of knowledge from alliances: **Geography constraints** (IN1), **staff turnover** (IN10) and the **low trust among alliance members** (IN8). In relation to geography constraints, IN1 argues that it is easier to coordinate alliances whose members are based in the same country. As he explains:

> *'We can coordinate here in the (alliance) to be in the same place at the same time every month. It is more difficult to do things like that when you are trying to deal with people in France, Belgium (...) What makes the difference is being able to meet and build that understanding, and we have been able to do that I think (...) We have not done it to the same extent with groups in the rest of Europe' (IN1).*

One respondent (IN10) states that staff turnover disrupts the communication between the country office and the headquarters in Europe. When his country representative in Colombia left, the relationship with the headquarters was affected: '*I do not know how to interlocute with the London (office), I do not have that role*' (IN10).

A document by an INGO alliance says: '*Weaknesses will continue to emerge as staff from (alliance) member organisations change*' (Document 6).

6.2.3.2 INGOs' limited time budget

For two interviewees (IN5, 6), the **limited time budget** constrains knowledge sharing and the attention that staff dedicate to discerning important messages from noise. As one coordinator of an INGO alliance explains:

> *'He (a senior INGO staff member) is responsible for the Latin America region, not just Colombia. So he is extremely busy. The event (the London Meeting) was a huge priority but there was so much to do within Colombia that I think that was one of the reasons why the information did not circulate' (IN6).*

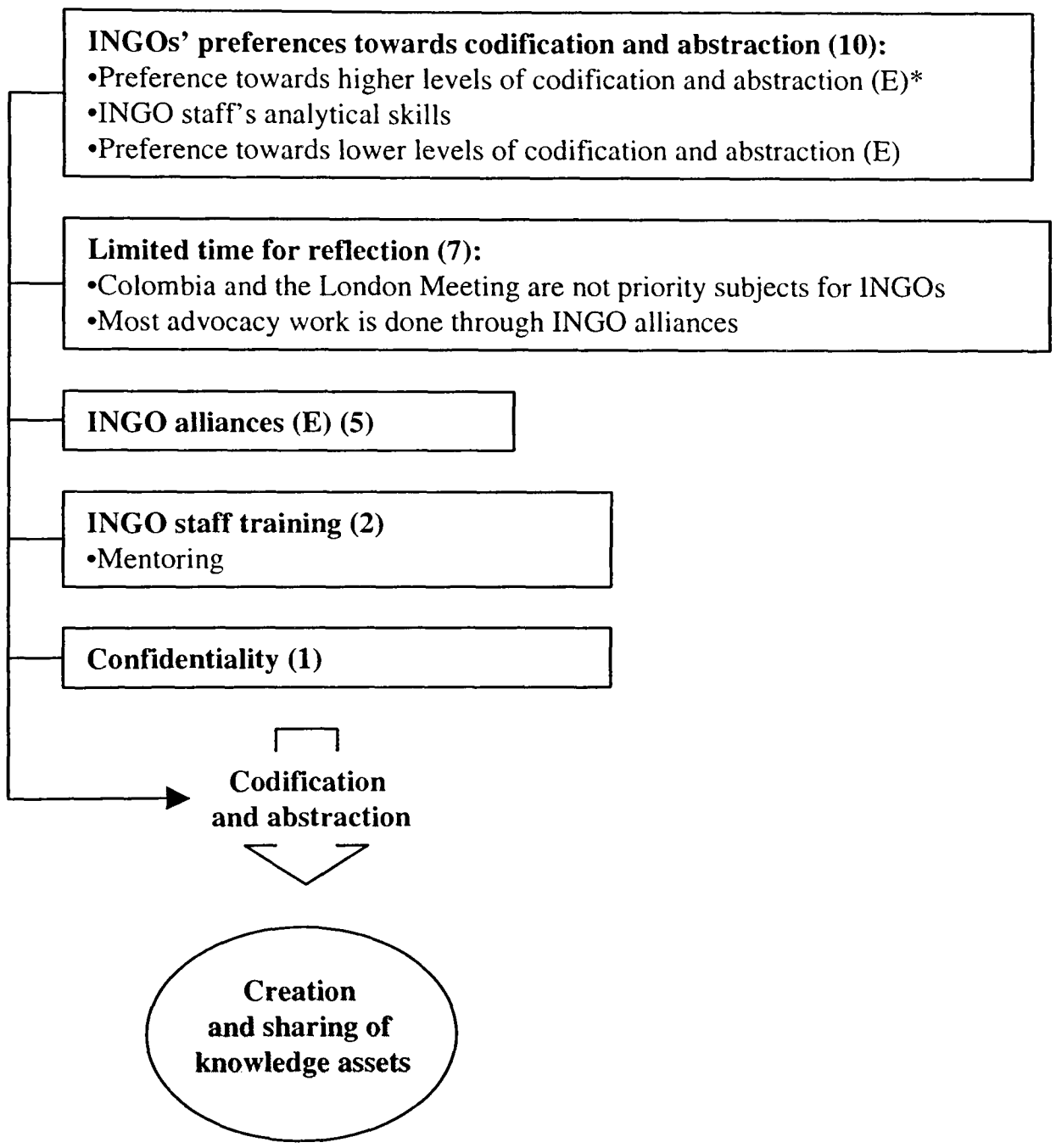
6.3 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION OF ADVOCACY KNOWLEDGE BASES

As in Chapters 4 and 5, the findings in relation to codification and abstraction[32] are discussed simultaneously. Factors that seem to constrain INGOs' codification and

[32] Codification and abstraction take place in the building and shaping of knowledge bases for the advocacy message and approach, and ultimately, in the formulation of an advocacy strategy.

abstraction processes are: **INGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** (10 interviewees); **limited time for reflection** (seven interviewees); **INGO alliances** (five interviewees); **INGO staff training** (two interviewees); and **confidentiality** (one interviewee).

Figure 27. Enablers and constraints to the codification and abstraction of advocacy knowledge bases - INGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

6.3.1 INGOS' PREFERENCES TOWARDS CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Interviewees' comments suggest that preferences towards both higher and lower levels of codification and abstraction exist.

6.3.1.1 Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction

Evidence of preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction is found from nine respondents (IN 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), in the form of established research programmes, advocacy strategy documents, position statements and internal information systems.

Two interviewees (IN8, 10) underline the role of **INGO staff's analytical skills** when handling knowledge relevant for advocacy. Two particular analytical skills relevant for advocacy are acknowledged: a) political analysis (identifying the opportunities and implications of external political events for advocacy work); and b) advocacy message framing analysis (identifying the language preferred by decision makers and being able to recreate that language in advocacy messages). Two respondents say:

> *'I think there is a difference between being a political lobbyist and being somebody who has a story to tell. My job is to interpret to some extent the story that they (the affected populations) have to tell, in a language that can tell these people (decision makers) what they need to hear. But very often you need somebody to interpret that, because just having (the affected populations) coming along and doing it (is not good). There is a relationship there, an interpreting relationship' (IN8).*

'I think that in this situation (advocacy work) you need two elements. You need a very pragmatic view. Taking action quickly is vital. But you also need a very analytical view to understand the Colombian context in order that the pragmatism can really be coherent' (IN10).

Nevertheless, some internal documents show evidence about the lack of political analysis and the absence of an advocacy strategy in INGOs, as seen next.

6.3.1.2 Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction

Evidence of **preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction** is also found in nine respondents (IN1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), in the form of absence of an advocacy strategy; absence of monitoring and evaluation programmes; and preference for the use of concrete and uncodified data (such as stories from affected communities), instead of statistics. In relation to the absence of an advocacy strategy, one interviewee states that:

'I think that (advocacy strategies) don't work on paper... this kind of work is very fluid, very 'temporal' (...) it is very hard to write down a whole list of things that may happen, and the strategies that may be useful in any given circumstances' (IN8).

For two respondents (IN1, 9), the systematisation of lessons learnt from advocacy is an important analytical skill that in INGOs has not received the time and attention that it deserves.

Four respondents (IN2, 3, 7, 10) consider that INGOs are more likely to use testimonies from communities, rather than statistics, as evidence for advocacy work. Some of these respondents think that statistics can easily be manipulated and are not evidence of the

situation 'on the ground' while others believe that proper analysis of the situation in Colombia requires going beyond statistics. As two of them explain:

> *'We are not really that interested in talking about the number of battle-related deaths, for example. We are more likely to go back to (decision makers) and say: Look at this particular community where this particular situation has happened. We are much more likely to use that kind of evidence' (IN2).*

> *'Case studies are important and, particularly, more important at this time than statistics. Statistics have always been manipulated in Colombia as anywhere else. I think that the opportunities for lobbying can be enhanced, not just by having case studies, but also using the fact that there will be people from Colombia at (the donors meeting), people who have seen things, witnesses. That will help us to give weight to our messages. That is crucial in terms of having impact' (IN3).*

Among the 30 documents analysed, six show relatively sound research and a significant use of statistics. Sound analysis is evident in four documents. The following extract sheds some light on INGO preferences towards lower levels of codification and abstraction:

> *'There is a risk of diluting the distinct opinions and positions - or generalising them, or of them being politically manipulated in accordance with different interests when a 'consensus' is sought for ONE single opinion of 'civil society' on a complex subject, such as bilateral and multilateral international cooperation in an internal armed confrontation, and a situation of serious human rights violations' (Document 21)*[33].

> *'Domestic and international NGOs prepared good documents, but did not do a diagnosis of potential scenarios that they were going to meet in London' (Document 25).*

> *'The discussion around the evaluation (of our advocacy work) focused on the lack of clear objectives and how this would be achieved through the working group mentioned above' (Document 6).*

[33] All emphasis and quotation marks are from the original text.

6.3.2 LIMITED TIME FOR REFLECTION

Seven respondents (IN1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10) underline the **limited time for reflection** they have as a significant constraint. An INGO member describes the situation as follows:

> *'I think that what is missing is reflection and planning, trying to work out what would have most impact from where we are, and then we should have the discipline not to be swallowed up by the need to react to things that happen' (IN1).*

The limited time for reflection could be linked to what four interviewees (IN2, 4, 9, 10) say about Colombia, and the London Meeting, **not being a priority subject for INGOs.** Therefore, the time dedicated to them is significantly reduced. Two of these respondents (IN4, 10) acknowledge that **most of their advocacy work is done through their INGO alliances**, and that is another reason why INGOs dedicate little time to it:

> *'One of the problems is the importance that INGOs are giving to alliances. I think that INGOs are not doing lobbying... INGOs have their role in lobbying less clear' (IN10).*

In the documents analysed there is further evidence about Colombia not being a priority for INGO assistance, which is in line with British foreign policy:

> *'The proposal for fundraising for Colombia within (name of INGO) was rejected as it is not a priority country (...) The longevity of the emergency (in Colombia) makes fundraising based on public appeals complicated' (Document 17).*

6.3.3 INGOS' ALLIANCES

For five interviewees (IN1, 3, 6, 8, 10), INGO alliances enable the analysis of relevant knowledge for advocacy by permitting members to compare ideas and help each other

to understand a particular situation. Similar organisational ideologies among alliance members may contribute to this:

> *'INGOs have fewer ideological contradictions (than domestic NGOs) so they agree more easily on some topics (...) We arrived in London with five INGO documents that we had to convert into one. We did a three-page document' (IN6).*

Nevertheless, alliances could also constrain the debate that they are supposed to encourage. A document by an INGO emphasises that alliances need to receive '*greater analysis from (INGO alliance) member organisations in order to survive*' (Document 17). Interviewee IN10 states:

> *'These (alliance) spaces are becoming spaces where we want to avoid debate as much as possible, on behalf of our coordination' (IN10).*

6.3.4 INGO STAFF TRAINING

INGO staff training contributes to codification and abstraction of knowledge relevant for advocacy, according to two respondents (IN8, 9). One of them refers specifically to **mentoring**:

> *'One of the ways I have thought I would help to systematise and pass on all my knowledge to my successor was to be (a non-managerial supervisor) for the new member of staff. So I am paid regularly to go and have sessions with him, for him to ask me questions and to give him support in the job' (IN8).*

6.3.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

One interviewee (IN8) considers that **confidentiality** is a major constraint when building organisational knowledge bases. As he explains:

'I could never put down on paper all the things that are necessary to know, it would take 110 years to do that (...) That is the kind of information that you would never put on paper, not least because I don't want it on paper for a start, because a lot of confidentiality (...) I will never tell the real story of what we really did to anyone... The secret meetings I had with people, the meetings that are completely off the record, the ways in which I have influenced somebody to try and influence someone else to try and do something else. None of those things I want a word of on paper, and that is one of the reasons why for the minutes of the meetings we always have to be selective. You don't write certain things down... That is why I think the oral tradition has been much more effective. It is not so easy to build in transparency. It is much more difficult to build in transparency. I think this is one of the issues: How do you build in transparency in advocacy work?' (IN8).

6.3.6 INGO IDEOLOGIES

Respondents did not mention INGO ideologies as a constraint for codification and abstraction. Nevertheless, the documents analysed show some examples of **INGOs' low trust of the Colombian government**. In the following extract, a single case is presented as the base for concluding a pattern:

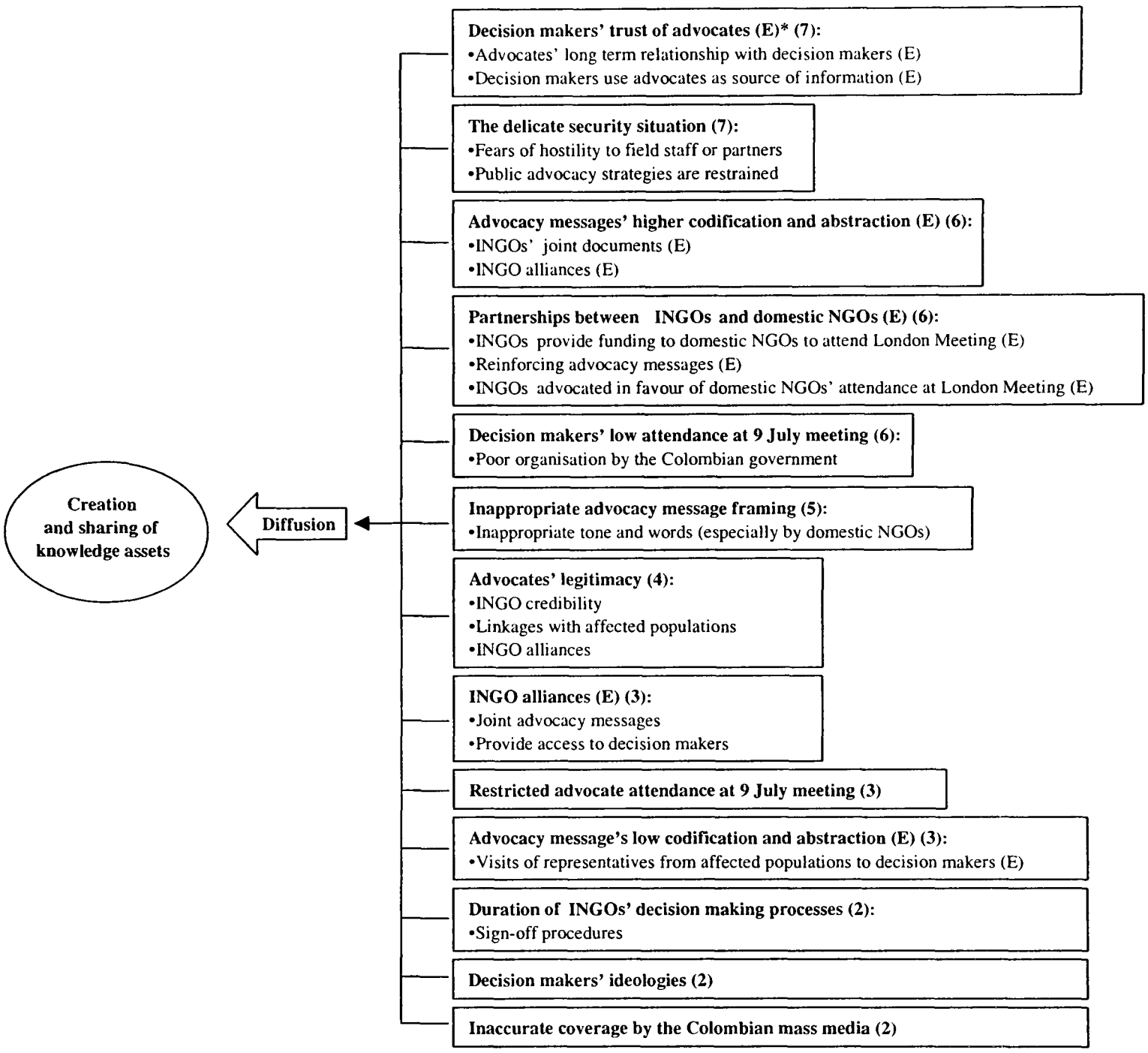
'The large majority of these (human rights) defenders are later released without charge, but the stigma remains, and in several cases released defenders have subsequently been killed, allegedly by paramilitary groups (as in the case of the university teacher Alfredo Correa, murdered on 17 September 2004). It is hard to avoid seeing a pattern here' (Document 14).

6.4 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE DIFFUSION OF THE ADVOCACY MESSAGE[34]

The factors affecting the diffusion of the advocacy message that emerge from INGOs' interviews can be grouped as follows: **Decision makers' trust of advocates** (seven interviewees); **the delicate security situation** (seven interviewees); the **advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction** (six interviewees); **partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs** (six interviewees); **decision makers' low attendance at 9 July meeting** (six interviewees); **inappropriate advocacy message framing** (five interviewees); **advocates' legitimacy** (four interviewees); **INGO alliances** (three interviewees); **restricted advocate attendance at 9 July meeting** (three interviewees); the **advocacy message's low codification and abstraction** (three interviewees); **the duration of INGOs' decision making processes** (two interviewees); **decision makers' ideologies** (two interviewees); and **inaccurate coverage by the Colombian mass media** (two interviewees).

[34] Diffusion refers to the sharing of newly created insights with a target population (Boisot 1995). In the context of advocacy communities, diffusion refers to the implementation of the advocacy strategy and particularly to the diffusion of the advocacy message to the target audiences.

Figure 28. Enablers and constraints to the diffusion of the advocacy message - INGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

6.4.1 DECISION MAKERS' TRUST OF ADVOCATES

Factors associated with **decision makers' trust of advocates** are found among seven respondents (IN2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10). Two interviewees (IN5, 8) acknowledge that they

have built **long-term relationships with some decision makers** and this enables them to disseminate their messages, because these decision makers consider it to be natural to look for INGOs' opinions.

When there is trust, decision makers use advocates as experts, or **sources of information**, which enables the dissemination of advocates' messages. Five interviewees (IN2, 4, 6, 7, 10) mention that they are consulted by decision makers, especially in relation to INGOs' perceptions of civil society participation; the situation of affected communities; and inputs for decision makers' policies.

6.4.2 THE DELICATE SECURITY SITUATION

Four respondents (IN2, 3, 5, 9) are concerned about the **delicate security situation** and admit that pressure from parties involved in the conflict, and **fears of hostility** either towards their staff in Colombia or towards their domestic NGO partners, deter them from speaking their minds:

> *'We know, for example, that a (specific) INGO will always say 'the army backs the paramilitaries', and we (an INGO alliance) will always take out the 'army backs' bit of it, not because we don't acknowledge that in some cases the army backs paramilitaries, but it is not something that we want to say as INGOs because it has implications for our work in Colombia' (IN2).*

Three additional respondents (IN4, 6, 10) recognise that the delicate security situation in Colombia **restrains them when pursuing public advocacy strategies**, such as campaigning.

6.4.3 ADVOCACY MESSAGE'S HIGHER CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Six respondents (IN3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10) use **joint documents** and position statements to facilitate the diffusion of their advocacy message. According to another interviewee, that is precisely what domestic NGOs are lacking:

> *'NGO people in Colombia have difficulties focusing their message when talking with targets in Europe. They do a long discourse instead' (IN8).*

For two respondents (IN2, 6), achieving consensus about a particular message is facilitated by **INGO alliances**:

> *'It is actually relatively easy for us (an INGO alliance) to reach common positions. We build these up over a number of years and there is a level of confidence between the different agencies that is the result of having worked together for quite a long time, understanding each other's programmes. We do not necessarily agree with everything everybody says, but there is a level of understanding. We are also relatively similar types of organisations, as we are all international UK-based development agencies' (IN2).*

6.4.4 PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN INGOS AND DOMESTIC NGOS

Respondents underline the level of organisation of domestic NGOs in Colombia and acknowledge that INGOs should support domestic NGO advocacy further. For four respondents (IN1, 6, 7, 10), partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs in the context of the London Meeting enabled domestic NGOs to attend the Meeting by **providing funding**.

For two respondents (IN5, 9), partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs enable the diffusion of **reinforcing advocacy messages**. An example of this is that for the London Meeting, INGOs shared the analysis of the human rights situation presented by domestic NGOs (International non-governmental agencies 2003).

For two respondents (IN5, 6), INGOs enabled the diffusion of domestic NGOs' advocacy message by **advocating donor governments in favour of inviting domestic NGOs**. As one INGO member explains:

> *'Participation is not the tradition of the Colombian government. Formal participation is a tradition, but then they call people to participate with some selectivity. That happened in the London Meeting, and in the Madrid meeting... it was the pressure from outside - INGOs and (donor) governments - that obliged the Colombian government to call (domestic NGOs) to take part' (IN6).*

During the interviews, the respondents did not refer to diffusion constraints associated with partnerships with domestic NGOs. Nevertheless, an internal INGO document mentions the low capacity of civil society organisations in Colombia '*to engage in debate with the national government and donor governments, or articulate an influential voice in public life*' (Document 17). Another document states that for the donors meeting, communications and decision making structures between INGOs and Colombian NGOs were not effectively established (Document 6).

6.4.5 DECISION MAKERS' LOW ATTENDANCE AT 9 JULY MEETING

For six interviewees (IN1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9), the attendance of only six representatives from donor countries at the 9 July meeting was much lower than expected, and this made it difficult for advocates to get their message through. Three respondents (IN5, 7, 9) think that low attendance was caused by the **poor organisation of the event by the Colombian government**, as explained in one of the documents analysed:

> *'The fact that only a handful of donor governments attended the NGO forum on 9 July raised questions about the value of even attending this event, since there were very limited mechanisms for ensuring that discussions on the 9 July actually fed into the 10 July closed meeting. Apparently, invitations from the Colombian government to donor governments for the 9 July event were only issued a few days before the event, making it unlikely that these donors would be able to attend. This extremely poor turnout left many NGOs feeling cheated and disrespected, since the objective in attending the 9 July forum was for civil society groups to share their perspectives with the international donor community' (Document 1).*

6.4.6 INAPPROPRIATE ADVOCACY MESSAGE FRAMING

For five interviewees (IN1, 5, 6, 7, 8), the **tone** and **words** used in advocacy messages are essential for their diffusion, and advocates should know how to adapt their language to circumstances:

> *'You can say exactly the same thing in one set of language or another. But if you don't know what the language is, you immediately spark off somebody. You get to know what the language is by knowing people. You know that you can't construct a sentence that has a particular slang to it because you learn that it is never going to work (...) Find the way to talk to the minister by going through the door that he has opened for you, and the door that he has opened for you is maybe security. What does security mean? How can you grab the word security and talk about human rights, how can you grab the word security and talk about justice?' (IN8).*

For four interviewees (IN1, 5, 7, 8), **the tone and words used by some domestic NGOs are inappropriate**:

> *'I think it is a matter of what we call' tone', what sort of language to use, because quite often the language that the groups in Colombia use is much stronger than, I think, is effective to use with the British government. You can't go to the British government and say 'Uribe is a fascist' - even if you think he is - because they would disregard it. So quite a lot of the exchange between us is about words. What is the most effective way of saying the same thing, and what is the most effective way of conveying the message?' (IN1).*

> *'Another thing that used to drive me crazy about Colombian organisations is their inability to recognise that you have to shift your language depending on who you are talking to (...) it depends on who you are talking about, but there is a whole spectrum of NGOs in Colombia that fall into this kind of unbelievable, tedious and long-winded discourse about Colombia and about their political exclusion, etc, etc. I have heard it fifteen times already. I used to have people over to go and do work at the Foreign Office, and I would sit down and say in advance: 'These are the things you have to concentrate on. You can't do this huge discourse; we have got half an hour, you need to be able to say this and this, and we need to understand that this is the way their (decision makers') minds work'. Some people could make that difference, but some people would go and do their five top priorities and that discourse, and I wanted to tear my hair out, because they could not see the difference. A lot of these people for instance would have come through the social movements or trade union movements...(they say:) 'I can't know or find another way to say it because this is the world that I live in'. And most of them are not experienced in how to do political lobbying. They don't have that experience. They are not political lobbyers and why should they be?' (IN8).*

One interviewee (IN10) thinks that it is unfair to ask representatives from civil society organisations to change their language and behaviour when meeting decision makers. On the contrary, he thinks that advocates should teach decision makers to accept others' languages.

Although interviewees did not refer to cases of inappropriate framing of INGO messages, there is some evidence in the documents analysed about the use of overstated and unbalanced messages and a focus on denunciation and criticism. Of the 30

documents analysed, eleven of them use overstated messages at some point, for example:

> *'In our opinion, although it is legitimate for any government to attain security for its government, the policies and strategies implemented by the government of Colombia under its 'democratic security' policy do not contain adequate - or even minimal - safeguards for human rights' (Document 11).*
>
> *'Although there could be miracles, and everything changes, there is currently little room for impact by Colombia's excluded democratic civil society and their friends in Europe at this (London) meeting of governments' (Document 21).*

In relation to the focus on denunciation and criticism, six documents emphasise criticism; five documents emphasise proposals; and nine documents both. With reference to unbalanced messages, 13 documents are focused on human rights, while seven documents look at the role of other armed actors (i.e. guerrilla groups) in the conflict in addition to the role of the Colombian government and the paramilitaries. Some INGOs justify their focus on state and paramilitary actors on the grounds that it is the Colombian government that is requesting and receiving funds. Regarding their focus on human rights, INGOs seem to acknowledge their need to build in analysis of economic, social and cultural rights '*in order to present an integrated human rights perspective*' (Document 6).

6.4.7 ADVOCATES' LEGITIMACY

Four interviewees (IN1, 5, 8, 10) consider **advocates' legitimacy** to be a significant enabler for the diffusion of the advocacy message. For one respondent (IN8), legitimacy is linked to the **credibility** of the INGO and its information, whereas for another

respondent (IN10), advocates' legitimacy is associated with **linkages with affected populations**.

For two respondents (IN1, 5), legitimacy is enabled by **INGO alliances**, which allows advocates to have a '*stronger voice*' (IN1). As IN5 puts it:

> *'I think that (the value of alliances) is both strategic and practical. (It is) strategic because we are showing a united front. Having six slightly different views presented to the Foreign Office simply confuses them, whereas if you can actually present one coherent view point, that is hugely beneficial. It is practical in the sense that these organisations cannot afford to have one person working on advocacy for Colombia, and another person working on advocacy for Bolivia. So they all pull their resources together and you have one specific coordination' (IN5).*

6.4.8 INGO ALLIANCES

According to three interviewees (IN4, 5, 6), INGO alliances not only enable legitimacy, but also facilitate diffusion by making the formulation of **joint advocacy messages** possible and by **providing access to decision makers** through contacts established by other alliance members. In relation to joint advocacy messages, INGOs managed to agree on a list of key recommendations to donor countries that were drawn from six documents that individual INGOs prepared for this event (ABC Group 2003).

6.4.9 RESTRICTED ADVOCATE ATTENDANCE AT 9 JULY MEETING

For INGOs, their attendance at decision makers' events is a prerequisite for disseminating their message. Three interviewees (IN5, 6, 9) mention the **restricted**

advocate attendance at the 9 July meeting as a major limitation. INGOs consider that the Colombian government was limiting access to decision makers by controlling the number of places that advocates were allocated at the meeting:

> *'We were told that there was such an event, and that it would be hosted by the Colombian government, but that essentially it was up to us to organise who would assist. But, to what degree was it really up to us? Because at the end a list of names was put forward by the NGOs in Colombia, and the Colombian government turned around and said that it wanted more INGOs, and fewer (domestic) NGOs. So, essentially, they were controlling the selection of people (...) Another problem is that (an organiser) said: 'Oh, we can only have so many people because the room is going to be this large', which is an absurd idea - that you are going to define participation by the size of the room' (IN5).*

According to some of the documents analysed, INGOs up to the last minute did not know who would be attending the meeting on 9 July (Document 21). INGOs' efforts in lobbying for greater participation of domestic NGOs '*met with firm refusal on the part of the British government*' (Document 1).

6.4.10 THE ADVOCACY MESSAGE'S LOW CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Three interviewees (IN3, 8, 10) state that **visits of representatives from affected populations to decision makers** have a positive effect in the diffusion of the advocacy message, and help to enrich it:

> *'Lobbying can be enhanced using the fact that there will be people from Colombia in Brussels or wherever next year - people who have seen things, witnesses. That will help us to give weight to our messages. That is crucial in terms of having impact' (IN3).*

6.4.11 DURATION OF INGOS' DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

INGOs experience difficulties when signing off public statements and documents. For two interviewees (IN2, 5), **sign-off procedures** pose considerable constraints to the diffusion of the advocacy message, especially if there are security concerns, or if a key signer is absent. However, interviewees think that sign-off procedures are necessary, as the advocacy message needs to agree with the INGOs' institutional line.

In a document by an INGO alliance, the need to agree systems for sign-off is emphasised, as well as the need to define in which situations the INGO alliance would lobby on behalf of the members without sign-off (Document 6).

6.4.12 DECISION MAKERS' IDEOLOGIES

According to two interviewees' answers (IN5, 8), decision makers' ideologies affect their willingness to listen to advocates' messages.

> *'You have to bear in mind that the story they (decision makers) want to hear is the story that says that they are doing the right thing. They will tell you that they don't want to hear any other story' (IN8).*

INGOs think that after the attacks of September 11, 2001 '*it is increasingly difficult to engage advocacy targets according to our agenda*' (Document 6).

6.4.13 INACCURATE COVERAGE BY THE COLOMBIAN MASS MEDIA

The last constraint, mentioned by two interviewees (IN4, 7), refers to **inaccurate media coverage** of the advocacy message. As one of them explains:

> *'Media coverage for the London meeting was important, but after the incident between the (domestic) NGOs' representative and the Vice President ... unfortunately, all that was achieved was reduced to that incident in the media' (IN4).*

Some documents analysed emphasise the need for advocates to have a clear media strategy and acknowledge that in the case of the advocacy work for the donors meeting process, that media strategy was not in place:

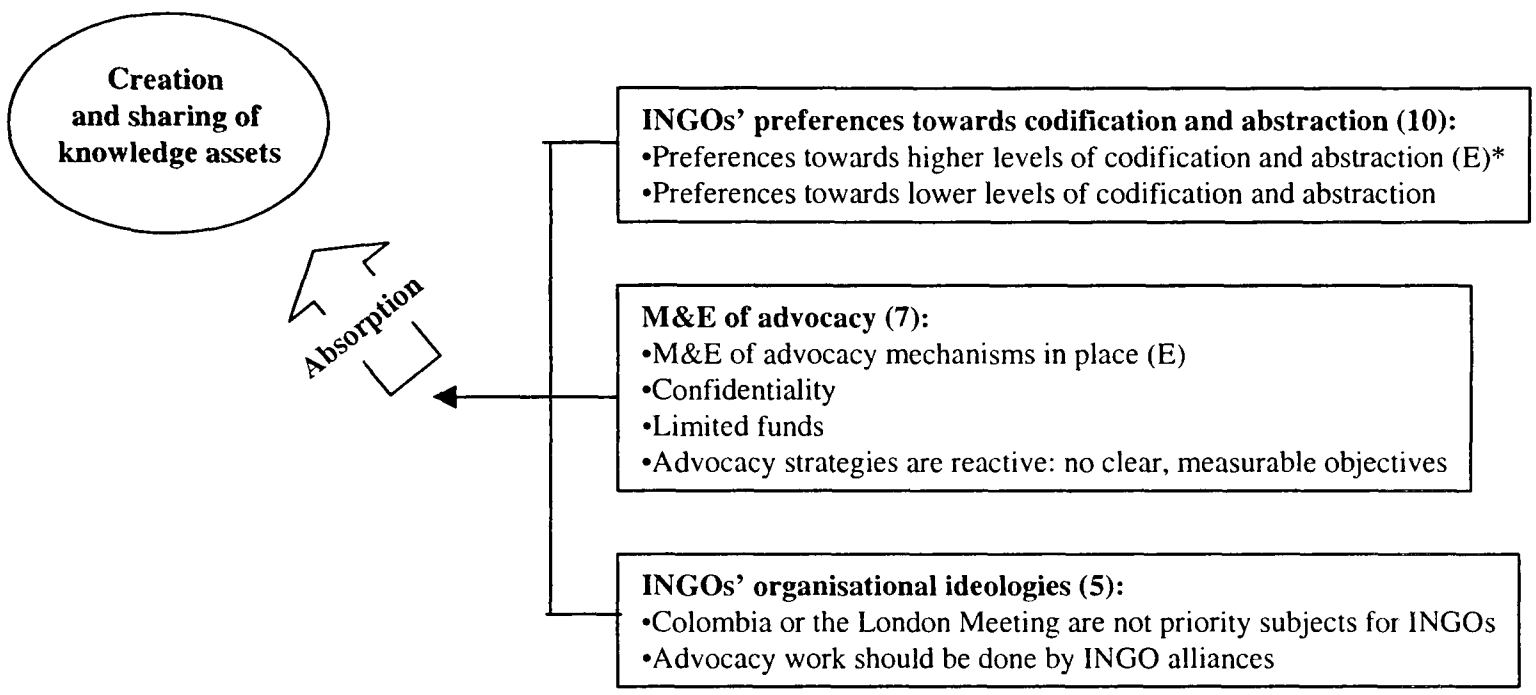
> *'After having had initial discussions about what our main media line on the conference might be two weeks before the conference, when it came to drafting a press release it became clear that actually we still hadn't thrashed out what to push or how outspoken we could be on military aid. Ideally, we would have had a media strategy a lot earlier on' (Document 8).*

6.5 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE ABSORPTION OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ADVOCACY

As discussed before, the absorption of new knowledge is potentially affected by the cognitive orientation of individuals, e.g. their preference towards codification and abstraction; or it is slowed down or blocked when it threatens values and beliefs held, e.g. ideologies (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998). Factors that influence INGOs' absorption of

knowledge for advocacy are[35]: **INGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** (10 interviewees); **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of advocacy** (seven interviewees); and **INGOs' organisational ideologies** (five interviewees).

Figure 29. Enablers and constraints to the absorption of knowledge for advocacy - INGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

6.5.1 INGOS' PREFERENCES TOWARDS CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

In relation to **INGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction**, interviewees' comments show that preferences towards both higher and lower levels of codification and abstraction exist. Evidence of preferences towards higher codification

[35] In relation to advocacy, absorption refers to the use of knowledge relevant to the effectiveness of advocacy in situations different to those that originated that knowledge. Absorption takes place during and after the implementation of the advocacy strategy.

and abstraction is found among nine respondents (IN 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10); similarly, evidence of preferences towards lower levels of codification and abstraction is also found among nine respondents (IN1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

6.5.2 Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of advocacy

In relation to mechanisms for M&E of advocacy, three respondents (IN4, 6, 7) mention having M&E procedures in place, but one of them (IN6) admits that their M&E is based more on informal meetings and internal discussions rather than formal evaluations. Among the documents analysed, three are M&E documents (one of these refers to M&E of a media strategy).

One respondent (IN8) states that the need for **confidentiality** affects M&E of advocacy: *'I will never tell the real story of what we really did to anyone'*. For two interviewees (IN1, 9), M&E of advocacy is constrained by **limited funding**.

Four respondents (IN3, 4, 6, 8) believe that **advocacy strategies are reactive**, at least in relation to work in Colombia. Among 30 documents analysed, three discuss an advocacy strategy of some sort, but there is no evidence of an advocacy strategy for the London Meeting. The absence of clear advocacy strategies may affect M&E to the extent that there are no clear, measurable objectives:

> *'I think that we have to improve. First, we have to make a serious advocacy strategy, of course. The problem that we have in this country (Colombia) is that you define a strategy and in 24 hours the map changes. If you have a strategy, you change the strategy. We have to be flexible, but I think that we have to have a serious advocacy strategy' (IN6).*

It seems that M&E is also constrained by **INGOs' organisational ideologies** about the difficulties of evaluating advocacy work, as discussed in some of the internal documents analysed.

6.5.3 INGOS' ORGANISATIONAL IDEOLOGIES

Contrary to domestic NGOs, INGOs' ideologies may not play a significant role in constraining scanning. Nevertheless, five respondents' answers suggest that some INGOs' ideologies may be affecting how these organisations absorb knowledge. As discussed before, four interviewees (IN2, 4, 9, 10) state that Colombia or the London Meeting are not priority subjects for their organisations. This idea may have implications for the way resources for projects in Colombia are distributed in the INGO (e.g. time and money dedicated to M&E).

As seen before, two interviewees (IN1, 10) explain that INGOs think that advocacy work should be done by INGO alliances, and as a consequence individual INGOs are not as involved in advocacy as they should be. This results in little knowledge going back from the alliances to the INGO members, as one of these members argues:

> *'One of the problems is the importance that INGOs are giving to alliances. I think that INGOs are not doing lobbying... INGOs have less clear their role in lobbying (...) The information is passing over INGOs, is going directly to the alliances (from domestic NGOs). So the contribution for the advocacy work, and specifically the information, is being collected by the alliances, and not by each of the INGOs (...) We are not collecting information or doing specific work for the donors meeting because we leave this to the alliance' (IN10).*

6.6 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE IMPACTING OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ADVOCACY

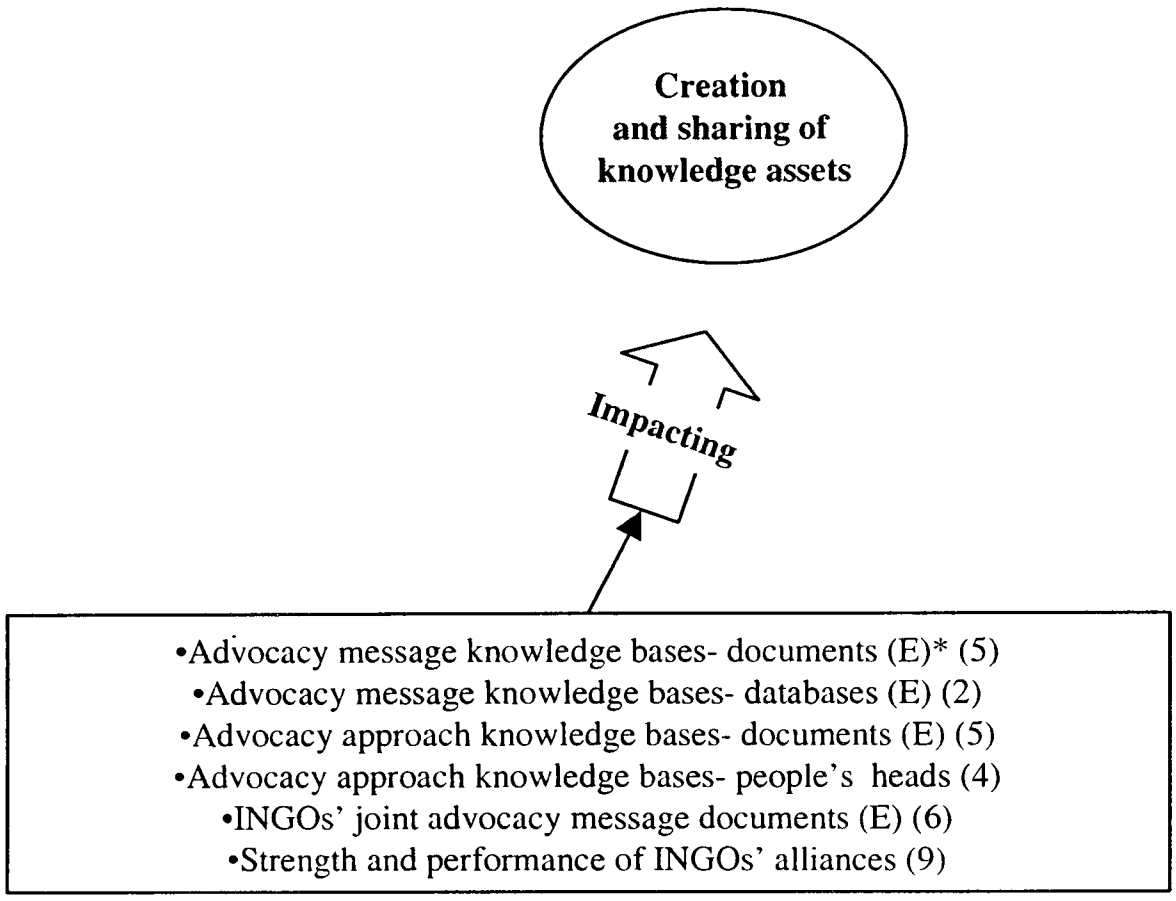
As discussed before, the lack of a suitable physical substrate can become a source of blockage for the impacting of knowledge (Boisot 1995). In relation to the physical substrate of knowledge assets, the data shows the following[36]:

- In five cases (IN2, 4, 5, 6, 8), advocacy **message knowledge bases are mainly centred on filed documents** and reports. In two cases (IN3, 10), advocacy message knowledge bases take the form of databases. 22 of the documents analysed could be considered physical substrata of knowledge concerning the advocacy message.

- There is evidence of **advocacy approach knowledge bases** in five of the INGOs interviewed (IN2, 3, 4, 5, 9), in the form of documents such as advocacy strategies; tactics for lobbying the diplomatic community in Colombia; and general guidelines about how to do advocacy. Ten of the documents analysed refer to advocacy approaches; three of them discuss general advocacy plans; three discuss results of advocacy work; three offer information or analysis about decision makers (e.g. stakeholder analysis); and one is a manual for advocacy.

[36] Impacting in advocacy refers to the embedding of knowledge in artefacts, rules or behavioural patterns (e.g. knowledge bases), and takes place during and after the implementation of the advocacy strategy.

Figure 30. Enablers and constraints to the impacting of knowledge for advocacy - INGOs' perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

- The collected data suggests that at least four INGOs (IN1, 6, 8, 10) **have not embedded their advocacy approach knowledge** in documents, databases or explicit organisational rules. As two of them say: *'(Advocacy) is a matter of experience' (IN1)*, and *'this process (coaching) is going to be easier than trying to do anything on paper' (IN8)*.

- The use of **joint advocacy message documents** by INGOs, which is mentioned by six respondents (IN3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10), provides additional evidence of the impacting of relevant knowledge for advocacy. As discussed before, INGOs were able to agree on a

joint statement for the London Meeting (International non-governmental agencies 2003).

- The data suggests that the **strengthening of INGO alliances** is a way in which INGOs have embedded knowledge about how to obtain information from decision makers and other advocates. Nine interviewees (IN1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) consider that there has been significant progress in coordinating among themselves. However, three interviewees (IN1, 8, 10) mention some constraints to the strength and performance of INGOs' alliances, such as geography constraints, staff turnover and a low level of trust among members.

> *'In many ways the work around the London Meeting drew the members of (an INGO alliance) together across the Atlantic, with each agency/organisation playing its part. This contributed to strengthening the INGO alliance, and provides a model for future work' (Document 6)]*

6.7 APPLICATION OF THE MODEL: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES - INGOS' PERSPECTIVE

After distributing the identified enablers and constraints, and their number of responses, between the external and internal environments, we obtain that 28% of responses refer to external factors whereas **72% refer to internal ones**. 32% of responses refer to scanning, while 28% of responses are linked to diffusion (see Table 22).

Table 22. Distribution of INGOs' responses by SLC phases and internal and external environments

Number of responses			
SLC phases	**External environment**	**Internal environment**	**Totals**
Scanning	31	31	62
Codification and abstraction	-	25	25
Diffusion	23	33	56
Absorption	-	22	22
Impacting	-	31	31
Totals	**54**	**142**	**196**

Percentages			
SLC phases	**External environment**	**Internal environment**	**Totals**
Scanning	16%	16%	32%
Codification and abstraction	-	13%	13%
Diffusion	12%	17%	28%
Absorption	-	11%	11%
Impacting	-	16%	16%
Totals	**28%**	**72%**	**100%**

6.7.1 THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The external factors that affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets according to the data collected from INGOs are summarised in Table 23.

Table 23. External enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness: INGOs

External enablers and constraints	Total	Importance*
SCANNING		
Limited time for advocates' data collection Lack of a clear strategy and unclear ownership of donors meeting process	**10**	1.00
Low codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages	**5**	0.50
Decision makers' ideologies Decision makers have to obey confidentiality Subjective orientations and mindsets	**5**	0.50
Decision makers' trust of advocates Staff turnover	**3**	0.30
Delicate security situation	**3**	0.30
INGO alliances Geography constraints	**2**	0.20
Higher codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages Documents by decision makers (E)	**3**	0.30
DIFFUSION		
The delicate security situation Fears of hostility towards field staff or partners Public advocacy strategies are restrained	**7**	0.70
Decision makers' low attendance at 9 July meeting Poor organisation by the Colombian government	**6**	0.60
Decision makers' trust of advocates (E) Advocates' long-term relationships with decision makers (E) Decision makers use advocates as a source of information (E)	**3**	0.30
Restricted advocate attendance at 9 July meeting	**3**	0.30
Decision makers' ideologies	**2**	0.20
Inaccurate coverage by the Colombian mass media	**2**	0.20

*Note: The total number of interviewees in the INGOs group is 10.

The data from the group of INGOs points at the role of **limited time for data collection** as a prominent external constraint to scanning - it is also the most highlighted constraint to scanning from domestic NGOs' data. Decision makers' ideologies emerge once more as a key external constraint to both scanning and diffusion.

In relation to the diffusion of advocacy messages, it appears that INGOs are more concerned about the delicate security situation and the potential hostility towards their staff than are decision makers and domestic NGOs.

In contrast to domestic NGOs, decision makers' low attendance at the 9 July meeting is an important constraint to diffusion. The codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages is mentioned once more, although a number of respondents think that some of these messages are clear and well structured (i.e. they have higher levels of codification and abstraction).

The role of INGO alliances emerges for the first time. INGO alliances are considered as an internal factor, although the performance of advocacy alliances is constrained by geographical distance - an external factor.

6.7.2 THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

For the third time, most of the enablers and constraints identified correspond to the internal environment (72% for INGOs). Table 24 shows the distribution of the internal enablers and constraints among the five variables of the Information Ecology model. As in previous chapters, when an enabler or constraint is linked to two or more variables of the model, its number of responses is distributed accordingly.

Table 24. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness and the Information Ecology model: INGOs

Internal enablers and constraints*	Total	KW	KC	KP	KA	KS
SCANNING						
INGO alliances (E) (scanning from decision makers)	10	2		8		
Staff turnover				X		
Low trust among alliances members		X				
Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction	7	7				
Documents by domestic NGOs (E)**						
Domestic NGOs' difficulties in systematising their experiences						
Documents by domestic NGOs are not opportune						
Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)	5	1		4		
Consultation processes with domestic NGOs (E)				X		
High levels of trust (E)		X				
Decision makers' trust of advocates	3	3				
Credibility of advocates' information (E)						
Nationalities of INGOs' staff						
INGO offices in different countries (E)	3			3		
INGOs' limited time budget	2		2			
Organisational ideologies	1		1			
Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information						
CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION						
INGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction	10	10				
Preferences towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E)						
Preferences towards lower levels of codification and abstraction						
Limited time for reflection	7		3	4		
Colombia and the London Meeting are not priority subjects for INGOs				X		
Most advocacy work is done through INGO alliances			X			
INGO alliances (E)	5			5		
INGO staff training	2					2
Mentoring						
Confidentiality	1			1		
DIFFUSION						
Advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction (E)	6			2	4	
INGOs' joint documents (E)					X	
INGO alliances (E)				X		
Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)	6			4	2	
INGOs provide funding to domestic NGOs to attend London Meeting (E)				X		
					X	
Reinforcing advocacy messages (E)				X		
INGOs advocate in favour of domestic NGOs' attendance at London Meeting (E)						
Inappropriate advocacy message framing	5		5			
Inappropriate tone and words (especially by domestic NGOs)						
Decision makers' trust of advocates (E)	4	4				
Advocates' long-term relationships with decision makers (E)						
Advocates' legitimacy	4			4		
INGO credibility						
Linkages with affected populations						
INGO alliances						
INGO alliances (E)	3			2	1	
Joint advocacy messages					X	
Provide access to decision makers				X		
Advocacy message's low codification and abstraction (E)	3				3	
Visit of representatives from affected populations to decision makers (E)						
Duration of INGOs' decision making processes	2			2		
Sign-off procedures						
ABSORPTION						
INGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction	10	10				
Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction						
Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction						
M&E of advocacy	7	2				5
M&E of advocacy mechanisms in place (E)						X
Confidentiality						X
Limited funds						X
Advocacy strategies are reactive: No clear, measurable objectives		X				
INGOs' organisational ideologies	5		5			
Colombia or the London Meeting are not priority subjects for INGOs						
Advocacy work should be done by INGO alliances						
IMPACTING						
Strength and performance of INGO alliances	9			9		
Strength and performance of INGO alliances (progress) (E)						
Strength and performance of INGO alliances (constraints)						
INGOs' joint advocacy message documents (E)	6				6	
Advocacy message knowledge bases - documents (E)	5				5	
Advocacy approach knowledge base - documents (E)	5				5	
Advocacy approach knowledge base - people's heads	4				4	
Advocacy message knowledge bases - databases (E)	2				2	
Total	142	39	16	48	32	7

*Note: The variables of our Information Ecology model are, in order of appearance: Knowledge workers; knowledge behaviour and culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture, and knowledge strategy

**Note: (E) indicates and enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint

Most of the enablers and constraints identified from INGOs' data refer to **knowledge politics**, followed by knowledge workers. The theoretical framework is validated as shown in Table 25.

Table 25. Research framework as validated by the data from INGOs (with importance for each enabler or constraint)

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	SLC phases affected
Alliances and partnerships (3.40)	KP	**INGO alliances (E)** Staff turnover	0.80	Scanning
		Strength and performance of INGO alliances Strength and performance of INGO alliances (progress and constraints)	0.90	Impacting
		INGO alliances (E)	0.50	Codification and abstraction
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E) Consultation processes with domestic NGOs (E)	0.40	Scanning
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E) INGOs provide funding to domestic NGOs to attend London Meeting (E) INGOs advocate in favour of domestic NGOs' attendance at London Meeting (E)	0.40	Diffusion
		Advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction (E) INGO alliances (E)	0.20	Diffusion
		INGO alliances (E) Provide access to decision makers	0.20	Diffusion
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (2.90)	KW	**INGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** Preferences towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E) Preferences towards lower levels of codification and abstraction	1.00	Codification and abstraction
		INGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction	1.00	Absorption
		Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction Documents by domestic NGOs (E) Domestic NGOs' difficulties in systematising their experiences Documents by domestic NGOs are not opportune	0.70	Scanning
		M&E of advocacy Advocacy strategies are reactive: No clear, measurable objectives	0.20	Absorption
Knowledge assets' substrata (2.20)	KA	**INGOs' joint advocacy message documents (E)**	0.60	Impacting
		Advocacy message knowledge bases - documents (E)	0.50	Impacting
		Advocacy approach knowledge base - documents (E)	0.50	Impacting
		Advocacy approach knowledge base - people's heads	0.40	Impacting
		Advocacy message knowledge bases - databases (E)	0.20	Impacting
Level of trust (1.00)	KW	**Decision makers' trust of advocates (E)** Advocates' long-term relationships with decision makers (E)	0.40	Diffusion
		Decision makers' trust of advocates Credibility of advocates' information (E) Nationalities of INGOs' staff	0.30	Scanning
		INGO alliances (E) Low trust among alliances members	0.20	Scanning
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E) High levels of trust (E)	0.10	Scanning
Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction (1.00)	KA	**Advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction (E)** INGOs' joint documents (E)	0.40	Diffusion
		Advocacy message's low codification and abstraction (E) Visit of representatives from affected populations to decision makers (E)	0.30	Diffusion
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E) Reinforcing advocacy messages (E)	0.20	Diffusion
		INGO alliances (E) Joint advocacy messages	0.10	Diffusion
Decision making processes (0.70)	KP	**Limited time for reflection** Colombia and the London Meeting are not priority subjects for INGOs	0.40	Codification and abstraction
		Duration of INGOs' decision making processes Sign-off procedures	0.20	Diffusion
		Confidentiality	0.10	Codification and abstraction
Organisational ideologies (0.60)	KC	**INGOs' organisational ideologies** Colombia or the London Meeting are not priority subjects for INGOs Advocacy work should be done by INGO alliances	0.50	Absorption
		Organisational ideologies Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information	0.10	Scanning
Incentives for learning (0.50)	KC	**Limited time for reflection** Most advocacy work is done through INGO alliances	0.30	Codification and abstraction
		INGOs' limited time budget	0.20	Scanning
Advocacy message framing (0.50)	KC	**Inappropriate advocacy message framing** Inappropriate tone and words (especially by domestic NGOs)	0.50	Diffusion
M&E of advocacy (0.50)	KS	**M&E of advocacy** M&E of advocacy mechanisms in place (E) Confidentiality Limited funds	0.50	Absorption
Legitimacy (0.40)	KP	**Advocates' legitimacy** INGO credibility Linkages with affected populations INGO alliances	0.40	Diffusion
Governance structures (0.30)	KP	**INGO offices in different countries (E)**	0.30	Scanning
Staff training (0.20)	KS	**INGO staff training** Mentoring	0.20	Codification and abstraction

As Table 25 shows, the research framework explains this set of data. Most internal enablers and constraints focus on scanning (22%), diffusion (23%) and impacting (22%). The majority is associated with knowledge politics (34%) and knowledge workers (27%). As in the case of domestic NGOs, knowledge architecture factors affect impacting significantly, while knowledge politics concentrates on scanning (see Table 26).

Table 26. Distribution of INGOs' responses on internal environments by the SLC and variables of the Information Ecology model

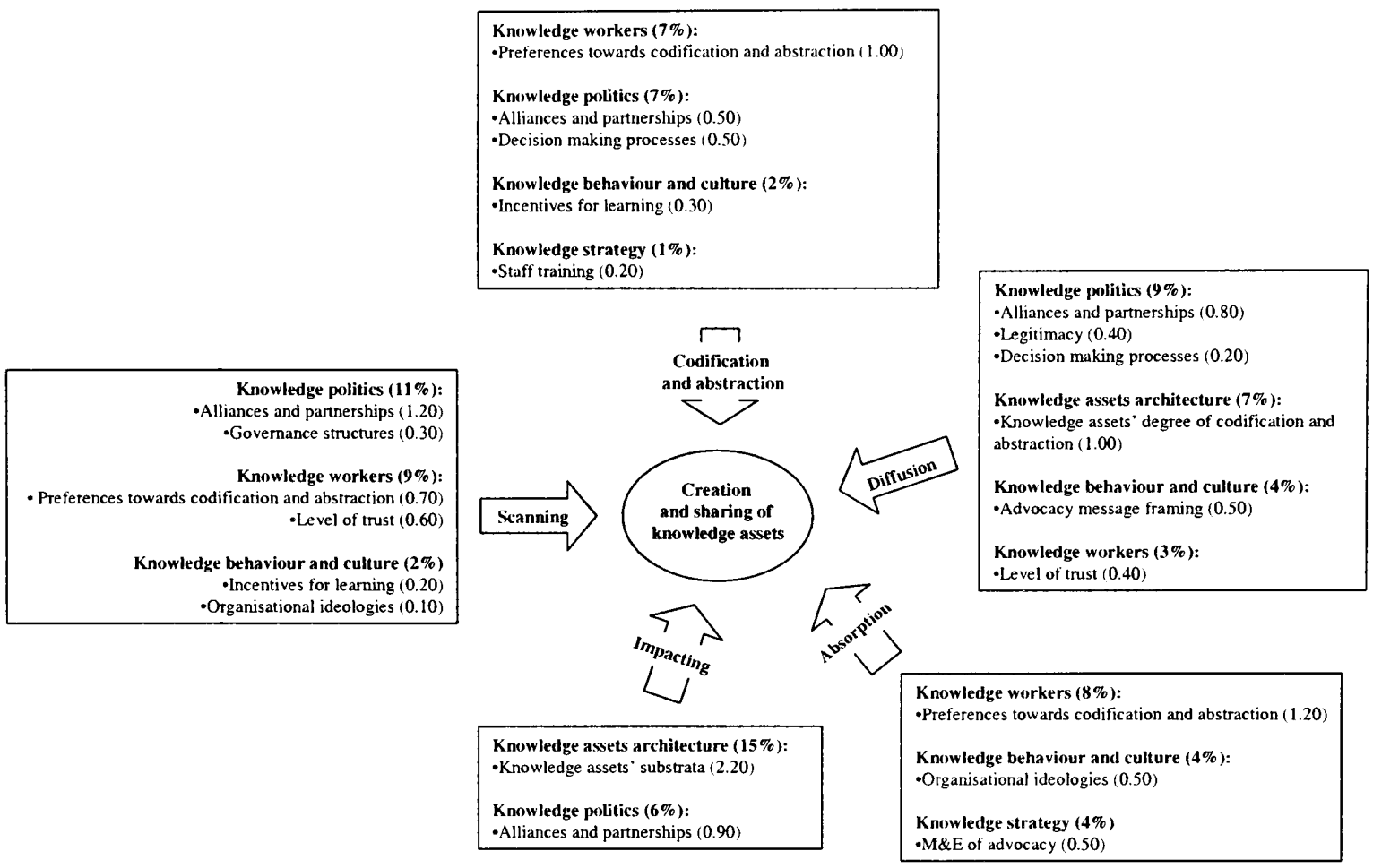
SLC phases	Information Ecology variables					Totals
	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy	
Scanning	13	3	15	-	-	31
Codification and abstraction	10	3	10	-	2	25
Diffusion	4	5	14	10	-	33
Absorption	12	5	-	-	5	22
Impacting	-	-	9	22	-	31
Totals	**39**	**16**	**48**	**32**	**7**	**142**

SLC phases	Information Ecology variables*					Totals
	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy	
Scanning	9%	2%	11%	-	-	22%
Codification and abstraction	7%	2%	7%	-	1%	17%
Diffusion	3%	4%	9%	7%	-	23%
Absorption	8%	4%	-	-	4%	16%
Impacting	-	-	6%	15%	-	22%
Totals	**27%**	**11%**	**34%**	**23%**	**5%**	**100%**

*Note: Percentages in this table are based on the total number of responses that refer to internal enablers and constraints (142).

Figure 31 shows a summary of the internal enablers and constraints, with their importance, identified from INGOs' data. The enablers and constraints are distributed by the phases of the SLC and by the variables of the Information Ecology model.

Figure 31. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness: INGOs' perspective



The data collected shows that:

- Most enablers and constraints are of **internal nature**, as with all previous stakeholders' data, and focus on **scanning** and **diffusion**. All enablers and constraints associated with the phases of codification and abstraction, absorption and impacting are internal. Scanning is slightly more affected by external factors than any other phase of the SLC.

- **Limited time for advocates' data collection** is the most significant external constraint, followed by decision makers' ideologies and the delicate security situation.

- The most prominent group of constraints is knowledge **politics** (34%), followed by knowledge **workers** (27%) and knowledge **architecture** (23%). Most of the internal constraints concentrate on **scanning** (22%), **diffusion** (23%) and **impacting** (22%).

- **Alliances and partnerships** appears in first place among enablers and constraints and affects mainly scanning. Advocates' alliances also facilitate the diffusion of the message by enabling access to decision makers and the drafting of joint documents. The use of joint documents could be seen as a move towards higher levels of codification and abstraction. However, from being a complement and a support, alliances can become a substitute for NGO advocacy. Some interviewees warn that if individual NGOs leave all the responsibility of advocating to their alliances and do not feed their knowledge regularly into them, the strength and performance of these alliances may be affected.

- In relation to knowledge workers, **preferences towards codification and abstraction** appear in first place, affecting mainly codification and abstraction, and absorption. There seems to be a slight preference for higher levels of codification and abstraction among INGOs than among domestic NGOs, as shown by the use of more joint documents and more structured advocacy approach knowledge bases. Nevertheless, there is concern about the lack of clear and measurable objectives of advocacy strategies, which could be seen as a manifestation of lower levels of codification and abstraction.

- Respondents underline the benefits of messages at **lower levels of codification and abstraction**, as in the case of messages given directly to decision makers by

representatives of affected communities. This raises the question of the extent to which higher levels of codification and abstraction have more impact on decision makers than do lower levels.

- The **limited time for reflection** constrains codification and abstraction and is associated with decision making processes: As some interviewees have pointed out, Colombia is not a priority for some of the INGOs interviewed, which limits the time and resources dedicated to it.

- The role of **organisational ideologies** is not as clear in INGOs as it is in domestic NGOs. It was only when the internal documents were analysed that examples of organisational ideologies, which did not emerge during the interviews, came to light.

CHAPTER 7

ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS OF CREATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE ASSETS FOR POLICY ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS: AID INTERNATIONAL'S PERSPECTIVE

Contents

- Introduction
- Enablers and constraints to scanning
- Enablers and constraints to codification and abstraction of advocacy knowledge bases
- Enablers and constraints to diffusion of the advocacy message
- Enablers and constraints to the absorption of knowledge for advocacy
- Enablers and constraints to the impacting of knowledge for advocacy
- Application of the model: External and internal environments in advocacy communities, Aid International's perspective

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7.1 INTRODUCTION: AID INTERNATIONAL AND THE PROCESS OF THE DONORS MEETING FOR COLOMBIA

In Chapters 4 to 6 the enablers and constraints of sharing knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness according to decision makers, domestic NGOs and INGOs have been discussed. Chapter 7 presents the data collected from an in depth case study of a particular INGO taking part in the process of the donors meeting for Colombia. For confidentiality reasons, this INGO is identified as **Aid International**.

Aid International's headquarters are located in the United Kingdom. Over the last five years there has been a significant reorganisation as several activities have been moved to regional offices in developing countries. The INGO has a strong international composition and its staff work in over 50 countries. Aid International's objectives in relation to the donors meeting process are similar to those of other INGOs: The organisation advocates for international cooperation to Colombia based on the implementation of the UNHCHR human rights recommendations. Aid International states that the only viable mechanism for a sustainable solution to the Colombian conflict is a peace process with rebel groups, instead of armed confrontation against them, and that Colombian civil society organisations must be part of this process and of other relevant debates in Colombian society.

A total of 28 interviews were undertaken at Aid International in both the UK and Colombia offices (see Table 27). A total of 33 internal documents were reviewed[37]. Other internal sources such as emails, minutes and the corporate intranet were also used. Additional information was gathered through observation during regular visits to Aid International over a period of three months. Anonymity has been granted to all interviewees.

[37] Of the 33 internal documents analysed, 12 documents refer to internal communications or knowledge management initiatives; 11 documents refer to advocacy; eight documents refer to monitoring and evaluation; and three documents are related to the process of the London Meeting.

Table 27. Interviews by type of informant: Aid International

Staff directly involved in the advocacy work around the donors meeting for Colombia	Staff taking part in other advocacy work at Aid International	Staff working with information and knowledge management
• Policy and advocacy: 3 • Humanitarian: 1 • Media: 2 • Directors: 2	• Policy and advocacy: 6 • Director: 1 • Media: 1	• Internal information and communications: 5 • Information systems: 5 • Knowledge management: 1 • Monitoring and evaluation: 1
Total: 8 interviews	Total: 8 Interviews	Total: 12 interviews

7.1.1 THE MOST RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE FOR THE SUCCESS OF ADVOCACY WORK, AND THE ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO OBTAINING IT ACCORDING TO AID INTERNATIONAL

Aid International has made efforts to create an enabling environment for learning. However, a number of internal reports highlight some inadequacies: '*There is something that still holds back the dynamic (of knowledge) generation and sharing*' (Document 5).

In relation to the success of the advocacy work around the donors for Colombia process, Aid International members of staff consider the following to be relevant knowledge:

From affected populations:

- Domestic NGOs' priorities and interests in relation to advocacy: Position and objectives of civil society organisations in the donors meeting process; potential allies on the ground; domestic NGOs producing useful information.

- Colombian political context: The human rights situation in the areas affected by the internal conflict and the overall effects that government policies are having on those communities: '*Stories that illustrate the relevance of the advocacy message*' (AI1) and '*a real practical take on what is happening on the ground*' (AI22).

In relation to decision makers:

- Donor countries' agendas of international cooperation with Colombia: Donor governments' policies in relation to Colombia and their main interests and concerns in relation to that cooperation.

- Relevant decision makers: Who they are and who the best decision makers to focus on are; their backgrounds, personal interests and motivations: '*What makes them think and understand*' (AI22); what capacity of decision making they have; what the opportunities to influence the key people are. Decision makers' legal and political obligations for which they are accountable, and the gaps in the implementation of these obligations; how decisions are made; and decision makers' preferred language: '*How they want us to communicate with them*' (AI17).

In relation to other advocates:

- Other advocates' organisations: Their status and reputation; and their organisational capacity.

- Other advocates' relevant experience in advocacy work: Research on sensitive issues; experience and information about relevant decision makers; level of engagement and commitment to objectives; and their analysis of the situation in Colombia.

In relation to other areas within the organisation:

- Work on the ground: How existing policies are affecting work on the ground; evidence to back up the advocacy case, e.g. stories; proposals from practical and successful experiences; and areas of expertise of staff.

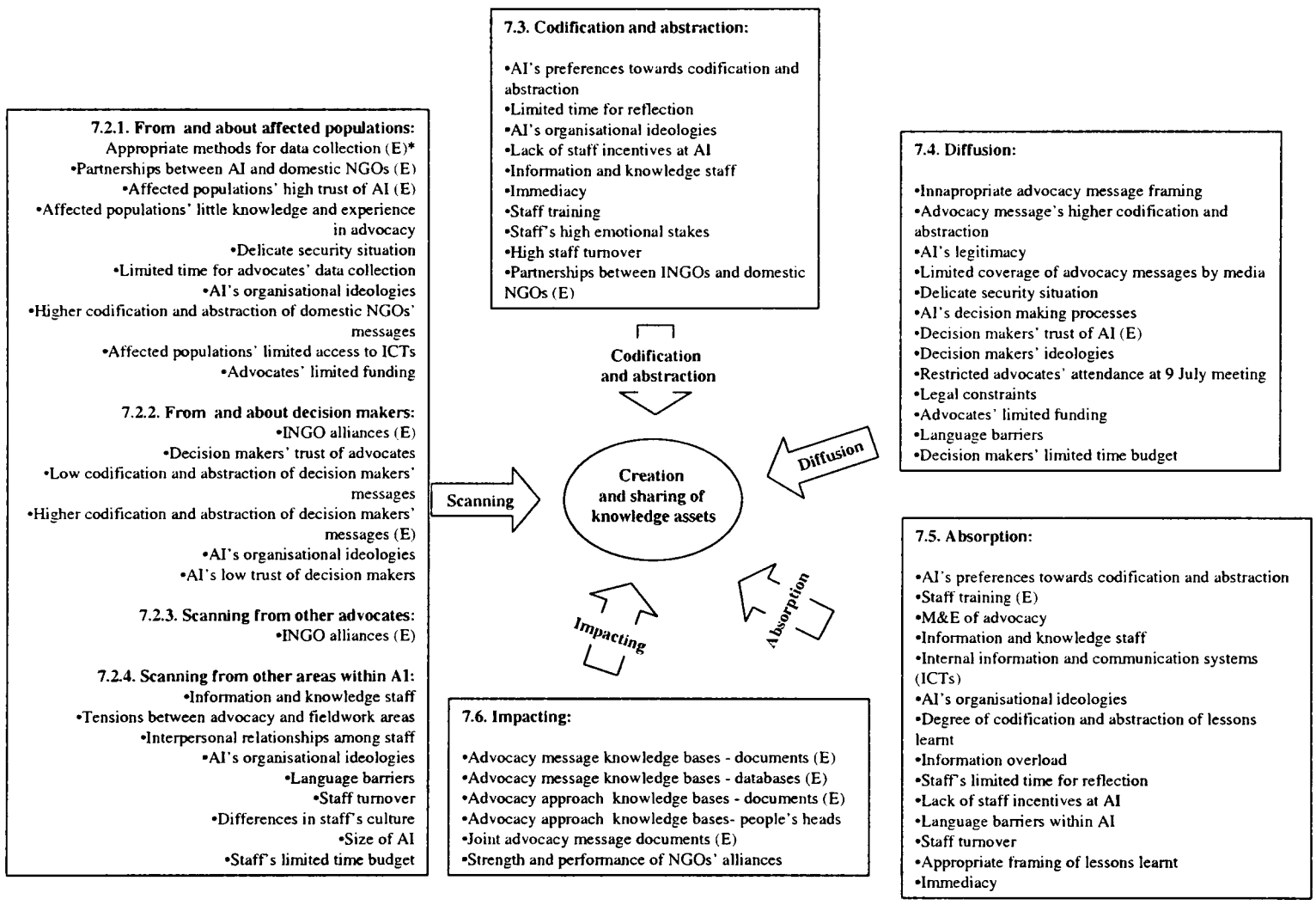
- Relevant experience in advocacy work: What the organisation is doing or has done previously in advocacy; and what decision makers the organisation has contacted or worked with currently and previously.

Interviewees considered that advocacy efforts have achieved significant results: a) The London Declaration, signed between Europe and the United States, sets out conditions for international cooperation with Colombia, such as the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations; b) the participation of domestic NGOs in the London Meeting, which, although limited, was not originally envisaged; c) the strengthening of the profile of advocacy work for Colombia in the UK - particularly with parliamentarians; d) the creation by civil society organisations of a space for coordination (La Alianza); and e) to follow up the process, the international community in Colombia has started to work in a more coordinated way.

Respondents think that there are two main areas where results have not been satisfactory. These are a) the absence of mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations; and b) the little consultation with Colombian civil society organisations.

Figure 32 shows a summary of the enablers and constraints of knowledge creation and sharing among advocacy communities from Aid International's perspective. These enablers and constraints are discussed in detail in the next sections.

Figure 32. Summary of enablers and constraints of knowledge creation and sharing in advocacy communities: Aid International's (AI) perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint

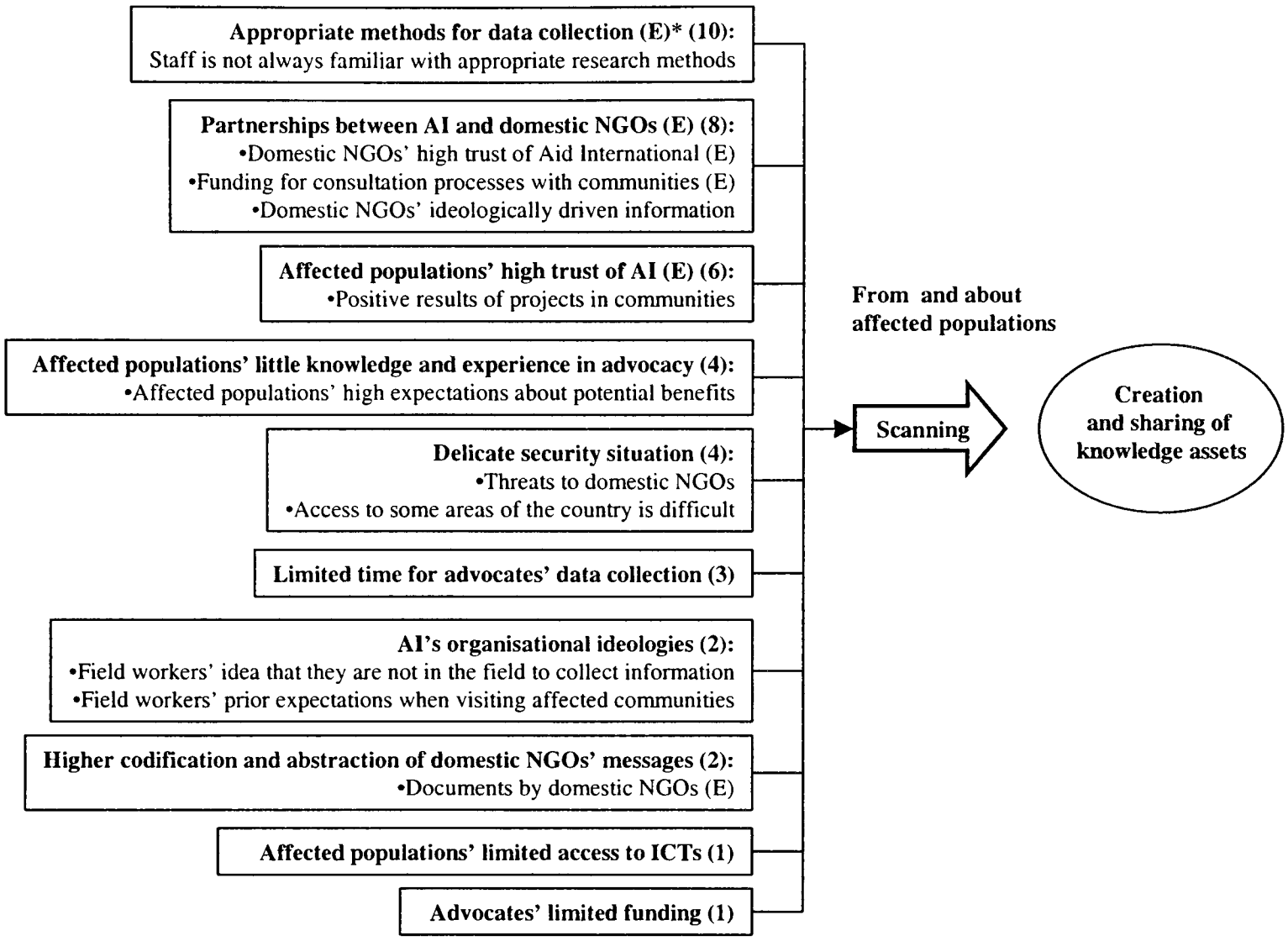
7.2 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING

The constraints identified by interviewees refer to the acquisition of information and knowledge from affected populations, decision makers, other advocates and other areas within Aid International.

7.2.1 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

The factors affecting scanning in relation to affected populations are: **Appropriate methods for data collection** (10 interviewees); **partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs** (eight interviewees); **affected populations' high trust of Aid International** (six interviewees); **affected populations' little knowledge and experience in advocacy** (four interviewees); **delicate security situation** (four interviewees); **limited time for advocates' data collection** (three interviewees); **Aid International's organisational ideologies** (two interviewees); **higher codification and abstraction of domestic NGOs' messages** (two interviewees); **affected populations' limited access to ICTs** (one interviewee); and **advocates' limited funding** (one interviewee).

Figure 33. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to affected populations - Aid International's perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

7.2.1.1 Appropriate methods for data collection

For ten respondents, the use of **appropriate methods for data collection** enables the acquisition of sound evidence. One of them argues that Aid International's 'grassroots research' is based on a 'classic academic approach', where a thesis is tested against evidence from the field (AI3). One respondent illustrates the importance of research for the organisation:

'You actually have to invest quite a lot to get sound knowledge of the affected populations, because you have to go and do joint research, for instance, with them, to really get knowledge about what is the situation. That is why over the last three years we have invested in a research capacity here, precisely to be able to deal with this work - how different policies - international policies - impact and affect poor peoples' lives. And that, of course, hopefully, is going to create a far greater richness of analysis than really we have at the moment' (AI8).

Nevertheless, Aid International's **staff is not always familiar with appropriate research methods**, as AI1 points out. An internal report underlines that it is necessary to build the capacity of regional offices' staff to do research (Document 16) .

7.2.1.2 Partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs

For eight interviewees (AI2, 4, 6, 8, 22, 23, 24, 26), **partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs** have facilitated obtaining information from affected populations. One interviewee emphasises:

'I think that particularly in Colombia, where there is such strong civil society, so well organised, we are really taking a cue from them. And that is something we have to be very careful with. It is not about what we want to say, it is about what Colombians want to say and we helping - a kind of shaping the message in a form that would be better received. So, most of our messages are coming out of what Colombian civil organisations have to say' (AI2).

Two interviewees (AI2, 4) comment that partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs enable **high trust**. As AI4 explains, '*you have to focus on the quality of the relationship*' with domestic NGOs. For one interviewee (AI23), the **funding provided through the partnership** facilitates obtaining information. However, this factor may also have disadvantages, as an internal document comments (Document 12).

Three interviewees (AI4, 8, 26) think that additional difficulties arise when domestic NGOs engage in advocacy because of hidden political motivations, or when the information they provide is '***ideologically driven*** *and not very rigorous in its approach*' (AI8). One respondent describes the situation:

> *'Sometimes domestic NGOs are manipulated by political groups - this is not the problem. The problem is that domestic NGOs are driven by political parties, respond to political parties' interests... and in Latin America that is common. That is an important obstacle, because information can be manipulated and their messages have interests' (AI26).*

7.2.1.3 Affected populations' high trust of Aid International

For six respondents, **affected populations' high trust of Aid International** is a significant enabler when obtaining information, particularly in Colombia, where trust and personal contacts significantly affect the way people relate (AI2). For three interviewees (AI3, 8, 26), affected populations' trust is enabled by the passage of time, and by **positive results of projects** in their communities:

> *'It is not easy to get hold of stories, and that is why the work on the ground has to be mature - because people have to trust you. They have to feel like they want to open up to you. They have to understand, I think, that you are there to help them, and that by sharing that information we will have some kind of use. I think it is something people do spontaneously when the trust is there, or when you have worked with people for a long period of time, and they benefit directly from your interventions and your support. Then, sharing their experiences comes naturally' (AI3).*

However, the intangible nature of advocacy makes it difficult for communities to perceive the benefits of taking part in advocacy initiatives (AI26).

7.2.1.4 Affected populations' little knowledge and experience in advocacy

For two interviewees (AI24, 28), affected communities usually have **little knowledge and experience about international scenarios of advocacy**. Two interviewees (AI4, 26) link this to **affected populations' high expectations about potential benefits** that they anticipate from advocacy, which influences the information these communities give to Aid International:

> *'If you go out to collect information about starvation and you are an aid provider, they will just tell you that they are hungry and starving, instead of giving you a sort of independent assessment of the situation' (AI4).*

7.2.1.5 Delicate security situation

Four respondents (AI2, 4, 6, 24) mention security as a serious constraint. Two of them (AI2, 6) refer to the **threats to domestic NGOs** in Colombia, whereas the other two (AI4, 24) argue that any delicate security situation (e.g. an internal conflict) makes it **difficult to have access to some areas**. Some information cannot, therefore, be collected or validated:

> *'If the political regime is so difficult, not allowing freedom of speech or freedom of movement, you could be restricted to a geographical area to collect information. Collecting information in an area of conflict could be very difficult because of insecurity. You cannot travel to the area where mass murder has happened. Therefore, you should rely on trustworthy individuals who have witnessed (the event)'(AI4).*

7.2.1.6 Limited time for advocates' data collection

Three respondents (AI4, 8, 24) refer to the **limited time for advocates' data collection**. This is particularly a result of work overload (AI4). One member of an advocacy team explains that consultation processes with communities take a long time, so the amount of time available is vital:

> *'You have got to really know what are you looking for. You have to make sure you get to the right authority to be able to do these things; that you set up with the right communities; that the communities know why they are doing it. Therefore, they are giving their time freely for it' (AI8).*

A member of staff (AI24) who took part in the advocacy work around the donors meeting for Colombia states that the limited time for data collection was evident, and the quality of the consultation process with communities was affected.

7.2.1.7 Aid International's organisational ideologies

From the answers of two interviewees, two organisational ideologies appear to be influencing the collection of information from affected populations. The first refers to **fieldworkers' idea that they are not in the field to collect information**, as they see this activity as an additional task to their job (AI1). The second one refers to **fieldworkers' prior expectations** when visiting affected communities (AI26). As AI26 explains:

> *'Sometimes we do not how to listen... We arrive in the field with a fixed idea. It is like one-colour glasses... If you wear green glasses and you go with them around the world without realising it, you see everything in green. So, we have to be able to take a kit of glasses of different colours and change them regularly to see the*

rainbow. That is another barrier, our attitude to the context, and that is what we are least aware of. Within our context we believe that we possess the truth' (AI26).

7.2.1.8 Other constraints for scanning information and knowledge from affected populations

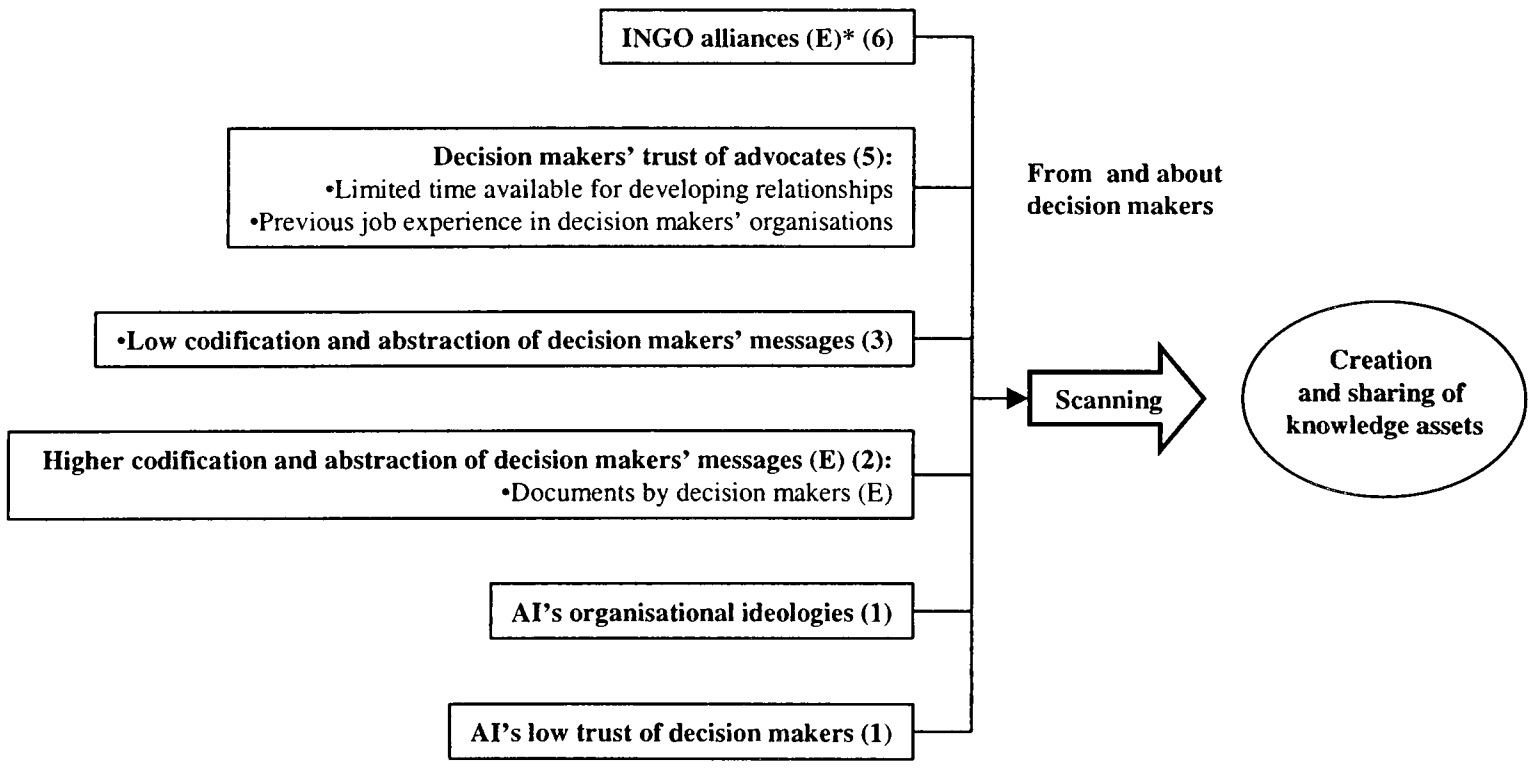
Two interviewees (AI22, 24) state that one of their main sources of information about affected populations is the **documents by domestic NGOs**. As AI24 explains, among domestic NGOs, there are some specialised in certain areas such as displaced communities and human rights: '*They are organisations that have systematised information for ten years or more*' (AI24).

One respondent (AI24) argues that **affected populations' limited access to ICTs** constrains their opportunities for taking part in Aid International's consultation processes, especially when these communities are located in remote areas of the country. This respondent also emphasises the role that **advocates' limited funding** has in restricting the amount and quality of information and knowledge that an organisation can obtain from affected communities.

7.2.2 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO DECISION MAKERS

Aid International's acquisition of information and knowledge from decision makers is affected by the following factors: **INGO alliances** (six interviewees); **decision makers' trust of advocates** (five interviewees); **low codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages** (three interviewees); **higher codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages** (two interviewees); **Aid International's organisational ideologies** (one interviewee); and **Aid International's low trust of decision makers** (one interviewee).

Figure 34. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to decision makers - Aid International's perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

7.2.2.1 INGO alliances

For six interviewees (AI2, 5, 6, 22, 24, 28), **INGO alliances** have enabled the acquisition of relevant knowledge about decision makers, as they facilitate both sharing information with other advocates and doing research on sensitive issues:

> *'We tend to do research under an umbrella. We support, for example, a parliamentary group. We call them and they are actually publicly doing the research and the report won't have our logo. So there are ways of getting the information' (AI6).*

7.2.2.2 Decision makers' trust of advocates

For five interviewees (AI1, 6, 22, 24, 28), **decision makers' trust of advocates** enables the obtaining of information and knowledge about them:

> *'It depends a lot on sort of cultivating allies within the government - civil servants - to get information. It is all about relationships. If you develop good relationships you get more information' (AI22).*

'*Consistency in engagement*' (AI1) with decision makers is restricted by the **limited time** available to Aid International's staff for establishing and developing these relationships (AI6). According to one respondent (AI22), **previous job experience in decision makers' organisations** is an advantage for engaging with decision makers and gaining access to their information.

Two respondents (AI24, 28) state that relationships and access to officials within the British government has changed over recent years - particularly in the context of the

'war on terror' - and this has affected the acquisition of information about the donors meeting process.

7.2.2.3 Low codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages

Three respondents (IN23, 24, 28) emphasise that **decision makers' messages were unclear** and produced at the last moment. For Aid international, it was not clear how the donors meeting was organised, by whom, or who was invited to it. One respondent describes the situation as follows:

> *'The problem prior to Bula leaving is that they (the Colombian government) proposed these 'mesas', but they again were not clear about how people were going to participate and what the terms of reference were - and actually how far they really were open to changing or discussing. (...) There is no clear strategy for participation (...) the (Colombian) government's position during the whole process, their handling of it, has been, I think, very unclear - and particularly in terms of information of processes. Are they calling the meetings? The beginning was very unclear - who was calling? What meeting basically? Who is in charge?' (AI23).*

7.2.2.4 Higher codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages

Two interviewees (AI22, 24) emphasise the importance of **decision makers' documents** when obtaining relevant knowledge for advocacy. As AI22 says, books and articles about governments and international organisations can be useful when planning advocacy.

7.2.2.5 Aid International's organisational ideologies

One interviewee (AI8) mentions **Aid International's organisational ideologies** as a constraint. According to him, there is a '*mystique built around advocacy work*', which holds back staff's confidence to get involved in advocacy in the first place. As he explains:

> *'There is a huge amount of mystique built around advocacy. And that is because for anybody to meet somebody who they perceive to be more powerful than themselves is intimidating; and therefore people partly create that mystique for themselves in order to create barriers that allow them to stay in their comfort zone: Either I don't do advocacy because that person is more (powerful) than me and I haven't really got anything to say, or I am not being backed up by the organisation' (AI8).*

7.2.2.6 Aid International's low trust of decision makers

For a member of Aid International's field office in Colombia (AI28), the Colombian government is trying to control international cooperation with the country. He also states that both the British and the Colombian governments were more interested in manipulating the process of the donors meeting than in facilitating real participation of civil society.

7.2.3 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO OTHER ADVOCATES

Interviewees identify one main factor influencing knowledge sharing among advocates: **INGO alliances** (five interviewees).

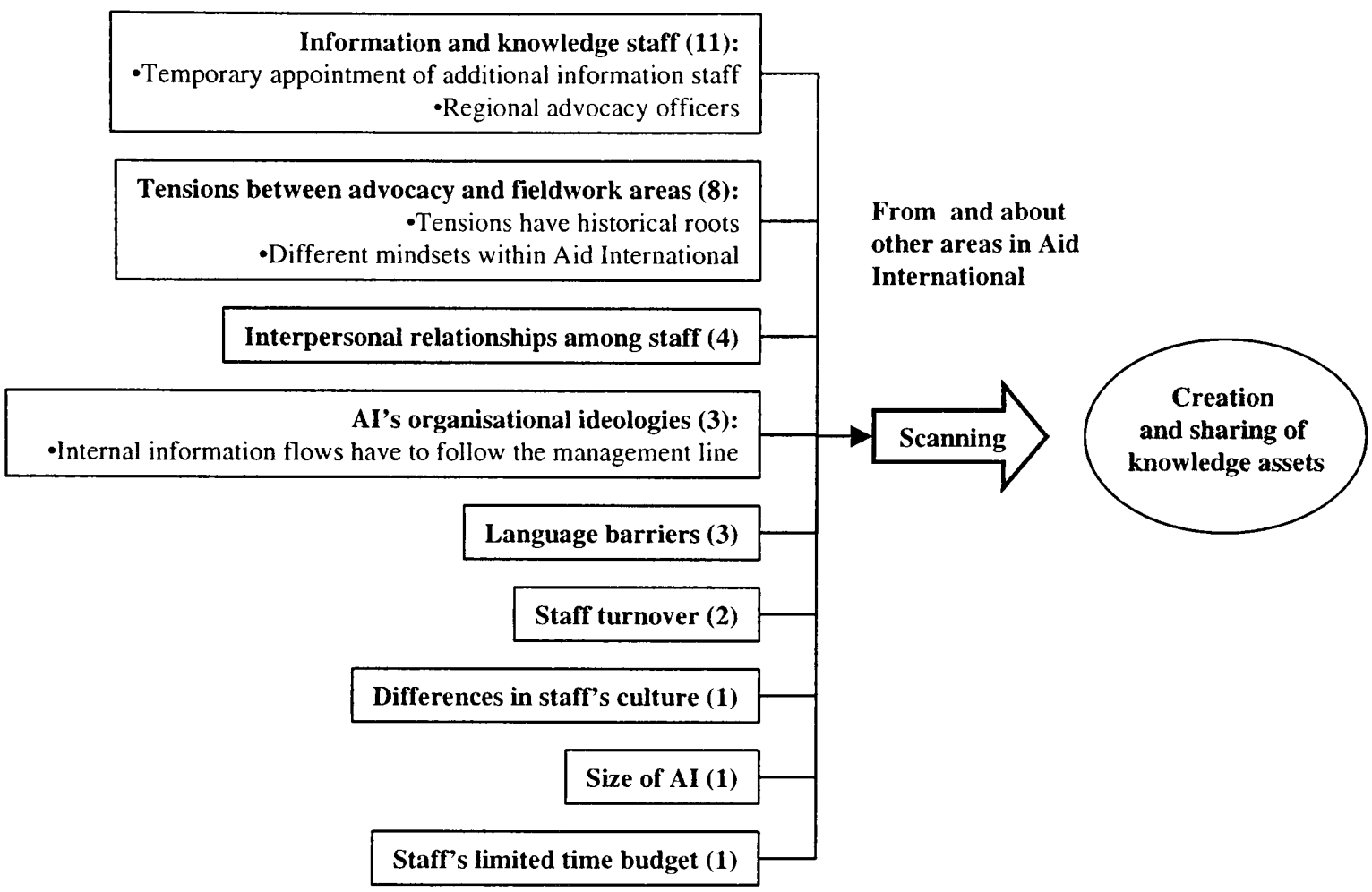
7.2.3.1 INGO alliances

According to five interviewees (AI2, 4, 6, 23, 28), **INGO alliances** play a vital role in helping advocates to obtain relevant knowledge. Information flows within INGO alliances depend upon there being a certain **level of trust among alliance members** (AI23) - which may be affected by **people's personalities** (AI2). This trust can be severely constrained by **differences in organisational capacity and level of engagement** (AI4), as well as **staff turnover** within INGOs (AI28). An internal report acknowledges that: '*Aid International's profile and relationships with partners changes when staff changes*'. Staff turnover seems to have constrained knowledge sharing among advocates in the case of the donors meeting for Colombia, as many of the INGOs there appointed new directors during that period (AI28).

7.2.4 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO SCANNING IN RELATION TO OTHER AREAS WITHIN AID INTERNATIONAL

According to interviewees, the main factors influencing the acquisition of information and knowledge from other areas within Aid International can be summarised as follows: **Information and knowledge staff** (11 interviewees); **tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas** (eight interviewees); **trust among staff** (four interviewees); **Aid international's organisational ideologies** (three interviewees); **language barriers** (three interviewees); **staff turnover** (two interviewees); **differences in staff's culture** (one interviewee); **size of Aid International** (one interviewee); **staff's limited time budget** (one interviewee).

Figure 35. Enablers and constraints to scanning in relation to other areas within Aid International



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

7.2.4.1 Information and knowledge staff

Eleven respondents (AI5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28) emphasise the role of **information and knowledge staff** in enabling the sharing of relevant knowledge across areas within the organisation. As AI5 and 21 explain, the **appointment of additional information staff** has been used with success in crises such as the war and occupation of Iraq since 2002, when the staff in the field could not respond to increasing information demands. Nevertheless, there are a number of permanent positions that are proving particularly useful, according to respondents, such as regional advocacy

officers; staff in charge of chairing online discussions and forums; and staff in charge of lobbying specific decision makers (e.g. the UK government, the European Union or the World Bank). An interviewee comments about the latter:

> *'There is a team here specialised on the World Bank; another team specialised on the International Monetary Fund; another on transnational companies... If my team is going to work on the World Bank, there is no point in going alone, I have to look for advice from the person (inside Aid International) who knows people within the World Bank by name' (AI24).*

Five interviewees (AI7, 21, 22, 26, 28) consider **regional advocacy officers** to be critical in enabling the sharing of information from and with the regions. As one respondent points out: *'This is a key person. Internal communication networks are improving because of this person' (AI26).* However, as two respondents emphasise (AI7, 24), regional advocacy officers' **time budget is limited,** as they have to attend to both their regional offices and Aid International's main office:

> *'They (regional advocacy officers) have many things to do at the regional level, which are their priorities, and which are slightly different to ours (at the main office) I suppose. And the flow of information is not as good as it could be...' (AI7).*

7.2.4.2 Tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas

There is evidence from eight respondents (AI8, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26) about the existence of **tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas** that may be affecting the internal sharing of information and knowledge. A member of a policy team describes the existing tensions as follows:

> *'Long-term development, humanitarian response or preparedness, and advocacy... they should all be working in unity together, joyfully, and of course they do to a point, but there is also substantial tension about where resources go, about the relative weight each of these elements has in determining the agenda. Long-term development often says 'we need humanitarian response which is*

aligned with our development policies', whereas the humanitarians would say 'if there is a disaster we need to save lives, we are not messing about saying 'oh, let's make sure that partners are always consulted and all those things'. And they are both right; there is no right answer. They have got to find a right balance in each situation' (AI8).

Six respondents (AI8, 13, 15, 20, 25, 26) think that tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas are reinforced by the existence of **different mindsets within Aid International**, associated with the different types of work, skills, methods and cognitive orientation predominant in advocacy or fieldwork, which have emerged with Aid International's relatively new interest in advocacy:

'People who come from a policy and advocacy focus have a different take on something from people who come from a field programme. The advocacy focus is about the delivery of messages and how you do that, who you do it with and when you do it. The field programme is more about doing the activities that you have and so on. The focus that you bring to it is not about changing the background but changing the reality that people are living with. If you are an advocate talking about Iraq, you are involved in how to shape the context within which people live, by persuading policy makers and politicians to take particular policy directions that will, at the end, change the environment in which people live. If you look at it from the field programme point of view (...) actually, you are involved in: 'Does this person have a house to live? Do they have water? Are they secure?' 'Do they have their livelihoods secured?' Very day to day questions. That reflects how you think about context and how you might want the context to be. My ways of thinking are shaped by what it is that I do. It is the same with the advocacy people. They are dealers, and they find ways of using words and dealing with people. What I do is something different. There is a cultural difference that is linked to the institutional one' (AI15).

For one respondent (AI26), the different mindsets are associated with what could be described as **different preferences for codification and abstraction**, as he explains:

'I think that people in advocacy areas - not always, but sometimes - manage very theoretical knowledge, not practical knowledge. In the humanitarian areas there is the opposite problem: People with a lot of practical experience, which sometimes is not well supported by theoretical knowledge. This creates a tension between the two approaches, between different ways to look at things, to understand the context... I think teams should be better balanced: Bring more theoretical people to the field, and people with more practical experience to the policy teams' (AI26).

A member of a field office in Latin America (AI18) thinks that these tensions are linked to **historical strains between developed and developing countries**, which originate as far back as the colonial era.

7.2.4.3 Trust among staff

For four interviewees (AI5, 11, 21, 22), interpersonal relationships with their colleagues in other areas of Aid International facilitate obtaining information and knowledge. As AI5 puts it: '*Sometimes personal contact used to override system failures*'. For a member of an IT team (AI11), there is a lot of person-to-person sharing going on, and people are more likely to contact those whom they know and ask questions.

7.2.4.4 Aid International's organisational ideologies

The fourth constraint, identified by three interviewees (AI14, 17, 18), refers to Aid International's organisational ideologies, in particular the staff's belief that **internal information flows have to follow the management line**. For a member of an IT team (AI17), people in Aid International '*do not talk to each other across functional silos*', but he believes this is not unique to the organisation. Another IT member of staff explains:

> *'It is a very hierarchical, very linear system... I think people feel that they need to go through management lines and I think information flows are still very much down the line, so following the management line. Although it is getting better now (...) I think that in the headquarters there is a lot more sharing across as well as up and down. But I think it is still mainly up and down, following the line. This is still the main source of information. I think there is a lot more sharing at headquarters than is, for example, reflected in the structure here' (AI14).*

According to a member of a regional team (AI18), there is little '*lateral communication*' among different regional offices and '*it is a very formal communication, almost military*'. This is confirmed by some reports, where the internal culture is described as '*of telling and cascading the information 'down the line'*.

7.2.4.5 Language barriers

Staff members' **different languages** constrain internal scanning, according to three interviewees (AI1, 13, 14). One of them (AI13) explains that Aid International is translating some materials into different languages and implementing '*multilingual information systems,*' but the costs of doing this are very high and are difficult to justify to donors. A1 says: '*A lot of our staff are not English first speakers, so language is a very significant issue*' (AI1).

7.2.4.6 Other constraints to scanning from other areas within Aid International

According to two respondents (AI17, 18), **staff turnover** and staff transfer affect scanning from other areas within the organisation. As AI17 points out, when staff members are transferred to a different area or location, relationships have to be built again and existing communication lines are disrupted.

For one interviewee (AI18), **differences in staff members' culture** can affect scanning from different areas of the organisation. AI18 states that, for example, there are

differences in the way the European culture and the Latin American culture express their ideas:

> *'There was a European director (in the field office). I think she did not feel Latin American culture... she was disappointed because she was not receiving feedback, as in Europe, from the bottom, and she felt isolated. But she was not responding either to the informal communication that was in the environment... From a Latin American perspective, they (staff in the field office) were communicating in their normal way, not formal, and were waiting for an answer, because this is the way their culture works. So, they also were not clear, because they were not receiving oral feedback' (AI18).*

AI8 believes that the **size of Aid International** '*in terms of its spread across many countries*' poses serious challenges when obtaining information from other areas, whereas AI1 believes the main obstacle is the **staff's limited time budget**.

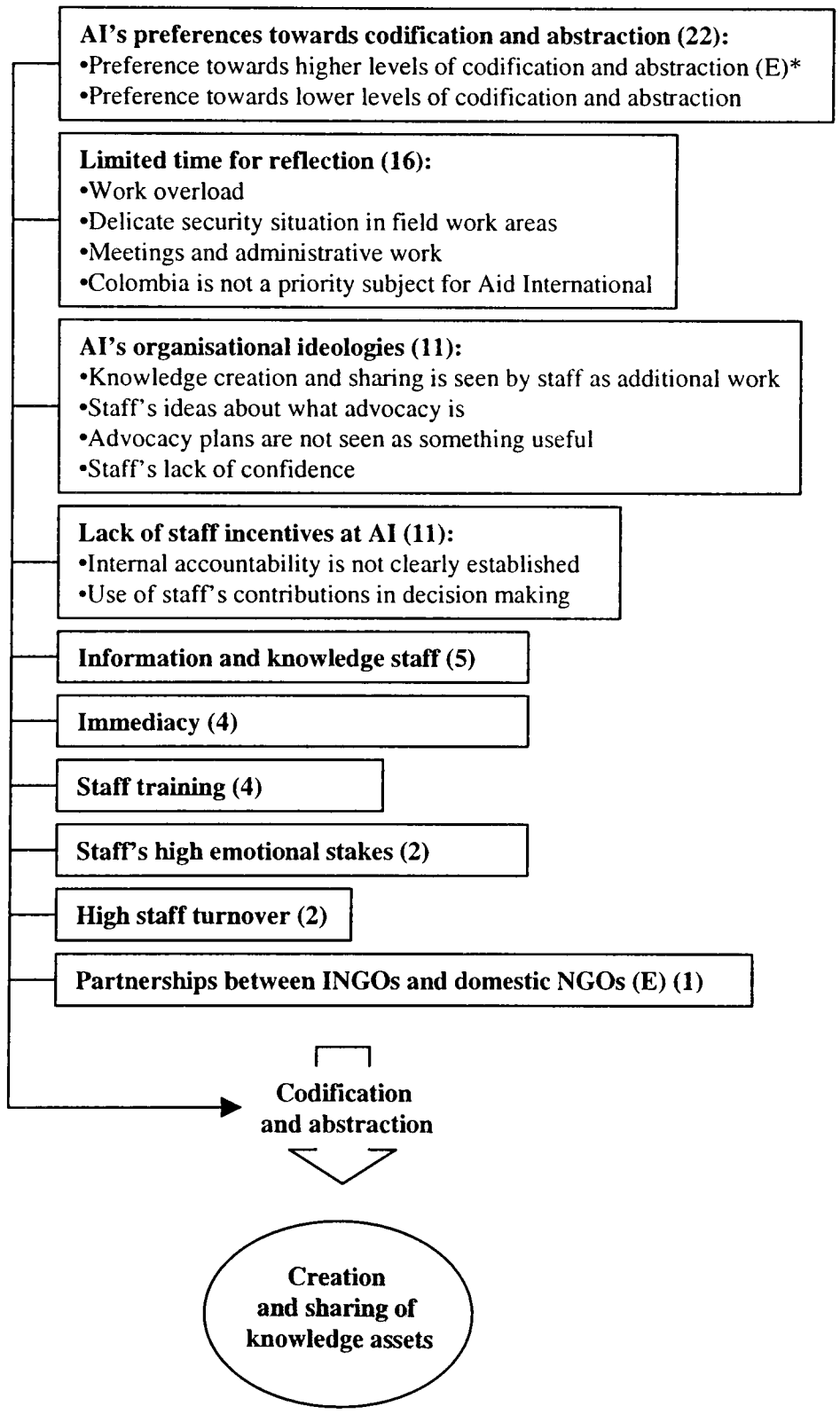
Although interviewees did not mention it, an internal document highlights the lack of understanding of why information is being requested as one of the reasons for obtaining poor quality information from other areas. According to the document, staff can only give information meaningfully and well if they understand why it is needed and can see how their input contributed to the end result (Document 2).

7.3 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION OF ADVOCACY KNOWLEDGE BASES

According to the data collected, the factors that seem to constrain Aid International's codification and abstraction processes are: **Aid International's preferences towards codification and abstraction** (22 interviewees); **limited time for reflection** (16 interviewees); **Aid International's organisational ideologies** (11 interviewees); **lack**

of staff incentives at Aid International (11 interviewees); **information and knowledge staff** (five interviewees); **immediacy** (four interviewees); **staff training** (four interviewees); the **staff's high emotional stakes** (two interviewees); **high staff turnover** (two interviewees); and **partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs** (one interviewee).

Figure 36. Enablers and constraints to codification and abstraction of advocacy knowledge bases - Aid International's perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

7.3.1 AID INTERNATIONAL'S PREFERENCES TOWARDS CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

As well as in the case of INGOs and domestic NGOs, interviewees' comments suggest that both preferences towards higher and towards lower levels of codification and abstraction exist at Aid International.

7.3.1.1 Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction

Evidence of **preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction** is found in the answers of nine respondents (AI2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 20, 21, 22), who referred to advocacy strategy documents and systematic methods of analysis. Advocacy strategy documents are mainly written about priority areas or about key decision makers rather than about particular pieces of advocacy work, as AI22 explains:

> *'I have been doing on an annual basis an overall strategy that sets up: 'This is where the British government is at the moment'; 'these are the key people you need to influence'; 'these are the links we have with them already'; 'these are the priorities for the people who want to talk to them'; and 'these are the issues we are going to do lobbying with different people about'. So we do have an overall UK government strategy, and we were doing the same on the European Union, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. There is an overall strategy that says what we are trying to do with individual targets, and that is actually where a lot of the analysis would be written down' (AI22).*

Eight interviewees (AI2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 20, 22) underline the role of the **staff's analytical skills** when building knowledge bases for advocacy. Three particular analytical skills relevant for advocacy can be identified: a) power mapping (identifying

opportunities and weaknesses when influencing decision makers, the relationships among the decision makers and with their potential influencers); b) writing skills; and c) analysis and synthesis skills (building coherent proposals for decision makers from first hand suggestions from affected populations). Five respondents (AI2, 4, 5, 8, 22) state that power mapping is used regularly within Aid International.

In the face of information overload, senior management has promoted synthesis skills by making clear to staff that short reports are more welcome than long ones (AI20). Seven respondents (AI3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 20, 22) underline the importance of analysis and synthesis skills. For these respondents, Aid International staff's analysis and synthesis skills are in good shape.

7.3.1.2 Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction

Evidence of **preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction** is found in 19 respondents (AI1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28), in the form of absence of clear advocacy strategies; absence of written guidelines about advocacy; and the need to improve the staff's analytical skills.

In relation to the **absence of clear advocacy strategies**, twelve respondents (AI1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 19, 23, 25, 27, 28) say that the use of advocacy strategies is not widespread within the organisation. They suggest that detailed planning only takes place for priority areas or projects. The lack of standards for advocacy plans was also identified as a

constraint. The absence of clear advocacy strategies is particularly evident in the case of advocacy for Colombia:

> *'What they are trying to influence, the overall strategy that is being presented for Colombia ... the case needs to be made, why a military solution is not going to work. How do we build the evidence, the argument for that? I think that this is the real challenge' (AI2).*

> *'In Colombia we do not have a strategic plan (for advocacy). The advocacy that is being done is not within a plan. There is a lot of activism without a plan' (AI25).*

The answers from eight respondents (AI4, 7, 8, 9, 13, 17, 22, 26) can be associated with a **preference for the use of contextual information**. One of them states that because of the nature of advocacy work, knowledge needs to be accompanied with contextual information to be of real use and impact:

> *'If somebody in South Asia runs the same method that they use in Nigeria, and they did not have the context and other relevant information, they may mess it up, and use a lot of money. So they need to look at the whole process and then take informed decisions about it (...) One has to back up with that contextual information, otherwise the top line will not be useful for people who need the details to work. Take an example of a laboratory experiment: If you just write the results, people do not understand why you are saying that, if they do not have the context of the experiment. What is equally important is that you put that, but on top of it you put the synthesis' (AI13).*

Further evidence of preference for lower levels of codification and abstraction is the **absence of written guidelines about how to do advocacy work**, and **staff preference for face to face communication with colleagues** when discussing an advocacy strategy, as this knowledge is 'more in people's heads'. This is mentioned by nine respondents (AI4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 19, 22, 26):

> *'I don't know how much of (how to do advocacy) is documented. I would have thought this is very much in people's heads, with a bit of documentation. It would not be clear where the documentation is held, or whether it would be easy to find it in six months time, or to know where the latest version is' (AI10).*

'I think that programme (field) work is very structured really, in the sense of how you plan your programme, how you manage it, how you report on it, how you do impact assessment. I think that in terms of advocacy work, some of the project management skills from the programme (areas), information systems and other areas could be a benefit' (AI19).

According to some internal documents, gaps in analytical skills still exist, in particular in regional offices (Document 27). One report regrets that the analysis draws '*anecdotally from the experience of Aid International and our partners*' and there is little use of research (Document 6). Six interviewees (AI2, 6, 8, 15, 23, 25) refer to the **need to improve the staff's analytical skills**, especially documentation and writing skills, and the depth and regularity of analysis. A consultant report argues that because some staff lack skills in document writing, readers waste time trying to find out what the main points are and what they are meant to do (Document 31). Two interviewees comment about writing skills:

'The ability to document what we are seeing, and turning it into a form for backing the message is probably, first of all, a weakness at the Colombian level' (AI2).

'Staff are very busy and they don't write good reports; the analysis is superficial and does not come regularly' (AI6).

Two of these respondents (AI23, 25) argue that constraints in staff's analytical skills are associated with Aid International's traditional focus on fieldwork. As they explain, advocacy demands a new set of skills:

'My idea when I came (to Colombia) was to map up where everybody was, and then to try and begin to target particularly your allies here. People are working on that, but in a slightly unstructured way (...) I feel like we should be able to do a much better analysis from the beginning (...) We are still not used to thinking in that way, which is about really beginning to join up advocacy and fieldwork in a much more integral way. I think agencies are partially very sort of fieldwork oriented and then there is a big sort of rush to do policy work' (AI23).

'It is about a work culture. If Aid International and our partners have a work culture to think: 'Well, this is the root of the (affected populations') need', then we

could start working more on that knowledge. But what happens now is that knowledge is focused on technical issues such as providing water, but we do not have the culture to think 'well, let's see beyond the technical part and understand the policies and ideas (that are causing the needs)' (AI25).

For two respondents (AI8, 15), what constrains the staff's analytical skills is that knowledge is not thought of as a part of advocacy work. As one of them says:

'People should have the habit of sending short notes about key learning to their colleagues, but that is not happening (...) The technical adviser who comes back from a field visit advising a programme or helping with monitoring writes a trip report: 'This is what I did while in this place'. Does he think about that report as a piece of knowledge for people? No, he does not. He disseminates it to his manager, and he wants his manager to see that he has done a good job. He disseminates it to the people he has been working with in the field because he wants to 'hammer home' the things that he said to them and he wants to be transparent with them about what he is saying about them back in headquarters. Does he think this is a piece of knowledge that he can offer to other people? Probably not!'(AI15).

There is some internal debate about the need for higher levels of codification and abstraction. A consultancy report states that one of the obstacles lies in Aid International not having '*a firm concept of business process*'. The authors consider this a cultural not a technical issue, and argue that information is not formatted in a way that supports business decisions:

'Few internal documents meet even basic standards of consistency in layout and content structure (...) Aid International places little weight on standards and procedures. The organisation is very action oriented, and standards are seen as inhibiting creativity and speed of response. Where standards have been agreed, levels of conformity are low, and are not enforced in any formal way' (Document 9).

A member of Aid International's knowledge management team writes:

'We are relatively strong at influencing development policies through our campaigning and advocacy work. We are less strong at influencing development policies and practices through the learning and experience generated through our fieldwork' (Document 6).

7.3.2 LIMITED TIME FOR REFLECTION

Sixteen respondents (AI1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 28) underline the **limited time for reflection** they have as a significant constraint. Four of them (AI17, 19, 20, 25) consider that the limited time for reflection is due to **work overload**: '*It is a capacity problem*' (AI19); staff are '*under lots of pressure*' (AI20) and feel '*overwhelmed*' (AI17):

> *'The major challenge is people finding the time to input, because everyone, especially the people who work in the field, 100% of their time is already taken up by the actual work that they are employed to do. So they regard this (giving their input to organisational knowledge bases) as an added extra' (AI14).*

For three of them (AI2, 6, 25), the limited time for reflection is linked to pressures arising from **delicate security** or 'life saving' situations:

> *'I think that the national (Colombian) dynamic is so absorbing, life and death on a daily basis... People are under so much pressure that the ability to step out and reflect is very limited. You know, they are just responding, responding, responding.' (AI2).*

Two respondents (AI9, 14) state that there is not enough time for reflection because of an increasing **number of meetings and administrative work**.

In a similar line as interviewees from INGOs, six respondents (AI4, 5, 8, 23, 24, 28) state that Colombia is **not a priority country for Aid International**. The time and resources dedicated to Colombia are, therefore, significantly lower than to many other countries. As interviewees state: '*Colombia has not been one of those examples where there have been very substantial resources*' (AI5); and '*you happen to be an*

extraterrestrial in Aid International, talking about a thing called Colombia that nobody knows and in which nobody is interested either' (AI24).

One respondent (AI2) states that for Aid International there are no priority countries. He believes that there are constraints associated with the planning procedures of advocacy, rather than with a country being a priority or not.

Several of the documents analysed mention limited time for reflection as a key obstacle for learning. A consultancy report states that knowledge management is not visible as a strategic management issue, and that various initiatives have not been fully pursued as they are seen as secondary to more visible and tangible activities (Document 9).

7.3.3 AID INTERNATIONAL'S ORGANISATIONAL IDEOLOGIES

Eleven respondents (AI1, 4, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 23, 25) refer to the role of **organisational ideologies** in constraining the building of knowledge bases. For three interviewees (AI4, 22, 25), ideologies are more likely to influence the analysis of complex situations. AI25 explains how this is manifested in Colombia:

> *'In Colombia, when you try to have a sound analysis of things, it is difficult, because... there are a lot of explanations about the conflict. How could Aid International analyse them and say clearly: 'We can take this course?' This is what we are missing in Colombia, a hypothesis for our work. With this hypothesis we could develop a strategy, but it is difficult to define that hypothesis' (AI25).*

According to four respondents (AI1, 8, 14, 15, 25), Aid International's staff see **activities associated with knowledge creation and sharing as something additional to their work**:

> *'One of the findings of the evaluation is that people in the field hardly ever look at the database and never put documents online. Most of what is online is placed there by people here in headquarters, and the majority of people accessing (the database) are based in headquarters. They (people in the field) said that they did not have the time, that they did not see the use of it (the online database), or that they thought it was going to be something added to their work rather than saving work. That perception still exists, and I think that it is very difficult to get away from, because unless they actually spend the time to go and look at (the database), they will not see how useful it is. Whether they have the time or not at the moment I don't know, but they certainly don't perceive that they have the time. They certainly think that they should stay all their time working in the field rather than developing knowledge management solutions' (AI14).*

For AI25, ideology constraints are linked to **staff ideas about what advocacy is**. He argues that in Latin America in particular, the idea that advocacy equals manifestations and protests is common, and little attention is given to the design of proposals based on sound analysis.

Two respondents (AI2, 28) state that they **do not see advocacy plans as useful** and believe that it is very difficult to have such plans.

> *'My sense is that advocacy plans... We can spend a lot of time developing them and they get so big ... An advocacy plan for Colombia, I am not sure how useful it is, because what you actually need is a plan around the process, like the donors meeting. To work around the details of power mapping... you need to do that about specific initiatives because situations are so fluid that you can just get stuck in the planning and never get out of the door and do anything' (AI2).*

> *'I laugh each time I make a plan. I have said that to (my boss). We have four weeks of meetings with the Colombian Congress, but then there is an unexpected law, so we have to go today and eat with that Congressman. It is not an absolutely clear thing because here (in Colombia) politics change all the time and you have to follow opportunities. It is not as synchronised, it is not as well planned (as in other countries). Here those levels of planning cannot exist' (AI28).*

Another constraint emerging from the data collected, according to four respondents (AI12, 13, 14, 18), is **staff members' lack of confidence**, in particular in their own capability for contributing to organisational knowledge bases. This lack of confidence is associated with little knowledge about the use of software (AI12); fears of hostility when acknowledging mistakes (AI18); and low proficiency in the use of English in the case of field office staff (AI14).

AI18 believes that lack of confidence is also associated with cultural factors, in particular with how some societies relate to the written word, and with fears of defying authority, as he explains:

> *'I am sure that Latin America has a quite different culture with respect to written information. The written word has life in itself and they fear that. I am Canadian, and I can write anything as a draft and send that to everybody and I do not have any problem with that, because I am clear in what I am and what my ideas are. But in Latin America people have a different relationship with written text. Before they write something, they think and think, until being convinced that it is correct. They do not have that problem with oral communication, because it is not permanent (...) It has been difficult to promote collaborative tools because they are afraid to put a draft in a public, or not so public place... it can be just three people accessing it... but because it is written, they are afraid of the written form. I try to convince them that this (using collaborative tools) is more like a chat, but it is a cultural change' (AI18).*

7.3.4 LACK OF STAFF INCENTIVES AT AID INTERNATIONAL

According to eleven respondents (AI5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 26), **staff incentives for knowledge creation and sharing are not appropriate**. Interviewees state that Aid International focuses on rewarding results, not learning. The staff's role in organisational learning is not specifically defined in their job descriptions, and

guidelines about how to organise and process information and knowledge do not exist - or staff do not know about them:

> *'For me it is absolutely clear that in your job description it should say, in the same way as it says: 'Your duty is to talk with donors', it should say: 'When you leave your post - or every year - you have to organise and store in specific places the information that depends on you'. The filing procedures... I do not understand - when you join Aid International, nobody tells you how you have to file the information, so you understand why it is not possible to find the information and that is a serious problem. I have a particular way to file things, other people have their ways... and that could be standardised, but now each person adds (to the common drive) the information they want when they want' (AI26).*

For three of these interviewees (AI6, 14, 15), **internal accountability for creation and sharing of knowledge is not clearly established** and responsibilities are lost. Most knowledge related activities are done on a voluntary basis and there are no real sanctions when guidelines are not followed:

> *'It is not an organisation where you can order people to do things; it does not work like that. It is a very hierarchical organisation, make no mistakes, and I can say to the people I manage 'I want you to do this' and they probably will do it, but there is no real sanction if they do not. It is not an army. So orders do not look like orders, they look like requests' (AI15).*

According to three respondents (AI13, 14, 19), the **use of staff contributions in organisational decision making** is an incentive of knowledge creation and sharing:

> *'We always make it quite clear that issues arising from (online) discussions will be taken forward into senior manager meetings, and we always post up the minutes of those meetings so that people can see that this is the case' (AI14).*

7.3.5 INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE STAFF

Five respondents (AI1, 3, 4, 26, 28) mention the role of **information and knowledge staff** in building knowledge bases for advocacy. As one of them explain:

'There are not enough resources to organise information. I think that to organise and systematise information, it is important to appoint people for doing that, in order to have more clarity' (AI26).

7.3.6 IMMEDIACY

For four respondents (AI9, 10, 22, 25) in Aid International there is a tendency towards activism and less reflection and research. People's personalities tend to be more 'activity driven', interested in quick results. They are always '*thinking about doing what has to be done today*' (AI9). A regional director (AI25) thinks that immediacy is linked to Aid International's traditional focus on projects. Nevertheless, a member of a campaign team emphasises that Aid International has made good progress in promoting internal reflection:

'Are we more reactive than proactive? I don't think that we are anymore. We generally tend to do both. The big campaigns are very proactive in the sense that we decide what we want to change. I think that some of the country specific advocacy that we do is probably quite reactive, but I think that is probably inevitable. For the most part, country advocacy tends to be in some kind of conflict situation, and you have to recognise the reality on the ground and move according to that' (AI22).

7.3.7 OTHER ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Four interviewees (AI3, 4, 20, 25) emphasise the role of **staff training**, especially workshops. According to internal documents, training is weak (Documents 5 and 9), and especially constrained by **staff turnover**.

For two respondents (AI24, 25), the **staff's high emotional stakes**, particularly in conflict situations, may influence their analysis:

> *'We have to agree a (advocacy) strategy, and there are people who have their own... I understand them... They are generally staff in Colombia, who have a very strong emotional link to what is happening, and have a link with Colombian organisations, which are being threatened. I understand this, but I have to separate Aid International's role from that. I try to say: 'Aid International is not part of Colombian civil society'. Sometimes our own staff do not have that clarity, they feel part of Colombian civil society and want to do what Colombian civil society does' (AI25).*

The role of **high staff turnover** in constraining organisational memory is emphasised by two interviewees (AI24, 25). One of them explains:

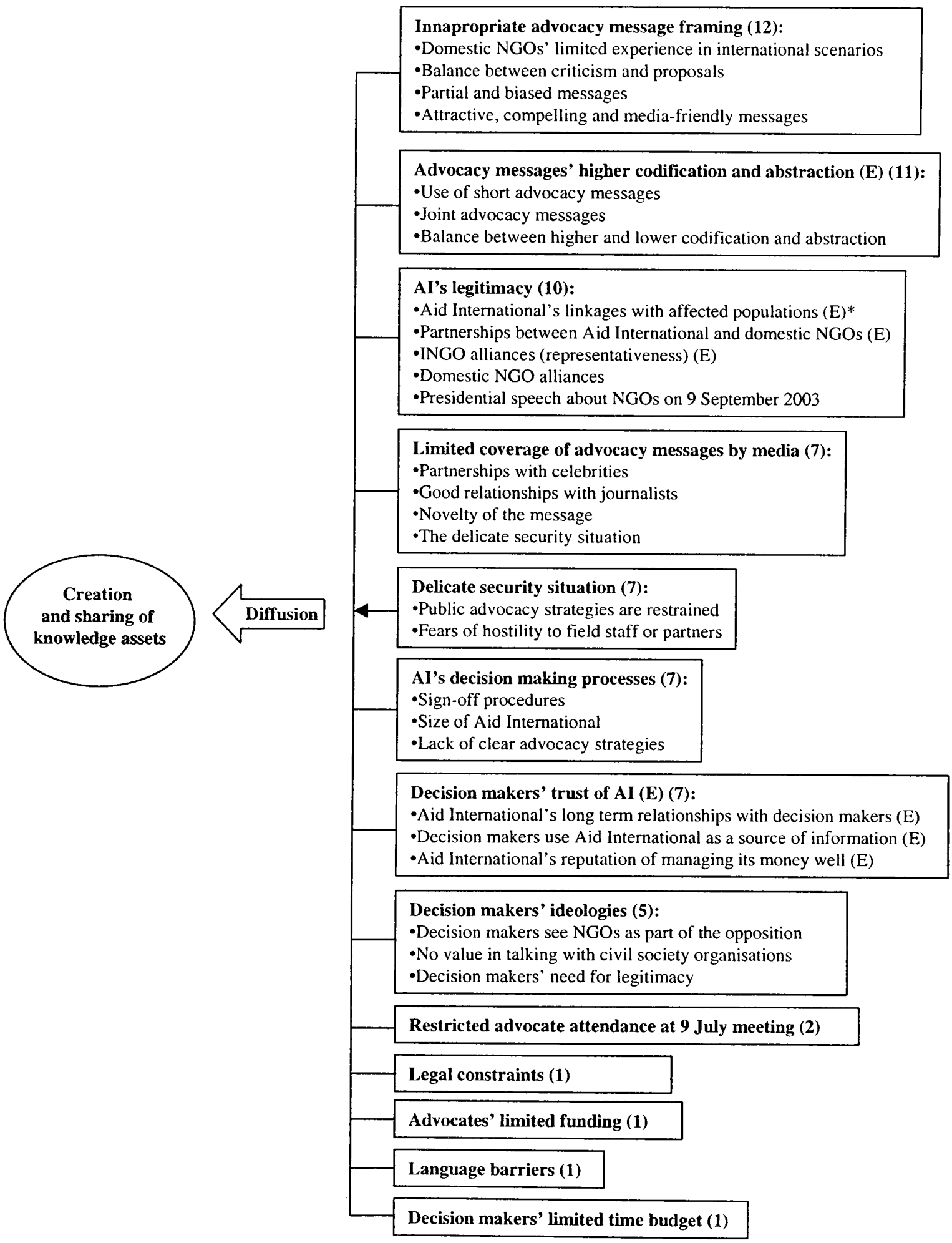
> *'The problem is more about institutional discontinuity. For whatever reason, which I do not know, Aid International changed the staff in the Colombia office, and changed nearly everybody. The institutional memory was suddenly lost' (AI24).*

One interviewee (AI23) thinks that **partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs** have a significant role to play in contributing to domestic NGO discussions and '*their ability to support their (advocacy) case*'.

7.4 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE DIFFUSION OF THE ADVOCACY MESSAGE

The factors affecting the diffusion of the advocacy message that emerge from interviews at Aid International can be grouped as follows: **Inappropriate advocacy message framing** (12 interviewees); **Aid International's legitimacy** (10 interviewees); the **advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction** (11 interviewees); **limited coverage of advocacy messages by the media** (seven interviewees); **the delicate security situation** (seven interviewees); **Aid International's decision making processes** (seven interviewees); **decision makers' trust of Aid International** (seven interviewees); **decision makers' ideologies** (five interviewees); **restricted advocate attendance at 9 July meeting** (two interviewees); **legal constraints** (one interviewee); **advocates' limited funding** (one interviewee); **language barriers** (one interviewee); and **decision makers' limited time budget** (one interviewee).

Figure 37. Enablers and constraints to the diffusion of the advocacy message - Aid International's perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint. AI stands for Aid International

7.4.1 INAPPROPRIATE ADVOCACY MESSAGE FRAMING

For twelve interviewees (AI3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28), the way in which the advocacy message is framed affects its potential for impact. Three respondents (AI3, 19, 24) state that the tone and words used in advocacy messages have to be attuned with the particular culture of the receivers of that message, and '*some kind of things just do not work in certain contexts*' (AI3). **Domestic NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios of advocacy** may constrain knowledge about appropriate framing of messages:

> *'In order to be able to do sound advocacy you need to manage certain codes, knowledge about people, events, moments... you cannot arrive and simply say what you want. Some INGOs specialise part of their teams just on this' (AI24).*

Six respondents (AI4, 5, 23, 24, 25, 28) emphasise the importance of having a **balance between criticism and proposals**. Nevertheless, two interviewees (AI23, 24) say that the use of proposals by Colombian domestic NGOs is restrained by NGOs' beliefs that proposals are the responsibility of the government and that criticisms have more potential for impact with decision makers; and by domestic NGOs' limited analytical skills and experience in advocacy:

> *'When you do lobbying and advocacy around changing policies, you need to engage in a more propositional and constructive way, rather than in opposition and in a destructive way. The more you attack the government, the less you get heard. The more you bring ideas and try to exert influence for a change in a positive way, the more you will be listened to' (AI4).*

> *'I do think that it is important to encourage (domestic NGOs) to come up with proposals in terms of cooperation. One of the difficulties is that there is a lot of good work, incredible work going on around the country (Colombia), but donors do not necessarily have access to enough information on this. But also I do not think that (domestic NGOs) are very good at trying to build proposals that are*

sufficiently large to interest international donors (...) I think NGOs as a whole have not been thinking in that way. Within Aid International, we are beginning to build the development of programmes, which includes looking very much more strategically at what changes in policies you want. Even we with our long history are only beginning to find ways of doing that effectively' (AI23).

One interviewee (AI24) thinks that **partial and biased messages**, for example focused only on human rights while not taking into account wider development issues, are a mistake. For another interviewee (AI5), the tone and words used by organisations such as the United Nations offer a guideline about how to frame Aid International's messages:

'The UN in its annual report to the General Assembly has quite strong language. That is a piece of relevant knowledge in deciding how we phrase things. It at least poses the question for us: 'Do we want to be harsher'? If Kofi Annan said that or that, NGOs can't be less robust than the Secretary General' (AI5).

Six respondents (AI3, 4, 7, 8, 21, 27) emphasise that the advocacy message has to be **attractive and compelling**, as well as **media-friendly**. This means, among other things, '*hard-hitting*' (AI7), '*spinable*' (AI3) and '*communicable, not just to policy experts, but also to the public*' (AI8). Media-friendliness is enhanced by the novelty of the story; the accessibility of the language used; and the combination of different types of information, such as text, graphs, videos and photos.

7.4.2 ADVOCACY MESSAGE'S HIGHER DEGREE OF CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Eleven interviewees' answers (AI1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28) indicate the use of advocacy messages at higher levels of codification and abstraction in order to facilitate

diffusion. As one respondent says: '*When you do advocacy, you simplify reality*' (AI24). Higher levels of codification and abstraction are manifested in the use of **short advocacy messages** (AI3, 7, 8, 21) and the use of **joint advocacy messages** (AI23, 24, 28). Nevertheless, seven respondents (AI1, 3, 4, 8, 17, 22, 24) state the need to complement advocacy messages with data at lower levels of codification and abstraction, such as stories from affected populations.

7.4.2.1 Use of short advocacy messages

For four respondents (AI3, 7, 8, 21), the use of **short and simplified messages** facilitates diffusion, especially in relation to the mass media. However, one respondent (AI3) argues that short messages could reduce credibility, as relevant evidence is not shown and counter-arguments are not properly discussed: '*There is a fear that (the message) is too dumbed down in order to be accessible*'. Another interviewee says:

> *'Almost everybody has very little time. (Decision makers) are busier than you are, therefore unless you are absolutely clear about what you are saying, and you are saying a very limited number of things, you are not being heard. And this is what we suffer from. Unless you have got three messages, three messages that are communicable within two minutes, you have not got a case' (AI8).*

7.4.2.2 Joint advocacy messages

For three interviewees (AI23, 24, 28), diffusion is facilitated by agreeing **joint advocacy messages** with other advocates. According to AI24, Colombian civil society was able to agree joint messages for the London Meeting, although they were only agreed at the last minute:

'If you don't want to make a difference, it is good to stay with the herd, shouting fifteen slogans simultaneously so nobody can hear them. If you want to make a difference, you have to take some flak (AI8).

7.4.2.3 Balance between higher and lower codification and abstraction

Despite the importance of short advocacy messages for facilitating diffusion, seven respondents (AI1, 3, 4, 8, 17, 22, 24) underline the need for complementing facts and figures with anecdotes and stories from affected populations, '*which illustrate the relevance of the advocacy message*' (AI1), as well as with '*hard evidence*' such as photos and videos. In a similar line, face to face communication with decision makers is regarded as potentially influential (AI22), as they are usually bombarded with emails and documents.

'You can have the analysis, but if that is not backed up by real people and stories, it is something rather lifeless, and a little bit dubious. When it is backed up with what people say, you have a really powerful combination' (AI3).

Two respondents (AI4, 8) emphasise that when using this type of qualitative information, it is essential to follow **appropriate methods for data collection and analysis**:

'Anecdotes on their own are simply anecdotes, and they are easily dismissed, and many of ours have been dismissed. Of course, many civil society organisations only have the resources to be able to provide anecdotes, so that is the material that they have, and they often use them at the level that anecdotes are still useful, even though they are not necessarily very powerful (...) The problem is that a bunch of anecdotes compared to the massive econometric models from huge databases generate very little purchase. They (decision makers) say: 'You (advocates) say that people are getting poorer, but our database demonstrates that everybody is getting richer, except for a particular small group in which of course we are very interested'. An organisation such as Aid International has the privilege, because we have more resources, to be able to do more than anecdotes. One of the things that we have done is to reassess the economic and econometric models, criticise them and reapply them in a way that we think more generally shows what the data is telling (...) By a rigorous approach to the generation of

those anecdotes, you can actually build up a very strong picture of what the life of people at the bottom of the supply chain is like, and how the decisions taken actually transfer down the supply chain. So there are times when anecdotes are really helpful' (AI8).

AI3 and 24 state that the use of anecdotes and stories is relative to the message, the public and the media:

'It is very important to use stories for the general public, because you cannot reach the general public with matrices, tables and statistics. So stories are really important. But if I am going to send a letter to the minister in charge of Latin America, I cannot use in his letter a lot of stories, because he is not going to be able to read them. So I have to use good statistics, processed information. It depends on who you are talking about. With the media, for example, some newspapers such as The Guardian could give us a big space to tell stories, but on TV that is going to be very difficult. Decision makers like statistics, but stories are powerful with the media, as a complementary strategy to reach those who exert pressure on decision makers' (AI24).

7.4.3 AID INTERNATIONAL'S LEGITIMACY

Ten interviewees (AI1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 20, 23, 24, 28) consider **legitimacy** to be a significant enabler for the diffusion of the advocacy message. For five respondents (AI2, 5, 6, 8, 20), legitimacy is associated with **linkages with affected populations**. As AI2 explains, decision makers, in particular elected government officials, question advocates' legitimacy because advocates are not elected. Linkages to affected populations give Aid International '*the authority to speak*' about some issues (AI6). These linkages are in turn facilitated by Aid International's presence in the field:

'It is our fieldwork that gives us the credibility, that gives us the ability to say to the decision makers: 'Look, we know what the problems are', and that kind of evidence strengthens our campaigning ability' (AI20).

Connected to the latter enabler are the **partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs**, underlined by six respondents (AI2, 4, 8, 23, 24, 28). Interviewees emphasise that their advocacy is based on what local civil organisations want to say *'and we help kind of shaping the message into a form that would be better received'* (AI2).

> *'It was important for us to work with them (domestic NGOs) because they have institutional legitimacy to operate. They are local, we are international. This partnership is very important. It is important if these (domestic) organisations challenge their own governments, rather than Aid International challenging them' (AI4).*

For five respondents (AI1, 2, 8, 23, 24), legitimacy is enabled by **INGO alliances**. The status and reputation of potential allies is crucial for Aid International (AI1, 8). For AI2, INGO alliances provide protection to members when doing advocacy: *'You are safer if you come out in numbers'* (AI2).

The role of **domestic NGO alliances** in enabling legitimacy is mentioned by four respondents (AI2, 23, 24, 28). However, **different organisational ideologies** make consensus among domestic NGOs difficult.

> *'All over Latin America there is a lot of tension between the kind of professional NGOs and what we consider 'popular organisations'. The kind of more professional organisations tend to be run by middle class, educated people. I think that this is an important thing to look at in terms of how knowledge passes between academics and activists (in Colombia). It is a similar pattern everywhere, and the (Colombian) government would play these sectors against each other because (professional NGOs) are more articulated; they are more prepared; they will be more willing to fight than, you know, local populations that are more vulnerable' (AI2).*

For two respondents (AI23, 28), the **presidential speech about NGOs** is part of an attempt by the Uribe government to diminish domestic NGOs' legitimacy.

7.4.4 LIMITED COVERAGE OF ADVOCACY MESSAGES BY THE MEDIA

Seven respondents (AI7, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27) agree that media coverage is central to the diffusion of advocacy messages, particularly in relation to the current UK government, which, as one interviewee says, '*has always been overly concerned about getting good press*' (AI22). Three respondents (AI7, 21, 27) acknowledge that **partnerships with celebrities** have helped them to get access to some of the media, especially tabloids. For two respondents (AI7, 22), **good relationships with journalists** have enabled media coverage. Media interest is also influenced by the **novelty of the message** (AI7, 21), or by traditions of covering some countries more than others, as AI22 explains:

> *'To put it cruelly, there is more interest in the parts of the world we used to colonise (...) Latin America always tends to be a very low priority' (AI22).*

Staff in the Colombia office (AI23, 25) state that media coverage of Aid International's messages is intentionally limited because of **security** and **legitimacy** concerns:

> *'I don't particularly want a media strategy (in Colombia) on the London Meeting because I don't think it is really the position of the (INGOs) to make a lot of public statements. I think we should be supporting local organisations to make public statements if they want. For me, our media strategy has to be a media strategy in Europe, that is our contribution... because this is our role. Our role is about talking to our (European) governments about what they are doing. This is a very legitimate role for us, because who really should be influencing public opinion here is local civil society organisations' (AI23).*

7.4.5 THE DELICATE SECURITY SITUATION

The **delicate security situation** in Colombia is a constraint for diffusion, according to seven respondents (AI6, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28). Interviewees acknowledge that security concerns **restrain them from pursuing public advocacy strategies**, as AI6 explains:

> *'If (the topic) is very sensitive, you do private lobbying instead of media advocacy. You might also do it in alliance with other people to protect yourself, to protect your exposure, because we may be targeted by one of the stakeholders, an armed group or something. But if we do it together in a coalition, then we protect ourselves more. But often we can't even do that, we have to do it face to face (with decision makers) (...) You should ideally have all those (advocacy) elements together for synergy and maximum impact, but on conflict issues you can only have one or two... lobbying and maybe only analysis, and then you give the analysis to somebody else (other INGOs). So impact is much more difficult, because you are limited in terms of strategy' (AI6).*

According to all seven respondents, **fears of hostility** towards staff on the ground limit what Aid International is willing to say in public. This is why INGOs without staff on the ground can be more outspoken (AI6):

> *'Our work is to give impartial assistance to those affected by the conflict in Colombia. In doing so, we have to be impartial. We have to be very careful with our advocacy, because what we say could affect our impartiality, and also our staff's security. In the humanitarian area there are 30 people on the ground, in the most dangerous places, working daily, being stopped by armed groups, being asked who they are. So if in our advocacy we are seen as partial, that can affect the security of these people' (AI25).*

7.4.6 AID INTERNATIONAL'S DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

For seven interviewees (AI6, 13, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28), **sign-off procedures** restrict the diffusion of advocacy messages. In Aid International, humanitarian areas have a veto

over public statements, and that has created some internal tensions. Staff think that sign-off procedures are necessary, but that a lot of time is spent on reaching consensus, particularly because of the **size of the organisation** (AI6, 13). Messages have been delayed and opportunities for circulating messages have been missed because of **sign-off procedures**:

> *'The main constraint for press releases is sign-off. There is a sign-off procedure that makes complete sense. You need to have it because it is a security measure that Aid International is saying the right thing and that one person is not going out on a limb and speaking on behalf of Aid International without actually having the expertise. It is sometimes not too clear who should have (the sign-off responsibility) or, if that person is not there, who has the sign-off responsibility in their place. Also, there are other people who feel that they want to give their input into it, because, fair enough, they know quite a lot about the issue. But they then re-write what had already been written, which then means that you have to go back to get the sign-off again. The whole thing then becomes absolutely ridiculous and the press release is delayed' (AI21).*

One respondent (AI25) states that the **lack of clear advocacy strategies** is a reason why sign-off procedures are delayed:

> *'When you do advocacy you have to be fast. What is happening? When you do not have a clear strategy, or when not all the people involved in the (advocacy) process are familiar with that strategy, then the messages are done ad hoc, because you cannot refer to a strategy. So the letter has to be sent to me because I have to look after the impartiality and security of Aid International. If we had a clear strategy, the preparation of the letter would be easier. What is happening now? The letter is written, it is sent to me and the content is not appropriate, and we have to change it... if we had a clear strategy, I would not have to do anything to that letter. I would read it and say: 'It is fine' (AI25).*

7.4.7 DECISION MAKERS' TRUST OF AID INTERNATIONAL

Seven respondents (AI1, 2, 7, 13, 21, 22, 24) emphasise the importance of **decision makers' trust of Aid International**. The organisation has managed to build **long-term relationships with key decision makers,** (AI22, 24) which has enabled access to

knowledge as well as positioning Aid International as a **source of information** in decision makers' debates (AI7). For two interviewees (AI1, 13), decision makers' trust of Aid International is based on the organisation's **reputation for managing its money well**.

In Colombia, decision makers' trust of Aid International varies: '*The Colombian government probably does not like us very much*' (AI2), says one respondent.

7.4.8 DECISION MAKERS' IDEOLOGIES

The changing of decision makers' ideas or beliefs is at the core of Aid International's definition of advocacy (Document 29). Five respondents (AI2, 4, 22, 23, 24) refer to **decision makers' ideologies** as a constraint, particularly in the political context since the 11 September, 2001 attacks:

> *'There is almost an ideologically driven agenda there (in relation to military aid to Colombia), and if people are believing in something because that is what they are believing from an ideological point of view, it is quite difficult to change their minds' (AI22).*

Some **decision makers see NGOs as part of the opposition** - or as part of rebel groups in the case of Colombia (AI4, 24), or they **do not see the value in talking with civil society organisations** (AI23, 24):

> *'There are maybe elements within the (Colombian) government who are interested in discussions (with domestic NGOs), but there are other elements in the government who are absolutely not interested. And there is always a tension between them, which makes the government confusing' (AI23).*

Three interviewees (AI2, 22, 24) state that behind decision makers' willingness to listen is their **need for legitimacy**, or political backing, and this was the case of the donors meeting for Colombia:

> *'I think that there is a temptation on the part of NGOs to think that simply because you get invited to a meeting with the Foreign Office, it is going to make a difference, and the answer is maybe no. You just can't say that, because all the government wants to do is tick the box and say 'because we consulted civil society organisations'. They can just do it, and say 'no' at the end of the day. It does not mean that they have to listen to a single word you are saying. There is a big difference there' (AI22).*

7.4.9 OTHER ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO DIFFUSION

For two interviewees (AI23, 24), the participation of civil society organisations in the London Meeting process was restricted and selective. Respondents argue that the organisers of the meeting put an emphasis on certain domestic NGOs to the detriment of the more '*bossy, political, human rights organisations*' (AI23).

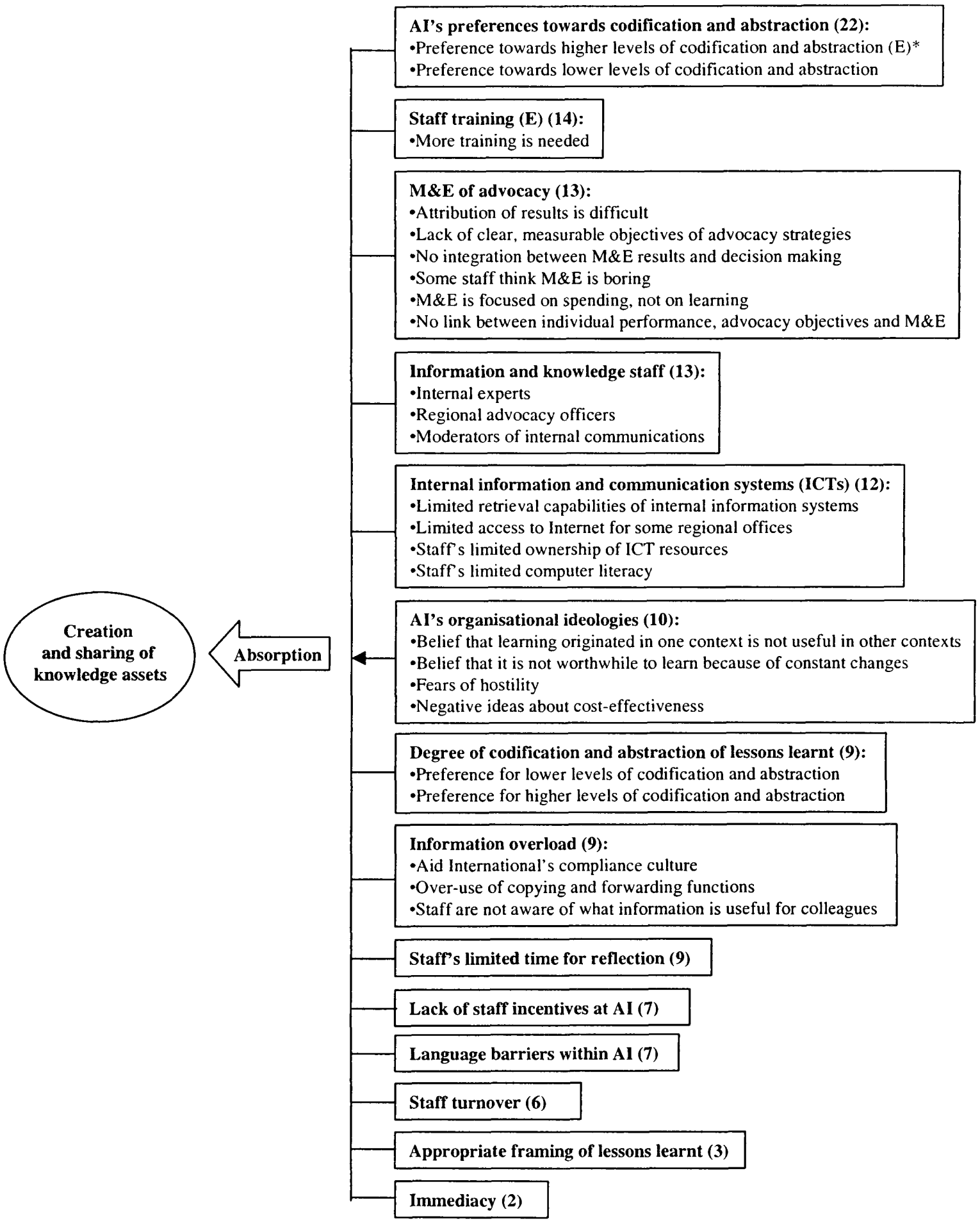
One interviewee (AI6) mentions the role of **legal constraints** in restricting diffusion of messages: '*We can be sued by companies*'. For AI24, diffusion constraints are also associated with **advocates' limited funding** and **language barriers**, e.g. when organisations from affected populations attend international events. For AI22, on some occasions the main constraint is **decision makers' limited time budget**.

7.5 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE ABSORPTION OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ADVOCACY

> *'Our expertise needs to be in turning the headless chicken situation into the effective use and transfer of ideas, continually updating this as new information comes in, and then reflecting on what we have done to date, to absorb learning to use while the situation is ongoing, and to extract, to capture and to replicate elsewhere (...) We need to build a strong background of collective learning on which to make better choices and decisions' (Document 30).*

Boisot states that knowledge absorption is potentially affected by the cognitive orientation of individuals and their values and beliefs (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998). The data collected shows that interviewees at Aid International tend to prefer lower levels of codification and abstraction and need to improve their analytical skills. In addition to this, several enablers and constraints come into view by focusing data collection on a single organisation. These can be grouped as follows: **Staff training** (14 interviewees); **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of advocacy** (13 interviewees); **information and knowledge staff** (13 interviewees); **internal information and communication systems** (12 interviewees); **Aid International's organisational ideologies** (10 interviewees); the degree of **codification and abstraction of lessons learnt** (nine interviewees); **information overload** (nine interviewees); **limited time for reflection** (nine interviewees); **lack of staff incentives at Aid International** (seven interviewees); **language barriers within Aid International** (seven interviewees); **staff turnover** (six interviewees); **appropriate framing of lessons learnt** (three interviewees); and **immediacy** (two interviewees).

Figure 38. Enablers and constraints to the absorption of knowledge for advocacy - Aid International's perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

7.5.1 STAFF TRAINING

Fourteen respondents (AI3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27) agree on the importance of **staff training**. The size of Aid International poses a challenge to the scope and cost-effectiveness of training activities such as seminars (AI13). Two respondents emphasise that a lot of learning happens in informal settings (AI4, 22). Formal training in advocacy is done mainly through workshops (AI3, 4), telephone conferences (AI4), inductions packs (AI7), and coaching (AI22). There is also an established IT training programme (AI11, 12, 19).

Six interviewees think that **more training is needed**, mainly in relation to M&E (AI10), information management (AI20, 26), media work (AI23, 27), and advocacy (AI25). In relation to advocacy, AI25 underlines: '*We have not trained people in the regions in advocacy sufficiently*' (AI25).

7.5.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) OF ADVOCACY

Thirteen staff refer to constraints associated with M&E of advocacy (AI6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28). Aid International uses diverse methods and tools for monitoring and evaluating its work (Document 17). However, staff consider that there is room for improvement, especially in relation to advocacy (AI15, 22, 25): '*M&E of advocacy is unknown territory for us*' (AI25). On some occasions, M&E is not done at all: '*We do not bother*' (AI10), or:

'For Aid International the question is to demonstrate impact and this is much more difficult in advocacy. Despite all the rhetoric in Aid International, we can't measure impact on advocacy. We have put all these resources into advocacy but we don't have real systems for measuring impact' (AI6).

Five interviewees (AI6, 8, 11, 22, 25) think that it is **difficult to attribute** results in affected populations to a particular INGO - as much of the work is done with allies - or to changes in particular policies: '*Very often it depends on a combination of things, not only on one actor*' (AI11). A member of an advocacy team explains:

'The whole thing about attribution... is that you can't say that it is definitely down to you. There will be lots of other factors involved. A lot of the time decision makers, as a whole, are not changing their minds or being influenced by a particular person. It is very seldom that you are going to get a minister who says 'Aid International lobbied me on this and that changed my mind', because that it is not how politicians work. They don't admit that they changed their mind, and if they have changed their mind it is certain that they are not going to say that it was because somebody external influenced them. It is quite hard to say whether we made a difference on an issue' (AI22).

For three respondents (AI6, 10, 27), the constraint lies in the **lack of clear, measurable objectives of advocacy strategies**:

'What do you monitor? We have a set of agreed messages for any advocacy strategy. I monitor whether these have been met or not, just by making a judgment. We don't tend to describe this as indicators of success and that (description) is probably lacking. But all the advocacy strategies that I have seen are weak on that' (AI6).

Internal documents provide some examples of unclear advocacy objectives, such as '*coffee consumer countries compromise to solve producer countries problems*' (Document 20). A report underlines the importance of defining clear objectives: '*It should at least be possible to explain lucidly what one is trying to achieve*' (Document 29).

For four interviewees (AI10, 11, 12, 22), there is not always integration between M&E results, planning, and decision making: '*I do not think we always do it rigorously*' (AI22). '*We should force the design to look at lessons and experiences elsewhere, to prevent the avoidable*' (AI11). AI10 argues that M&E results cannot be used in planning because of incompatible timing:

> *'Sometimes it is because of timing. Evaluations are too late. We have one big campaign, it finishes and as soon at it finishes or just before it finishes they start planning the next campaign or the next chunk. When this one finishes they think 'oh, we should have an evaluation of the last chunk'. So sometimes the timing is not so organised. They should have the evaluation and then the planning, but it does not work like that' (AI10).*

Internal Aid International documents highlight that learning from M&E should feed design and implementation of new projects and inform organisational direction or decision making (Documents 17 and 29), but a consultancy study found that:

> *'Programmes' content and execution are driven by financial years or financial reporting rather than programme need. Project reporting is locked to the annual cycle of reporting rather than to project needs... these reports are not supportive of what the job programme officers should be doing. Some project officers sometimes try to get the partners to align their reporting to the Aid International cycle to make the life of Aid International staff easier' (Document 31).*

Two respondents (AI10, 19) say that some staff at Aid International think that **M&E is boring**. Two members of staff (AI13, 27) are concerned about the M&E focus being on justifying spending, not on learning. AI27 explains:

> *'We are not doing a tactical analysis about how we achieve a result. I think that what is missing is double loop learning, Argyris and Schon if you like, in the sense of reflecting about what type of change we achieve and how. Would the type of change we achieve be better with another method? The analysis that I have seen is more about whether we have reached a lot of people, whether we have managed to publish our message in newspapers, how many hours of broadcasting we did (...) Currently we know what we want to achieve, but we are not analysing whether that is true or not. We are working based on knowledge that has been accepted' (AI27).*

For three respondents (AI10, 26, 28), there is **no effective link between individual performance, advocacy objectives and M&E**. Evaluation of staff performance is limited as managers do not have the time to do it properly, or they fear potential hostility from their colleagues and prefer to keep good relationships (AI26, 28). Responsibilities are not always clearly defined and staff accountability is not always clear. For AI26, the intangible nature of advocacy makes internal accountability particularly challenging:

> *'In a private company, people are accountable, because there is profit or there is not. The question is 'how do you make people accountable when there is no profit in between?' In that sense, in order to have an evaluation of performance... there is not such a tangible thing for a manager to cut the head of somebody. A lot of people prefer to be silent to avoid trouble. I have been silly enough to be honest, transparent and my head was nearly cut off. Aid International has a double discourse. The double discourse is in the air, that you have to be responsible for the procedures. But at the end, if you are honest and transparent, you will make people uncomfortable, and your head will be cut off, like in any other organisation, unless you have power' (AI26).*

In an internal document, a member of the evaluation team summarises the constraints associated with M&E in organisations such as Aid International:

> *'M&E in NGOs in general has tended a) to be very much project based; b) to ignore outcomes and impact, until very recently; c) to be weak in exploring how change induced by a given project or programme combines, or compares to, other changes in the external environment; d) rarely to result in changed practice; and e) inadequately to involve the people we ultimately aim to benefit. The result has been that NGOs tend to have a weak base of evidence about what works and what does not. They have few means of assessing processes and programmes as opposed to projects, and tend to exaggerate their impact or, at least, under-estimate the impacts of other agencies or processes. NGOs produce a lot of reports and paper, which often makes little difference to the quality of their work' (Document 29).*

7.5.3 INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE STAFF

Thirteen respondents (AI2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22) mention the role of **information and knowledge staff** in enabling the absorption of lessons learnt. Five of them (AI2, 5, 6, 8, 10) describe how internal experts at Aid International move from one position to another, sharing their specialised knowledge with other staff:

> *'There are somewhere between five and ten people here in our head office, who some of the time are available to move from crisis to crisis, and they have skills that are either about media, popular campaigning, lobbying, or developing policy (...) They will move around from crisis to crisis depending on where they think they can do most good' (AI5).*

> *'I did not have a great deal of knowledge about the current situation in Colombia. Obviously, I have in my head a template of advocacy. You can stretch it and it covers pretty much any problem, and some useful things may pop out of it' (AI8).*

Six interviewees (AI3, 6, 11, 17, 18, 20) emphasise the role of **regional advocacy officers**, who contribute to building the capacity for advocacy in the regional offices and to the dissemination of lessons learnt among staff. AI18 states that because of the high demand for the time of the staff, there are bottlenecks in the communication between the headquarters and the regions.

Five respondents (AI9, 11, 12, 19, 20) point out the role of **moderators of internal communications**, such as intranet editors and coordinators of communities of practice, in helping to disseminate lessons learnt:

> *'One of the things I feel it is critical for Aid International to do is to actively recognise the value of moderators of communication. You know, I think that we need to identify where we are trying to support a communication process, and then to pay people to moderate that process. This is done in certain contexts. For example, it was done in Iraq. When there is a big emergency or crisis we do that. But I don't know that we do it systematically enough as part of everyday work... it would mean that that person could make sure that the right people learn the right*

things. A good example: The (name) database. I think that that this database is well moderated to make sure that people get the information they need' (AI19).

7.5.4 INTERNAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION (ICT) SYSTEMS

Twelve respondents (AI9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21) refer to Aid International's **internal information and communication (ICT) systems** as learning tools. In Aid International's office in Colombia, staff have access to email and to the corporate intranet. The organisation monitors each month the use of its intranet, and although people use it daily, most of them are based at headquarters in the UK (AI12, 13). Interviewed staff consider that some factors constrain better use of ICT resources. These are described below.

7.5.4.1 Limited retrieval capabilities of internal information systems

Seven respondents (AI9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19) consider that there are serious **limitations of the search functions**. Information is not well organised and it is difficult for staff to know whether a document is out of date:

'We have a paper archive system. It is only relatively recent that a lot of this stuff is electronic and we do not yet have an effective electronic archive. A lot of the fieldwork material and old advocacy material is available in that paper archive. There is no indication of how you find things there. There is a Lotus Notes database that (staff) use, where they write all material that goes into the archive. So, it is possible to search that' (AI19).

Some internal reports refer to the difficulties in finding information, because the intranet is structured *'for the convenience of those supplying the information rather than for all*

the users across the organisation' (Document 31), and because some material is kept by individuals rather than in organisational systems (Document 9). These reports also point out that the amount of out of date information on the intranet is a major concern.

7.5.4.2 Limited access to Internet for some regional offices

Four interviewees (AI11, 14, 19, 20) consider that the main constraint in relation to ICTs is the **limited access to Internet**, especially for some regional offices in Africa and Asia.

A CD-ROM version of the intranet is available for those regional offices with bandwidth limitations. At the Colombian office, there is permanent access to the intranet and other network services, similar to at the headquarters, but at lower speed.

7.5.4.3 Staff's limited ownership of ICT resources

For three respondents (AI13, 14, 17), **staff's limited ownership of ICT resources** constrains their use. AI13 thinks that information systems are too headquarter-centred. For AI14, limited ownership is caused by the lack of interactivity of Aid International's ICT resources. AI17 believes that many of the ICT resources are '*narrowly targeted*', so only a few interested people use them.

7.5.4.4 Staff's limited computer literacy

Two respondents (AI13, 19) refer to the **limited computer literacy** of staff in some areas of the organisation (e.g. Africa and South Asia):

> *'I think that people in headquarters are reasonably comfortable with ICTs. There is a quite established training programme and all new staff get time off for training. I think that in the regions it depends on the country. Latin and Central America I think, yes, probably very good. In parts of Asia and parts of Africa I think there is much of a problem' (AI19)*

Internal documents mention the lack of integration of software suites as a significant constraint, as ICT tools have been developed to some degree in isolation (Document 31) and without taking into account how they could be used for the purpose of increasing impact (Document 6).

7.5.5 AID INTERNATIONAL'S ORGANISATIONAL IDEOLOGIES

Answers from ten respondents (AI2, 3, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 26, 28) show evidence of organisational ideologies that may constrain absorption of knowledge.

According to six respondents (AI2, 3, 9, 15, 18, 26), there is a widespread **idea that learning originated in one particular context is not useful in other contexts**. An internal report states that the non-routine nature of advocacy work '*prevents the gradual accumulation of knowledge by repetition*' (Document 29). Two respondents comment on this belief:

'The evaluation (report) says: 'Evaluation of the Philippines Public Health Programme, 2002'. For people who are not interested in the Philippines, not interested in public health, not interested in the humanitarian programme, they will never think about reading it. Yes, it is about the Philippines and humanitarian work, but it is also about working with partners, and it is about government disasters response. People who are interested in working with partners will also find things, as well as people who are interested in the humanitarian area' (AI15).

'We see our reality in very 'micro'. When a paper or a case study has fulfilled a certain role in a specific context, we believe that it is finished. We do not think that it could be useful for other colleagues in other regions. The paper or report gets lost in the personal archives' (AI26).

Three respondents (AI9, 13, 19) consider that the constant changes in the organisation, especially in relation to IT resources, cause some staff to believe that it is not worthwhile to learn new information systems or software.

Two organisational ideologies that appear to constrain M&E initiatives are **fears of hostility** (AI15, 26, 28) and **staff members' negative ideas about cost-effectiveness** (AI10, 26). AI15 says that '*staff are defensive about who sits around the table*' when doing evaluations (AI15). AI10 recalls that staff were '*horrified*' about the idea of introducing a cost-effectiveness component in M&E initiatives. AI26 explains why:

'We have to be cost-effective... I have heard that word one thousand times already. I think that in the humanitarian work - which I have been doing for ten years - we cannot throw money away, we have to spend the money well, of course... but this concept applied to the humanitarian work... we have to be very careful. I am not saying that this concept is not valid, but it is about processes, about things that you cannot measure that easily, processes with people. We try to measure them and we have to make the effort to measure them, but you cannot measure them in terms of money, in terms of how much they cost' (AI26).

7.5.6 DEGREE OF CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION OF LESSONS LEARNT

Interviewees state that there are different learning styles across Aid International, and that people prefer a mixture of methods, from face to face to electronic information. However, the data collected suggests that staff have a noticeable preference for face to face training and knowledge communicated at **lower levels of codification and abstraction**, such as '*real life, internal stories*' (AI17). Six respondents (AI3, 4, 9, 11, 14, 17) think that written documents are not effective in an information-overloaded environment:

> *'I think the best way is through people sharing their experiences with each other. For example, in our last regional meeting we had the programme manager from Albania, giving a presentation on her campaign. A document would not have been useful. You really need to think very carefully about how you design it, and the kind of overload of information, especially on paper, programme managers in particular receive. All of us receive too many documents. And we might think 'gosh, that is interesting, but I don't have the time to read it right now', whereas people have to come to regional meetings anyway' (AI3).*

> *'People take a lot of time to learn things, especially when you don't have face to face interaction. I think that it is very difficult to learn things electronically, from the intranet. I think people need to experience things, and to get a change of culture and a change of attitude is very slow, it is human nature' (AI14).*

Reports complain about large internal documents, without summaries and in difficult English. Attention is also drawn to email abuse and misuse: Over-use of copying and forwarding functions; lack of clarity as to action required; too many and too long messages (Document 22). A consultancy report states that, although there are examples of staff who consistently write well focused, readable documents, '*too often documents are ill-structured and wandering*' (Document 31).

Three respondents (AI10, 15, 20) provide evidence of **preference for higher levels of communication and abstraction** when disseminating lessons learnt. They argue that shorter documents and the use of summaries, as well as taking into account what colleagues may need in their jobs, facilitate the dissemination and use of lessons learnt and contribute to reducing information overload. Nevertheless, as AI20 comments, people still produce many short pieces of information.

> *'One improvement is to make (evaluation reports) shorter. The format that we now use for evaluations, for the summaries, is to have one column of learning points and one column of action recommendations (...) either have things very short, or if they are not short, have a summary that will tell people enough to give them an idea' (AI10).*

7.5.7 INFORMATION OVERLOAD

For nine interviewees (AI10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 26), **information overload** is a considerable limitation for the absorption of lessons learnt. Interviewees describe that large numbers of emails - about 15, 000 a day in the organisation (AI19) - create noise, and staff are not able to prioritise which information is relevant (AI11, 20). AI15 argues that information overload is partly a result of staff not organising their own information appropriately. For AI19, information overload could be linked to Aid International's culture:

> *'I think that there is a problem in Aid International with what is called a 'compliance culture'. Certainly, we are quite an anarchistic organisation. So, for example, every team and every department invents its own way of doing everything. Nobody has standards about what information to put in a document, how you can tell who wrote a document, what status the document is in now, and all these kind of things' (AI19).*

For AI20, information overload is caused by over-use of copying and forwarding functions, which in turn is motivated by staff complaints when information is not copied to them:

> *'If you copy to a lot of people, they complain because you are creating unnecessary information; if you do not copy to somebody, they complain as well because they consider they should have been informed... and what is worse, they say: 'Ah, you did not take me into account'. I prefer to be accused of copying to everybody than causing somebody to get annoyed with me because I did not involve that person in our decision' (AI26).*

For three respondents (AI14, 19, 20), one of the causes of information overload is that staff are not aware of what information is useful for colleagues and end up disseminating unnecessary information to the wrong people. AI19 thinks that staff should be made more aware and sensitive to internal audiences:

> *'For each piece of major information that is being produced we should have the same discipline of thinking: Is this the best targeted piece of information? How does it meet the needs of our audiences? Is this the most cost-effective way of doing it? Would it be better if we organise a meeting? You know, to look at the alternatives within the context of producing these big, expensive publications (...) We are trying to move really more from a 'push car' where we push information out of everybody, to more of a 'pull coach', where people are confident the material is there, where they are informed about important new material and they can go and get it if they want it' (AI19).*

Information overload is one of the topics most discussed in internal reports. Aid International has some guidelines about internal communications, but they are not known by staff or are poorly implemented (e.g. email use). There is a gap of standardisation of information management procedures, according to some members of the IT team (Document 10). A consultancy report associates information overload with high **staff turnover**:

> *'(A regional) office has had a high turnover recently. For this reason, difficulties with processes have been inevitable, leading to an increased communication load*

as staff learn new techniques, get to know who is responsible for what, and find out who can help them' (Document 31).

In the same report, information overload seems also associated with **lower levels of codification and abstraction**, as shown by this extract:

'At times, emails and documents were unfocused and without clarity as to what the recipient is meant to do with it; at times, actions are buried within paragraphs. This leads to unquantified increases in traffic to determine what is meant and to a lack of traffic when staff do not respond to obscure documents' (Document 31).

7.5.8 STAFF MEMBERS' LIMITED TIME FOR REFLECTION

Nine respondents (AI6, 11, 14, 15, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27) argue that there is **not enough time for learning**, mainly because of work overload: '*Work pressure inhibits reflection' (AI27*). M&E efforts are particularly affected (AI6, 22, 26), as some evaluations require long-term studies to be able to track changes over time. For one respondent (AI6), Aid International tries to do too much, and talks about learning on top of it, but people are not given enough time. Another interviewee describes the situation as follows:

'We work isolated, each of us in a bubble. I would love to know all sorts of things about the rest of Aid International. I would love to dedicate a whole day exploring the intranet, which I know is full of valuable information, but I cannot (...) In order to have learning you need time. This is a serious problem. People do not have time to read... or they do not make the time. This is another debate, but many of us say we do not have time; others say that if you organise your agenda well you have time for everything... I do not know who is right, I think some place in between, but I can tell you that there is a problem of pressure because of work overload' (AI26).

7.5.9 LACK OF STAFF INCENTIVES AT AID INTERNATIONAL

Seven interviewees (AI6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19) refer to the **lack of incentives for staff** at Aid International for using organisational knowledge bases. As AI9 explains, the use of a knowledge base is on a voluntary basis. AI10 thinks that some staff do not receive enough motivation from the leadership. However, AI9 underlines that Aid International is launching a new information system that people are obliged to use for data entry. He thinks this may encourage staff to start looking in this system for other information.

For AI6, performance development plans should encourage people to invest more time in learning. AI11 thinks that staff should be asked, not obliged, to refer to past experiences when designing new projects.

> *'If you can say - and that has already been said - that in the new programme design people have to state what other experiences they have looked at, at least you don't force them but ask them the question. It is more likely that people would do that. A lot of things you cannot enforce by rules, it is too difficult. But I do feel that is the way you really use the institutional knowledge as a whole' (AI11).*

For three interviewees (AI11, 13, 14), learning cannot be enforced. They argue that staff will use knowledge bases if they are relevant to their work:

> *'How does it (the knowledge base) tell me to do my job better? How does it tell me in my working field? (If these questions can be answered) then staff members are interested. Staff members are less interested if they are told to look at the intranet because that is what the manager says, or put information on the intranet because that is what you are supposed to do. Then there is less motivation, but if you understand why and how it would change their work, help them understand their job and do their job better, then there is an interest' (AI13).*

The internal documents analysed agree about the lack of incentives for learning. Some documents point out that organisational incentives need to be aligned to rewards, and a commitment from senior managers is required:

> *'Fieldwork staff should have space in their objectives for knowledge management/sharing and on-the-job learning. At least 10% of their time should be set aside for this in order that they can learn from others, and also impart their knowledge to others' (Document 4).*

7.5.10 LANGUAGE BARRIERS WITHIN AID INTERNATIONAL

Aid International's staff speak about 200 languages. Seven people (AI11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20) refer to the **diversity of languages** as an important constraint to the absorption of knowledge. Most internal documents and information systems are in English, which is not spoken by all staff in overseas offices. The organisation translates some materials but there are still '*grey areas*' (AI11) due to the high costs involved.

Two members of an IT team (AI14, 19) say that language barriers are going to be addressed by the development of '*minor sites*', intranet and databases, in different local languages.

7.5.11 STAFF TURNOVER

Six respondents (AI9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20) consider that **staff turnover** and the regular rotation of personnel within Aid International constrains knowledge use. High staff

turnover limits the use of knowledge bases and communication resources until new staff are familiar with them: '*It is very hard for people to catch up*' (AI19), and the organisation has to make constant investments in training (AI9, 11).

7.5.12 APPROPRIATE FRAMING OF LESSONS LEARNT

For three respondents (AI3, 10, 14), the **framing of lessons learnt** affects their absorption. As interviewees state, basic things such as the use of meaningful titles in documents, or entertaining methods of communication (AI10), and avoiding jargon (AI14) all contribute:

> *'We were asking (some staff) to do something different (for their evaluation report). I asked them to draw some pictures and they could brief the other group on that with a newspaper, or radio interview, or something like that. They did that, and they did role-plays, which were good, and we recorded them. I had five hours of video footage and I cut it to seven minutes' (AI10).*

Four internal reports identified the lack of highlighting of what is available as a significant constraint: Staff do not know what lessons are available and what for (Documents 2, 5 and 4).

7.5.13 IMMEDIACY

Two interviewees (AI9, 11) refer to **immediacy** and argue that some staff are reluctant to look at past experiences:

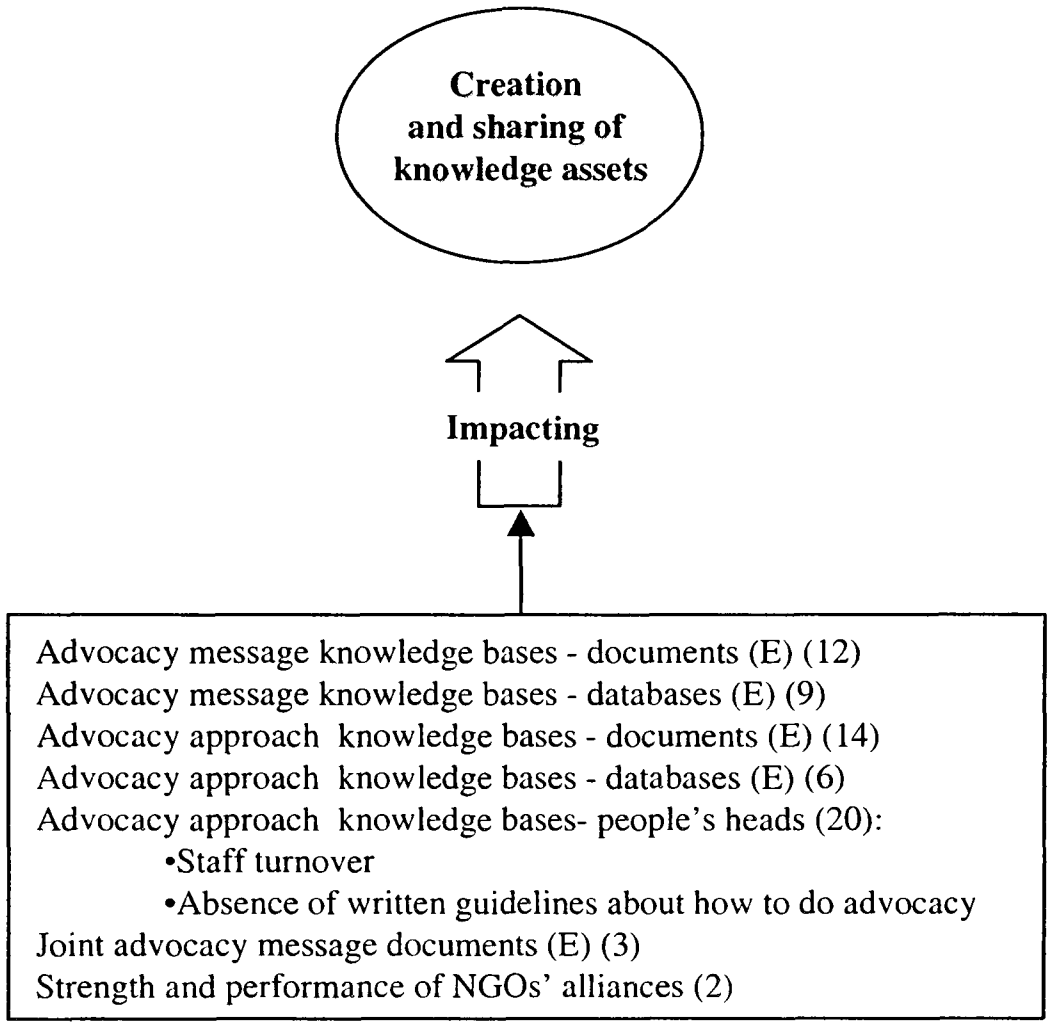
'People prefer almost not to know, just to work with it and get it done, because they are too busy. You may have to revise what you are doing at the moment. Sometimes it is better not to know' (AI11).

According to an internal report, this immediacy is more noticeable in overseas staff, who '*consider it to be more of a priority to perform their day-to-day activities*' (Document 4). Another internal report states that, in general, there is only a '*weak practice of enquiry to challenge thinking*' (Document 5).

7.6 ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE IMPACTING OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ADVOCACY

Two internal documents underline that organisational fieldwork experience is not being leveraged to gain a wider impact; that research and evidence gathered is rarely used to inform the direction of work; and that examples of good practice at project level need to be better communicated to decision makers (Document 12). One of these reports concludes that impact could be achieved not only through advocating for policy change, but also *'through extending good practice through shared learning'* (Document 5). In relation to impacting, the data shows the following.

Figure 39. Enablers and constraints to the impacting of knowledge for advocacy - Aid International's perspective



*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

7.6.1 ADVOCACY MESSAGE KNOWLEDGE BASES

Fifteen interviewees refer to Aid International's **advocacy message knowledge bases**. Twelve respondents (AI1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21, 26, 27) mention advocacy message knowledge bases in the form of written documents, e.g. policy papers, advocacy strategies, fieldwork documents and research reports. AI26 explains the role of one of these documents:

> *'Aid International has published a policy paper about humanitarian advocacy. This is a guide for all allies and is a tool that allows, in a more systematic way, that all of us give the same message, or similar messages, if we have a meeting*

with donors, or with other NGOs that we want to influence. It is about all of us using the same tool' (AI26).

Nine respondents (AI6, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21) mention **advocacy message knowledge bases** in the form of databases and other electronic resources, e.g. intranet, online discussion tools, databases of reports and previous projects. In relation to online discussion tools, one member of an IT team says:

'We have only been doing (online discussions) over the last five or six months. Basically it is a series of online debates that we use for capturing the knowledge of our officers in the field - the knowledge that they hold and keep to themselves, but that they can also share with colleagues. Also, we use their knowledge and their opinions to inform Aid International's policy positions (...) the outputs from that are fed into the meetings of senior managers, and they try to set Aid International's direction' (AI14).

Among the 34 documents analysed, seven refer to Aid International's advocacy message knowledge bases.

7.6.2 ADVOCACY APPROACH KNOWLEDGE BASES

Fifteen staff refer to Aid International's **advocacy approach knowledge bases**. Fourteen of them (AI1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 22, 25, 26, 27) mention approach knowledge bases in the form of written documents, e.g. advocacy strategies; power mapping analyses; induction packages; workshop materials; evaluation reports; advocacy guidelines; and security plans for countries with delicate security situations.

Six respondents (AI2, 6, 10, 21, 22, 26) refer to **advocacy approach knowledge bases in the form of databases or other electronic sources**, mainly Aid International's

intranet and its shared drives, which contain documents such as guidelines for power mapping; major advocacy strategies; guidelines about producing materials for the media; guidelines about doing M&E; and some basic information about decision makers:

> *'We have a database on members of parliament that people here have access to, but all that is going to give you is very basic biographical information on that MP. What it will not necessarily tell you is what Aid International has been doing with all of them' (AI22).*

Among the 34 documents analysed, 20 of them refer to Aid International's advocacy approach knowledge bases.

7.6.3 ADVOCACY KNOWLEDGE BASES EMBEDDED IN PEOPLE'S HEADS

Evidence that a significant part of Aid International's advocacy message and approach knowledge is **embedded in people's heads** comes from 20 respondents (AI2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28). Respondents commented that advocacy strategies are not always documented; knowledge gained about decision makers is lost; and people learn advocacy work mainly through practice and sharing with colleagues. These results are consistent with previous answers in relation to staff preference for lower levels of codification and abstraction, and the importance of internal experts and colleagues in knowledge sharing:

> *'At the end of the day, an awful lot of what is going on comes down to personal experience of people who work with them. A lot of it is precisely personal contacts, a lot of it ends up becoming, if you like, personal knowledge, which can be downloaded only by talking to somebody who probably is not terribly helpful' (AI22).*

AI15 argues that the lack of physical substrata of knowledge limits its diffusion within the organisation and its use by others, as he explains:

> *'We don't have a textbook. There can be a textbook for some things, (for example) 'how can you drill a well'. Fine, but we are not good at creating the knowledge. That is one area I am looking at, the creation of the knowledge. And once you have created it, you can go around and, if you like, apply that knowledge to other situations. You are creating knowledge out of previous activities or previous thinking or discussions. Once you have created it... what is it? It is a document. What do you do with that document? Where do you store it and how do you disseminate it? Yes, the knowledge that my daughter has (when she studies French) exists in France, it is systematised in a book and the teacher can give her that book and can say: 'Ok, open it on page fifteen'. We have nothing similar' (AI15).*

Four respondents (AI10, 18, 24, 26) emphasise that **staff turnover** and staff mobility '*take knowledge away*' from the organisation:

> *'There is also staff discontinuity, staff leaving, taking their knowledge with them. This is one of the prices that we pay for staff mobility, also within Aid International. They leave their job and move to another job within Aid International...apparently we transfer knowledge' (AI10).*

7.6.4 STRENGTH AND PERFORMANCE OF NGO ALLIANCES

According to two interviewees (AI23, 28), the donors meeting process has enabled civil society organisations to organise around something concrete, and has brought them together.

Internal documents provide examples of Aid International's knowledge impacting on decision makers' policies, civil society initiatives and academic events (Document 27). A minister of a developing country commented that Aid International's studies have provided valuable insights to policy makers, and innovative solutions.

7.7 APPLICATION OF THE MODEL: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES - AID INTERNATIONAL'S PERSPECTIVE

The data collected from Aid International follows the trend shown in previous chapters: 16% of responses refer to external factors, whereas **84% of responses refer to internal** ones. 30% of responses refer to absorption, while 22% of responses are associated with scanning (see Table 28).

Table 28. Distribution of Aid International's responses by SLC phases and internal and external environments

Number of responses			
SLC phases	**External environment**	**Internal environment**	**Totals**
Scanning	26	72	98
Codification and abstraction	5	73	78
Diffusion	25	47	72
Absorption	9	127	136
Impacting	4	62	66
Totals	**69**	**381**	**450**

Percentages			
SLC phases	**External environment**	**Internal environment**	**Totals**
Scanning	6%	16%	22%
Codification and abstraction	1%	16%	17%
Diffusion	6%	10%	16%
Absorption	2%	28%	30%
Impacting	1%	14%	15%
Totals	**16%**	**84%**	**100%**

7.7.1 THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The external factors that affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets according to the data collected from Aid International staff are shown in Table 29.

Table 29. External enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness: Aid International

External enablers and constraints	Total	Importance
SCANNING		
Delicate security situation Threats to domestic NGOs Access to some areas of the country is difficult	4	0.14
Affected populations' little knowledge and experience in advocacy Affected populations' high expectations about potential benefits	4	0.14
Affected populations' high trust of Aid International (E) Positive results of projects in communities	3	0.10
Decision makers' trust of advocates Limited time available for developing relationships Previous job experience in decision makers' organisations	3	0.10
Limited time for advocates' data collection	3	0.10
Low codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages	3	0.10
Higher codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages (E) Documents by decision makers (E)	2	0.07
Tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas Tensions have historical roots	1	0.03
Staff turnover	1	0.03
Affected populations' limited access to ICTs	1	0.03
Differences in staff's culture	1	0.03
CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION		
Limited time for reflection Delicate security situation in fieldwork areas	3	0.10
Staff's high emotional stakes	1	0.03
High staff turnover	1	0.03
DIFFUSION		
The delicate security situation Public advocacy strategies are restrained Fears of hostility towards field staff or partners	7	0.25
Decision makers' ideologies Decision makers see NGOs as part of the opposition No value in talking with civil society organisations Decision makers' need for legitimacy	5	0.17
Decision makers' trust of Aid International (E) Aid International's long-term relationships with decision makers (E) Decision makers use Aid International as a source of information (E)	4	0.14
Limited coverage of advocacy messages by the media Partnerships with celebrities Good relationships with journalists The delicate security situation	3	0.10
Aid International's legitimacy Aid International's linkages with affected populations (E) Presidential speech about NGOs on 9 September 2003	2	0.07
Restricted advocate attendance at 9 July meeting	2	0.07
Legal constraints	1	0.03
Decision makers' limited time budget	1	0.03
ABSORPTION		
M&E of advocacy Attribution of results is difficult	3	0.10
Internal information and communication systems (ICTs) Limited access to Internet for some regional offices	3	0.10
Staff turnover	3	0.10
IMPACTING		
Advocacy approach knowledge bases - people's heads Staff turnover	4	0.14

*Note: The total number of interviewees in the Aid International group is 28.

Respondents emphasise the role of the **delicate security situation** in constraining scanning and diffusion. Because of fears of hostility towards partners and staff, access to some areas is restricted and public advocacy is limited. Aid International prefers to keep a low profile and focuses on personal lobbying of decision makers instead. In relation to codification and abstraction, the limited time for reflection appears to be influenced by the delicate security situation in geographical work areas.

Decision makers' trust of Aid International is another significant factor affecting scanning and diffusion. Respondents are concerned about the limited time available for developing this trust.

Absorption and impacting are phases mainly affected by internal constraints. Nevertheless, the difficulty of attributing M&E results appears as an external constraint. The limited access to Internet for some regional offices emerges as a limitation for the appropriate functioning of internal systems. Staff turnover, a variable of both external and internal nature, also appears to influence both absorption and impacting; this is especially the case for knowledge embedded in staff members' heads.

7.7.2 THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

As in the cases of the other stakeholders, most of the enablers and constraints identified are internal (84%). If we classify the internal enablers and constraints among the five variables that compose the Information Ecology model, we obtain Table 30.

Table 30. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness and the Information Ecology model: Aid International

Internal enablers and constraints	Total	KW	KC	KP	KA	KS[38]
SCANNING						
Information and knowledge staff Temporary appointment of additional information staff Regional advocacy officers	**11**					**11**
Appropriate methods for data collection (E) Staff is not always familiar with appropriate research methods	**10**					**10**
Partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs Domestic NGOs' high trust of Aid International (E) Funding for consultation processes with communities (E) Domestic NGOs' ideologically driven information	**8**	**2** X	**2** X	**4** X		
Tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas Different mindsets within Aid International	**7**		**7**			
INGO alliances (E) (scanning from decision makers)	**6**			**6**		
INGO alliances (scanning from other advocates) Level of trust among alliance members Differences in organisational capacity and level of engagement Staff turnover	**5**	**2** X		**3** X X		
Interpersonal relationships among staff	**4**	**4**				
Affected populations' high trust of Aid International (E) Positive results of projects in communities	**3**	**3**				
Aid International's organisational ideologies (scanning from other areas) Internal information flows have to follow the management line	**3**		**3**			
Language barriers	**3**		**3**			
Decision makers' trust of advocates Limited time available for developing relationships Previous job experience in decision makers' organisations	**2**	**2**				
Aid International's organisational ideologies (scanning from affected populations) Fieldworkers' idea that they are not in the field to collect information Fieldworkers' prior expectations when visiting affected communities	**2**		**2**			
Higher codification and abstraction of domestic NGOs' messages Documents by domestic NGOs (E)	**2**				**2**	
Staff turnover (scanning from other areas)	**1**	**1**				
Size of Aid International	**1**			**1**		
Staff's limited time budget	**1**		**1**			
Advocates' limited funding**	**1**					
Aid International's organisational ideologies (scanning from decision makers)	**1**		**1**			
Aid International's low trust of decision makers	**1**	**1**				
CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION						
Aid International's preferences towards codification and abstraction Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E) Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction	**22**	**22**				
Limited time for reflection Work overload Meetings and administrative work Colombia is not a priority country for Aid International	**13**		**9** X X	**4** X		
Aid International's organisational ideologies Knowledge creation and sharing is seen by staff as additional work Staff's ideas about what advocacy is Advocacy plans are not seen as useful Staff's lack of confidence	**11**	**3** X	**8** X X X			
Lack of staff incentives at Aid International Internal accountability is not clearly established Use of staff contributions in decision making	**11**		**8**	**3** X X		
Information and knowledge staff	**5**					**5**
Immediacy	**4**		**4**			
Staff training	**4**					**4**
Staff's high emotional stakes	**1**	**1**				
High staff turnover	**1**	**1**				
Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)	**1**			**1**		

*Note: (E) indicates an enabler; absence of (E) indicates a constraint.

**Note: Internal enabler or constraint that does not fit any of the five variables of the Information Ecology model.

[38] The variables of our Information Ecology model are: Knowledge workers; knowledge behaviour and culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture, and knowledge strategy.

Internal enablers and constraints	Total	KW	KC	KP	KA	KS
DIFFUSION						
Inappropriate advocacy message framing	**12**		**12**			
Domestic NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios						
Balance between criticism and proposals						
Partial and biased messages						
Attractive, compelling and media-friendly messages						
Advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction	**11**				**11**	
Use of short advocacy messages						
Joint advocacy messages						
Balance between higher and lower codification and abstraction						
Aid International's legitimacy	**8**			**8**		
Aid International's linkages with affected populations (E)						
Partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs (E)						
INGO alliances (representativeness) (E)						
Domestic NGO alliances						
Aid International's decision making processes	**7**	**1**		**6**		
Sign-off procedures				X		
Size of Aid International				X		
Lack of clear advocacy strategies		X				
Limited coverage of advocacy messages by the media	**4**	**2**	**2**			
Partnerships with celebrities		X				
Good relationships with journalists		X				
Novelty of the message			X			
Decision makers' trust of Aid International (E)	**3**	**3**				
Aid International's long-term relationships with decision makers (E)						
Decision makers use Aid International as a source of information (E)						
Aid International's reputation for managing its money well (E)						
Advocates' limited funding**	**1**					
Language barriers	**1**		**1**			
ABSORPTION						
Aid International's preferences towards codification and abstraction	**22**	**22**				
Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E)						
Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction						
Staff training (E)	**14**					**14**
More training is needed						
Information and knowledge staff	**13**	**3**				**10**
Internal experts		X				
Regional advocacy officers						X
Moderators of internal communications						X
M&E of advocacy	**10**	**2**		**2**		**6**
Lack of clear, measurable objectives of advocacy strategies		X				
No integration between M&E results and decision making				X		
Some staff think M&E is boring						X
M&E is focused on spending, not on learning						X
No link between individual performance, advocacy objectives and M&E				X		
Aid International's organisational ideologies	**10**		**10**			
Belief that learning originated in one context is not useful in other contexts						
Belief that it is not worthwhile to learn because of constant changes						
Fears of hostility						
Negative ideas about cost-effectiveness						
Internal information and communication systems (ICTs)	**9**	**3**			**6**	
Limited retrieval capabilities of internal information systems					X	
Staff's limited ownership of ICT resources		X				
Staff's limited computer literacy		X				
Degree of codification and abstraction of lessons learnt	**9**				**9**	
Preference for lower levels of codification and abstraction						
Preference for higher levels of codification and abstraction						
Information overload	**9**	**3**	**6**			
Aid International's compliance culture			X			
Overuse of copying and forwarding functions		X				
Staff are not aware of what information is useful for colleagues		X				
Staff members' limited time for reflection	**9**		**9**			
Lack of staff incentives at Aid International	**7**		**7**			
Language barriers within Aid International	**7**		**7**			
Staff turnover	**3**	**3**				
Appropriate framing of lessons learnt	**3**		**3**			
Immediacy	**2**		**2**			
IMPACTING						
Advocacy approach knowledge bases - people's heads	**16**				**16**	
Staff turnover						
Absence of written guidelines about how to do advocacy						
Advocacy approach knowledge bases - documents (E)	**14**				**14**	
Advocacy message knowledge bases - documents (E)	**12**				**12**	
Advocacy message knowledge bases - databases (E)	**9**				**9**	
Advocacy approach knowledge bases - databases (E)	**6**				**6**	
Joint advocacy message documents (E)	**3**				**3**	
Strength and performance of NGO alliances (E)	**2**			**2**		
Total		**84**	**107**	**40**	**88**	**60**

**Note: Internal enabler or constraint that does not fit any of the five variables of the Information Ecology model.

Most of the internal enablers and constraints identified at Aid International refer to **knowledge culture and behaviour**, followed by knowledge architecture. The theoretical framework is validated by the data, as shown in Table 31.

Table 31. Research framework as validated by the data from Aid International (with importance for each enabler or constraint)

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	SLC phases affected
Knowledge assets' substrata (2.12)	KA	**Advocacy approach knowledge bases - people's heads** Staff turnover Absence of written guidelines about how to do advocacy	0.57	Impacting
		Advocacy approach knowledge bases - documents (E)	0.50	Impacting
		Advocacy message knowledge bases - documents (E)	0.42	Impacting
		Advocacy message knowledge bases - databases (E)	0.32	Impacting
		Advocacy approach knowledge bases - databases (E)	0.21	Impacting
		Joint advocacy message documents (E)	0.10	Impacting
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (1.66)	KW	**Aid International's preferences towards codification and abstraction** Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E) Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction	0.78	Codification and abstraction
		Aid International's preferences towards codification and abstraction Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E) Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction	0.78	Absorption
		M&E of advocacy Lack of clear, measurable objectives of advocacy strategies	0.07	Absorption
		Aid International's decision making processes Lack of clear advocacy strategies	0.03	Diffusion
Organisational ideologies (1.32)	KC	**Aid International's organisational ideologies** Belief that learning originated in one context is not useful in other contexts Belief that it is not worthwhile to learn because of constant changes Fears of hostility Negative ideas about cost-effectiveness	0.35	Absorption
		Information overload Aid International's compliance culture	0.21	Absorption
		Aid International's organisational ideologies Knowledge creation and sharing is seen by staff as additional work Staff's ideas about what advocacy is Advocacy plans are not seen as useful	0.28	Codification and abstraction
		Aid International's organisational ideologies Internal information flows have to follow the management line Fieldworkers' idea that they are not in the field to collect information Fieldworkers' prior expectations when visiting affected communities	0.20	Scanning
		Immediacy	0.14	Codification and abstraction
		Partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs Domestic NGOs' ideologically driven information	0.07	Scanning
		Immediacy	0.07	Absorption
Incentives for learning (1.20)	KC	**Limited time for reflection** Work overload Meetings and administrative work	0.32	Codification and abstraction
		Staff members' limited time for reflection	0.32	Absorption
		Lack of staff incentives at Aid International	0.28	Codification and abstraction
		Lack of staff incentives at Aid International	0.25	Absorption
		Staff's limited time budget	0.03	Scanning
Staff training (0.99)	KS	**Staff training (E)** More training is needed	0.50	Absorption
		Appropriate methods for data collection (E) Staff is not always familiar with appropriate research methods	0.35	Scanning
		Staff training	0.14	Codification and abstraction
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.91)	KS	**Information and knowledge staff** Temporary appointment of additional information staff Regional advocacy officers	0.39	Scanning
		Information and knowledge staff Regional advocacy officers Moderators of internal communications	0.35	Absorption
		Information and knowledge staff	0.17	Codification and abstraction
Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction (0.78)	KA	**Advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction** Use of short advocacy messages Joint advocacy messages Balance between higher and lower codification and abstraction	0.39	Diffusion
		Degree of codification and abstraction of lessons learnt Preference for lower levels of codification and abstraction Preference for higher levels of codification and abstraction	0.32	Absorption
		Higher codification and abstraction of domestic NGOs' messages Documents by domestic NGOs (E)	0.07	Scanning
Level of trust (0.65)	KW	**Interpersonal relationships among staff**	0.14	Scanning
		Affected populations' high trust of Aid International (E) Positive results of projects in communities	0.10	Scanning
		Decision makers' trust of Aid International (E) Aid International's long-term relationships with decision makers (E) Decision makers use Aid International as a source of information (E) Aid International's reputation for managing its money well (E)	0.10	Diffusion
		Partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs Domestic NGOs' high trust of Aid International (E)	0.07	Scanning

		INGO alliances (scanning from other advocates) Level of trust among alliance members	0.07	Scanning
		Decision makers' trust of advocates Limited time available for developing relationships Previous job experience in decision makers' organisations	0.07	Scanning
		Limited coverage of advocacy messages by the media Partnerships with celebrities Good relationships with journalists	0.07	Diffusion
		Aid International's low trust of decision makers	0.03	Scanning
Advocacy message framing (0.59)	**KC**	**Inappropriate advocacy message framing** Domestic NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios Balance between criticism and proposals Partial and biased messages Attractive, compelling and media-friendly messages	0.42	Diffusion
		Appropriate framing of lessons learnt	0.10	Absorption
		Limited coverage of advocacy messages by the media Novelty of the message	0.07	Diffusion
Alliances and partnerships (0.55)	**KP**	**INGO alliances (E)** Differences in organisational capacity and level of engagement Staff turnover	0.31	Scanning
		Partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs Funding for consultation processes with communities (E)	0.14	Scanning
		Strength and performance of NGO alliances (E)	0.07	Impacting
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)	0.03	Codification and abstraction
Decision making processes (0.52)	**KP**	**Aid International's decision making processes** Sign-off procedures Size of Aid International Lack of clear advocacy strategies	0.21	Diffusion
		Limited time for reflection Colombia is not a priority country for Aid International	0.14	Codification and abstraction
		Lack of staff incentives at Aid International Internal accountability is not clearly established Use of staff contributions in decision making	0.10	Codification and abstraction
		M&E of advocacy No integration between M&E results and decision making No link between individual performance, advocacy objectives and M&E	0.07	Absorption
Different languages (0.38)	**KC**	**Language barriers within Aid International**	0.25	Absorption
		Language barriers	0.10	Scanning
		Language barriers	0.03	Diffusion
Subjective orientations and mindsets (0.33)	**KW**	**Aid International's organisational ideologies** Staff's lack of confidence	0.10	Codification and abstraction
		Information and knowledge staff Internal experts	0.10	Absorption
		Internal information and communication systems (ICTs) Staff's limited ownership of ICT resources Staff's limited computer literacy	0.10	Absorption
		Information overload Overuse of copying and forwarding functions Staff are not aware of what information is useful for colleagues	0.10	Absorption
		Staff's high emotional stakes	0.03	Codification and abstraction
Legitimacy (0.28)	**KP**	**Aid International's legitimacy** Aid International's linkages with affected populations (E) Partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs (E) INGO alliances (representativeness) (E) Domestic NGO alliances	0.28	Diffusion
Tensions between advocacy and operative staff (0.25)	**KC**	**Tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas** Different mindsets within Aid International	0.25	Scanning
M&E of advocacy (0.21)	**KS**	**M&E of advocacy** Some staff think M&E is boring M&E is focused on spending, not on learning	0.21	Absorption
ICTs (0.21)	**KA**	**Internal information and communication systems (ICTs)** Limited retrieval capabilities of internal information systems	0.21	Absorption
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.16)	**KW**	**Staff turnover**	0.10	Absorption
		Staff turnover (scanning from other areas)	0.03	Scanning
		High staff turnover	0.03	Codification and abstraction
Governance structures (0.03)	**KP**	**Size of Aid International**	0.03	Scanning

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology model. The initials indicate the following: KW: Knowledge workers; KC: Knowledge culture; KP: Knowledge politics; KA: Knowledge architecture; and KS: Knowledge strategy.

As Table 31 shows, our Information Ecology model explains most of the enablers and constraints found in Aid International's data. There are three internal factors that do not fit the model. **Staff turnover** and **information and knowledge staff** could be associated with knowledge workers and knowledge strategy respectively. The link between **advocates' limited funding** (see Table 30) and the five variables of the Information Ecology is not straightforward. This will be discussed further in the cross-case chapter.

Most of the internal enablers and constraints focus on absorption (33%), and are linked to knowledge culture (28%), knowledge architecture (23%), and knowledge workers (22%). Knowledge culture factors affect absorption significantly, while knowledge architecture is concentrated on impacting (see Table 32).

Table 32. Distribution of Aid International's responses on internal environment by the SLC and variables of the Information Ecology model

SLC phases	Information Ecology variables					Totals
	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy	
Scanning	15	19	14	2	21	72*
Codification and abstraction	27	29	8	-	9	73
Diffusion	6	15	14	11	-	47*
Absorption	36	44	2	15	30	127
Impacting	-	-	2	60	-	62
Totals	**84**	**107**	**40**	**88**	**60**	**381***

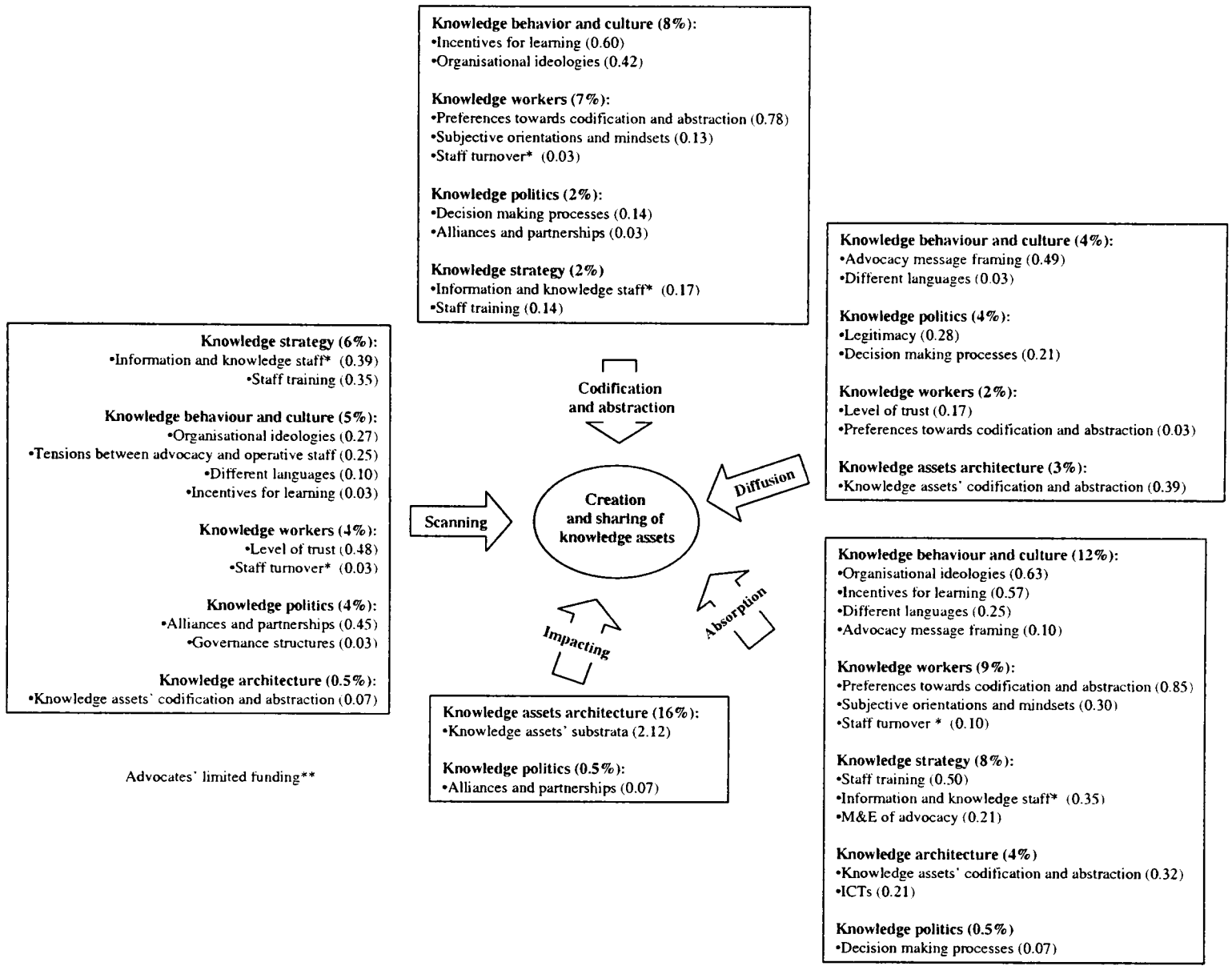
SLC phases	Information Ecology variables**					Totals
	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy	
Scanning	4%	5%	4%	0.5%	6%	19%
Codification and abstraction	7%	8%	2%	-	2%	19%
Diffusion	2%	4%	4%	3%	-	12%*
Absorption	9%	12%	0.5%	4%	8%	33%
Impacting	-	-	0.5%	16%	-	16%
Totals	**22%**	**28%**	**10%**	**23%**	**16%**	**100%***

*Note: The totals marked with * do not equal the sum of their rows because of the three internal factors that do not fit the model.

** Note: Percentages in this table are based on the total number of responses that refer to internal enablers and constraints (381)

Figure 40 shows a summary of the internal enablers and constraints identified, with their importance. As in previous chapters, the enablers and constraints are distributed by the phases of the SLC and by the variables of the Information Ecology model.

Figure 40. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness: Aid International's perspective



* No corresponding variable in the framework

** Internal constraint that cannot be allocated within any of the five variables of the Information Ecology model.

The data collected in Aid International shows that:

- Most enablers and constraints are of internal nature, and focus on **absorption** and **scanning**. The data from Aid International provides evidence about both internal and external enablers and constraints in all the phases of the SLC. Scanning and diffusion

are more affected by external factors, while absorption is more affected by internal ones.

- The **delicate security situation** is the most significant external constraint, followed by decision makers' trust of Aid International. As with INGOs[39], decision makers' ideologies also influence the diffusion of the message.

- The data points to knowledge **culture** (28%), knowledge **architecture** (23%) and knowledge **workers** (22%) as the main enablers and constraints. Most of the internal constraints affect **absorption** (33%), **scanning** (19%), or **codification and abstraction** (19%).

- Aid International's data emphasises the role of **organisational ideologies**, in contrast to INGOs' data. Some examples of ideologies are the belief that learning originated in one context is not useful in other contexts; or that knowledge creation and sharing is additional work. In the same group of knowledge culture factors, another key constraint is the **lack of staff incentives**, in particular the limited time for reflection.

- **Knowledge assets' substrata** is the most prominent internal factor and affects impacting only. Knowledge about advocacy approaches is mostly embedded in people's heads and in documents - a similar situation as in INGOs.

[39] In this Chapter, INGOs refer to the group of INGOs analysed in Chapter 6. Aid International is, of course, also an INGO.

- There is more evidence of **preferences towards lower** than towards higher levels of **codification and abstraction**. This affects codification and abstraction, and absorption. As in the case of INGOs, there is some concern about the absence of clear advocacy strategies and written guidelines about how to do advocacy - both of which could be seen as examples of lower levels of codification and abstraction. Some respondents refer to the role of the staff's analytical skills (e.g. power mapping; documentation and synthesis skills) in enabling the creation and sharing of knowledge.

- The production of long documents, the abuse and misuse of email, and the poor implementation of existing guidelines for information management contribute to **information overload**. Some staff are not aware of what knowledge is relevant for their colleagues, affecting the abstraction of lessons learnt.

- **Subjective orientations and mindsets** are more evident in Aid International than in INGOs. This may be the result of focusing data collection on a single organisation. An interesting example of mindsets is staff members' lack of confidence about their own capabilities to contribute to organisational knowledge bases.

- **Trust,** which affects mainly scanning and diffusion, is associated with the smooth functioning of alliances and partnerships, as well as with relationships among internal staff.

- **Sign-off procedures** slow down the diffusion of advocacy messages.

- In relation to knowledge strategy, the data collected underlines the importance of **information and knowledge staff** e.g. advocacy officers, intranet editors and internal experts. Information and knowledge staff do not correspond to any variable in the framework.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION CHAPTERS

The cross-case analysis chapter - Chapter 8 - examines the overall patterns found in the data collected from all the stakeholders involved in the process of the donors meeting, and points to some significant areas of enablers and constraints. The strategy of stacking 'compartable cases' (Miles and Huberman 1994) is used. Case level displays are grouped in 'meta displays' that allow for the systematic comparison of the data, as discussed in Chapter 3, Research Design and Methods.

Chapter 9 discusses the research findings and suggests some implications for management. Chapter 10 presents the contributions as well as an assessment of this research and its limitations. Finally, some areas of future research are considered.

CHAPTER 8

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Contents

- The most relevant knowledge for the success of advocacy work
- External and internal environments in advocacy communities
- Enablers and constraints affecting the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness
- Research framework as validated by the data
- Conclusions

8.1 THE MOST RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE FOR THE SUCCESS OF ADVOCACY WORK

The relevant knowledge for advocacy comes from four main sources: **Affected populations**, **decision makers**, **other advocates** and **internal sources**. The type of relevant knowledge is linked to the nature of the advocacy strategy pursued. Of the nine influence tactics distinguished by Falbe and Yukl (Falbe and Yukl 1992), three tactics feature prominently in this research: a) convince b) exchange and c) pressure strategies. The convince strategy focuses on arguments, and content plays a central role. In the exchange strategy both parties have something valuable for the other party and both reach their goals through a negotiation process. The pressure strategy is based on gathering power and is used when advocates have broad support.

Table 33 shows a summary of the most relevant knowledge for the success of advocacy work. Public support for the donors meeting process is weak, and there is little

information in the general media about it, which would indicate that a convince or exchange strategy is more appropriate. Nevertheless, advocates seem to follow a pressure strategy too, shown by their interest in knowing about the effects of government policies on affected populations and about the human rights situation, as well as knowing decision makers' political and legal obligations.

Table 33. Relevant knowledge for the success of advocacy work according to respondents

Sources: Respondents	Affected populations	Decision makers	Other advocates	Internal sources
Decision makers	____	Donor meetings: Objective, procedures, countries' positions Donor countries' agendas of cooperation: Policies, opportunities, limitations Donor countries' representatives Colombian government: Programmes, achievements	____	____
Domestic NGOs	Local needs and problems Political context: Human rights, effects of government policies Civil society organisations: Who they are	Donor countries' agendas of cooperation: Policies, interests, concerns Donor countries' representatives: Background, decision making capacity, power balance, commitment to Colombia Donor meetings: Procedures	____	____
INGOs	Local needs and problems Political context: Human rights, effects of government policies	Donor countries' agendas of cooperation: Policies, interests, concerns Donor countries' representatives: Background, interests, motivations, decision making capacity, influencers	Experience in advocacy: Focus, analysis, political positioning, proposals, message framing Donor meetings: Objectives, procedures, main topics, arguments, proposals Impact of advocacy message: On decision makers	____
Aid International	Civil society organisations: Positions, priorities, potential allies Political context: Human rights, effects of government policies	Donor countries' agendas of cooperation: Policies, interests, concerns Key decision makers: Background, personal interests and motivations, decision making capacity, influencers, political and legal obligations, decision making procedures	Other advocates: Status, reputation, organisational capacity Experience in advocacy: Research on advocated topics, knowledge about decision makers	Work on the ground: Effects of policies, evidence to support the advocacy case Experience in advocacy: Previous advocacy initiatives, linkages with decision makers

As shown in Table 33, there is agreement about the importance of knowing about donors meeting procedures, as well as the importance of knowledge about decision makers' interests and concerns. Nevertheless, advocates do not mention knowledge about what decision makers have done about the donors meeting as relevant. In a similar line, only the group of decision makers considers that advocates should know more about the Colombian government's achievements in social policies.

Domestic NGOs did not mention other advocates as a source of relevant knowledge. For Aid International, key internal knowledge is the organisation's experience in advocacy - the contacts and alliances that the organisation has developed. Knowledge about lessons learnt was not mentioned by INGOs or domestic NGOs.

8.2 EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES

As shown in Table 34, the enablers and constraints found concentrate on **scanning** (30% average) and **diffusion** (33% average). This average calculated without decision makers' data shows a similar trend: Scanning (27% average) and diffusion (24% average) contain most of the enablers and constraints found. This trend is present in all groups, except Aid International, where factors found concentrate mostly on absorption (30%) and scanning (22%).

Table 34. Enablers and constraints by SLC phases

SLC phases	Decision makers*	Domestic NGOs*	INGOs*	Aid International*	Row average	Average without decision makers
Scanning	40%	27%	32%	22%	**30%**	**27%**
Codification and abstraction		11%	13%	17%	10%	14%
Diffusion	60%	27%	28%	16%	**33%**	**24%**
Absorption		11%	11%	30%	13%	17%
Impacting		23%	16%	15%	14%	18%
Totals	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

*Note: The percentages shown are in relation to each group of interviewees.

In relation to each phase of the SLC, more of the enablers and constraints to scanning come from decision makers' data than from any of the other groups. More of the factors affecting codification and abstraction come from Aid International's data. Most of the factors affecting diffusion come from decision makers' data. More of the factors affecting absorption come from Aid International and more of the factors affecting impacting are found in domestic NGOs' data.

Boisot differentiates two distinct stages of the SLC, a value creation and a value exploiting stage. The first is composed of the phases of scanning, codification and abstraction, while the second is composed of the phases of diffusion, absorption and impacting (Boisot 1995). If we distribute the results by these two phases of the SLC, most enablers and constraints in advocacy communities target the **value exploiting stage** (see Table 35).

Table 35. Enablers and constraints by value creating and value exploiting stages

SLC stages	Decision makers*	Domestic NGOs*	INGOs*	Aid International*	Row average	Average without decision makers
Value creating stage	40%	38%	45%	39%	40%	40%
Value exploiting stage	60%	61%	55%	61%	**60%**	**60%**
Totals	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

*Note: The percentages shown are in relation to each group of interviewees.

Due to the limitations associated to the research methods and analysis, in particular to the fact that the counting of enablers and constraints in the context of this research does not mean to be statistical, it is not possible to discern to what extent the results shown in Table 35 are reliable and whether they indicate a potential area that deserves further exploration.

8.3 EXTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING THE CREATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE ASSETS FOR POLICY ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS

After compiling the results from all groups of interviewees, we obtain that, **on average, 29% of enablers and constraints found are of external nature**. They are focused on scanning (14%) and diffusion (12%). Most of the external enablers and constraints identified come from decision makers' data (46%) and the results are slightly changed when decision makers' data is not considered. Codification and abstraction, absorption and impacting are scarcely affected by external factors (see Table 36).

Table 36. Distribution of external enablers and constraints by SLC phases

SLC phases	Decision makers*	Domestic NGOs*	INGOs*	Aid International*	Row Average	Average without decision makers
Scanning	24%	11%	16%	6%	**14%**	**11%**
Codification and abstraction		6%	-	1%	2%	2%
Diffusion	22%	9%	12%	6%	**12%**	**9%**
Absorption		-	-	2%	0.5%	0.6%
Impacting		-	-	1%	0.25%	0.3%
Totals	**46%**	**26%**	**28%**	**16%**	**29%**	**23%**

*Note: The percentages shown are in relation to each group of interviewees.

If we distribute these results by the stages of the SLC - value creating and value exploiting - they suggest that most external factors in advocacy communities focus on the **value creating stage** (see Table 37). As with Table 35, research limitations make it difficult to discern whether these results deserve further exploration.

Table 37. External enablers and constraints by value creating and value exploiting stages

SLC stages	Decision makers*	Domestic NGOs*	INGOs*	Aid International*	Row average	Average without decision makers
Value creating stage	24%	17%	16%	7%	**16%**	**13%**
Value exploiting stage	22%	9%	12%	9%	13%	10%
Totals	**46%**	**26%**	**28%**	**16%**	**29%**	**23%**

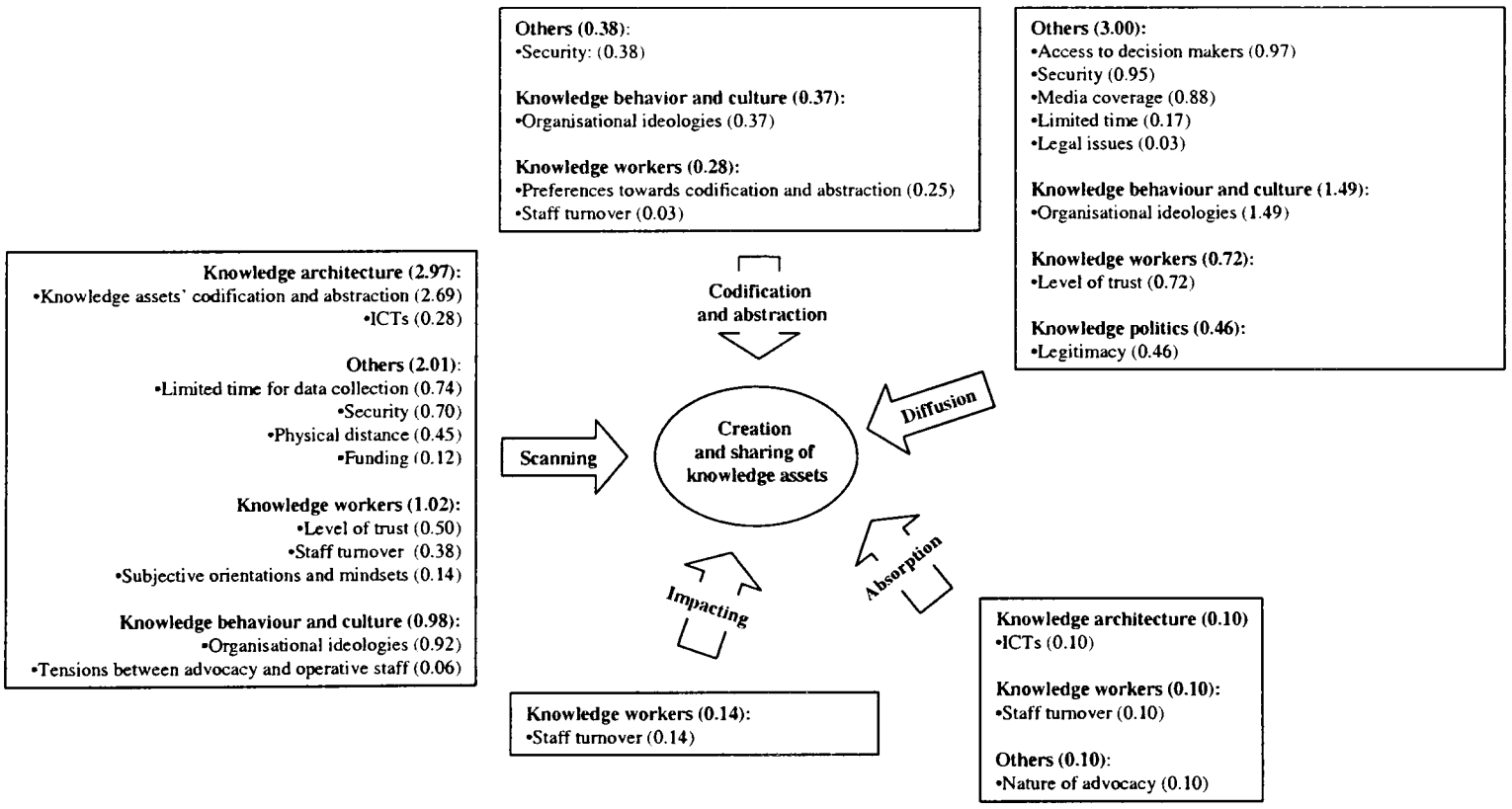
*Note: The percentages shown are in relation to each group of interviewees.

In the next section, the external factors identified from the data of each of the groups interviewed are analysed by the phases of the SLC. Similar factors are clustered together based on the Information Ecology model. Although this model is not intended for use with external factors, it provides a template to get a sense of which type of factors are present. Factors that do not correspond to the Information Ecology model are grouped under appropriate headings. Following this, their importance is added and,

when applicable, the source of each enabler or constraint is identified - the source refers to where the enabler or constraint originated or occurs, according to interviewees' responses. It does not refer to the particular stakeholder who mentions that enabler or constraint. Despite its limitations, this analysis allows us to discern which enablers and constraints are the most and the least supported by the evidence collected.

Figure 41 shows a summary of the external enablers and constraints, with their importance, distributed by the phases of the SLC and by the variables of the Information Ecology model.

Figure 41. External enablers and constraints that affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness (with importance)



8.3.1 EXTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING SCANNING

In relation to scanning, **knowledge assets' codification and abstraction** is the most highlighted external factor, followed by organisational ideologies. The low codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages and the lack of a clear strategy of the donors meeting process influence advocates' acquisition of relevant data and information.

Decision makers' ideologies seem to determine advocates' degree of access to decision makers' spaces and information. The limited time for advocates' data collection occupies third place. Most of the external factors are linked to **decision makers**. The Information Ecology model can explain most of external factors. Among those that cannot be explained by our model are the limited time for data collection, and security (see Table 38).

Table 38. External enablers and constraints affecting scanning

External factor (Total importance)	IEM*	External enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	Source
Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction (2.69)	KA	**Low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages** Government officials' limited experience in donors meetings Lack of a clear strategy for the donors meeting process	1.32	Decision makers
		Limited time for advocates' data collection Lack of a clear strategy and unclear ownership of donors meeting process	1.00	Decision makers
		Higher codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages (E) Documents by decision makers (E)	0.37	Decision makers
Organisational ideologies (0.92)	KC	**Decision makers' ideologies** Negative opinions about including INGOs and domestic NGOs Decision makers have to obey confidentiality Subjective orientations and mindsets	0.92	Decision makers
Limited time for data collection (0.74)	N/A	**Limited time for advocates' data collection**	0.74	Decision makers
Security (0.70)	N/A	**Delicate security situation** Visits to communities to validate information are constrained Threats to domestic NGOs Access to some areas of the country is difficult	0.70	Affected populations
Level of trust (0.50)	KW	**Decision makers' trust of advocates** Staff turnover Limited time available for developing relationships Previous job experience in decision makers' organisations	0.40	Decision makers
		Affected populations' high trust of Aid International (E) Positive results of projects in communities	0.10	Affected populations
Physical distance (0.45)	N/A	**Geographical distance**	0.25	N/A
		INGO alliances Geography constraints	0.20	N/A
Staff turnover (0.38)	KW	**Unclear ownership of the donors meeting process** Staff turnover in the Colombian government	0.38	Decision makers
ICTs (0.28)	KA	**Weak ICT culture in affected populations** Affected populations' limited access to ICTs	0.28	Affected populations
Subjective orientations and mindsets (0.14)	KC	**Affected populations' little knowledge and experience in advocacy** Affected populations' high expectations about potential benefits	0.14	Affected populations
Funding (0.12)	N/A	**Domestic NGOs' limited funding**	0.12	N/A
Tensions between advocacy and operative staff (0.06)	KC	**Tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas** Tensions have historical roots	0.03	Advocacy communities
		Differences in staff's culture	0.03	Advocacy communities

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology model. The initials indicate the following: KW: Knowledge workers; KC: Knowledge culture; KP: Knowledge politics; KA: Knowledge architecture; and KS: Knowledge strategy.

8.3.2 *EXTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION*

The delicate security situation, which affects staff members' emotional stakes, is the most significant external factor for codification and abstraction. This is closely followed by organisational ideologies. Most of the factors are linked to advocacy communities (see Table 39).

Table 39. External enablers and constraints affecting codification and abstraction

External factor (Total importance)	IEM*	External enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	Source
Security (0.38)	**N/A**	**Domestic NGO staff members' high emotional stakes** Delicate security situation	0.28	Advocacy communities
	N/A	**Limited time for reflection** Delicate security situation in fieldwork areas	0.10	N/A
Organisational ideologies (0.37)	**KC**	**Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies** Organisational ideologies are part of the political nature of advocacy	0.37	Advocacy communities
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (0.25)	**KW**	**Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** Cultural factors that stress immediacy	0.25	Advocacy communities
Staff turnover (0.03)	**KW**	**High staff turnover**	0.03	Advocacy communities

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology model. The initials indicate the following: KW: Knowledge workers; KC: Knowledge culture; KP: Knowledge politics; KA: Knowledge architecture; and KS: Knowledge strategy.

8.3.3 EXTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING DIFFUSION

Organisational ideologies is the most significant external factor for diffusion. Decision makers' ideologies such as negative opinions about advocates, and their need to present a good image constrain the diffusion of the message. The second most prominent external factor is **access to decision makers**. **Security** also appears as a considerable obstacle to the diffusion of the advocacy message.

Media coverage emerges as a new external factor. The evidence points to inaccurate coverage and the importance of good relationships with journalists and celebrities to get the advocacy message through. Many of the external constraints are linked to decision makers and could not be explained by the five variables of the Information Ecology model (see Table 40).

Table 40. External enablers and constraints affecting diffusion

External factor (Total importance)	IEM*	External enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	Source
Organisational ideologies (1.49)	**KC**	**Decision makers' ideologies** Opinions about including INGOs and domestic NGOs Decision makers' need to present a good image Competition for aid resources Decision makers see NGOs as part of the opposition No value in talking with civil society organisations Decision makers' need for legitimacy	1.49	Decision makers
Access to decision makers (0.97)	**N/A**	**Decision makers' low attendance at 9 July meeting** Poor organisation by the Colombian government	0.60	Decision makers
		Restricted advocate attendance at 9 July meeting	0.37	Decision makers
Security (0.95)	**N/A**	**The delicate security situation** Fears of hostility towards field staff or partners Public advocacy strategies are restrained	0.95	Affected populations
Media coverage (0.88)	**N/A**	**Limited coverage by the Colombian mass media** Media coverage is not accurate Partnerships with celebrities Good relationships with journalists The delicate security situation	0.88	Media
Level of trust (0.72)	**KW**	**Decision makers' level of trust of advocates** Working relationships between decision makers and advocates (E) Staff turnover in decision makers' organisations Decision makers use advocates as a source of information (E)	0.72	Decision makers
Legitimacy (0.46)	**KP**	**Advocates' legitimacy** Presidential speech about NGOs on 9 September 2003 Domestic NGOs' relationship with international organisations (E) Aid International's linkages with affected populations (E)	0.46	Decision makers Affected populations
Limited time (0.17)	**N/A**	**Decision makers' limited time budget**	0.17	Decision makers
Legal issues (0.03)	**N/A**	**Legal constraints**	0.03	N/A

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology model. The initials indicate the following: KW: Knowledge workers; KC: Knowledge culture; KP: Knowledge politics; KA: Knowledge architecture; and KS: Knowledge strategy.

8.3.4 EXTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING ABSORPTION

The evidence suggests that absorption is scarcely influenced by external factors. The factor with most evidence is the difficulty in attributing results of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of advocacy. This is followed by the limited access to Internet in some offices in developing countries (see Table 41)

Table 41. External enablers and constraints affecting absorption

External factor (Total importance)	IEM*	External enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	Source
Nature of advocacy (0.10)	**N/A**	**M&E of advocacy** Attribution of results is difficult	0.10	Advocacy communities
ICTs (0.10)	**KA**	**Internal information and communication systems (ICTs)** Limited access to Internet for some regional offices	0.10	Advocacy communities
Staff turnover (0.10)	**KW**	**Staff turnover**	0.10	Advocacy communities

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology model. The initials indicate the following: KW: Knowledge workers; KC: Knowledge culture; KP: Knowledge politics; KA: Knowledge architecture; and KS: Knowledge strategy.

8.3.5 EXTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING IMPACTING

The only external factor influencing impacting is **staff turnover** (0.14 importance). Staff turnover has been considered as both an external and an internal factor, as it is not completely under the control of the organisation. According to interviewees, staff turnover affects knowledge that is embedded in staff members' heads.

8.3.6 EXTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS THAT MOST AFFECT THE SLC

A significant proportion of the external factors found are associated with **decision makers**. These include **codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages**, and **decision makers' organisational ideologies**. The former seems linked to decision makers' limited experience in international scenarios, and increases significantly the amount of time advocates need to collect data and prepare for influencing the meeting.

Organisational ideologies affect scanning and diffusion mainly, by restricting access to decision makers. **Level of trust**, in turn, enables access to decision makers and to affected populations. Interpersonal relationships between decision makers and members of advocate organisations increase trust, whereas staff turnover affects it negatively. The use of advocates as a source of information emerges as an indicator of decision makers' trust.

The **delicate security situation** affects mostly scanning and diffusion, by constraining visits to affected populations and limiting the possibilities of public advocacy strategies. It also appears to affect codification and abstraction by increasing advocates' high emotional stakes.

External factors, such as the influence of legal issues, funding, and tensions among staff related to history (i.e. colonialism) are not supported by very much evidence. The complete list of external factors that most affect the creation and sharing of knowledge

in advocacy communities is shown in Table 42. The significance and potential linkages of these external factors is discussed in more detail in the Conclusions Chapter.

Table 42. External enablers and constraints that affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness

External factor (Total importance)	IEM*	External enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance	Source	SLC
Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction (2.69)	KA	**Low codification and abstraction of the Colombian government's messages** Government officials' limited experience in donors meetings Lack of a clear strategy for the donors meeting process	1.32	Decision makers	Scanning
		Limited time for advocates' data collection Lack of a clear strategy and unclear ownership of donors meeting process	1.00	Decision makers	Scanning
		Higher codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages (E) Documents by decision makers (E)	0.37	Decision makers	Scanning
Organisational ideologies (2.78)	KC	**Decision makers' ideologies** Opinions about including INGOs and domestic NGOs Decision makers' need to present a good image Competition for aid resources Decision makers see NGOs as part of the opposition No value in talking with civil society organisations Decision makers' need for legitimacy	1.49	Decision makers	Diffusion
		Decision makers' ideologies Negative opinions about including INGOs and domestic NGOs Decision makers have to obey confidentiality Subjective orientations and mindsets	0.92	Decision makers	Scanning
		Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies Organisational ideologies are part of the political nature of advocacy	0.37	Advocacy communities	Codification and abstraction
Security (2.03)	N/A	**The delicate security situation** Fears of hostility towards field staff or partners Public advocacy strategies are restrained	0.95	Affected populations	Diffusion
		Delicate security situation Visits to communities to validate information are constrained Threats to domestic NGOs Access to some areas of the country is difficult	0.70	Affected populations	Scanning
		Domestic NGO staff members' high emotional stakes Delicate security situation	0.28	Advocacy communities	Codification and abstraction
		Limited time for reflection Delicate security situation in fieldwork areas	0.10	N/A	Codification and abstraction
Level of trust (1.22)	KW	**Decision makers' level of trust of advocates** Working relationships between decision makers and advocates (E) Staff turnover in decision makers' organisations Decision makers use advocates as a source of information (E)	0.72	Decision makers	Diffusion
		Decision makers' level of trust of advocates Staff turnover Limited time available for developing relationships Previous job experience in decision makers' organisations	0.40	Decision makers	Scanning
		Affected populations' high trust of Aid International (E) Positive results of projects in communities	0.10	Affected populations	Scanning
Access to decision makers (0.97)	N/A	**Decision makers' low attendance at 9 July meeting** Poor organisation by the Colombian government	0.60	Decision makers	Diffusion
		Restricted advocate attendance at 9 July meeting	0.37	Decision makers	Diffusion
Media coverage (0.88)	N/A	**Limited coverage by the Colombian mass media** Media coverage is not accurate Partnerships with celebrities Good relationships with journalists The delicate security situation	0.88	Media	Diffusion
Limited time for data collection (0.74)	N/A	**Limited time for advocates' data collection**	0.74	Decision makers	Scanning
Staff turnover (0.65)	KW	**Unclear ownership of the donors meeting process** Staff turnover in the Colombian government	0.38	Decision makers	Scanning
		Staff turnover	0.14	Advocacy communities	Impacting
		Staff turnover	0.10	Advocacy communities	Absorption
		High staff turnover	0.03	Advocacy communities	Codification and abstraction
Legitimacy (0.46)	KP	**Advocates' legitimacy** Presidential speech about NGOs on 9 September 2003 Domestic NGOs' relationship with international organisations (E) Aid International's linkages with affected populations (E)	0.46	Decision makers Affected populations	Diffusion
Physical distance (0.45)	N/A	**Geographical distance**	0.25	N/A	Scanning
		INGO alliances Geography constraints	0.20	N/A	Scanning
ICTs (0.38)	KA	**Weak ICT culture in affected populations** Affected populations' limited access to ICTs	0.28	Affected populations	Scanning
		Internal information and communication systems (ICTs) Limited access to Internet for some regional offices	0.10	Advocacy communities	Absorption
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (0.25)	KW	**Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** Cultural factors that stress immediacy	0.25	Advocacy communities	Codification and abstraction
Subjective orientations and mindsets (0.14)	KC	**Affected populations' little knowledge and experience in advocacy** Affected populations' high expectations about potential benefits	0.14	Affected populations	Scanning
Limited time (0.17)	N/A	**Decision makers' limited time budget**	0.17	Decision makers	Diffusion
Funding (0.12)	N/A	**Domestic NGOs' limited funding**	0.12	N/A	Scanning
Nature of advocacy (0.10)	N/A	**M&E of advocacy** Attribution of results is difficult	0.10	Advocacy communities	Absorption
Tensions between advocacy and operative staff (0.06)	KC	**Tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas** Tensions have historical roots	0.03	Advocacy communities	Scanning
		Differences in staff culture	0.03	Advocacy communities	Scanning
Legal issues (0.03)	N/A	**Legal constraints**	0.03	N/A	Diffusion

8.4 INTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING THE CREATION AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE ASSETS FOR POLICY ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS

On average, **71% of enablers and constraints found are of internal nature**. They are focused on diffusion (21%) and scanning (16%). The results change when decision makers' data is not considered[40]: Impacting (18%) and absorption (17%) are then the phases with most enablers and constraints. Most of the internal enablers and constraints identified come from Aid International's data (84%). Internal factors are almost evenly distributed among all phases of the SLC (see Table 43).

Table 43. Distribution of internal enablers and constraints by the SLC phases

SLC phases	Decision makers*	Domestic NGOs*	INGOs*	Aid International*	Row average	Average without decision makers
Scanning	16%	16%	16%	16%	**16%**	16%
Codification and abstraction		5%	13%	16%	8%	11%
Diffusion	38%	18%	17%	10%	**21%**	15%
Absorption		11%	11%	28%	12%	**17%**
Impacting		23%	16%	14%	13%	**18%**
Totals	**54%**	**74%**	**72%**	**84%**	**71%**	**77%**

*Note: The percentages shown are in relation to each group of interviewees.

Taking into account the research limitations discussed for Tables 35 and 37, if we distribute these results by the stages of the SLC - value creating and value exploiting - most internal factors focus on the **value exploiting stage** (see Table 44).

[40] Decision makers did not provide data about the phases of codification and abstraction, absorption or impacting, which affects the average.

Table 44. Internal enablers and constraints by value creating and value exploiting stages

SLC stages	Decision makers*	Domestic NGOs*	INGOs*	Aid International*	Row average	Average without decision makers
Value creating stage	16%	21%	29%	32%	24%	27%
Value exploiting stage	38%	52%	44%	52%	**46%**	**50%**
Totals	**54%**	**74%**	**72%**	**84%**	**71%**	**77%**

*Note: The percentages shown are in relation to each group of interviewees.

8.4.1 INTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AND THE INFORMATION ECOLOGY MODEL

Most of the internal enablers and constraints focus on **knowledge culture** (25%), **knowledge workers** (23%) or **knowledge architecture** (23%). The least evidence is found for knowledge strategy (8%). These results are slightly changed when decision makers' data is not included: Knowledge culture (32%) and knowledge architecture (30%) are then the most highlighted variables (see Table 45).

Table 45. Internal enablers and constraints by the SLC phases and the Information Ecology model

Includes decision makers' data:

SLC phases	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy
Scanning	10%	4%	5%	0.1%	4%
Codification and abstraction	5%	3%	2%	0%	0.7%
Diffusion	2%	12%	10%	8%	0%
Absorption	6%	6%	0.1%	1%	3%
Impacting	0%	0%	4%	14%	0%
Total	**23%**	**25%**	**21%**	**23%**	**8%**

Does not include decision makers' data:

SLC phases	Knowledge workers	Knowledge culture	Knowledge politics	Knowledge architecture	Knowledge strategy
Scanning	7%	4%	6%	0.1%	4%
Codification and abstraction	6%	4%	3%	0%	1%
Diffusion	3%	16%	14%	11%	0%
Absorption	8%	8%	0.1%	1%	4%
Impacting	0%	0%	5%	18%	0%
Total	**24%**	**32%**	**28%**	**30%**	**9%**

Note: The percentages in this table correspond to the average of the results of the four groups of interviewees. The total row corresponds to the sum of the columns.

The nature of the internal enablers and constraints for each of the variables of the Information Ecology model, when including decision makers' data, is as follows:

- **Knowledge workers** affects mainly scanning.
- **Knowledge culture** factors concentrate on diffusion.
- **Knowledge politics** affects mainly diffusion.
- **Knowledge architecture** factors focus on impacting.
- **Knowledge strategy** influences mainly scanning.

If we read Table 45 from the perspective of the phases of the SLC, we see that:

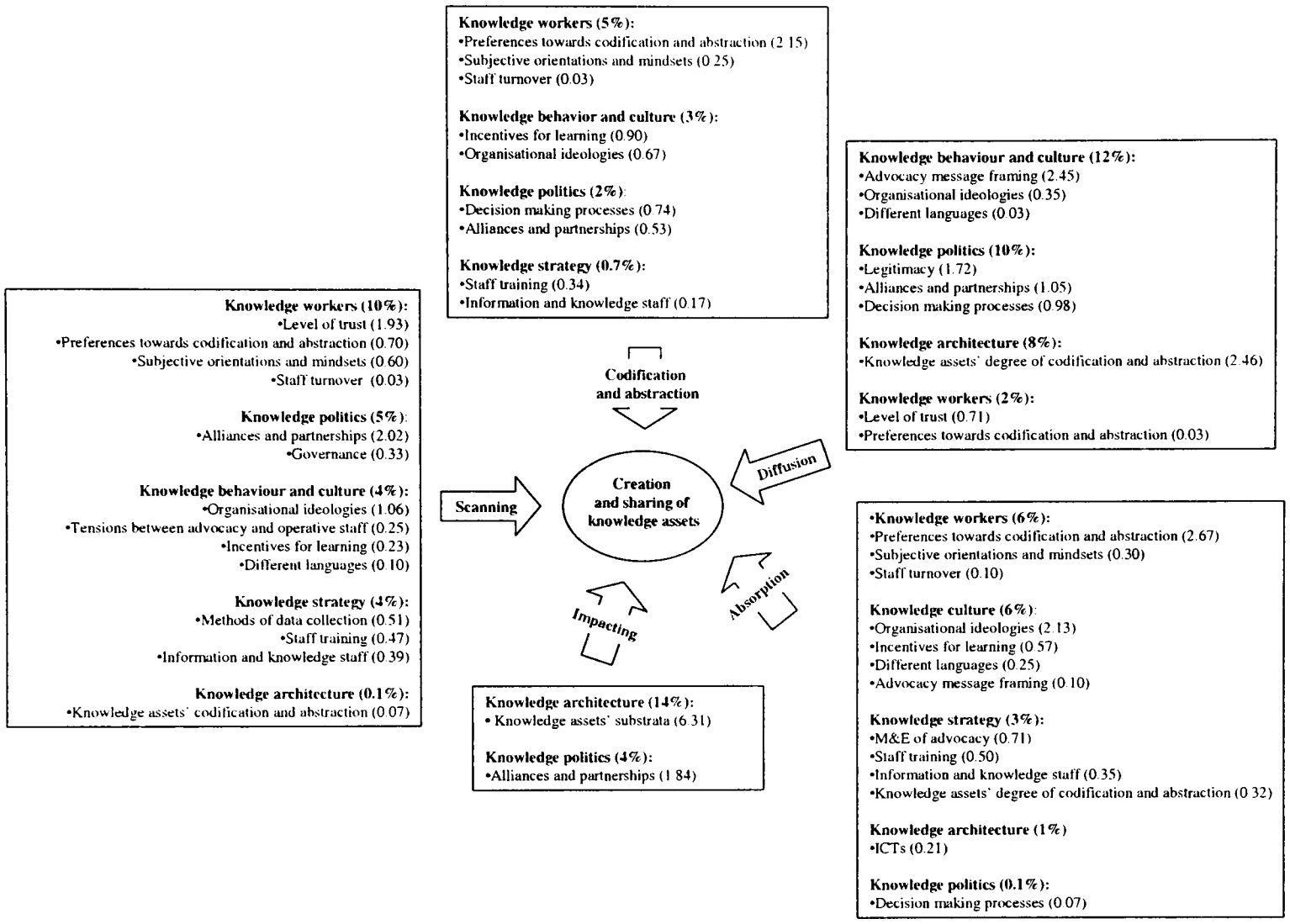
- **Scanning** is mostly influenced by knowledge workers.
- **Codification and abstraction** is mainly affected by knowledge workers.

- **Diffusion** is mainly affected by knowledge culture.
- **Absorption** is influenced by knowledge workers and knowledge culture.
- **Impacting** is predominantly influenced by knowledge architecture.

In the next section, the internal factors are analysed by the phases of the SLC. Similar internal factors are clustered together based on the Information Ecology model, and their importance is added. Factors that do not correspond to this model are grouped under appropriate headings. As discussed before, despite the limitations of this sort of analysis, it helps us to discern which enablers and constraints are the most and the least supported by the evidence collected.

Figure 42 shows a summary of the internal enablers and constraints, with their importance, distributed by the phases of the SLC and by the variables of the Information Ecology model.

Figure 42. Internal enablers and constraints to the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness



8.4.2 INTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING SCANNING

As seen before, knowledge workers, knowledge politics and knowledge culture mainly influence scanning. In terms of particular factors, the evidence collected emphasises the role of **alliances and partnerships**, and **trust**. The influence of INGO alliances appears stronger than the influence of domestic NGO alliances. Domestic NGOs' low trust of decision makers seems to be a key constraint for scanning. Advocates organisational ideologies are also a prominent factor, whereas issues such as different languages,

knowledge assets' codification and abstraction, and staff turnover seem to have little effect on scanning (see Table 46).

Table 46. Internal enablers and constraints affecting scanning

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance
Alliances and partnerships (2.02)	KP	**INGO alliances (E)** Staff turnover Differences in organisational capacity and level of engagement	1.11
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E) Consultation processes with domestic NGOs (E) Domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation (E)	0.79
		Domestic NGOs' alliances (E)	0.12
Level of trust (1.93)	KW	**Domestic NGOs' low trust of decision makers**	0.85
		Decision makers' trust of advocates Credibility of advocates' information Nationalities of INGOs' staff Limited time available for developing relationships Previous job experience in decision makers' organisations	0.37
		INGO alliances Low trust among alliance members	0.27
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs High levels of trust (E)	0.17
		Interpersonal relationships among staff	0.14
		Affected populations' high trust of Aid International (E) Positive results of projects in communities	0.10
		Aid International's low trust of decision makers	0.03
Organisational ideologies (1.06)	KC	**Advocates' organisational ideologies** Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information Misconceptions about what advocacy is Unbalanced readings of the situation in Colombia Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information Tradition of opposing the government Internal information flows have to follow the management line Fieldworkers' idea that they are not in the field to collect information Fieldworkers' prior expectations when visiting affected communities	0.99
		Partnerships between Aid International and domestic NGOs Domestic NGOs' ideologically driven information	0.07
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (0.70)	KW	**Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** Documents by domestic NGOs (E) Domestic NGOs' difficulties in systematising their experiences Documents by domestic NGOs are not opportune	0.70
Subjective orientations and mindsets (0.60)	KW	**Advocates' knowledge gap about international cooperation** NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios	0.60
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.51)	KS	**Inappropriate methods of data collection** Inappropriate statistical methodology Lack of rigorous research	0.51
Staff training (0.47)	KS	**Appropriate methods for data collection (E)** Staff is not always familiar with appropriate research methods	0.35
		Domestic NGOs' knowledge gap about international cooperation Lack of training for policy advocacy	0.12
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.39)	KS	**Information and knowledge staff** Temporary appointment of additional information staff Regional advocacy officers	0.39
Governance structures (0.33)	KP	**INGO offices in different countries (E)**	0.30
		Size of Aid International	0.03
Tensions between advocacy and operative staff (0.25)	KC	**Tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas** Different mindsets within Aid International	0.25
Incentives for learning (0.23)	KC	**Staff's limited time budget**	0.23
Different languages (0.10)	KC	**Language barriers**	0.10
Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction (0.07)	KA	**Higher codification and abstraction of domestic NGOs' messages** Documents by domestic NGOs (E)	0.07
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.03)	KW	**Staff turnover (scanning from other areas)**	0.03

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology Model (i.e. knowledge workers, knowledge culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture and knowledge strategy)

8.4.3 INTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Knowledge workers and knowledge culture are the most significant variables for codification and abstraction. The data stresses the importance of **preferences towards codification and abstraction**, and **incentives for learning** - in particular the limited time for reflection. Staff turnover seems to have little effect on codification and abstraction (see Table 47).

Table 47. Internal enablers and constraints affecting codification and abstraction

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (2.15)	KW	**INGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction** Preferences towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E) Preferences towards lower levels of codification and abstraction	1.78
		Domestic NGOs' preferences towards codification and abstraction	0.37
Incentives for learning (0.90)	KC	**Limited time for reflection** Most advocacy work is done through INGO alliances Work overload Meetings and administrative work	0.62
		Lack of staff incentives at Aid International	0.28
Decision making processes (0.74)	KP	**Limited time for reflection** Colombia and the London Meeting are not priority subjects for INGOs	0.54
		Confidentiality	0.10
		Lack of staff incentives at Aid International Internal accountability is not clearly established Use of staff contributions in decision making	0.10
Organisational ideologies (0.67)	KC	**Aid International's organisational ideologies** Knowledge creation and sharing is seen by staff as additional work Staff's ideas about what advocacy is Advocacy plans are not seen as useful	0.28
		Domestic NGOs' organisational ideologies	0.25
		Immediacy	0.14
Alliances and partnerships (0.53)	KP	**INGO alliances (E)**	0.50
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)	0.03
Subjective orientations and mindsets (0.25)	KW	**Staff members' high emotional stakes**	0.15
		Aid International's organisational ideologies Staff's lack of confidence	0.10
Staff training (0.34)	KS	**Staff training** Mentoring	0.34
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.17)	KS	**Information and knowledge staff**	0.17
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.03)	KW	**High staff turnover**	0.03

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology Model (i.e. knowledge workers, knowledge culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture and knowledge strategy)

8.4.4 INTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING DIFFUSION

Diffusion is mainly affected by knowledge culture and knowledge politics. **Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction**, and **advocacy message framing** are the most highlighted internal factors. Short, focused communications enable the diffusion of the advocacy message. Nevertheless, sometimes the use of low levels of codification and abstraction is effective. The use of a confrontational tone, and emotional and overstated messages significantly block diffusion.

The data also points at the importance of advocates' legitimacy, which in turn is enabled by the strength of advocates' alliances and their partnership with domestic NGOs, among other things. There is little evidence to suggest that preferences towards codification and abstraction and different languages have significant roles in blocking diffusion (see Table 48).

Table 48. Internal enablers and constraints affecting diffusion

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance
Knowledge assets' degree of codification and abstraction (2.46)	KA	**Advocacy messages' low codification and abstraction** Long and unfocused messages Lack of a joint advocate message Domestic NGOs' joint documents (E)	1.07
		Advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction (E) INGOs' joint documents (E) Use of short advocacy messages Joint advocacy messages Balance between higher and lower codification and abstraction (E)	0.79
		Advocacy message's low codification and abstraction (E) Visit of representatives from affected populations to decision makers (E)	0.30
		Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E) Reinforcing advocacy messages (E)	0.20
		INGO alliances (E) Joint advocacy messages	0.10
Advocacy message framing (2.45)	KC	**Inappropriate advocacy message framing** Confrontational tone, focused on criticism Partial and biased messages Emotional and overstated messages Inappropriate tone and words (especially by domestic NGOs) Domestic NGOs' limited experience in international scenarios Balance between criticism and proposals Attractive, compelling and media-friendly messages	2.38
		Limited coverage of advocacy messages by the media Novelty of the message	0.07
Legitimacy (1.72)	KP	**Advocates' legitimacy** Advocates' representativeness (alliance's strength) Advocates' interlocutor or representative Advocates' expertise on topic Domestic NGOs' relationship with international organisations (E) Legitimacy of domestic NGOs' objectives (E) Accountability to affected populations (E) INGO credibility Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)	1.72
Alliances and partnerships (1.05)	KP	**Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs (E)** INGOs provide funding to domestic NGOs to attend London Meeting (E) INGOs advocate in favour of domestic NGOs' attendance at London Meeting (E)	0.65
		Advocacy message's higher codification and abstraction (E) INGO alliances (E)	0.20
		INGO alliances (E) Provide access to decision makers	0.20
Decision making processes (0.98)	KP	**Duration of advocates' decision making** Domestic NGO interlocutor or representative (E) Sign-off procedures Size of Aid International Lack of clear advocacy strategies	0.98
Level of trust (0.71)	KW	**Decision makers' trust of advocates** Working relationships between decision makers and advocates Decision makers use Aid International as a source of information (E) Aid International's reputation for managing its money well (E)	0.64
		Limited coverage of advocacy messages by the media Partnerships with celebrities Good relationships with journalists	0.07
Organisational ideologies (0.35)	KC	**Advocates' ideologies** Little involvement of the Colombian government in advocates' strategies Reactive nature of advocacy strategies	0.35
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (0.03)	KW	**Aid International's decision making processes** Lack of clear advocacy strategies	0.03
Different languages (0.03)	KC	**Language barriers**	0.03

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology Model (i.e. knowledge workers, knowledge culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture and knowledge strategy)

8.4.5 INTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING ABSORPTION

Absorption is more influenced by knowledge workers and knowledge culture than other factors. Advocates' **preferences towards codification and abstraction**, and advocates' **organisational ideologies** are the most significant internal factors. Examples of ideologies constraining absorption are the belief that learning originated in one context is not useful in other contexts, and the negative ideas about cost-effectiveness. Monitoring and evaluation of advocacy occupies third place, and is constrained by limited funds, confidentiality issues and its focus on monitoring spending, not on learning.

The framing of lessons learnt does not emerge as a significant constraint for absorption. The integration between M&E results and decision making is not highlighted in the data collected either (see Table 49).

Table 49. Internal enablers and constraints affecting absorption

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (2.67)	KW	**Advocates' preferences towards codification and abstraction** Preference towards higher levels of codification and abstraction (E) Preference towards lower levels of codification and abstraction	2.40
		M&E of advocacy Lack of clear, measurable objectives of advocacy strategies	0.27
Organisational ideologies (2.13)	KC	**Advocates' organisational ideologies** Belief that learning originated in one context is not useful in other contexts Belief that it is not worthwhile to learn because of constant changes Fears of hostility Negative ideas about cost-effectiveness Colombia or the London Meeting are not priority subjects for INGOs Advocacy work should be done by INGO alliances	1.85
		Information overload Aid International's compliance culture	0.21
		Immediacy	0.07
M&E of advocacy (0.71)	KS	**M&E of advocacy** M&E of advocacy mechanisms in place (E) Confidentiality Limited funds Some staff think M&E is boring M&E is focused on spending, not on learning	0.71
Incentives for learning (0.57)	KC	**Staff members' limited time for reflection**	0.32
		Lack of staff incentives at Aid International	0.25
Staff training (0.50)	KS	**Staff training (E)** More training is needed	0.50
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.35)	KS	**Information and knowledge staff** Regional advocacy officers Moderators of internal communications	0.35
Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction (0.32)	KA	**Degree of codification and abstraction of lessons learnt** Preference for lower levels of codification and abstraction Preference for higher levels of codification and abstraction	0.32
Subjective orientations and mindsets (0.30)	KW	**Information and knowledge staff** Internal experts	0.10
		Internal information and communication systems (ICTs) Staff's limited ownership of ICT resources Staff's limited computer literacy	0.10
		Information overload Overuse of copying and forwarding functions Staff are not aware of what information is useful for colleagues	0.10
Different languages (0.25)	KC	**Language barriers within Aid International**	0.25
ICTs (0.21)	KA	**Internal information and communication systems (ICTs)** Limited retrieval capabilities of internal information systems	0.21
Advocacy message framing (0.10)	KC	**Appropriate framing of lessons learnt**	0.10
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.10)	KW	**Staff turnover**	0.10
Decision making processes (0.07)	KP	**M&E of advocacy** No integration between M&E results and decision making No link between individual performance, advocacy objectives and M&E	0.07

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology Model (i.e. knowledge workers, knowledge culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture and knowledge strategy)

8.4.6 INTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING IMPACTING

The variable that most affects impacting is knowledge architecture. The evidence focuses on **knowledge assets' substrata**, and specifically on advocacy approach knowledge bases being embedded mainly in people's heads. Documents are the preferred way to embed advocacy knowledge, both about the message and about the approach. The use of databases is not well established in advocacy communities, in particular for approach knowledge. The formation and development of advocates' alliances is as a way in which advocacy knowledge is embedded (see Table 50).

Table 50. Internal enablers and constraints affecting impacting

Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	Internal enablers and constraints from data collected	Importance
Knowledge assets' substrata (6.31)	**KA**	**Advocacy approach knowledge bases - people's heads** Staff turnover Absence of written guidelines about how to do advocacy	1.72
		Advocacy message knowledge bases - documents (E)	1.54
		Advocacy message knowledge bases - databases (E)	1.14
		Advocates' joint advocacy message documents (E)	0.95
		Advocacy approach knowledge bases - documents (E)	0.75
		Advocacy approach knowledge bases - databases (E)	0.21
Alliances and partnerships (1.84)	**KP**	**Strength, scope and performance of advocates' alliances** Strength and scope of domestic NGOs' alliances (some progress) (E) Strength and scope of domestic NGOs' alliances (constraints)	1.84

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology Model (i.e. knowledge workers, knowledge culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture and knowledge strategy)

8.5 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AS VALIDATED BY THE DATA

Table 52 (following pages) shows how the theoretical framework is validated by the evidence collected from all four groups of respondents. Most enablers and constraints found can be explained by the Information Ecology model, with three exceptions: Information and knowledge staff, inappropriate methods of data collection and staff turnover. These factors have been incorporated in our Information Ecology model (see Table 51).

Evidence was not collected for two variables of the framework: Accountability and M&E of knowledge strategies. Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs have an accountability component, but respondents did not mention accountability as a relevant factor for knowledge creation and sharing. Respondents did not refer to the evaluation of knowledge strategies, and examples of such evaluation in the organisations interviewed were not found.

Table 51. Internal enablers and constraints from research framework with importance (includes new factors)

Includes decision makers' data:

Knowledge workers 23%	**Knowledge culture 25%**	**Knowledge politics 21%**	**Knowledge architecture 23%**	**Knowledge strategy 8%**
• Preferences towards codification and abstraction (5.55) • Level of trust (2.64) • Staff turnover (1.16)* • Subjective orientations and mindsets (1.15)	• Organisational ideologies (4.21) • Advocacy message framing (2.55) • Incentives for learning (1.70) • Different languages (0.38) • Tensions between advocacy and operative staff (0.25)	• Alliances and partnerships (5.44) • Decision making processes (1.79) • Legitimacy (1.72) • Governance structures (0.33) • *Accountability*	• Knowledge assets' substrata (6.31) • Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction (2.85) • ICTs (0.21)	• Staff training (1.31) • Information and knowledge staff (0.91) • M&E advocacy (0.71) • Methods of data collection (0.51)* • *M&E knowledge strategies*

Note: The italics indicate those factors for which evidence was not collected. The stars indicate factors added to the original framework due to the evidence collected.

Table 52. Research framework as validated by the data from all respondents

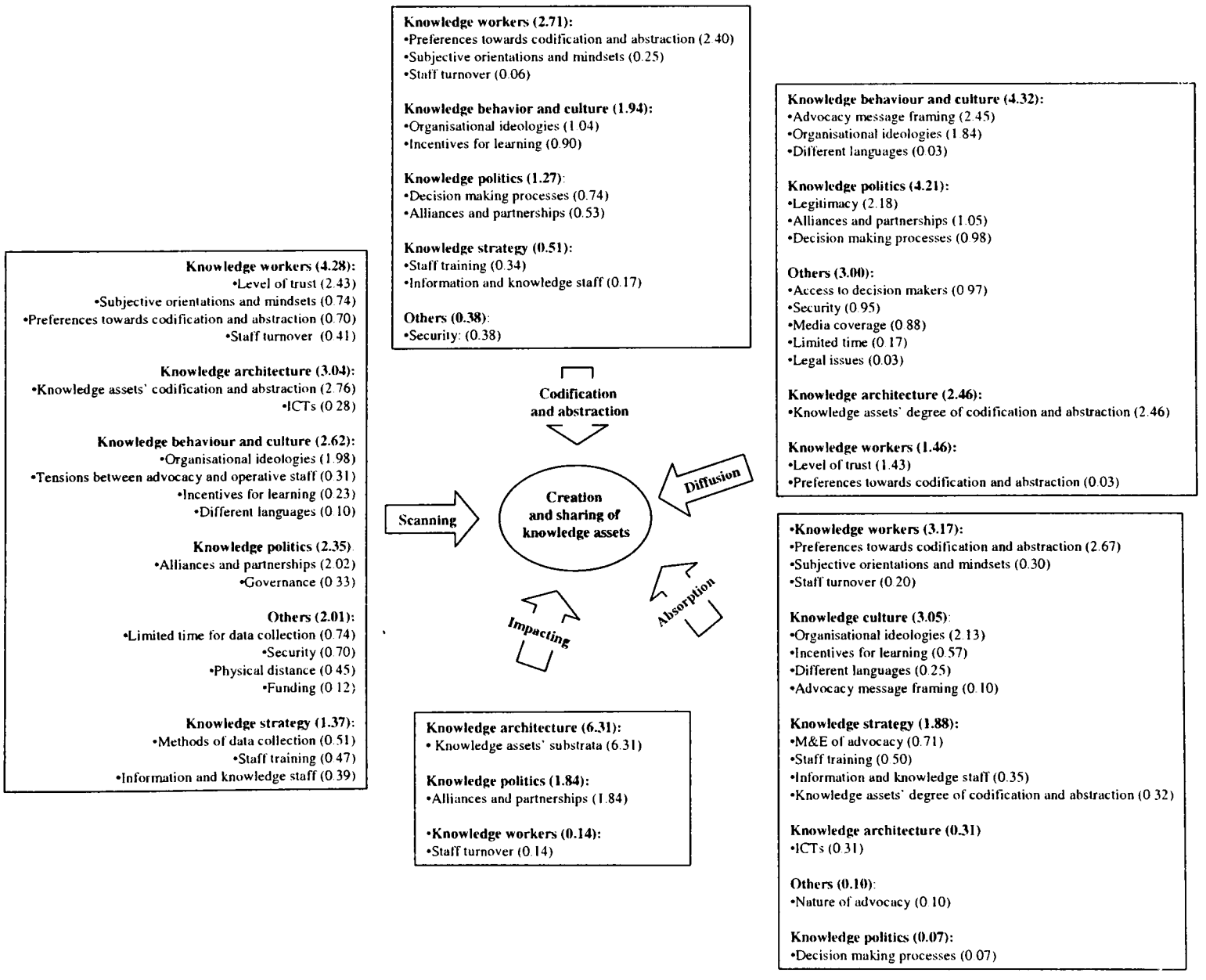
Research framework (Total importance)	IEM*	SLC	Importance	Examples of internal enablers and constraints from data collected
Knowledge assets' substrata (6.31)	**KA**	Impacting	6.31	Advocacy approach knowledge bases - people's heads
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (5.55)	**KW**	Absorption	2.67	Lack of clear, measurable objectives of advocacy strategies
		Codification and abstraction	2.15	Preferences towards lower levels of codification and abstraction
		Scanning	0.70	Domestic NGOs' difficulties in systematising their experiences
		Diffusion	0.03	Lack of clear advocacy strategies
Alliances and partnerships (5.44)	**KP**	Scanning	2.02	INGO alliances
		Impacting	1.84	Strength, scope and performance of advocates' alliances
		Diffusion	1.05	Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs
		Codification and abstraction	0.53	INGO alliances (E)
Organisational ideologies (4.21)	**KC**	Absorption	2.13	Belief that learning originated in one context is not useful in other contexts
		Scanning	1.06	Use of different definitions of categories for collecting information
		Codification and abstraction	0.67	Knowledge creation and sharing is seen by staff as additional work
		Diffusion	0.35	Little involvement of the Colombian government in advocates' strategies
Knowledge assets' degree of codification and abstraction (2.85)	**KA**	Diffusion	2.46	Advocacy messages' low codification and abstraction
		Absorption	0.32	Degree of codification and abstraction of lessons learnt
		Scanning	0.07	Higher codification and abstraction of domestic NGOs' messages
Level of trust (2.64)	**KW**	Scanning	1.93	Domestic NGOs' low levels of trust of decision makers
		Diffusion	0.71	Working relationships between decision makers and advocates
Advocacy message framing (2.55)	**KC**	Diffusion	2.45	Confrontational tone, focused on criticism
		Absorption	0.10	Appropriate framing of lessons learnt
Decision making processes (1.79)	**KP**	Diffusion	0.98	Sign-off procedures
		Codification and abstraction	0.74	Colombia and the London Meeting are not priority subjects for INGOs
		Absorption	0.07	No integration between M&E results and decision making
Legitimacy (1.72)	**KP**	Diffusion	1.72	Advocates' representativeness (alliance's strength)
Incentives for learning (1.70)	**KC**	Codification and abstraction	0.90	Limited time for reflection
		Absorption	0.57	Lack of staff incentives at Aid International
		Scanning	0.23	Staff's limited time budget
Staff training (1.31)	**KS**	Absorption	0.50	More training is needed
		Scanning	0.47	Staff is not always familiar with appropriate research methods
		Codification and abstraction	0.34	Mentoring
Subjective orientations and mindsets (1.15)	**KW**	Scanning	0.60	Advocates' knowledge gap about international cooperation
		Absorption	0.30	Internal experts
		Codification and abstraction	0.25	Staff members' high emotional stakes
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.91)	**KS**	Scanning	0.39	Regional advocacy officers
		Absorption	0.35	Moderators of internal communications
		Codification and abstraction	0.17	Information and knowledge staff
M&E of advocacy (0.71)	**KS**	Absorption	0.71	M&E of advocacy mechanisms in place (E)
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.51)	**KS**	Scanning	0.51	Inappropriate methods of data collection
Different languages (0.38)	**KC**	Absorption	0.25	Language barriers within advocates' organisations
		Scanning	0.10	Language barriers
		Diffusion	0.03	Language barriers
Governance structures (0.33)	**KP**	Scanning	0.33	INGO offices in different countries (E)
Tensions between advocacy and operative staff (0.25)	**KC**	Scanning	0.25	Tensions between advocacy and fieldwork areas
ICTs (0.21)	**KA**	Absorption	0.21	Limited retrieval capabilities of internal information systems
No corresponding variable in the framework (0.16)	**KW**	Absorption	0.10	Staff turnover
		Scanning	0.03	Staff turnover (scanning from other areas)
		Codification and abstraction	0.03	High staff turnover

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology Model (i.e. knowledge workers, knowledge culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture and knowledge strategy).

8.6 CONCLUSIONS: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES

Chapter 8 has brought together all the data collected from the stakeholders involved in the donors meeting process. Figure 43 summarises both the external and the internal enablers and constraints, distributed by the variables of the Information Ecology model, and shows how they affect the different phases of the SLC.

Figure 43. External and internal enablers and constraints that affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness (with importance)



In sum, the data points to the following issues:

- The great majority of enablers and constraints affecting the creation and sharing of knowledge are **internal** and focus on **scanning** and **diffusion**. Most of these enablers and constraints affect the **value exploiting stage.**

- Most external enablers and constraints are associated with decision makers. The most prominent factors are the **codification and abstraction of decision makers' knowledge assets**, and decision makers' **organisational ideologies**. The delicate **security** situation is another significant external constraint.

- Internal enablers and constraints focus on **knowledge culture**, **knowledge workers** and **knowledge architecture**. Less evidence is found about knowledge strategy factors.

- The nature of both external and internal enablers and constraints for each of the phases of the SLC can be summarised as in the following Table (first shown in the Introduction Chapter):

Table 53. Nature of external and internal enablers and constraints to the SLC in advocacy communities

SLC	Information Ecology model	Most significant enablers or constraints
Scanning	Knowledge workers	• Level of trust
	Knowledge architecture	• Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction
Codification and abstraction	Knowledge workers	• Preferences towards codification and abstraction
	Knowledge behaviour and culture	• Organisational ideologies
Diffusion	Knowledge behaviour and culture	• Advocacy message framing
	Knowledge politics	• Legitimacy
Absorption	Knowledge workers	• Preferences towards codification and abstraction
	Knowledge behaviour and culture	• Organisational ideologies
Impacting	Knowledge architecture	• Knowledge assets' substrata
	Knowledge politics	• Alliances and partnerships

To conclude this chapter, we consider the enablers and constraints in terms of total prominence in the data (see Table 54).

Table 54. Enablers and constraints that affect the creation and sharing of knowledge assets for policy advocacy effectiveness

Enablers and constraints (Total importance)	IEM*	Importance	SLC
Organisational ideologies (6.99)	KC	2.13	Absorption
		1.98	Scanning
		1.84	Diffusion
		1.04	Codification and abstraction
Knowledge assets' substrata (6.31)	KA	6.31	Impacting
Preferences towards codification and abstraction (5.80)	KW	2.67	Absorption
		2.40	Codification and abstraction
		0.70	Scanning
		0.03	Diffusion
Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction (5.54)	KA	2.76	Scanning
		2.46	Diffusion
		0.32	Absorption
Alliances and partnerships (5.44)	KP	2.02	Scanning
		1.84	Impacting
		1.05	Diffusion
		0.53	Codification and abstraction
Level of trust (3.86)	KW	2.43	Scanning
		1.43	Diffusion
Advocacy message framing (2.55)	KC	2.45	Diffusion
		0.10	Absorption
Legitimacy (2.18)	KP	2.18	Diffusion
Security (2.03)	N/A	0.95	Diffusion
		0.70	Scanning
		0.38	Codification and abstraction
Decision making processes (1.79)	KP	0.98	Diffusion
		0.74	Codification and abstraction
		0.07	Absorption
Incentives for learning (1.70)	KC	0.90	Codification and abstraction
		0.57	Absorption
		0.23	Scanning
Staff training (1.31)	KS	0.50	Absorption
		0.47	Scanning
		0.34	Codification and abstraction
Subjective orientations and mindsets (1.29)	KW	0.74	Scanning
		0.30	Absorption
		0.25	Codification and abstraction
Access to decision makers (0.97)	N/A	0.97	Diffusion
Information and knowledge staff (0.91)	KS	0.39	Scanning
		0.35	Absorption
		0.17	Codification and abstraction
Media coverage (0.88)	N/A	0.88	Diffusion
Staff turnover (0.81)	KW	0.41	Scanning
		0.20	Absorption
		0.14	Impacting
		0.06	Codification and abstraction
Limited time for data collection (0.74)	N/A	0.74	Scanning
M&E of advocacy (0.71)	KS	0.71	Absorption
ICTs (0.59)	KA	0.31	Absorption
		0.28	Scanning
Inappropriate methods of data collection (0.51)	KS	0.51	Scanning
Physical distance (0.45)	N/A	0.45	Scanning
Different languages (0.38)	KC	0.25	Absorption
		0.10	Scanning
		0.03	Diffusion
Governance structures (0.33)	KP	0.33	Scanning
Tensions between advocacy and operative staff (0.31)	KC	0.31	Scanning
Limited time (0.17)	N/A	0.17	Diffusion
Funding (0.12)	N/A	0.12	Scanning
Nature of advocacy (0.10)	N/A	0.10	Absorption
Legal issues (0.03)	N/A	0.03	Diffusion

*Note: IEM stands for Information Ecology Model (i.e. knowledge workers, knowledge culture, knowledge politics, knowledge architecture and knowledge strategy).

As shown in Table 54, the data points strongly at the following:

- *The role of organisational ideologies in constraining knowledge:*

Organisational ideologies emerge as the most prominent constraint to the creation and sharing of knowledge in advocacy communities. Organisational ideologies influence mainly absorption and scanning. Some examples of ideologies affecting absorption are the belief that learning originated in one context is not useful in other contexts, and the negative ideas about cost-effectiveness.

In relation to scanning, the use of different definitions of categories for collecting information comes to light. The selection of categories is closely linked to codification - coding relies on this selection to simplify a phenomenon. Advocates' codification and abstraction (i.e. analytical skills) seem also to be influenced by ideologies: The belief that decision makers cannot be trusted influences how advocates evaluate decision makers' data.

Decision makers' ideologies constrain diffusion significantly, because of prejudices about including NGOs in policy debates (e.g. the belief that there is no value in talking with civil society organisations), and decision makers' need to present a good image, which leaves little space for listening to criticism.

- *The embedding of knowledge assets and preferences towards codification and abstraction in advocacy communities*

Advocacy communities show a preference for lower levels of codification and abstraction when sharing and embedding knowledge assets. Nevertheless there is some divergence: INGOs tend to favour higher levels of codification and abstraction than domestic NGOs.

Preferences towards codification and abstraction affect mainly absorption. A significant manifestation of this is the lack of clear advocacy strategies and of measurable advocacy objectives, which in turn constrains the **M&E of advocacy** (see paragraph about M&E in this section). There seems to be a link between preferences towards lower codification and abstraction and some **organisational ideologies** - e.g. knowledge creation is seen by staff as additional work - and between the former and **subjective orientations and mindsets -** e.g. staff's lack of confidence to feed knowledge bases.

Advocacy staff show a preference for sharing and embedding knowledge at lower levels of codification and abstraction, e.g. in face to face meetings and in people's heads respectively. People's heads is the primary substrata for advocacy knowledge assets. Most of the knowledge embedded in documents or databases refers to advocacy messages. Knowledge concerning advocacy approaches is much less embedded either in documents or in organisational systems (e.g. databases), which makes it vulnerable to **staff turnover**. Domestic NGOs and INGOs differ to some extent on this, as INGOs embed their knowledge more in documents and organisational systems than domestic NGOs, which have more difficulties in systematising their knowledge.

- *Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction*

On one hand, advocates' scanning was considerably constrained by decision makers' vague messages, and the amount of **time** advocates needed to collect data and prepare for influencing the London meeting increased. On the other hand, decision makers also complain about long, unfocused and cacophonous advocacy messages.

At first sight, knowledge assets' higher codification and abstraction seems to benefit primarily the diffusion of knowledge, as decision makers favour statistics and sound research over anecdotes. Yet, some respondents argue that it is necessary to keep a balance between higher and lower codification and abstraction. Besides, advocates still tend to use lower levels of codification and abstraction when communicating their messages. Examples of the advantages of higher codification and abstraction when diffusing messages are the London Declaration and the UNHCHR recommendations on Colombia. These have been central to the advocacy process around the London Meeting. Advocates have used them to guide their advocacy efforts and to put pressure on decision makers.

Advocates' joint messages represent a move towards higher codification and abstraction. **Alliances and partnerships** have the potential to produce joint advocacy messages, but this potential is restricted by alliances' need to take into account as many of their members' views as they can, because of representativeness and **legitimacy** concerns. The need for legitimacy poses a challenge to alliances' attainment of higher levels of codification and abstraction of their messages.

- *Alliances and partnerships*

The role of alliances and partnerships in enabling the creation and sharing of knowledge in advocacy communities is particularly highlighted for scanning, diffusion and impacting - e.g. partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs help the former to obtain information from affected populations, and the latter to fill their knowledge gaps about international scenarios. In relation to diffusion, the political dimension of alliances emerges as a significant enabler. Alliances' scope and representativeness is associated with advocates' **legitimacy,** which in turn increases advocates' chances to access decision makers for both obtaining and disseminating information.

There seems to be a link between alliances and **higher codification and abstraction of the advocacy message**. Alliances have the potential to agree a joint, focused message, and to nominate an interlocutor or representative who can take that joint message to decision makers, reducing the levels of noise in the communication process.

Some evidence points to the role of **organisational ideologies** in restricting alliances' performance, particularly their speed of decision making and their capacity for consensus - e.g. domestic NGOs differ in their diagnosis of the internal conflict in Colombia and have not been able to build an all-inclusive alliance. By constraining alliances' capacity for consensus, organisational ideologies may diminish the potential for **higher levels of codification and abstraction**. A **low level of trust** among members is another factor constraining advocate alliances.

- *Level of trust*

The importance of trust, especially during scanning and diffusion of the advocacy message, is supported by the data collected. Trust facilitates collecting information from affected populations, from internal areas, and from other **alliance** members. Decision makers' trust of advocates and advocates' access to decision makers' knowledge are directly linked. A series of factors contribute to decision makers' trust of advocates, such as interpersonal relationships and the **appropriate framing of the advocacy message** (e.g. avoiding overstated statistics). Because of the role of interpersonal relationships in fostering trust, **staff turnover** emerges as a constraint. Decision makers' trust of advocates and decision makers' perception of advocates' **legitimacy** seem also to be related. Whatever the source of trust, the use of information produced by advocates appears to be an indicator of decision makers' trust of them.

- *Advocacy message framing*

The diffusion of the advocacy message is constrained by inappropriate framing. An adequate framing can contribute to enhancing the credibility of the message and of decision makers' **trust** of advocates. Decision makers expect a more conciliatory tone, a 'cold analysis' and solid proposals for action, and disapprove of advocates' lack of recognition of progress made and their use of overstated messages. Advocates' limited experience in international scenarios, as well as **organisational ideologies**, seem to be associated with inappropriate message framing.

- *Legitimacy*

Legitimacy enables the diffusion of the advocacy message. In addition to alliances' representativeness, another source of advocates' legitimacy is the links to affected populations via **partnerships with domestic NGOs**. However, no further evidence was collected about the role of **accountability** to affected populations as an enabler of legitimacy or of knowledge creation and sharing.

Other sources of legitimacy include the nature of the objectives pursued, e.g. defence of human rights, and the links to international organisations, e.g. INGOs and domestic NGOs based their advocacy message on the UNHCHR recommendations to Colombia.

- *The delicate security situation in Colombia*

The security conditions affect mainly scanning and diffusion. Visits to some areas of the country in order to collect or to validate information are restrained because of fears of hostility towards advocates' staff or partners. INGOs refer more to insecurity as a constraint to knowledge than do domestic NGOs. Some evidence indicates that insecurity affects codification and abstraction, by influencing the staff's emotional stakes, and by limiting the time available for reflection due to the state of alert in which some advocate organisations, e.g. human rights organisation, work.

- *Decision making processes*

Neither Colombia nor the London Meeting are priorities for INGOs. This affects considerably the amount of time and resources dedicated to these topics. Time for reflection seems particularly reduced by this. Lengthy decision making processes (i.e. sign-off procedures) affect the diffusion of advocacy messages. Pressures for greater legitimacy and consensus within alliances, and fears of **inappropriate advocacy message framing** are associated with the latter.

- *Incentives for learning and staff training*

Time for reflection is the incentive for learning that advocates miss the most. This raises questions about the value that knowledge creation and sharing are given in the organisations studied. In relation to staff training, there are three areas where more such training is needed: Policy advocacy, research methods, and ICTs. Staff training is mainly constrained by work overload and high **staff turnover** in advocate organisations.

- *Subjective orientations and mindsets*

Among the subjective orientations found are advocates' limited expertise and experience in advocacy; advocates' high emotional stakes; and advocates' lack of confidence to contribute to internal knowledge bases.

Advocates' limited experience in international advocacy is related to knowledge gaps, such as about the nature of donor meetings and **appropriate ways to frame messages** to decision makers. There is evidence of **high emotional stakes**, particularly among domestic NGOs. This could be associated with the **delicate security situation**. Staff members' high emotional stakes appear mainly to affect codification and abstraction.

Some subjective orientations could be linked to **information overload**: Staff are not aware of what information is useful for colleagues and end up sending a substantial amount of information to email lists. The overuse of copying and forwarding functions is also motivated by fears of hostility from colleagues, who may feel that they are not being taken into account. Subjective orientations constrain codification and abstraction too - e.g. advocates' lack of confidence to contribute to internal knowledge bases, which seems more acute in INGO field offices than in INGO headquarters.

- *Information and knowledge staff*

Advocacy officers, moderators of internal communications and temporarily appointed information staff act as knowledge brokers among internal areas. Regional advocacy officers play a significant role in fostering knowledge flows between headquarters and field offices. Online forums and help desks are key tools in promoting the absorption of knowledge created within the organisation. However, the evidence suggests that the importance of these tools is lower in relation to the other factors discussed above.

- *Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of advocacy*

The absorption of lessons learnt via M&E of advocacy initiatives is constrained by a number of factors. First, **advocates' preferences for lower codification and abstraction** appear associated with the lack of clear advocacy strategies, and the lack of focused and measurable objectives for those strategies. With no clear advocacy strategies and objectives, learning by comparing what was planned with what is achieved is restricted. Second, a number of **organisational ideologies** challenge M&E initiatives, such as fieldworkers' ideas that they are not in the field to collect information; the belief that M&E is boring; and the negative attitudes towards cost-effectiveness approaches. Third, confidentiality may affect M&E of advocacy, as staff do not disclose relevant information. Confidentiality in turn seems to be encouraged, especially at an internal level, by fears of hostility from colleagues.

The use of knowledge created by M&E initiatives appears also to be constrained by little integration between M&E and organisational **decision making processes**.

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The following enablers and constraints are least supported by evidence. Nevertheless, they point to appealing areas that could contribute to knowledge creation and sharing for policy advocacy:

- In relation to **ICTs**, the limited retrieval capabilities of internal information systems seem to affect the absorption of knowledge. The advantages of ICT use in advocacy appear also to be restrained by staff members' limited computer literacy, and by little ownership of internal information systems designed by headquarters.

- Some decision makers consider that advocates need to have more rigorous research and to strengthen their statistical **research methods**.

- The existence of **different languages** within advocate organisations has some effect on absorption. Most advocacy knowledge bases are in English and a number of staff from overseas offices do not speak English, or do not feel confident to navigate and feed internal information systems using English.

- **Governance** issues (e.g. INGO offices in different countries) are hardly mentioned by interviewees in this research. Similarly, the role of **tensions between advocacy and**

operative staff in constraining knowledge creation and sharing are only marginally supported by the data collected.

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The cross-case analysis has demonstrated the success, with minor modifications, of the research framework in explaining the enablers and constraints encountered in advocacy communities. The analysis has also identified the most prominent enablers and constraints, and provided a discussion about these factors.

In chapters 9 and 10, the significance of the research findings and contributions are discussed, together with their potential implications and limitations.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Contents

- Introduction
- A revised Information Ecology model of enablers and constraints of knowledge creation and sharing
- Research findings concerning the variables of the Information Ecology model
- Managerial implications

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the implications of the findings at both the theoretical and the managerial levels. Our research offers a revised information ecology model of enablers and constraints for knowledge creation and sharing. Following this, three main areas for discussion are highlighted: a) the potential integration of two distinct perspectives in the management literature - the perspective of knowledge as a commodity and knowledge as a process; b) the link between knowledge assets and organisational effectiveness; and c) a potential extension to the understanding of scarcity, value and utility of knowledge.

Next, a discussion about the research findings concerning the variables of the Information Ecology model is presented. The third section of this chapter suggests some managerial implications of the research findings.

9.2 A REVISED INFORMATION ECOLOGY MODEL OF ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS FOR KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND SHARING

9.2.1 THE VIEWS OF KNOWLEDGE AS A COMMODITY AND KNOWLEDGE AS A PROCESS ARE INTEGRATED INTO A SINGLE FRAMEWORK

This research contributes to the idea that the views of knowledge as a process and knowledge as a commodity are complementary rather than contradictory. The use of Boisot's SLC (Boisot 1995) has helped to extend previous understanding of the use and embedding of knowledge, as the SLC enables a clearer definition of the learning process. It also allows the integration of individual (knowledge worker), organisational (INGOs and domestic NGOs) and inter-organisational levels (advocacy alliances) in the analysis.

The diversity of enablers and constraints found in this research highlights the fragility of the knowing process (Inkpen 2000) and its dependency on the knower (Empson 2001; Tsoukas and Vladimirou 2001). It also suggests that management efforts should be oriented first towards understanding the **internal constraints** in this process - especially in relation to the **value exploiting phase** - in order to facilitate the enabling conditions for it to take place (Krogh, Ichijo et al. 2000).

This research also shows that knowledge becomes embedded in organisational bases, in the form of documents, databases or organisational structures. The I-space is found to be robust enough to explain the nature of these knowledge assets and their likely

evolution in the context of advocacy communities. The dimension of abstraction of the I-Space offers a richer perspective to the study of knowledge assets than those offered by the distinction between codified and non-codified knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Grant 1996).

9.2.2 THE IDEA THAT KNOWLEDGE ASSETS CONTRIBUTE TO ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IS VALIDATED

This study shows how the ability to create and share knowledge assets plays a key role for advocacy effectiveness. Although the role of knowledge in organisations is not free of ambiguities (Alvesson 2001), and its effects are difficult to evaluate (Denton 1998), we have been able to observe some plausible negative effects of the 'not knowing alternatives' - e.g. not knowing about decision makers' motivations and agendas - which suggest that knowledge assets are a potential source of effectiveness.

9.2.3 THE UNDERSTANDING OF SCARCITY, VALUE AND UTILITY OF KNOWLEDGE IS EXTENDED

Two main approaches to the study of the value of knowledge can be identified. The first considers the economic value of knowledge in exchange (Teece 1998). The second considers the value of knowledge in relation to the impact on performance of its use (Glazer 1998; Haas and Hansen 2005). These approaches are distinguished here for clarity: Economic value of knowledge will be referred to as value; and value of

knowledge in relation to its use and impact on performance will be referred to as utility of knowledge[41] (Boisot 1995).

The degree of codification of knowledge has been associated to its utility, in different ways. Higher codification has been linked to higher utility, as it provides for economies by allowing knowledge reuse (Hansen, Nohria et al. 1999). But low codification has also been linked to higher utility, as it makes it difficult for competitors to imitate knowledge assets and organisational capabilities (Inkpen 1998; Lane and Lubatkin 1998; Winter and Szulanski 2001).

Most of these contributions base their analyis on different interpretations of the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge (Polanyi 1966). This literature does not take into account the abstraction and the diffusion dimensions of knowledge (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998). Incorporating these dimensions into the analysis of the value and utility of knowledge adds a richer perspective.

According to Boisot, higher codification and abstraction of knowledge bring higher utility and scarcity - the latter because the cognitive investments are larger and the number of people willing to make them is smaller. In this way, knowledge also acquires economic value. With each new disclosure of knowledge, its potential profitability is further eroded (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998).

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[41] Utility has two dimensions: First, how useful the knowledge turns out to be in a particular application; and second, how many different potentially useful applications can be found for it (Boisot 1998).

Nevertheless, scarcity, value and utility of knowledge are manifested in slightly different ways in advocacy communities. Kogut and Zander state that '*the creation and replication of knowledge by a firm do not proceed with the purpose of rapid public dissemination*' (Zander and Kogut 1995). However, in advocacy communities they do, particularly in the case of advocacy messages.

Advocacy messages could be considered what Boisot calls '*public goods*' (Boisot 1995). In this sense, the concept of economic value would not apply as such; it is the diffusion of the message that has the potential to make it useful for advocate organisations, not its scarcity. But unrestricted diffusion could also have undesirable effects, such as increasing noise levels for decision makers. Higher levels of abstraction and codification can increase the utility of the message for advocates - increasing the range of its potential applications - and contribute to reducing noise levels (Boisot 1995). Nevertheless, utility and noise reduction are also more likely to be achieved if higher codification and abstraction are accompanied by an appropriate framing of the message.

Because the diffusion of an advocacy messages is its aim, the levels of codification and abstraction of that message have to be finely balanced: Not so low that decision makers can dismiss it as local, particular knowledge; but not so high that it becomes insubstantial or that it demands higher cognitive investments from decision makers than those they are willing to make in return for the utility they perceive in the message. For decision makers, the utility of the advocacy message is linked to a) the extent to which the message increases or maintains their legitimacy; and b) the extent to which the message reduces uncertainty in their decision making process.

In relation to advocacy approach knowledge, its external diffusion is not necessarily useful for advocates, and could even be detrimental to the advocacy strategy. But in order for advocacy alliances to perform, advocacy approach knowledge has to be shared internally. So this research extends the idea that low levels of codification bring difficulties for the replication of knowledge assets and for learning within advocacy communities. There is, nevertheless, a balance to keep: Codification and abstraction should not be so low that advocates have to invest considerable time and effort in teasing out the useful knowledge from contextual information; and they should not be so high that the richness of the knowledge is taken away, or that mistaken generalisations occur.

In sum, in relation to the advocacy message, controlled diffusion of knowledge to decision makers - instead of its scarcity - creates utility for advocate organisations. An appropriate balance between codification and abstraction of the advocacy message contributes to noise reduction for decision makers, and to making the utility of the message more manifest for them. In relation to advocacy approach knowledge, utility for advocates is created when knowledge is kept scarce for those to be influenced, but unrestricted within advocacy alliances. An appropriate balance between codification and abstraction of advocacy approach knowledge contributes to the internal access and use of that knowledge.

9.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS CONCERNING THE VARIABLES OF THE INFORMATION ECOLOGY MODEL

9.3.1 KNOWLEDGE CULTURE AND TRANSACTIONAL STRUCTURES IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES

Regular information flows give rise to '*transaction patterns, which crystallise into institutions through a cumulative social learning process*' (Boisot 1998). Institutions are an outcome of information production and exchange and not just devices for their governance: '*They are thus effects as well as causes*' (Boisot 1995). As institutions help to economise data processing, transactions tend to lean towards regions in the I-Space where institutional investments exist.

Boisot distinguishes four basic types of transactional structures. Each type of transaction has some cultural characteristics associated with it[42]. They are: Markets, bureaucracies, clans and fiefs[43]. In markets, relevant information is well codified, abstract and broadly diffused. In bureaucracies, information is well codified and abstract, but its diffusion is under central control. In clans, information is uncodified, concrete and only diffused to small groups; while in fiefs, uncodified and concrete information is undiffused (see Table 55).

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[42] Culture is understood as the expression of information production and sharing strategies (Boisot 1998).
[43] With this distinction, Boisot refers to the cultural style of transactions, not to their governance.

Table 55. Profile of transactions in the I-Space

Bureaucracies	Markets	Fiefs	Clans
Information is abstract and codified, but undiffused - i.e. its diffusion is under central control. Example: A monthly financial report.	Information is abstract, codified, and diffused. Example: Prices.	Information is concrete, uncodified and undiffused. Example: Personal childhood memories, expertise.	Information is concrete and uncodified, but has limited diffusion - i.e. to groups, rather than to the target population as a whole. Examples: Myths, oral traditions.
Relationships are impersonal; identity does not matter.	Relationships are impersonal; identity does not matter.	Relationships are impersonal; identity does matter.	Relationships are impersonal; identity does matter.
Control is external, shared values and trust are not necessary.	Control is external, shared values and trust are not necessary.	Control is internalised, shared values and trust are necessary.	Control is internalised, shared values and trust are necessary.
Coordination is hierarchical and formal.	Coordination is horizontal and self-regulating (the invisible hand).	Coordination is hierarchical and informal.	Coordination is horizontal and carried out through mutual adjustments.
Goals are imposed from above.	Each player is free to pursue his/her own goals.	Goals are imposed from above.	Goals are negotiated between players.
Core institutional value: Obedience to the rule.	Core institutional value: Transactional freedom.	Core institutional value: Loyalty and submission to a leader.	Core institutional value: Loyalty to the group.

Source: (Boisot 1995)

These transactional types are manifested in advocacy communities in different ways. **Decision makers behave as bureaucracies**, whereas **advocates behave as clans**. This difference accounts for a number of constraints found in the exchanges between these two groups: On one hand, decision makers' information is abstract and codified, but under central control and not available to all[44]. They are keen to protect their authority and legitimacy; their coordination is hierarchical (e.g. representatives have to follow their governments' guidelines); and trust and shared values are not that necessary. On

[44] What advocates perceive as decision makers' unclear messages might be the expression of the central control of the diffusion of information in bureaucracies, and not necessarily that this information is at low levels of codification and abstraction. However, this research does not provide evidence on this, as the study of decision makers' SLC was beyond its objectives.

the other hand, advocacy communities share mainly uncodified and concrete information through face to face groups; control is internalised and goals are defined by an ongoing process of negotiation among allies. Trust, personal relationships, and shared values are essential. The application of transactional structures in the analysis of barriers to knowledge exchange extends our understanding about the role of subjective considerations (Empson 2001) and the degree of tacitness of knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Leonard and Sensiper 1998) in conferring legitimacy and value to the knowledge received from other exchanging parties[45].

There are centripetal and centrifugal cultures. The former concentrate their transactions on a narrower region of the I-Space than the latter. When transactional pathologies develop, all transactions are channelled through one type of transactional structure to the exclusion of others; a culture becomes ideologically driven and is deprived of the diversity required for learning. By contrast, with cultural evolution, cultures tend to become more centrifugal and complex, responding more adaptively and readjusting their premises, so that they have more capacity to learn from their mistakes (Boisot 1995).

This research shows that **advocacy communities' transactional structures tend to concentrate on the lower regions of the I-Space**, and tend to have **a centripetal focus** on clan transactions. This focus is manifested more in domestic NGOs than in INGOs, which have developed some characteristics of bureaucracies[46]. The domestic NGOs

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[45] Empson found that individuals with a predominantly tacit knowledge base placed less value on the codified knowledge of their colleagues, and vice versa (Empson 2001). Our results align with these findings.

[46] These findings contrast with Nonaka and Takeuchi's arguments about the primary focus of Western organisations on explicit knowledge '*that can be created through analytical skills*' (Nonaka and Takeuchi

studied form exclusive small groups bound by loyalty and feel hostility towards other domestic NGOs that do not share their views. There are some glimpses of fief-type transactional structures in domestic NGOs (e.g. power is, on some occasions, very concentrated, and loyalty to the group constrains critical views about that group). There are also differences within NGOs. The case of Aid International shows that tensions between different organisational units (e.g. advocacy and humanitarian work) can be linked to differing preferences towards codification and abstraction. However, the role of these tensions appears relatively less significant in comparison to other constraints.

Transactions among groups tend to be in areas of higher codification, abstraction and diffusion than transactions within a group, and contribute to making knowledge more plausible, as assumptions are tested more rigorously (Boisot 1995). Some advocates feel that testing their assumptions is a threat and respond by reducing the intensity of exchanges with external groups (i.e. decision makers or other advocates) that do not share their views. The blockages caused by ideologies in advocacy communities are reinforced by the reduction of these extra-group exchanges. Knowledge is then more vulnerable to the effects of group biases.

9.3.1.1 Cultural evolution of advocacy communities

The extent to which social patterns of behaviour associated with each transactional structure can reasonably be predicted from the characteristics of the information environment in which they occur needs to be established (Boisot 1995). The differences

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1995). However, our research did not provide enough evidence to discuss in depth the role of national cultures in explaining advocates preferences' for low codification and abstraction.

in behaviour between domestic NGOs and INGOs could shed some light on this. INGOs have managed to build some bureaucratic transactional structures, while domestic NGOs appear more restricted to clans. The increasingly global nature of advocacy and the role of advocates as bridges between local affected populations and international decision makers is placing emphasis on more transactions at higher levels of codification, abstraction and diffusion than before. This suggests that advocacy communities, in order to adapt to new constraints, will probably need to develop more bureaucratic and market-oriented styles.

Advocacy communities seem to possess an advantage in relation to more market and bureaucracy-oriented cultures: They feel comfortable transacting knowledge at lower regions of the I-Space, and by doing this they are '*able to access external sources of tacit knowledge and build their knowledge assets in ways that are unavailable to more contract-oriented firms*' (Boisot 1998). This suggests that a feasible alternative for advocacy communities is to promote more exchanges in the upper regions of the I-Space, while keeping their capabilities for transacting in the lower regions. In sum, creating a more centrifugal culture than they now possess in order to increase their scope for learning.

9.3.2 *KNOWLEDGE WORKERS' ANALYTICAL SKILLS AND PREFERENCES TOWARDS CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION IN ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES*

> *'The way that the knowledge held by an individual is configured in the Epistemological Space[47] is affected by the way he learns and by more general personality factors... Personality orientations largely determine the data that will be processed and how it will be processed' (Boisot 1995).*

Current literature needs to explore further the role that individuals play in the knowledge process in organisations (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; O'Dell and Grayson 1998). Individual preferences towards codification and abstraction help to explain bias in the creation and sharing of certain types of knowledge assets. But how can preferences towards codification and abstraction be measured? Boisot establishes a link between Jung's psychological types (Jung 1991) and the two dimensions composing the Epistemological Space: Codification and abstraction.

Jung's psychological types are based on four pairs of orientations that describe: An individual's mode of relation to the world via introversion or extroversion; mode of decision making via perception or judgment; preferred way of perceiving via sensing or intuition; and preferred way of judging via thinking or feeling (see Table 56).

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[47] The Epistemological Space comprises the two dimensions of codification and abstraction. It does not include diffusion - the I-Space does. '*The Epistemological Space allows us to visualise graphically in what form an individual processes and stores the data available to him*' (Boisot 1995).

Table 56. Jung's psychological types

Mode of relation to the world *Communicating*	**E EXTROVERT TYPE** Oriented toward external world of other people and things	**I INTROVERT TYPE** Oriented toward inner world of ideas and feelings
Mode of decision making *Style of working*	**J JUDGING TYPE** Emphasis on order through reaching decisions and resolving issues	**P PERCEIVING TYPE** Emphasis on gathering information and obtaining as much data as possible
Mode of perceiving *Gathering evidence*	**S SENSING TYPE** Emphasis on sense perception, facts, details, and concrete events	**N INTUITION TYPE** Emphasis on inspiration and imagination
Mode of judging *Decision making*	**T THINKING TYPE** Emphasis on analysis, using logic and rationality	**F FEELING TYPE** Emphasis on human values, establishing personal friendships; decisions made mainly on beliefs

Source: Adapted from Briggs and Briggs-Myers (1998)

Boisot considers that Jung's orientations largely determine the data that will be processed and how it will be processed by an individual (Boisot 1995). He argues that the three dimensions (extroversion - introversion; sensation - intuition; and thinking - feeling) impose a template on the experiences processed in the Epistemological Space. Extroversion - introversion orients individual data processing either toward concrete or abstract objects; sensation - intuition biases it toward coded or uncoded data; and thinking - feeling establishes the part that will be played respectively by cognitive and by emotional factors in the manipulation and evaluation of data (Boisot 1995).

Following this, it is possible to establish the following correspondences between the Epistemological Space and Jung's psychological types:

- **The coded - uncoded** dimension and the Jung's **sensation - intuition** orientation.
- **The concrete - abstract** dimension and the Jung's **extroversion - introversion** orientation.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Briggs and Briggs-Myers 1998; Briggs-Myers 2000) is a psychological self-report instrument to assess people's orientation toward the Jungian types. The MBTI has been used in Aid International, showing the following preferences[48]:

- Sensation - Intuition: More people have preferences for **intuition** than in the population at large.
- Extroversion - Introversion: **No variance** from general population.
- Thinking - Feeling: More people have preferences for **thinking** than in the population at large.
- Judging - Perceiving: More people have preferences for **perceiving** than in the population at large.

The MBTI's results at Aid International coincide with this research regarding preferences towards uncoded data. In relation to the concrete - abstract dimension, the MBTI's results indicate that preferences for both coexist within the organisation, which also aligns with the results of our research.

The link between Boisot's I-Space and Jung's psychological types theory offers an opportunity to contrast the findings of this research with data from Aid International. These preferences explain advocates' bias in creating and sharing certain types of knowledge assets, as discussed next.

[48] Source: personal communication with human resource manager at Aid International, 27 April 2004.

9.3.3 ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES' KNOWLEDGE ASSETS AND THEIR LOCATION IN THE I-SPACE

The distribution of knowledge along the codification and abstraction scales indicates the nature of a society's communication problems (Boisot 1995). The donors meeting for Colombia and the advocacy work around it show that data has been economised at different locations of the I-Space, but that there is a preference for the lower regions. Table 57 presents guidelines for locating knowledge assets in the I-Space.

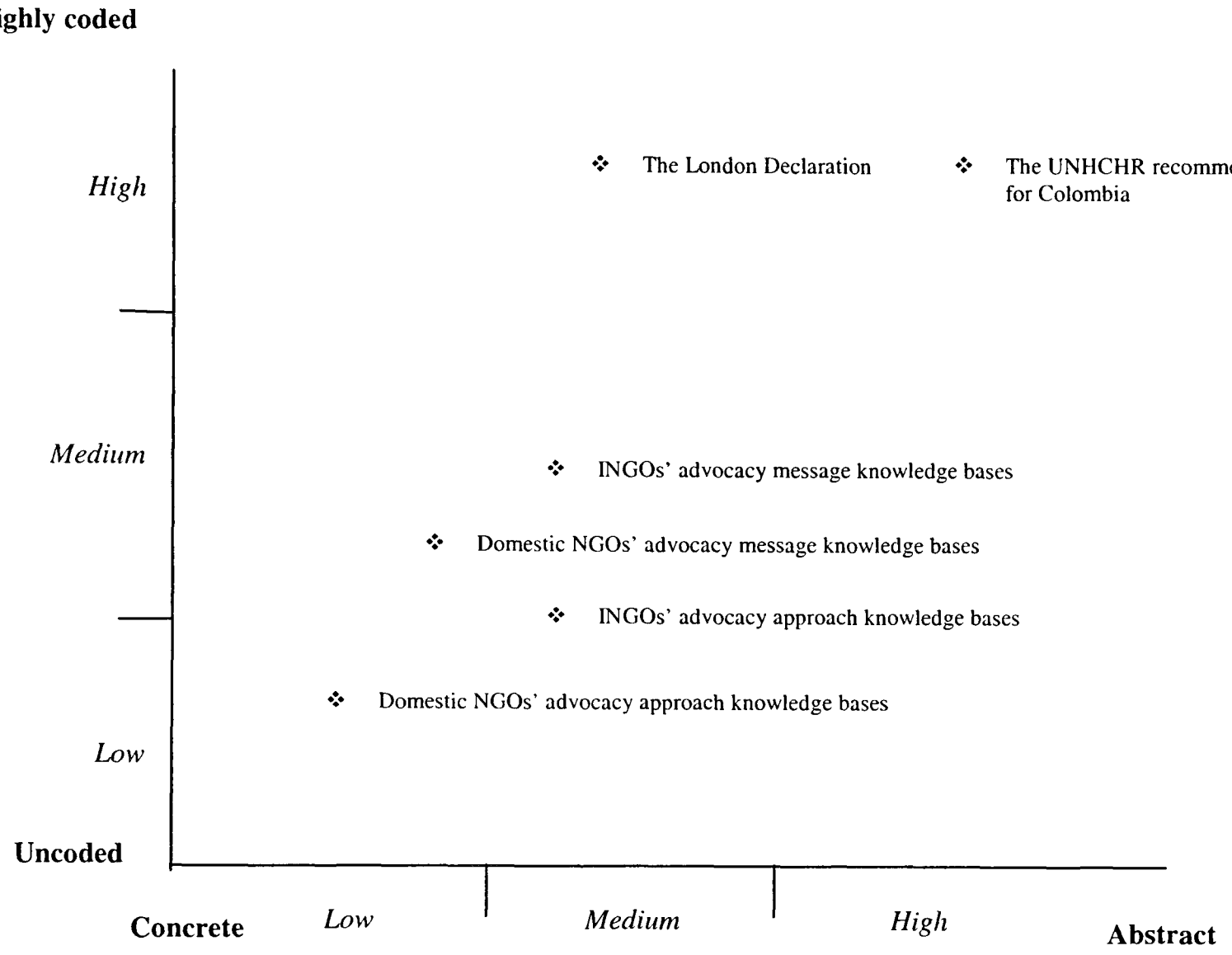
Table 57. Scaling guide for knowledge assets

Position on scale	Codification	Abstraction	Diffusion
High	• Easily captured in figures and formulae. • Lends itself to standardisation and automation. • High level of structure. Little contextual information.	• Generally applicable to all agents, whatever the sector they operate in. • Heavily science-based.	• Readily available to all agents who wish to make use of it.
Medium	• Describable in words and diagrams. • Can be readily understood by others from documents and written instructions alone.	• Applicable to agents within a few sectors only. • Needs to be adapted to the context in which it is applied.	• Available to only a few agents or to only a few sectors.
Low	• Hard to articulate. • Easier to show someone than to tell them about. • Low level of structure. Plenty of contextual information.	• Limited to a single sector and to application within that sector. • Needs extensive adaptation to the context in which it is applied.	• Available to only one or two agents within a single sector.

Source: Adapted from (Boisot 1998).

Figure 44 shows how knowledge assets in advocacy communities are located along the codification and abstraction dimensions - the Epistemological Space. The diffusion dimension is not applied in this analysis.

Figure 44. Location of advocacy communities' knowledge assets along the codification and abstraction dimensions



Knowledge assets from domestic NGOs and INGOs differ in their levels of codification and abstraction, but overall both tend to gravitate towards the lower regions of the I-Space. Advocacy message knowledge is embedded mostly in documents, while advocacy approach knowledge is embedded mainly in people's heads and is more difficult to transmit from one individual to another.

The London Declaration and the UNHCHR recommendations for Colombia are examples that '*well-formed information goods*' - those characterised by a high degree of codification and abstraction - can be traded less problematically (Boisot 1995): Both were available to all interested parties; were easily transmissible through channels such as the Internet or paper copies, beyond the environment in which they were originated; and advocates based many of their strategies and messages on them.

These findings align with previous work about the link between a high degree of codification of knowledge and its easier diffusion and use (Inkpen 1998; Teece 1998). Nevertheless, the comparison with previous literature is limited, as the abstraction dimension of knowledge as such is not taken into account in most cases.

This research also indicates that in some circumstances combining higher and lower codification and abstraction improves an advocacy message's chances of impact. This might be explained by: a) the low trust between advocates and decision makers, and b) the potential for personalisation and richness at lower regions of the I-Space. Because of a), decision makers doubt the reliability of, for example, advocates' statistics, and prefer other evidence about the conditions of affected communities, such as photos, anecdotes, videos or the direct testimony of a community representative. All of these are found at lower levels of codification and abstraction. Because of b), these types of evidence might be more likely to appeal to decision makers' emotions and move them to action.

We can conclude that, overall, advocates tend to use lower than appropriate levels of codification and abstraction when communicating with decision makers. As bureaucracies, decision makers are more likely to accept knowledge at higher degree of

codification and abstraction as plausible. There are circumstances, however, when knowledge at lower levels of codification and abstraction has a better chance of impact on decision makers' emotions and motivations.

Within advocacy communities, lower levels of codification and abstraction constraint the sharing and use of knowledge. These results contrast with existing literature that emphasise the utility of tacit knowledge due to its limited '*transferability*' (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Grant 1996).

9.4 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS OF THIS RESEARCH

This research shows that the creation and sharing of knowledge face multiple constraints and that learning is far from being a cumulative or a smooth process. Nevertheless, this research also highlights areas where managers can, up to a point, '*exploit existing blockages to the functioning of a SLC by removing them*', in what is called '*a strategic value maximising behaviour in the I-Space*' (Boisot 1995). Leadership commitment is, of course, essential (Inkpen 1996).

As discussed before, advocacy communities' enablers and constraints are concentrated on the value exploiting stage. In the value creating stage, enablers and constraints are mostly associated with knowledge workers, whereas in the value exploiting stage they refer mainly to knowledge architecture. In three of the phases of the SLC, knowledge

worker constraints are predominant, whereas in diffusion, culture and politics have more influence.

The exploiting of advocates' knowledge assets is linked to their involvement and growing experience in advocacy activities. In terms of specific investments, our results suggest that advocacy communities should invest primarily in their workers' skills, organisational culture and the embedding of approach knowledge. A set of specific recommendations is discussed next.

9.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE VALUE CREATING STAGE OF THE SLC

This research suggests that in order to reduce blockages during the value creating stage of the SLC (i.e. scanning, codification and abstraction), advocacy communities should make the following investments:

9.4.1.1 Investments under direct control of advocacy communities concerning the value creating stage

- **Strengthening staff members' analytical skills**. Advocacy work demands high levels of codification and abstraction, from raw evidence from affected populations to compelling arguments and sound policy proposals for decision makers. Training

focused on improving analytical, writing, synthesis and conceptualisation skills contributes to strengthening staff members' analytical skills. Training in appropriate research and analysis methods can be useful.

- **Promoting learning and allowing time for it**. Besides time for reflection, staff members like to feel that their efforts in terms of knowledge creation and sharing are acknowledged, e.g. that their contributions to organisational knowledge bases are put into use. '*It is often the expected returns to one's communicative efforts that compel to shift to higher codification and abstraction*' (Boisot 1995).

- **Reinforcing advocacy alliances and partnerships**. Investing in alliances and partnerships to facilitate the acquisition and sharing of knowledge would be beneficial, as would building trust within the alliance and investing in domestic NGOs' advocacy skills, in order to increase the quality of their contributions.

- **Making organisational ideologies explicit**. Existing ideologies are more likely to be challenged when they are made explicit (i.e. when they are given higher levels of codification and abstraction) (Boisot 1995; Kegan and Lahey 2001).

9.4.1.2 Investments not under direct control of advocacy communities concerning the value creating stage

- **Adjusting scanning to decision makers' unwillingness to communicate and to the low codification and abstraction of their messages**. Advocates should be more

aware of the potential effects of decision makers' intentional or unintentional noise. When faced with noise, advocates should look for alternative sources of information, or use interpersonal contacts to overcome it (Boisot 1995). The latter will require higher investments in building trust with decision makers.

- **Building decision makers' trust**. One of the main obstacles for accessing decision makers' information is advocates' low trust of decision makers. The strengthening of ties with decision makers is facilitated by the high quality of advocates' information, and by developing interpersonal relationships (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Arnulf, Dreyer et al. 2005). Becoming a credible source of knowledge is another strategy that can be more attractive for advocates who are not keen on building decision makers' trust through interpersonal relationships.

9.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE VALUE EXPLOITING STAGE OF THE SLC

This research suggests that in order to reduce blockages during the value exploiting stage of the SLC (i.e. diffusion, absorption and impacting), advocacy communities should invest in the following:

9.4.2.1 Investments under direct control of advocacy communities concerning diffusion

- **Using codification and abstraction to advocates' advantage**. Decision makers, as bureaucracies, prefer messages at higher levels of codification and abstraction. Yet, advocates use long and context-dependent messages. '*Effective communication strategies will be those that take such characteristics into account when tailoring a given message's degree of codification and abstraction to the possibilities and expectations of the chosen audience*' (Boisot 1995). Advocates need to recognise the circumstances in which a certain degree of codification and abstraction is appropriate for decision makers.

- **Framing advocacy messages appropriately**. In order to become sources of knowledge, advocates should play an active role in innovating, exploring and demonstrating useful alternatives (Lewis and Wallace 2000). Advocates can invest in the quality of their messages and seek to identify when a focus on proposals is more productive than an emphasis on criticism. Decision makers will be willing to dedicate their attention to a message if its relevance and value for them is evident.

- **Defining clear advocacy strategies**. The advocacy strategy pursued and the framing of the message should be aligned. Insider lobbying relies more on expertise and is likely to be cooperational and based on persuasion, in contrast to other advocacy strategies such as public campaigning (Edwards 1993; Nelson 2000). Some advocates have pursued an insider lobbying strategy while using a confrontational approach.

Advocates should challenge existing ideologies that restrain them from getting closer to decision makers, especially in a context in which security issues constrain public advocacy strategies. Advocates also have to maintain coherence between the choice of advocacy strategy and the type of transactions supporting it, e.g. lobbying strategies around technical topics would probably call for a different level of codification and abstraction than public campaigns.

9.4.2.2 Investments not under direct control of advocacy communities concerning diffusion

- **Becoming sources of knowledge for decision makers**. '*The ability to reduce cognitive uncertainty through codification in a way that is acceptable to others is a creative act of leadership and a source of power*' (Boisot 1995). Advocates who are recognised as experts on the issues they advocate for are more likely to have access to decision makers, but this research shows that this is not the priority for many of the NGOs interviewed - knowledge is scarcely mentioned as a source of legitimacy. If advocacy communities are evolving from clans into bureaucracies, success will increasingly '*involve moving from a position of recipient of knowledge, towards a position of contributor of knowledge*' (Boisot 1995), by offering sound, impartial and credible arguments.

- **Strengthening alliances' representativeness**. This research shows that alliances' legitimacy is directly linked to their scope and representativeness. Advocacy alliances

can broaden support by involving other civil society sectors and strengthening their governance, e.g. appointing a representative.

- **Engaging local and national mass media**. Strengthening their media strategy and getting close to local and national mass media to gather public support for their objectives would be beneficial.

9.4.2.3 Investments under direct control of advocacy communities concerning absorption

- **Investing in both higher and lower regions of the I-Space**. This study shows that advocacy communities tend to behave as centripetal cultures, focused on the lower regions of the I-Space, which makes their SLC more vulnerable to blockages. More investments in transactions at higher levels of codification and abstraction are necessary '*to expand the overall transactional capacities to the internal development of a centrifugal culture, one in which personal and impersonal forms of exchange can mutually invigorate each other*' (Boisot 1995).

Promoting inter-group exchanges (e.g. with decision makers) is a way to lead to investments in the upper regions of the I-Space, as more codified and abstract knowledge is produced. Focusing on intra-group exchanges (e.g. with other advocates)

will favour transactions in the lower regions of the I-Space, which can exacerbate information overload[49].

- **Increasing investment in ICTs.** Advocates' investment in appropriate communications infrastructure remains poor and has been only marginally integrated into their processes. Investment in ICTs can increase advocates' capacity to capture, process and transmit data, facilitating codification, abstraction and diffusion. ICTs can also enable advocates to engage more productively with knowledge flows in the lower regions of the I-Space because of their capacity to handle larger volumes of data (Boisot 1998).

Advocacy communities need to overcome increasing spatial distances in order to function. More investment in ICTs should be accompanied by higher codification and abstraction in order to make proper use of the spatial reach offered by ICTs (Boisot 1998). More investment in ICTs can also have a positive effect on the building of trust, '*irrespective of the constraints of time and space*', and enhance networking (Boisot 1998).

- **Monitoring and evaluating advocacy strategies.** '*Confirmatory experiences enable the absorption of new knowledge*' (Boisot 1995). The internal collection, processing and dissemination of confirmatory or disproving evidence about what works is facilitated when advocacy strategies are made explicit and clearly formulated. Promoting the use of lessons learnt in decision making processes enables their embedding in organisational rules and routines.

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[49] For suggestions about how to reduce information overload see Hansen, M. T. and M. R. Haas (2001).

9.4.2.4 Investments under direct control of advocacy communities concerning impacting

Promoting the embedding and externalisation of advocates' knowledge. This research shows that there is a link between preferences towards lower codification and abstraction, and the selection of people's heads as the preferred substrata for the embedding of information. In the advocacy communities studied, examples of key knowledge that is embedded in people's heads, and likely to be lost, is knowledge concerning the advocacy approach, e.g. knowledge about allies and decision makers advocates have worked with; knowledge about potential influencers of those decision makers and advocates' links with them; and validated methods and practices for effective advocacy.

Thus, knowledge created within advocacy communities has a bigger potential of survival and impact if that knowledge finds a wider audience that can be involved in its use and validation: '*By externalising ideas and embedding them in objects, one can play around with them, change them, and perfect them*' (Boisot 1995). Low codification constrains the use and survival of knowledge. With higher codification and abstraction, advocacy communities could also increase their potential for contributing to social science debate.

- **Using monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as an advocacy tool**. M&E of decision makers offers advocates a tool for influencing the former. By making decision makers' knowledge and practices explicit, advocates render these subject to analysis, and

therefore to challenge and questioning. There is a lack of monitoring of the resources pledged in the donors for Colombia meeting process, as well as of the implementation of those resources: 56% of pledged resources may not have been implemented; seven of 18 donor countries did not acknowledge pledges made by their representatives in Madrid, Bogotá and Brussels; and some of the pledges corresponded to resources already assigned, not to fresh resources (CEPEI 2005). A potential area of contribution for advocates is the M&E of international cooperation.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

Contents

- Introduction
- Contributions of this research concerning the SLC
- An assessment of this research and its limitations
- Potential future research
- Concluding remarks

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This research has integrated two distinct academic works, the I-Space (Boisot 1995; Boisot 1998) and an Information Ecology model (Davenport and Prusak 1997) in order to explore the enablers and constraints of knowledge creation and sharing. Boisot's I-Space and his SLC are not articulated to the point of directly testable hypotheses, as he acknowledges: '*(They) could of course turn out to be a pure figment of our imagination and to have absolutely no basis in reality*' (Boisot 1995). **This research shows that when the SLC is considered within the Information Ecology model, it can explain comprehensively how specific factors influence particular stages of the creation and sharing of knowledge.**

The resultant framework has a descriptive and a predictive character. First, it can be used to identify knowledge flows and assets in a specific setting. Equipped with a better understanding of the blockages of knowledge creation and sharing, managers can

address specific issues and improve enabling conditions. Therefore, the Information Ecology model is seen as a means towards increasing the effectiveness of the SLC.

Second, the predictive character of the framework is associated with its potential to envisage concerns about knowledge-related initiatives, in three respects: a) which particular enablers and constraints are likely to be found at specific phases of the creation and sharing of knowledge; b) which information flows are likely to be affected by particular enablers and constraints; and c) what the expected nature of constraints is in settings where particular cultures dominate (see in Chapter 9 the discussion about knowledge culture and transactional structures in advocacy communities).

10.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH CONCERNING THE SLC

10.2.1 KEY FINDINGS ABOUT SCANNING

This research shows that blockages to scanning are associated mostly with knowledge workers, knowledge architecture and knowledge culture factors. The results of this study align with Boisot's views about the difficulties of scanning in the lower part of the I-Space. **Knowledge assets' codification and abstraction** is the most highlighted factor affecting scanning. Lower levels of codification and abstraction of decision makers' messages increase noise and require considerable **time and effort** by advocates.

The role of **trust** in enabling scanning is confirmed. In advocacy communities, **trust** appears associated first with **access** to the other party - independently of whether scanning is taking part in the lower or upper parts of the I-Space. In this sense, trust plays a key role in initiating the communication process itself. This aligns with previous contributions about the role of social capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998) and the nature of relationships among exchanging parties (Inkpen 1998; Arnulf, Dreyer et al. 2005) in starting knowledge exchanges. So decision makers can obstruct advocates' SLC considerably by limiting access, especially when advocates rely on direct lobbying strategies.

However, much of the low levels of trust comes from advocates themselves, because of their negative assumptions (i.e. **ideologies**) about decision makers' intentions. This is consistent with observations that knowledge exchanges are hindered when people assume self-interest motivations in the other party (Nahapiet, Gratton et al. 2005), or when one party feels that it can be vulnerable to the other (Larsson, Bengtsson et al. 1998). So advocates' own ideologies have the potential to constrain their access to decision makers' knowledge.

> '*What the knower makes of the data therefore depends at least as much on what he makes of the experience as an object of value as on his data processing faculties themselves. His likes and dislikes, hopes and fears, thus have a direct bearing on how he structures his world*' (Boisot 1995).

Organisational ideologies and **subjective orientations and mindsets** are two other factors strongly supported by the evidence collected. This coincides with literature concerning the effects of different organisational '*patterns of thinking*' (Senge 1990);

beliefs and emotions (Lazaric, Mangolte et al. 2003); or epistemic barriers (Brown and Duguid 1998) in knowledge sharing.

This research complements previous work on learning alliances (Doz 1996; Inkpen 1998); by drawing attention to the role of the political dimension of alliances and partnerships in enabling scanning. **Alliances and partnerships** not only provide spaces where members can exchange knowledge; they also have the potential to exert pressure on decision makers in order to gain **access** to them and their information. The legitimacy embedded within the alliance aids advocacy communities when accessing and disseminating knowledge.

This research allows for some key observations about the role of the delicate security situation and of knowledge strategies in scanning. **Delicate security** influences scanning by constraining access to information sources. Organisational **knowledge strategies** such as appropriate methods of data collection, staff training, and information and knowledge staff can contribute to scanning.

ICTs are not very integrated into advocacy processes and do not appear to be a significant factor for knowledge creation and sharing in the case studied. This coincides with Boisot's view about the limited role that ICTs have on centripetal cultures, and with previous literature about the limitations of sharing tacit knowledge by ICTs (Leonard and Sensiper 1998; O'Dell and Grayson 1998). The strategy pursued by advocates is still concentrated on the lower regions of the I-Space (e.g. face to face lobbying), which exert little pressure for ICT investment. This pressure is expected to rise as factors such as spatial distance pose challenges to communicating with affected populations and decision makers.

10.2.2 KEY FINDINGS ABOUT CODIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Codification and abstraction are at the core of advocacy work. By codifying and abstracting, advocates interpret and synthesise data and testimonies from affected populations and other sources and communicate them to decision makers. The process from the evidence collected in affected populations to the policy proposals to decision makers involves a movement towards higher levels of abstraction and codification. The NGO literature describes this movement as staff members' ability to conceptualise complex processes, and to reason based on a clear analytical framework (Korten 1987; Clark 1992). Without explicitily referring to abstraction, as discussed before, the management literature describes this movement as the understanding of causal links between events (Lazaric, Mangolte et al. 2003) or the development of '*mental models*' that allow organisations to define more rigorously what functions, what does not work, and why[50].

Nevertheless, this research shows that advocacy communities **prefer lower levels of codification and abstraction**. This is the most prominent factor constraining the SLC at the codification and abstraction phase. Advocacy communities' leanings towards intuitive, pragmatist, and activist individuals may have an effect on their codification and abstraction skills, which is manifested in inappropriate **advocacy message framing**[51], lack of clear objectives for advocacy strategies, and difficulties in documenting, monitoring and evaluating their efforts. Advocacy communities'

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[50] Source: Zollo, M. M. and S. G. Winter (2002), quoted in Guilhon, B. (2004).

[51] Coding skills consist of recognising the range of circumstances or contexts in which the use of a given code - e.g. a specific choice of words - is appropriate (Boisot 1995). In this sense, appropriate message framing could be considered as the expression of coding skills.

codification skills seem more developed than their abstracting skills, as evidenced by the documents analysed.

Limited experience in international advocacy contributes to the blockages to codification and abstraction. This link is supported by research about the role of previous knowledge in facilitating the acquisition and use of new knowledge (Cohen and Levinthal 1990; Inkpen 2000).

Organisational ideologies are the second most prominent factor influencing codification and abstraction. This finding aligns with prior ideas about the role of taken-for-granted beliefs '*which compensate for the absence of true rationality*' (Alvesson 1993). Some evidence points at the role of **local cultures** in stressing immediacy and discouraging reflection (Boisot 1995), but this was not conclusive.

The role of individual **subjective orientations and mindsets** is less supported by evidence, but it points at staff members' **lack of confidence** for contributing to organisational knowledge bases. This coincides with recent research about the relation between confidence and staff members' motivation and ability to contribute to electronic knowledge repositories (Kankanhalli, Tan et al. 2005).

Boisot argues that perhaps the greatest obstacle to the process of abstraction, besides cognitive obstacles, is the denial of its value and of time. Our findings confirm this and show that the **limited time for reflection** and the **lack of incentives for learning** are linked. In general, staff members feel overloaded and have little motivation to contribute to organisational knowledge bases. The research shows that **limited time for**

reflection can be the result of internal politics: Colombia and the donors meeting process are not priorities for most of the organisations studied (the implications of this for the research are discussed Chapter 10, section 'An assessment of this research and its limitations').

The results show other factors affecting codification and abstraction, such as the role of **alliances and partnerships**, **security** and **staff training**. The contribution of alliances and partnerships to codification and abstraction takes place mainly in the context of INGO alliances, perhaps as a result of their orientation towards higher levels of codification and abstraction than domestic NGO and their alliances. The delicate security situation in Colombia seems associated to staff members' **high emotional stakes** and partly explains the **limited time for reflection** available to them. Staff training activities, such as mentoring, have the potential to facilitate codification and abstraction processes.

10.2.3 KEY FINDINGS ABOUT DIFFUSION

Knowledge assets' degree of codification and abstraction is the most prominent factor influencing diffusion. This result supports the idea that a message's low degree of codification and abstraction constrains its diffusion (Boisot 1995), and is consistent with previous research about the relationship between codification and the costs of knowledge transmission (Hansen 1999; Teece 2000). So decision makers' willingness to listen appears encouraged by short, focused and joint advocacy messages. Nevertheless, some evidence suggests that lower codification and abstraction is useful

in some circumstances (see in Chapter 9, section 'Advocacy communities' knowledge assets and their location in the I-Space').

This research shows that **advocacy message framing** is as important as the degree of codification and abstraction when it comes to diffusion of the advocacy message. Conciliatory, unbiased and compelling messages are likely to be allocated a larger **time budget** than confrontational, biased, and emotional messages. However, the evidence shows that many advocates' messages are focused on denunciation and offer few constructive criticisms. It would appear that existing research has underestimated the role of the framing of messages in connection to organisational learning.

Our research emphasises the relation between decision makers' willingness to listen and their **organisational ideologies**. To achieve communicative effectiveness it is necessary to modify a receiver's '*expectations that shape behaviour*' (Boisot 1995). Ideologies are expectations that shape behaviour and it is therefore likely that existing expectations become a significant barrier to new ones. An example of decision makers' ideologies, or expectations, is the little value that some decision makers see in advocates' participation.

This research extends current understanding about the relevance of political factors in the diffusion of knowledge, in particular **legitimacy**, and **alliances and partnerships**. Prior ideas about legitimacy being gained *from* other members of the alliance (Chapman and Fisher 2000; Eade 2002) are complemented. The nature of legitimacy in this research is more linked to the **scope** and **representativeness of alliances**, e.g. their potential to offer a united front to decision makers - what Fowler calls '*breadth of*

support' (Fowler 1997), and the links to local contexts (e.g. affected populations). Tregaskis found this relationship between legitimacy and alliances' links to local contexts in multinational subsidiaries (Tregaskis 2003).

So advocates' **legitimacy** is a key trigger of decision makers' willingness to listen. But there seems to be a paradox between alliances' legitimacy and their capacity for transacting in the upper areas of the I-Space. In searching for legitimacy, alliances increase their scope and size, which results in a wider range of views that require accommodating in their messages. As seen before, divergent views (e.g. ideologies) make the achievement of higher levels of codification and abstraction of advocacy messages difficult.

The duration of decision making processes, such as **sign-off procedures**, can delay the diffusion of the message, with adverse consequences for advocacy organisations. Some evidence associates lengthy sign-off procedures with unclear advocacy strategies (i.e. advocacy **approach knowledge at low levels of codification and abstraction**).

Partnerships between INGOs and domestic NGOs are another source of legitimacy found. However, **accountability to affected populations** was not highlighted as a significant factor for learning. This could be associated with the scope of this research, or could show that accountability is understood by INGOs as their linkages with domestic NGOs.

Another factor influencing the diffusion of knowledge from advocacy communities is **delicate security**. Because of **fears of hostility** from illegal armed groups towards

advocates' field staff and partners, public advocacy strategies are constrained. This suggests that delicate security pushes advocacy messages towards a lower degree of codification, abstraction and diffusion (e.g. personal lobbying). This contrasts with previous contributions about the role of crises in stimulating knowledge processes (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995) and supports the idea that some crises could instead block those processes (Inkpen 1996).

10.2.4 KEY FINDINGS ABOUT ABSORPTION

The adoption and use of new knowledge owes more to personal values held and to cognitive orientations than it does to rational deliberation (Boisot 1995). The results of this research confirm these arguments: The two most prominent factors influencing absorption are advocacy communities' **preferences towards codification and abstraction**, and their **organisational ideologies**.

As seen before, **preferences towards codification and abstraction** are related to the cognitive orientations of individuals in the organisation (see Chapter 9, section 'Knowledge workers' analytical skills and preferences towards codification and abstraction in advocacy communities'). In advocacy communities, **preferences towards lower codification and abstraction** and **information overload** appear to be linked, corroborating the idea that cultures focused on lower regions of the I-Space are prone to data overload.

The lack of economisation of data in advocates' information environments risks to '*overflow the capacity of observers, and this in turn constrains further economising*' (Boisot 1995). This is consistent with prior analyses about the effect of information overload in reducing the attention span of recipients (Hansen and Haas 2001).

'*NGOs can be a welcoming environment for strongly held beliefs*' (Hailey 1999). Advocates' **organisational ideologies** impact absorption more that any other phase of the SLC. This result is consistent with behavioural research about the effect of existing beliefs on decision making and the difficulty that individuals have in incorporating evolving information into those decisions (Khanna, Gulati et al. 1998); but extends these contributions by providing a clearer differentiation of the stages of the knowledge process impacted by these ideologies.

Because of **preferences for lower codification and abstraction**, many ideologies are not made explicit, and therefore are not challenged. They develop in an environment where many members of staff are new to international advocacy. An idea that slows down the absorption of knowledge in advocacy communities is that learning originated in one context is not useful in another context. This sort of '*silo behaviour*' (O'Dell and Grayson 1998) has been found in other organisational contexts.

Organisational **knowledge strategies** emerge as an essential enabler of absorption, in particular **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of advocacy**. The literature provides various examples about the utility of measurement systems (Glazer 1998) and the development and use of metrics (Nevis, DiBella et al. 1995) in organisational learning, but much work remains to be done in this area (Krogh, Ichijo et al. 2000).

M&E initiatives are, in turn, constrained by **preferences towards lower codification and abstraction**, and negative ideas about M&E. The results of this research support the idea that centripetal cultures located in the lower regions of the I-Space can cope with ambiguous efficiency measures. Advocacy communities' leanings towards low codification and abstraction are blocking the definition of unambiguous efficiency measures. What our research observed in advocacy communities is consistent with the relationship, suggested by Alvesson, between the difficulty of employing good performance measures and the emphasis of '*ideological or clan control*', which targets values, ideas, beliefs and emotions (Alvesson 2001).

Some evidence points at the lack of integration between M&E results and **decision making**, and M&E results and individual performance. This was discussed by just a few respondents, but could indicate a source of blockages, as shown by previous research about decision making strategies for integrating knowledge into organisational activities (Lawrence, Mauws et al. 2005).

There is evidence of **limited incentives for learning**, especially a lack of time for reflection, and insufficient staff training; but the prominence of this factor is less in comparison to knowledge workers and culture factors. Weaknesses in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation (Jas 2002) are confirmed.

Although mentioned less, the **degree of codification and abstraction of new knowledge** influences absorption. The balance between high and low codification and abstraction seems to affect particularly the internal absorption of approach knowledge.

Boisot states that as one moves up the codification and abstraction scales, the physical diffusibility of information may increase, but effective diffusion, '*taken in the sense of a message communicated, received and understood*', will decline (Boisot 1995). At an internal level, and within their alliances, advocate organisations are not necessarily benefited by highly abstract and decontextualised approach knowledge.

10.2.5 KEY FINDINGS ABOUT IMPACTING

This research contributes to the idea that the lack of a suitable physical substrate for the embedding of knowledge can become a source of blockages for its use. This is more evident in the case of advocacy approach knowledge than in the case of advocacy message knowledge, where embedding occurs at higher regions of the I-Space. **Advocacy message** knowledge gets embedded mostly in **documents**, with some use of databases. **Approach knowledge** gets embedded mostly in **people's heads**, with some use of documents and a few examples of databases. This preference for embedding knowledge in people's heads can be understood because of existing **preferences towards lower codification and abstraction**. Knowledge embedded in people's heads is vulnerable to the **high staff turnover** in advocate organisations.

Our study considers **alliances and partnerships** as knowledge assets - structures where knowledge can be emdedded (Boisot 1995). As previous work has discussed, alliances enable not only the acquisition of knowledge about alliance partners, but also of knowledge about how to collaborate (Simonin 1997; Powell 1998). Examples of this

collaborative know-how embedded in alliances include rules and procedures concerning joint advocacy tactics.

Lubatkin et al. describe three main conditions that facilitate cooperative learning in alliances: Resource interdependency (each participant has knowledge that is unique); goal interdependency (participants can best attain their goals by working together towards a collective agenda); and task interdependency (the collective agenda is best accomplished when participants specialise their efforts where they are most competent) (Lubatkin, Florin et al. 2001). These conditions are present in the context of advocacy communities and help to explain the predominance of alliances in the creation and sharing of knowledge.

However, alliances' contribution to advocates' SLC is threatened by members' low investments of resources in them. **Alliances** appear to be increasingly in charge of obtaining, processing and disseminating knowledge, without being properly fed by their members' analysis or their financial resources. Previous research has pointed at the negative effects of cost minimisation on the sustainability and potential contribution of learning alliances (Khanna, Gulati et al. 1998; Madhok and Tallman 1998).

10.3 AN ASSESSMENT OF THIS RESEARCH AND ITS LIMITATIONS

In this section, the tactics used to achieve veracity, objectivity and perspicacity in this research are presented. The limitations of the findings associated with both the research design and methods, and the research analysis are then discussed.

10.3.1 TACTICS USED BY THIS RESEARCH TO ACHIEVE VERACITY, OBJECTIVITY AND PERSPICACITY

In '*The Ethnographer's Method*', Stewart proposes three criteria for evaluating qualitative research: Veracity, objectivity and perspicacity (Stewart 1998). These criteria are applied to this research in order to offer the reader an assessment of the challenges this study faced and the tactics used to meet them.

Veracity is defined as verisimilitude of depiction. In relation to veracity, the following tactics were used:

- The **size of the universe** of organisations taking part in the donors meeting process was considerable. The answer to this challenge was to sample as diverse a group of respondents as possible. Using an embedded case study facilitated this.

- **Access** to some decision makers (notably Colombian government officials) was limited. Data was triangulated with interviews of other decision makers, such as representatives of embassies and international organisations. Access to many other respondents was facilitated by good relationships with key sources of information at Aid International, other INGOs and domestic NGOs.

- Respondents' accounts are influenced by **personal and organisational interests**. In the face of this, a significant number of interviews were undertaken and diverse sources

for triangulation were used. The focus on constraints reduced interviewees' temptation to refer to how things should be, instead of how things are.

- The **theory can bias data collection** and cause premature interpretation of the data. Systematic recording, coding and counting helped to avoid seeing non-existent connections. Although a set of factors influencing enablers and constraints were suggested, specific relationships among factors were not defined before data collection and analysis.

- **Limited witnessing of performance**. This research relies mainly on respondents' accounts. That is why triangulation is central to it. Interviews were complemented with extensive bibliographical research drawn from diverse sources of information, such as emails, internal and external documents, and news.

- The **social context biases respondents**. In advocacy communities, advocates did not criticise their partners, and decision makers were cautious in criticising NGOs or the Colombian government. The researcher's familiarity with the language and local culture contribute to making sense of the observations and facilitate questioning about sensitive issues.

Objectivity refers to the relative independence of the results from particularities of the researcher. In relation to objectivity, the following tactics were used:

- The research is influenced by the **personal characteristics and orientations** of researchers and respondents, and the interactions between these two. Nevertheless, the data is sufficiently specified, so that readers can make their own judgments about the objectivity of findings. To enhance objectivity, respondent validation was used three times during the course of this research, with respondents from Aid International, domestic NGOs and decision makers. There were no major concerns about the findings and useful feedback was received.

- **Coding is influenced by researchers' bias**. In this research, coding categories are not mutually exclusive. It is a '*promiscuous coding*' (Stewart 1998). Providing definitions of the codes used, and contrasting evidence from different sources of information aim to reduce the researcher's bias. An effort was made to transcend the researcher's own perspectives, in particular her political perspectives. A two-step coding contributed to this: First, coding was based on the Information Ecology model; and second, on the SLC phases. The set of codes was refined during analysis.

Perspicacity refers to the applicability of insights elsewhere. In order to achieve perspicacity, the researcher should aim to a) delineate the findings so as to clarify when and where they apply and b) seek reorienting or disconfirming observations in existing theory (Stewart 1998). In relation to perspicacity, the following tactics were used:

- **The results of this research are potentially sensitive to its context**, most obviously, to the delicate security situation in Colombia. However, it could also be argued that extreme situations allow the process and its effects on knowledge to be

'*transparently observable*' (Eisenhardt 1989). The research design allowed for the specific influence of context sensitive factors, such as insecurity, on the SLC to be highlighted. Another issue that contributes to the perspicacity of this research is that several enablers and constraints of our initial framework were specified using existing literature (Eisenhardt 1989). It is expected that these enablers and constraints will apply in other inter-organisational environments with similar conditions.

- The insights from this research come from a **single perspective**. This limitation was intended to be overcome by intense consideration of the data. First, the data was open coded with the help of software for qualitative analysis (Atlas Ti). Segments from the same code were placed together in displays (matrices), allowing the first reflections to emerge. After this, using displays, the constraints associated with specific phases of the SLC (second-order coding) within each group of interviewees were analysed. Data from each group was then integrated in the cross-case analysis.

- Some authors have expressed concern about the difficulties of **generalising insights from single case studies** (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 1989). However, as Yin states, case studies are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes, and what is often forgotten is that bias can also enter into the conduct of experiments and other research strategies, such as designing questionnaires (Yin 1989).

Theoretical sampling facilitated efficient interviewing. The choice of advocacy communities was appropriate as information and knowledge is not only the support for exchange but also its objective. The focus on a particular advocacy campaign was highly beneficial as there was an intensive exchange of knowledge among participants

during the data collection. The two levels of analysis used, intra and inter organisational, facilitated triangulation during analysis.

10.3.2 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The findings of this research have the following limitations associated with the research design and methods:

- This research focuses on decision makers, INGOs and domestic NGOs. The views of other advocacy stakeholders, such as affected populations, the media and the general public, are not covered.

- The SLC proves useful in offering insights into the creation and sharing of knowledge. However, methodological limitations make it difficult to gather data about the phases of codification and abstraction and to analyse them separately. The results from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Briggs and Briggs-Myers 1998; Briggs-Myers 2000) in Aid International are then used to triangulate the researcher's interpretation of codification and abstraction preferences.

- The research method has limitations in distinguishing individual mindsets and organisational ideologies. In addition to the guidelines provided by the definitions, the

decision rule used was that individual mindsets, as the name indicates, have an individual dimension, whereas organisational ideologies have a collective dimension.

- Observations are focused on one area of Aid International. Information ecologies could vary from one area to another but this does not affect the validity and applicability of the framework.

- The fact that the donors process for Colombia is not a priority for advocacy communities influences the amount of time and resources that advocates dedicate to it, and how knowledge is created and shared in this context. Nevertheless, the low priority of the process is representative of similar projects and does not indicate that similar constraints are not going to be present in top priority initiatives.

- In terms of the coverage of the embedded case study, for a single researcher it is possible to do only a limited number of interviews, and analyse a limited number of documents. Some limitations will therefore come from those selections as well.

- '*Given the multiplicity of knowledge assets that a firm deals with and the number and complexity of information fields that these give rise to, it is unrealistic to hope for a single, unified representation of a firm's learning processes*' (Boisot 1998). This research aims to contribute to the understanding of the kinds of SLCs that advocacy communities tend to generate, and does not claim to provide a single representation of advocacy communities' learning processes.

10.3.3 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESEARCH ANALYSIS

The findings of this research have the following limitations associated with the research analysis:

- In this research, the use of counting does not mean to be statistically reliable. Frequencies and importance are tools to identify patterns in the data. They help to prevent the researcher from being '*carried away by vivid but false impressions of qualitative data*' (Eisenhardt 1989).

- The results of this research are influenced by how different stakeholders perceive the enablers and constraints, e.g. decision makers did not perceive constraints relating to codification and abstraction, or impacting. Also, the larger number of interviewees at Aid International - compared to other groups interviewed - may be associated with the larger number of enablers and constraints identified by this group. Constraints to diffusion are also more familiar for respondents and easier to articulate than constraints to impacting.

- The results of this research are affected by the number of factors identified for each of the variables of the Information Ecology framework (e.g. knowledge architecture has fewer variables than knowledge culture).

10.4 POTENTIAL FUTURE RESEARCH

The following areas offer compelling opportunities for expanding and revising the results obtained in this research:

- **Focusing on a particular variable of the Information Ecology model of this research**. Further understanding about knowledge creation and sharing could be obtained by focusing on a specific group of enablers and constraints (e.g. knowledge workers), and seeing how they are manifested in the SLC.

- **Looking at enablers and constraints in and between other transactional structures**. The validity of this framework will be extended when tested in other types of information environments (e.g. other industries). Further research could expand on the understanding of enablers and constraints associated with each of the four institutional transactional types identified by Boisot: Markets, bureaucracies, clans and fiefs. It could also focus on which particular enablers and constraints are manifested in exchanges between specific transactional structures.

- **Sampling priority initiatives**. The fact that the donors process for Colombia is not a priority for advocacy communities influences the amount of time and resources that advocates dedicate to it, and how knowledge is created and shared in this context. It would be interesting to see which blockages emerge to the creation and sharing of knowledge in priority initiatives.

10.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research has made significant contributions in at least three respects: a) It has extended existing theory within the research domain; b) it has identified managerial implications of value to practitioners; and c) it has opened opportunities for new research within its area. In doing so, I believe this research has fulfilled the requirements for the degree of DPhil.

APPENDIX

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- Appendix 1: Background to case study
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11.1 APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND TO CASE STUDY

11.1.1 INTRODUCTION: NGO POLICY ADVOCACY COMMUNITIES IN THE UK AND COLOMBIA

This appendix provides background information to the case study. The first and second sections focus on UK and Colombian advocacy communities. Brief accounts of the origins of the non-profit sectors in the UK and Colombia and their increasing participation in advocacy activities are presented. Topics such as the size and structure of the UK and Colombia non-profit sectors, their sources of income and the characteristics of their workforce are discussed. The aim is to describe the external environments in which the advocacy communities studied operate, in order to understand better the enablers and constraints that could originate from these particular environments.

The third section of this appendix introduces the process of donors meetings in Colombia, which goes back to 2000, when the first donors meeting around Plan Colombia took place in Madrid.

11.1.2 THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR IN THE UK AND ITS ROLE IN ADVOCACY

11.1.2.1 A brief account

From the 17th until the beginning of the 20th century, the delivery of social services in the UK was dominated by the non-profit sector (Kendall and Knapp 1993). Non-profit organisations have been involved in advocacy and campaigning since the 18th centuries, e.g. anti-slavery campaigns; campaigns on prison reform; and campaigns for the prevention of cruelty to animals and children (Taylor 1999).

In the 19th century, the social pressures of the industrial revolution encouraged the establishment of the Charity Commission. This was accompanied by the creation of voluntary organisations, formed by middle class people, which combined service provision with campaigns to draw public attention to excluded segments of the population. Some of these organisations still survive, such as Barnardo's, set up in 1867.

During the Second World War, there were examples of strong partnerships between the non-profit sector and the state. This situation changed with the establishment of the

welfare state in the 1940s, when the public sector was declared the main provider of education, health and social services. In 1945, the Labour government nationalised services in charge of voluntary action, such as hospitals. This contributed to a decline of voluntary organisations over the subsequent 20 years. However, the sector assumed a function of watchdog of the new welfare state (Bryer 1999).

During the 1960s and 1970s, rapid urbanisation and immigration led the government to channel public money through community-based groups. In the meantime, a new generation of campaigning organisations, independent and critical of the state, and focused primarily on poverty issues, emerged (e.g. the World Development Movement). During this time, many of the existing INGOs were created. Some INGOs set up dedicated public affairs units, which developed links with MPs, officials and other NGOs, as well as publishing materials to influence corporations and governments on social development issues (Bryer 1999).

In 1979, the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher committed to limiting the role of the state in social provision, allocating to non-profit organisations tasks previously in the hands of official organisations. The 1980s saw the expansion of tax concessions - due in part to the non-profit organisations' own lobby. In 1992, John Major's government introduced the Charities Acts of 1992 and 1993, which modernised the regulatory environment for the sector and facilitated public donations. This period is also characterised by calls from the government for greater efficiency and accountability of the sector.

In 1990, a survey of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) found that 77% of non-profit organisations were involved in advocacy-related activities[52]. In 1996, the advocacy role of non-profit organisations was recognised as essential for a 'healthy democracy' in the report 'Meeting the Challenge of Change: Voluntary Action into the 21st century', best known as the Deakin Report[53] (NCVO 1996). Tony Blair's government is increasingly involving non-profit organisations in the design and implementation of policy (Kendall 2003).

In the environmental arena, both critical NGOs (e.g. Greenpeace) and more traditional NGOs (e.g. the National Trust) have contributed to increasing awareness and have influenced specific policies, e.g. the 1981 and 2000 Wildlife and Countryside Acts (Alger 1990). Other examples of successful NGO advocacy are the definition of a code of conduct for the marketing of baby milks in developing countries; the campaign against landmines; and the design of some measures for special debt relief (Clark 1992; Edwards and Hulme 1992).

However, these achievements are limited if compared to the for-profit and government sectors' influence. The non-profit sector is highly fragmented and decision making is slow. Existing legislation restricts UK NGOs from taking part in politics-related activities (Taylor 1999). Researchers state that UK NGOs are not yet focused on advocacy as the principal way to increase their impact (Dolan 1992; Kendall 2003;

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[52] NCVO (1990) "Cause and effect: a survey of campaigning in the voluntary sector". National Council for Voluntary Organisations, London. Quoted by Taylor, M. (1999).

[53] The Deakin Report was written by the Independent Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector, a body created by the NCVO, and chaired by professor Nicholas Deakin, to provide a vision for the role of the voluntary sector in England. Half of the recommendations in the report were directed at the government.

Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003). So '*advocacy is seen as important, but not urgent*' (Clark 1992).

11.1.2.2 Size and structure of the non-profit sector in the UK

The size of the sector varies depending on which definition of non-profit organisations is used (see Box 1). The broad 'civil society sector' in the UK has been described as a large sector, from an international perspective. It accounts for 6.2% of all paid employment (Kendall 2003).

Box 1. Civil society organisations, voluntary organisations and charities

INGOs and domestic NGOs are part of a broader type of organisation, which has collectively been called the 'civil society sector' (Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003), 'voluntary organisations' (Kendall and Knapp 1996; NCVO 2004) or 'charities' (Charity Commission 1999). Although these concepts refer to different groups of organisations, they are sometimes used interchangeably.

For Salamon et. al (Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003), civil society organisations refer to a broad collection of organisations that are private (i.e. outside the institutional structure of government); not primarily commercial or destined to distribute profits; self-governing; and that people are free to join or support voluntarily. Civil society organisations are therefore expected to serve some public or community purpose, not simply to generate profits for those involved in them. Religious and educational organisations are included in this definition.

In the UK, charities and voluntary organisations are regulated by the Charity Commission, which states that in order to have charitable status, organisations need to meet two fundamental criteria: The main purpose must be exclusively and legally charitable; and the organisation must also be for the benefit of the community or an 'appreciably important' section of the community (Charity Commission 2001). Cooperatives, sports and social clubs, and trade unions are included in this definition.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) uses the definition of 'general charities' as the base for producing the statistics for its 'UK Voluntary Sector Almanac' (NCVO 2004). The NCVO describes general charities as private, non-profit making organisations, which are independent from government and the corporate sector; do not distribute profits to shareholders; have a wider public benefit that goes beyond membership; and are predominantly non-religious bodies. Approximately 40% of the organisations in the Charity Commission register are excluded by this definition (Jas 2002).

According to the NCVO's UK Voluntary Sector Almanac 2004, there were approximately 98,000 'general charities' and voluntary organisations in the UK in 1991. This number increased to 153,000 in 2002 (NCVO 2004).

In 2000, the 'general charities' paid workforce totalled 563,000, 2% of the total UK workforce (Jas 2002). In 2002, this number increased to 569,000, two-thirds in full-time employment, and mostly in medium and large organisations (NCVO 2004).

By 2002, it was estimated that 70% of 'general charities' operated at local level (Jas 2002), and that approximately 8% of 'general charities' were involved in advocacy, information and research as *primary* activities. These advocate organisations shared 10% of the sector's total income (Jas 2002).

11.1.2.3 Sources of income

A favourable economic environment over the last ten years has contributed to growth in the UK voluntary sector's income. It is estimated that the gross income of UK 'general charities' for 2001 was £15.6 billion. This represents an increase of 37.7% or £3.7 billion in real terms from 1991 (Jas 2002).

90% of the UK voluntary sector's income is concentrated in large organisations (organisations with over £100,000 of annual income), which only represent 10% of the sector (Jas 2002). The two largest sources of income for the sector are official funding, mainly in the form of governmental grants and contracts, and private grants and

donations from the public (NCVO 2004). An increasing part of the official funding has been directed to advocacy activities.

The OECD countries are giving greater importance to civil society groups' role in advocacy (Development Co-operation Directorate DAC 2003). The Department for International Development (DFID) - the UK governmental agency in charge of official development assistance - created in 1999 the 'Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF)' to support UK INGOs' advocacy-oriented activities in recipient countries. The fund aims to encourage civil society organisations in recipient countries to engage in local and national decision making processes, and to improve their linkages to international civil society organisations. In 2000, £4 million was allocated to support 100 initiatives (Development Co-operation Directorate DAC 2001).

11.1.2.4 UK NGOs' workforces

It is estimated that 69% of UK NGOs have a formal policy to encourage their staff to undertake training and learning opportunities. However, some of the main weaknesses of the broad voluntary sector are in management skills, particularly in IT (50% of organisations); strategic 'planning and forward thinking' (40% of organisations); monitoring and evaluation (31%); and project management (29%). Other skill-gaps include promotion and publicity (35%); communication skills (30%); and lobbying (20%) (Jas 2002). Many of these skills are key for advocacy work.

11.1.2.5 The use of ICTs by UK NGOs

Although the use of ICTs in advocacy initiatives is increasing, it is not equally distributed. UK NGOs have been slow to respond to new technologies: Only 50% of organisations have a website (Jas 2002). The integration of ICTs with NGOs' core business activities remains low, and a significant proportion of the NGO sector is failing to exploit the potential of ICTs, especially in areas such as the improvement of internal governance, knowledge management, the geographical relocation of work, customer services, and the strengthening of alliances (Burt and Taylor 1999).

A survey of 366 UK NGOs found that fewer than 35% of organisations use ICTs to provide information to stakeholders; fewer than 3% enable stakeholders to participate in the internal policy process using mechanisms such as electronic voting; just 7% of organisations employ ICTs in inter-organisational data exchange; and a similar percentage engages in electronic liaison with NGO partners (Burt and Taylor 1999).

11.1.2.6 The legal framework of NGO advocacy in the UK

Since 1997, there have been changes in tax measures favourable to non-profit organisations, aimed at simplifying the tax system and encouraging charitable giving[54] (Jas 2002). Tax concessions account for up to 30% of a non-profit's income. Charities also have the opportunity to apply for public funds.

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[54] The office in charge of policies towards the non-profit sector is the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU), which belongs to the Cabinet Office.

Charitable organisations engaged in '*improper political activities*' could lose their tax privileges (Charity Commission 1999). Although the Charity Commission has issued guidelines, the distinction between what is a proper political activity and what is not is not totally clear in practice (Kendall and Knapp 1996).

According to the Charity Commission's guidelines, the promotion of human rights, within or outside the UK, is a charitable purpose by itself, and can be pursued by UK INGOs whether or not human rights are acknowledged in the domestic law of the countries in which these organisations work. Charities can also undertake political activity '*which is incidental and subsidiary to the achievement of the charitable purposes*'. However, promoting a change in the law or government policy is a political rather than a charitable purpose. An organisation set up for that purpose could not, therefore, be a charity under British law (Charity Commission 1999; Charity Commission 2003).

Some authors consider that the current charitable status is constraining UK INGOs from shifting their emphasis from development and relief projects to advocacy (Dolan 1992; Taylor 1999). Organisations have overcome this in different ways: Either by not applying for charitable status and creating a separate non-charitable campaigning structure (e.g. Liberty and Amnesty International), or by joining other organisations in a legally separate campaigning alliance (Kendall and Knapp 1996; Taylor 1999).

11.1.3 THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR IN COLOMBIA AND ITS ROLE IN ADVOCACY

11.1.3.1 A brief account

The origins of the non-profit sector in Colombia are closely linked to the role of the Catholic Church in welfare provision during the colonial period (15th to 19th centuries). The Spanish Crown delegated to the Church the administration of education, hospitals, orphanages and hospices. Evangelisation, the maintenance of social order and charity were the principles guiding those activities (Villar, List et al. 1999).

During the mid-to-late 19th century - a period of government by the Liberal party - the responsibility for welfare provision was partly transferred to municipal governments. Private charitable organisations appeared, financed by a mix of private and public money, such as the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and the Workers' Circle (*Circulo de Obreros*). In 1886, the Conservative party returned to power, re-established the role of the Church in the social welfare area and declared the Roman Catholic religion as the official religion in the country.

This period of Conservative government ended in 1930. Liberal party reforms followed in the social and economic areas, which intended to secularise the state. Once again, the provision of social welfare was declared to be a governmental task. A favourable legal environment promoted the creation of the first workers' and cooperative movements (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992). The Catholic Church allied with the Conservative party

to oppose these reforms. Tension increased between Liberals and Conservatives. The polarisation of society led to a period of civil conflict known as The Violence (*La Violencia)*[55].

The military seized the government from 1953-1957. During this period, tensions between the political parties declined. Conservative and Liberal leaders in 1958 established the National Front (*Frente Nacional*), an agreement to alternate in government to prevent politically motivated violence. The National Front lasted until 1974, and although it contributed to a decrease in political violence, it also brought about the loss of legitimacy of political institutions and the reduction in the capacity of the political parties to channel citizens' demands.

During the National Front, various civil society organisations emerged, such as the Family Compensation Funds (*Cajas de Compensación Familiar*); the Community Action Groups (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*); and the women's and peasants' organisations. The Family Compensation Funds were created by the National Industrialist Association in 1954 to distribute subsidies for workers' families. The Action Groups, also created in the 1950s, were a governmental initiative to provide a social space for citizen expression on community affairs[56].

The most significant peasant organisation was the National Peasant Association (*Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos* - ANUC). It was created in 1968 as

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[55] It is estimated that 300,000 Colombians died as a result of the widespread political violence between Liberals and Conservatives during *La Violencia*, from 1945 to 1953.

[56] The later success of the *Juntas* proved to be too much for the National Front and their growth was restricted in 1966 (Florez 1997). Despite this, they are still the most widespread type of civil society organisation in Colombia (Villar 1998).

another governmental attempt to promote organisation at the grassroots. The ANUC provided peasants with credit and technical assistance, and aimed to give them a voice in public debates. This organisation became more militant and began pressing for agrarian reforms, until 1972, when the Conservative government dismantled a significant part of the existing agrarian reform and the ANUC split (Ritchey-Vance 1991).

In the 1970s, indigenous organisations and corporate foundations became more visible. The former were invigorated with the creation in 1971 of the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council (*Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca* - CRIC). Corporate foundations focused on fostering economic development via the promotion of micro enterprises or educational programmes. Some of them created separate companies to generate resources, e.g. *Fundación Social* and *Fundación para la Educación Superior* - FES (Smith 1985; Ritchey-Vance 1991).

The 1960s and 1970s also witnessed the emergence of a new group of non-profit organisations influenced by progressive movements of the church; by intellectuals or ordinary citizens increasingly dissatisfied with the government's inability to deal with social problems; and by the lack of political space in the context of the National Front. This group of organisations, which usually receive the name of 'NGOs' (*ONGs or 'o-ene-ges'*, was more interested in promoting self-help participatory development than in providing charity (Villar, List et al. 1999); some of them considered themselves 'anti-establishment' (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992).

Box 2. Colombia human development and poverty indices

Colombia is ranked 73rd of 177 countries in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI), and 10th of 95 countries in the Human Poverty Index-1 (HPI)[57]. It is estimated that between 1990 and 2002, on average 8.2% of the population lived on less than US$1 a day, and 22.6% of the population lived on less than US$2 a day (UNDP 2004). In terms of gender equality, women hold 10.8% of parliamentary seats; make up 50% of professional and technical workers, and 38% of administrators and managers.

In 1986, the process of decentralisation was regulated by the Municipal Reform Law (Law 11, 1986), which marked an important moment for domestic NGOs as it promoted community participation and facilitated NGO contracting with the state (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992). From 1986 to the 1990s, the formalisation of community participation in debates over public policies influenced NGOs' relationships with the government. The 1991 Constitution set the institutional and legal conditions for greater visibility and independence, and facilitated NGO participation and their active presence in public policy debate; in the provision of social services; and in the monitoring of governmental programmes (Villar, List et al. 1999).

The literature has documented relatively few cases of NGO advocacy in Colombia. Examples include the *Ecofondo* network, created in 1993, which has improved community participation in the design of environmental policies and the management of environmental projects; and the Colombian Association for Population Studies (*Asociación Colombiana para el Estudio de la Población* - ACEP), which focused its advocacy efforts on improving domestic workers' conditions. ACEP used strategies that included dissemination of information to domestic workers; public education

[57] The Human Development Index (HDI) combines measures of life expectancy, school enrolment, literacy and income to offer a broad view of a country's development. The Human Poverty Index-I (HPI-1) measures human poverty in developing countries and focuses on health, access to education, living standards and the proportion of people below a certain income level. For both indices, a smaller number means better performance in the index.

campaigns; and interaction with public officials in the social security and labour offices. After six years of work, their efforts were rewarded with Law 11 of 1988, which made social security benefits mandatory for domestic workers (Ritchey-Vance 1991).

Other successful cases of political advocacy include campaigns such as *Viva la Ciudadanía*, launched in 1991 by a group of NGOs to promote citizen information and participation in the context of the drafting of the 1991 Constitution; the *Bosconia/La Florida* programme with street children and the *Fundación Granja Taller*'s work with mentally ill, homeless people. *Bosconia* and *Granja Taller* tested methods of work that were later adopted by the government in public programmes (Ritchey-Vance 1991). There have also been successful cases of hybrid programmes, which are promoted by the government and based on community organisations, such as the 70,000 Family Welfare Homes (*Hogares de Bienestar Familiar*), which undertake child assistance activities for 1.2 million children (Villar 1998).

Human rights and peace NGOs in Colombia are increasingly active in advocacy activities. The most prominent include the Colombian Commission of Jurists (*Comisión Colombiana de Juristas - CCJ*) and the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (*Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo*), which are focused on defending human rights through legal analysis and casework; the Jesuit-founded Centre for Popular Research and Education (*Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular - CINEP*), which manages the country's largest and most influential database of human rights violations; the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (*Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos - CPDH*), which provides support and assistance to victims of human rights violations; the Association of

Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons (*Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos y Desaparecidos - ASFADDES*), the country's leading voice in demanding justice for the disappeared; the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (*Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento - CODHES*), which advocates policies designed to prevent displacement and defend the rights of the displaced; and the Peace Network (*Redepaz*), an umbrella organisation dedicated to the promotion of peace[58].

The United States Department of State says that:

> *'Colombian human rights NGOs had an influence that far exceeded their membership or resources. By sharing information among themselves and disseminating it to international human rights organisations and the media, they raised the country's human rights profile and contributed to significant levels of international attention'* (US Department of State 2004).

11.1.3.2 Size and structure of the non-profit sector in Colombia

In Colombia, domestic NGOs have been defined as a subgroup of non-profit organisations that are:

> *'...particularly committed to service, to socioeconomic, cultural and political development, and to the promotion of self-development in poor sectors and in marginal communities'* (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992).

This definition excludes schools, universities, hospitals, family compensation funds, religious congregations, cooperatives, parent associations, trade unions, sports clubs, trade associations, and professional associations, among others. However, in practice the term 'NGO' is used to describe non-profit entities more broadly, including corporations, associations and foundations, as well as grassroots initiatives.

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[58] This list of prominent human rights and peace organisations was originally made by the US Department of State (2004).

The vigour and strength of the NGO sector in Colombia have been recognised (Smith 1985; Smith 1990; Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992). However, estimating its size and scope has proved difficult as most of the data is out of date and legislation does not oblige NGOs in Colombia to disclose their budgets and sources of funding.

The United States Department of State estimates that there are 60,000 non-profit organisations in Colombia, although some exist only on paper (US Department of State 2004). Other accounts suggest that there are as many as 74,400 including active and inactive organisations (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992). It is estimated that 39,000 non-profit organisations in Colombia are Community Action Groups (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*) and 5,000 are cooperatives[59].

In relation to domestic NGOs, a study by the Colombian Centre of Non-profit Social Benefit Entities (CIDESAL) identified 5,436 NGOs in 1990; among these are national foundations and community organisations. The study showed that 60% of these organisations were concentrated in the main cities - Bogotá, Cali and Medellín (CIDESAL 1990).

A survey of 1,371 NGOs found that their main areas of work in 1992 were health (57%); community organisation and participation - including advocacy activities (53%); education (48%); micro enterprises (37%); and assistance to handicapped persons (22%) (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992). These NGOs reported attending 10.1

[59] Source: Castañeda, A; L. López and E. Puentes. 'Los organismos no gubernamentales en Colombia: una aproximación a la dimensión de su espacio económico y social'. Informe final, proyecto FES – Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia. July 25, 1989. Quoted by Vargas et al. (1992).

million beneficiaries, with an average of 8,071 persons per organisation. 55% of the NGOs worked in urban areas; 37% in both urban and rural areas; and only 8% in rural areas. 47% of the NGOs had municipal coverage; 29% had national coverage; 15% had departmental coverage[60]; and 8% had regional coverage (two or more departments) (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992).

The Colombian non-profit sector is being studied as part of the Comparative Non-profit Sector Project (Villar, List et al. 1999; Salamon, Sokolowski et al. 2003). According to this study, Colombia shares several characteristics with other countries in Latin America, especially Argentina and Brazil, in relation to the modest size of the sector in terms of paid employment; the strong influence of the Catholic Church; and the emergence of new, more autonomous organisations in recent years.

What distinguishes the Colombian non-profit sector are its diversity and the higher levels of private philanthropy on which its organisations rely. In contrast to other Latin America countries, the non-profit sector in Colombia is relatively well developed and has a balanced composition, i.e. none of the fields of non-profit activity clearly dominates (Villar, List et al. 1999).

The non-profit sector in Colombia had operating expenditures of over $1.7 billion in 1995 (2.1% GDP), and employed nearly 287,000 full-time equivalent paid workers, almost one-third as many people as work for the government, and equal to 2.4% of total employment. Although it is one of the largest non-profit sectors in Latin America, it still falls short of the level of many developed countries (Villar, List et al. 1999).

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[60] The 32 departments are the political and administrative divisions of Colombia.

The study concludes that there is evidence of the emergence of advocacy-oriented activities, as a significant proportion of the workforce employed in service functions (e.g. the delivery of direct services such as education, health and housing) is also engaged in advocacy activities.

11.1.3.3 Sources of income

In 1995, most non-profit sector income (70%) came from fees and charges for the organisations' services (Villar, List et al. 1999), not the public sector or philanthropy, in contrast to the UK. Organisations rely on voluntary labour, rather than on government financing - similar to the rest of Latin America. It is estimated that governmental sources account for a quarter of NGO funding (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992).

Resources from international cooperation have been of limited significance for domestic NGOs in Colombia. In 1992, 0nly 8.6% of NGO income came from aid from INGOs and governments, and these funds were used by a small percentage of the organisations (5.5%) (Vargas C 1993). This situation is explained by the limited amount of development aid that Colombia receives. Since the 1990s, Colombia has been classified as a country of medium development, and as a result, it was not considered a priority country for development cooperation (Agencia Colombiana de Cooperacion International ACCI 2004). However, international funding has received increasing attention from the Colombian government in recent years (Florez 1997), as will be discussed later in the section 'Donors meetings and international aid to Colombia'.

Following a similar trend in other countries, official development assistance (ODA) is increasingly channelled through NGOs (Agencia Colombiana de Cooperacion Internacional ACCI 2003). It has been estimated that INGOs and domestic NGOs received on average 30% of ODA funds to Colombia from 2000 to 2002 (CEPEI 2003).

11.1.3.4 UK INGOs and their alliances in Colombia

The 1960s marked the arrival of the first INGOs in Colombia. During that time, bilateral aid from the United States contributed significantly to the presence of organisations such as the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, with programmes focused on technical assistance in rural areas (Meyer 1999). In the 1970s and 1980s, European INGOs became interested in Latin America, and filled the gap left by falling aid from the United States.

Vargas's study identified 111 INGO offices in Colombia in 1992 (Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992). According to the Colombian Government, specifically the Presidential Programme on Human Rights[61], INGOs have provided '*an invaluable service to Colombia*' in the investigation of human rights cases and in humanitarian activities.

INGOs currently working in Colombia include Amnesty International, International Alert, the Lawyers Committee, the Andean Commission of Jurists, Pax Christi, Diakonia, Human Rights Watch, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peace

[61] Source: The Presidential Programme for Human Rights. This office, created in 1987, is the governmental advisory entity in charge of policies related to human rights and International Humanitarian Law. For more information see http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/2index.php

Brigades International, Médecins Sans Frontières, Médecins du Monde, Save the Children, and the Norwegian Committee for Refugees. Several of these organisations are involved in advocacy activities either directly, or through supporting Colombian civil society organisations. Among the UK INGOs operating in Colombia are Oxfam, Save the Children UK, Christian Aid and Plan International.

INGOs operating in Colombia have formed alliances to coordinate their efforts and undertake advocacy initiatives. Examples of these alliances include PADEC and DIAL. PADEC (*Plataforma de Agencias para el Desarrollo en Colombia)*, is formed by four European INGOs focused on development programmes, and was established in 2002. DIAL (*Diálogo Inter-Agencial),* was formed in 1997 and aims to promote inter-agency dialogue and coordination of advocacy efforts among INGOs. Currently, DIAL is made up of five INGO members and two additional INGOs as observers. Some of the INGO members work directly with affected populations, whereas others focus on giving financial and technical support through domestic NGOs.

11.1.3.5 Colombian NGOs' workforces

Although there have been considerable efforts in personnel training, many domestic NGOs still lack the skills they need in advocacy (Villar, List et al. 1999). The limited experience of these NGOs in policy advocacy has been linked to the fact that they operate primarily at the local or regional levels - as mentioned, only 29% of NGOs have national coverage - and that governmental agencies at local or regional levels can only implement, not set policies.

The area of international cooperation is one where Colombian NGOs have particularly limited experience, if compared with other developing countries, as the country is not a priority for international aid. Efforts to strengthen NGO participation in international aid issues have, however, been implemented in recent years.

11.1.3.6 The use of ICTs by Colombian NGOs

The use of ICTs by NGOs in Colombia has only recently started, but according to a study by Funredes[62], this use is growing rapidly. Funredes' online report underlines the positive effect that ICTs are having on NGOs' sense of networking and the strengthening of communities of interest beyond national borders.

The study also underlines some obstacles that still exist for Colombian NGOs. In many cases, institutions do not have an internal computer network, and Internet and email access is limited to one machine. Very often, training is limited and support is not easily available. Communications with other NGOs and partners inside the country are generally not maintained through Internet or email, but through other media - primarily telephone, fax and face to face meetings.

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[62] Funredes is an NGO dedicated to the dissemination of ICTs in developing countries, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. For more information about Funredes see http://funredes.org. The study cited is available at http://funredes.org/is-ntic/apc.html.

11.1.3.7 The relationship between NGOs and the Colombian government

The relationship between NGOs and the Colombian government has changed over the years. Some of the non-profit organisations created by government programmes during the 1960s became the vehicles for clientelism. During the 1970s and 1980s, NGOs were mainly focused on promoting development programmes on a small scale and in this sense they were relatively independent from the government. However, this situation changed in the late 1980s and the 1990s, when new spaces for participation meant that NGOs increasingly needed to negotiate and coordinate with the government (Villar 1998).

The evolution of this relationship has nonetheless had some constant premises. On one hand Colombian politics has been dominated by elites and a two-party system that traditionally had not encouraged widespread participation in decision making (Smith 1990). In this context, some government officials consider that being 'non-governmental' means 'anti-governmental' (Landim and Thompson 1997). In 2003 the government publicly stated, and claimed to have supporting evidence, that some human rights NGOs supported guerrilla groups and were engaged in criminal activities. This statement has made relationships between domestic NGOs and the Colombian government more difficult.

On the other hand, some NGOs also feel reluctant to be too close to the government or to political parties (Smith 1985), as they believe that too much involvement with the public sector could reduce their own independence and leave them vulnerable to political pressures (Smith 1985; Vargas C, Toro A et al. 1992).

11.1.3.8 The favourable legal framework for non-profit organisations in Colombia

Tax legislation provides preferential treatment for Colombian non-profit organisations, and in 1995 the red tape to obtaining legal status was reduced for some non-profits, except for political movements and parties, religious institutions, and trade unions (Villar, List et al. 1999).

The Municipal Reform Law (Law 11 of 1986), followed by the 1991 Constitution, set up the conditions for participation of civil society organisations in the public policy debate; in the provision of social services; and in the monitoring of governmental programmes (Villar, List et al. 1999). According to Florez, two factors have driven the inclusion of NGOs by the Colombian government in the public policy debate. The first is NGOs' relationships with vulnerable groups that are the targets of these policies. The second is NGOs' favourable position for accessing funds that can complement state funds for policy implementation (Florez 1997).

By law, public entities have to call a *veeduría* in any contracting process. A *veeduría* is a group formed by citizens to monitor public expenditure by the government, public or private entities, and national or international NGOs providing public services. NGOs have been actively promoting *veedurías*, especially in relation to anti-corruption initiatives and for monitoring the execution of governmental development plans. The law also prescribes that civil society organisations take part in the National Planning Council, a forum to discuss the National Development Plan. Furthermore, the law on Citizen Participation, promulgated on 31 May 1994, authorises civil trade unions and

community organisations to forward legislative initiatives, as well as to ask for open town meetings.

11.1.3.9 Security threats to NGO members in Colombia

With the favourable legal framework for advocacy in Colombia, one might expect a high number of initiatives, and significant influence on national politics. However, one of the biggest constraints to NGO advocacy in Colombia is the security threat that both organisations and their members face when doing their jobs.

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Colombia leads the western hemisphere in reported human rights and international humanitarian law violations. Although these violations decreased in 2003 and 2004, kidnappings, indiscriminate attacks and selective killings committed by paramilitaries and guerrilla groups continue. According to human rights campaigners, alleged ties between units of the security forces and paramilitaries have not been properly addressed (Human Rights Watch 2003).

NGO members, especially members of human rights organisations, have been targets of harassment and murder by the illegal armed groups. In 2002, sixteen human rights defenders were reported killed. In 2003, thirteen human rights defenders were murdered, and several more left the country under threat (US Department of State 2003; US Department of State 2004). Threats against human rights defenders were more serious in rural areas and small towns (Human Rights Watch 2003). Statistics from

some v*eeduría* networks indicate that between the end of 2003 and the middle of 2004, 12 members were murdered, and 70 received death threats[63].

The Colombian government provided protection to over 3,000 human rights activists in 2003, but human rights groups complain that this protection programme is inadequate (US Department of State 2004). Several NGOs also claim that the government arrests human rights activists arbitrarily, particularly in highly conflictive areas; that military intelligence sees human rights work as evidence of guerrilla sympathies; and that the names of human rights defenders are kept on files (Human Rights Watch 2003).

11.1.3.10 Domestic NGOs' alliances in Colombia

Human rights and peace NGOs in Colombia have actively promoted the creation of umbrella groups such as the Colombian Coalition for Human Rights, Democracy and Development (*Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo*); the Civil Society Permanent Assembly for Peace (*Asamblea Permanente de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz*); and the Colombia Europe United States Coalition (*Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos - CCEEU*). However, efforts to group the whole NGO sector into a unique national confederation have proven difficult. Currently, the Colombian Confederation of NGOs (*Confederación Colombiana de ONGs - CCONG*) groups 1200 organisations[64].

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[63] Source: Revista Cambio. For more information see: http://www.revistacambio.com/html/informe/articulos/2573/

[64] For more information on the CCONG see http://www.ccong.org.co/index.htm

Authors have explained the lack of cooperation and coordination among Colombian NGOs in different ways. Smith argues that competition, jealousy and a protective attitude towards their programmes and funding sources has impeded Colombian NGOs from articulating their interests and broader alliances (Smith 1985). Salamon states that there exist two different sectors in Colombia: One is composed of more traditional charitable organisations linked to the social and economic elite, while the other is associated with grassroots organisations and the NGOs that support them. There are fundamental differences over philosophy and priorities that create tensions between these two sectors (Salamon, Anheier et al. 1999).

11.1.3.11 Monitoring and evaluation in Colombian NGOs

The panorama for domestic NGOs in Colombia does not differ much from what the literature describes to be the case globally in relation to limited monitoring and evaluation. For Ritchey-Vance, the problem with evaluation programmes '*lies essentially in determining what to measure*' (Ritchey-Vance 1991). Unfavourable working conditions - in particular unstable and low salaries, and uncertainties around the obtaining of funds may also contribute to the limited strength of Colombian NGOs' evaluation programmes (Florez 1997).

11.1.4 DONORS MEETINGS AND INTERNATIONAL AID TO COLOMBIA

Donors meetings are international gatherings that aim to bring together beneficiary countries, the donor community, multilateral organisations and civil society with the purposes of building a consensus on development priorities and of coordinating financial and technical assistance to a beneficiary country, countries or regions. Donors meetings originated in the 1960s, but became more widely used in Latin America at the end of 1990s, when they were called following the disaster caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Colombia began with the Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance or Rio Treaty in 1947, which intended to provide a collective security mechanism for the Western hemisphere prior to the Second World War, and the Alliance for Progress, launched by United States president John F. Kennedy in 1961, which sought to encourage the adoption of anti-poverty policies that would increase the legitimacy of Latin American governments and prevent communist revolution. Initially, these international resources were focused on housing and school-building projects, followed by support for education, land reform and other social reform initiatives (Fajardo 2003).

By 1968, thanks to coffee and oil bonanzas, Colombia needed less aid from its main donor, the United States. During the 1980s, ODA to Colombia reached low levels, averaging close to US$60 million per year. In the 1990s, The World Bank classified Colombia as a country with medium development and, as a result, it was no longer

considered a priority country for development cooperation (Agencia Colombiana de Cooperacion International ACCI 2004). However, during the 1990s, the effects of the production and trafficking of illegal drugs and the long-standing internal war with guerrilla groups led the Colombian Government to present to the international community special plans for cooperation in order to increase aid levels. One of these plans was the controversial Plan Colombia.

11.1.4.1 Plan Colombia and the donors meetings

Plan Colombia was launched during the presidency of Andres Pastrana (1998-2002) in response to increasing concerns about the effects of the production and trafficking of illegal drugs on Colombia's internal conflict and development. The Plan is a government strategy focused on achieving peace and stability through four main lines of activity: a) negotiation of the internal armed conflict; b) antidrugs operations, c) economic and social recovery; and d) institutional strengthening [65].

The execution of Plan Colombia required resources of at least US$7.500 million, US$3,500 million of which were expected to be contributions from the international community. The Support Group for the Peace Process, made up of donor countries and international organisations, was created and a series of donors meetings were held in Madrid (7 July 2000), Bogotá (24 October 2000) and Brussels (30 April 2001).

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[65] For more information see Plan Colombia web site: http://www.plancolombia.gov.co/contenido/plan_colombia/antecedentes.html

The United States has played a major part in financing the implementation of Plan Colombia in an effort to reduce the entry of drugs into the United States. During the Clinton administration, authorisation for $1.3 billion of aid was obtained, the majority of which (70%) was approved for use in funding military aspects of the Plan (Fajardo 2003). By contrast, European support towards Plan Colombia has been more limited, with several countries having concerns about the effects of the Plan's military components on the civilian population.

11.1.4.2 The Madrid meeting, 7 July 2000

The Committee on Latin America (COLAT) of the European Council of Ministers dedicated two meetings, in April and May 2000, to trying to find a common European position towards the Plan. The Colombian Government held a meeting in Geneva with European officials and European and Colombian NGOs in a late attempt to address European countries' concerns. However, in London, during a meeting called by the UK government on 19 June 2000 to prepare a common approach for the Madrid meeting, it was clear that the majority of European countries would not support the Plan (Transnational Institute 2001).

INGOs' and domestic NGOs' advocacy efforts were visible at both the COLAT meeting and the meeting in London in June 2000. The day before the Madrid meeting, INGOs and NGOs took part in what was called 'an alternative round table' and rejected the Plan, arguing that it had not been discussed democratically, and that its military and social components were incompatible.

According to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which is in charge of the Technical Secretariat of the Support Group for the Peace Process, the Madrid meeting ended with strong political support for the Colombian Government and a financial commitment of US$871 million for economic and humanitarian programmes (Inter-American Development Bank 2000). However, this sum has been questioned:

> *'Only the US$100 million from Aznar's government was a genuine 'contribution', while US$771 million were either loans, conditional aid or funds that had already been destined for Colombia but were simply renamed'* (Transnational Institute 2001).

On 22 October 2000, a group of Colombian peace and human rights NGOs (Paz Colombia) held the 'International meeting on Peace, Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law' in San José, Costa Rica in support of the peace process. Representatives from business and the government also attended.

This event managed to reunite divided Colombian peace and human rights groups, especially members from the regions, and send a message to donors about the strong opposition that Plan Colombia was facing from civil society organisations (Isacson 2000). In the context of this meeting, some European delegates announced an estimated 250 million euro aid package from Europe, separate from Plan Colombia, which would be channelled through INGOs and domestic NGOs.

11.1.4.3 The Bogotá meeting, 24 October 2000

At the Support Group follow-up meeting in Bogotá on 24 October 2000, the European Union took distance from Plan Colombia. European Union officials visited Colombia with the intention of facilitating dialogue between the Colombian government and guerrilla groups. Peace negotiations re-initiated in March 2001 with the participation of a facilitation group formed by four European countries (Sweden, Norway, France and Spain) plus Cuba, Canada, Mexico and Venezuela.

On 1 February 2001, the European Parliament approved a resolution on 'Plan Colombia and Support for the Peace Process'[66], in which it rejected Plan Colombia, considering it as a bilateral affair between Colombia and the United States, and warning that it contains aspects that run counter to European Union cooperation programmes in the country.

11.1.4.4 The Brussels meeting, 30 April 2001

The third meeting of the Support Group for the Peace Process took place in Brussels and was preceded by a meeting held by INGOs, domestic NGOs and civil society organisations on 26 and 27 April. In a declaration issued at the end of the Brussels meeting, donor countries granted political support for the peace efforts of President

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[66] See complete text of the resolution at http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/colombia/doc/ep01_02_01.htm

Pastrana, called all parties of the conflict to reach a ceasefire, and manifested their concerns at violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The European Union announced that it would spend 330 million euros on social and peace initiatives in Colombia. Of that contribution, 140 million euros corresponded to aid from the European Commission, which launched a 'peace laboratory' project in the Magdalena Medio area to support the implementation of peace agreements, as well as projects on human rights, displaced people, children involved in conflict, and alternative development. The United States made a pledge of US$146 million.

11.1.4.5 The collapse of the Colombian peace process

During 2001, peace negotiations with guerrilla and paramilitary groups made little progress. The ELN and the FARC continued to kidnap civilians and attack rural and urban areas, raising doubts about their commitment to the peace process. After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the United States Government exerted pressure on the Colombian government to harden its position against the ELN and the FARC, officially labelled 'terrorist groups' by the United States government (Fajardo 2003).

In February 2002, the FARC hijacked a domestic flight and kidnapped senator Jorge Gechem, president of the Senate Peace Commission. In response, president Pastrana called an end to the three-year long peace process, removed the FARC's political status and stepped up military operations. The FARC responded by increasing attacks (Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2003).

In May 2002, Alvaro Uribe was elected president for the period 2002-2006. He promised a hard line response to the illegal armed groups. The FARC responded with mortar attacks on the presidential palace and a military compound in Bogotá, killing 21 civilians. The United States Government confirmed its support for the new Colombian government and removed limitations for using United States-funded military hardware only for drug control operations, to include operations against guerrilla groups (Fajardo 2003). In June 2002, the European Union added the ELN and the FARC to its list of terrorist organisations, motivated by evidence that guerrillas were involved in training fighters and in making weapons (Human Rights Watch 2003).

The Government of President Uribe continued implementing Plan Colombia, but the resources needed for its full implementation were limited due to fiscal constraints. The support of the international community was seen as vital for the continuation of the Plan. At the beginning of 2003, the UK government offered for the second time to host in London a preparatory meeting of the Support Group for the Peace Process, with a view to a fourth donors meeting. Under the new Colombian government, the Support Group for the Peace Process received the name International Cooperation Board for Colombia, or Group of 24 countries (G24).

11.1.5 MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION BOARD FOR COLOMBIA, LONDON, 9 - 10 JULY 2003: THE LONDON MEETING

The meeting of the International Cooperation Board for Colombia or G24 held in London on 9 - 10 July 2003, is the focus of our case study. In the context of this research, this meeting in London is known as **the London meeting**. The London meeting is part of the preparations for the fourth donors meeting held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in February 2005. Interviews and data collection concentrate on a one-year period of INGOs' and domestic NGOs' advocacy work, from February 2003 to February 2004.

The following account of the process of the London meeting does not mean to be exhaustive but aims to provide the reader with background information about the nature and development of the specific setting studied.

11.1.5.1 The London meeting process

11.1.5.1.1 Before the London meeting

After lobbying by UK INGOs, the UK and Colombian governments agreed to call a meeting on 9 July, the day before the London meeting, where domestic NGOs and civil society organisations could present their views to the international community and to the Colombian government. However, several domestic NGOs and INGOs complained

that this invitation arrived too late: Only in June did the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation (ACCI) inform domestic NGOs about the donors conference. Some domestic NGOs and INGOs were not convinced about the value of attending the London meeting, as they saw the process as manipulative and lacking commitment by the Colombian government. Nonetheless, the view that '*critical engagement was a more productive approach that at least allowed access to decision making platforms*' won[67].

In June 2003, a group of 30 domestic NGOs met President Uribe to discuss the human rights situation in Colombia. The President made clear in this meeting that its agenda on international aid, focused on obtaining support for the Democratic Security Policy, was not going to change. NGO delegates interpreted this response as a lack of willingness on the part of Uribe's government to listen to civil society. This opinion was reinforced when the Colombian government appointed CEPEI (*Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional*) as coordinator of the 9 July meeting. Some domestic NGOs believed that CEPEI was a biased organisation, which supported the Colombian government's agenda, and campaigned for the UNDP office in Colombia to fulfil the role of coordinator of the 9 July meeting. Domestic NGOs achieved their objective: CEPEI's role in the London meeting was narrowed to a logistical support role for the 9 July event.

As part of the consultation process with civil society organisations prior to the London meeting, domestic NGOs met with representatives of the business sector and agreed on some topics for the meeting, but failed to sign a common statement. Nevertheless, the

[67] Source: Personal communication of INGO director.

unsigned agreement between the business sector and NGOs was regarded by embassies and international organisations in Colombia as an achievement.

As places for the London meeting were limited, domestic NGOs and INGOs had to choose a group of delegates. Interviewees argue that only on 3 July did the Colombian government deliver to the UNDP office the definitive number of available places for domestic NGOs. On 6 July, domestic NGOs' delegates travelled from Colombia to the UK, and were still discussing their joint position paper for the London meeting during the flight. At their arrival in the UK, the NGO delegates found CEPEI's arrangements for transport, accommodation and meeting rooms inadequate.

11.1.5.1.2 The 9 July meeting

The Colombian government hosted the meeting on 9 July. Advocates were dissatisfied with donor countries' turnout - just six of 24 donor countries' representatives attended. Some INGOs and domestic NGOs argued that the invitations from the Colombian government to donor governments' representatives for the 9 July meeting were only issued a few days before the meeting, making it unlikely that these representatives would be able to attend.

During the meeting, the Colombian government focused on showing the positive results of the Democratic Security Policy, whereas domestic NGO delegates emphasised the negative consequences of that strategy on the civilian population, and the escalation of

the internal conflict. At the end of the meeting, INGOs and domestic NGOs chose their representatives for the meeting with governments the following day.

11.1.5.1.3 The 10 July meeting

The UK government hosted the 10 July meeting. It was designed to be a debate between the Colombian Government and donor governments about what the priorities for international cooperation to Colombia were. The representatives of INGOs and NGOs were allocated some time to present their views. At the end of his speech, the representative of domestic NGOs emphasised that if the international community were to give political support to the Colombian government, domestic NGOs would like to be excluded from the declaration of the meeting. According to countries' representatives, this was an unwise move.

The result of the meeting was a public statement known as the 'London Declaration', in which donor countries and international organisations gave political support to the Colombian Government in its efforts to address the internal conflict; defined six lines for international cooperation with Colombia; called for the respect of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties involved in the conflict; and committed to reviewing their own cooperation programmes with a view to the fourth donors meeting , eventually held in 2005 in Colombia (see Box 3 'London Declaration').

Advocates' reactions to the London Declaration were diverse. Some of them felt disappointed by the support of the international community for the Colombian

government. Others felt that there were positive points in the Declaration. After the meeting, the representative of domestic NGOs argued with the Colombian Vice President about the inclusion of domestic NGOs and civil society groups in the Declaration. A representative from an international organisation called other domestic NGOs and asked them whether they supported the view of their representative. A domestic NGO director disapproved of his representative's behaviour and the story was carried by the Colombian media, where domestic NGOs were portrayed as a divided group.

Box 3. 'London Declaration' of the preparatory meeting of the International Cooperation Board for Colombia, London, 9 and 10 July 2003: The London meeting

Senior representatives of the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the European Union, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America, and of the European Commission, the United Nations agencies, the Andean Development Corporation, Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Bank met in London on 10 July to discuss the situation in Colombia. All representatives present reaffirmed their strong political support for the Colombian Government in its efforts to address threats to democracy, terrorism, illegal drugs, human rights and international humanitarian law violations, and the serious humanitarian crisis.

The meeting was opened by Bill Rammell MP, Minister responsible for relations with Latin America in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The Vice President and the Foreign Minister of Colombia attended the meeting and set out their Government's strategy and vision for the future.

The meeting welcomed and acknowledged the views of civil society, which were presented by ABColombia and a representative of Colombian civil society.

All government representatives present expressed their full support for the democratically elected Colombian Government and for all the efforts to develop fully functioning institutions of a democratic state throughout its territory, based on respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and the welfare and safety of all citizens, and to reform the country's institutions. They expressed their support for the Colombian Government in its fight against conflict-related violence and illegal drug production and trafficking, underlining the need in so doing to respect the rule of law, human rights and, when applicable, international humanitarian law.

They welcomed President Uribe's commitment to seek a negotiated solution to the internal conflict in Colombia, including through direct engagement with those illegal armed groups prepared to negotiate a peace agreement. They underlined the importance of the contribution of the UN. They offered their full continuing support to the good offices of the UN Secretary-General, and thanked the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Colombia for his contribution.

They expressed their willingness to provide practical help to the Colombian Government and the UN in peace efforts. They called upon all the illegal armed groups to agree to a ceasefire and to enter a serious negotiating process to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. They condemned all violent acts against the civilian population and elected representatives and called for the release of kidnap victims, and the halting of narcotics trafficking.

They expressed deep concern about the humanitarian crisis in Colombia, particularly the plight of internally displaced persons, as well as the grave human rights and international humanitarian law situation. They voiced their strong support for the work undertaken by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia. They noted with satisfaction the Colombian Government's pledge to implement the recommendations made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. They urged the Colombian Government to implement these recommendations promptly and to take effective action against impunity and collusion, especially with paramilitary groups.

They welcomed the efforts of President Uribe to reform Colombian institutions in order to develop a fully functioning democratic state throughout its territory, based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, the safety and welfare of its citizens, social and economic reform and sustainable economic development. They emphasised the importance of such measures, especially in rural areas that have borne the brunt of the conflict, in helping to achieve a peaceful solution. They noted the significant role that the private sector could play in meeting some of these challenges.

They welcomed the Colombian Government's statement that it recognised and supported the role of civil society and non-governmental organisations as important stakeholders in carrying out reform, implementing development programmes, defending human rights and moving towards a negotiated settlement of the internal armed conflict. They further welcomed and underlined the importance of the Colombian Government's pledge to protect civil society leaders, including of trade unions, who have suffered threats against themselves and their families.

Finally, they agreed to review and refocus their cooperation programmes with particular emphasis on contributing to the strengthening of state institutions, the alleviation of the humanitarian crisis, the protection of human rights, environmental activities, and the development of alternatives to drug production. Having taken careful note of the Colombian Government's priorities in these areas, they agreed to consider how to make their cooperation programmes more effective in light of the current situation in Colombia, with a view to a donors' coordination conference to be organised by the Inter-American Development Bank at a date convenient to the Colombian Government and the donor community.

10 July 2003

11.1.5.1.4 Events post-London meeting

After the London meeting on 10 July, the UNDP office in Colombia committed to working with domestic NGOs and civil society groups in organising follow up meetings with embassies and international organisations in Bogotá, and to facilitating dialogue between civil society and the Colombian government, in the preparation process prior to the fourth donors meeting in Cartagena. In the meantime, INGOs defined a work plan for lobbying embassies in Colombia.

In September, a group of 80 domestic NGOs published 'The Authoritarian Spell' (Plataforma Colombia 2003), a report about the human rights balance in the first year of Uribe's presidency, which portrayed an unfavourable image of the Colombian government. Following this publication, President Uribe accused some domestic NGOs of being allies of rebel groups. Donor countries' representatives criticised this speech, as they thought it could place human rights NGOs at increased risk of attack. Meanwhile, La Alianza, an advocacy network of NGOs and civil society organisations that attended the London meeting, was taking shape.

In October, the Colombian government launched working groups or '*mesas temáticas*', a consultation mechanism where domestic NGOs and civil society groups give feedback about the priorities for international cooperation[68]. In November, La Alianza invited

[68] The Colombian government strategy for international cooperation, refined after the London meeting, comprises six priority areas for receipt of international aid: forests, peace and re-incorporation, alternative and productive development, strengthening of the rule of law, regional development and peace programmes, and forced population displacement and humanitarian assistance (Agencia Colombiana de Cooperacion International ACCI 2004). Consultation with civil society organisations has taken place in some of these areas, where discussion tables (*mesas temáticas*) have been set up. International

governments', INGOs' and domestic NGOs' representatives to a meeting in Bogotá to discuss developments after the London Declaration, and to present local evidence from domestic NGOs about the state of the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations by the Colombian Government.

In December, the European Union's office in Colombia stated that the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations was a condition for the fourth donors meeting to take place, and suggested that that meeting should take place in Colombia. In January 2004, the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation (ACCI) presented the revised strategy for international cooperation with Colombia to the 24 donor countries, the Colombian government, INGOs and domestic NGOs. The Colombian government announced that the fourth donors meeting would take place in February 2005 in Cartagena, Colombia.

11.1.5.2 Concluding remarks: The effectiveness of INGOs' and domestic NGOs' advocacy

A thorough debate about the impact of INGO and domestic NGO advocacy on the process of the donors meeting for Colombia is beyond the scope of this research. However, there is some evidence that suggests that INGO and domestic NGO advocacy has influenced the process in some aspects, the most noteworthy of which are:

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organisations and diplomatic representatives in Colombia have taken part in some of the discussion tables.

- The creation of the meeting on 9 July, between the Colombian government, donor governments' representatives, and advocates.
- The access granted to domestic NGOs for the London Meeting.
- The appointment of the UNDP office in Colombia to take on CEPEI's role as coordinator of the 9 July meeting.
- The emphasis of the London Declaration on the fulfilment of the 27 UNHCHR recommendations to Colombia, the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and the importance of the role of NGOs and civil society groups in the resolution of the internal conflict.
- The European Union office in Colombia's statement that the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations is a condition for the fourth donors meeting to take place, and its suggestion that this meeting should take place in Colombia.

Despite these achievements, advocates were disappointed about the strong political support that the Colombian government received in the London Declaration. They were also concerned about the lack of stronger conditionality for international cooperation on the fulfilment of human rights treaties and recommendations.

11.2 APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

The following are two examples of interviews protocols used during data collection. The first protocol was used in interviews with members of INGOs. The second was used in interviews with decision makers. Interviews with Aid International and domestic NGOs used a similar protocol to the one shown here for INGOs.

11.2.1 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR INGOS

a) Introduction
Could you tell me more about your background?
Could you tell me more about your role and your involvement in the donors for Colombia meeting?
Why is your organisation taking part in this meeting?
Could you give me your perspective/highlights of the process so far?

b) Relevant knowledge for advocacy around donors for Colombia meeting
I am thinking about what knowledge has to do with advocacy, and have prepared this draft diagram (Figure 5: 'Information and knowledge supporting advocacy effectiveness' is shown to the interviewee). We have knowledge coming from other advocate organisations, knowledge coming from decision makers, and internal knowledge. This knowledge feeds both the message and the approach of the advocacy work. An advocacy strategy is formulated and the results obtained are then compared with that strategy. Allies and affected communities are kept informed about the results. The lessons drawn from that particular experience feed the organisational knowledge bases for future advocacy work.

Does this diagram make sense from your experience in advocacy? Is there any stakeholder, type of knowledge or connection missing?

I am going to ask you some questions about the relevant information and knowledge to obtain from each stakeholder in order to build a more successful argument and strategy of advocacy work, and about the blockages to obtaining that information and knowledge.

<u>Domestic NGOs and civil society organisations in Colombia</u>
What is the most relevant information and knowledge to obtain from/about domestic NGOs in Colombia for the success of this advocacy work?

Where is that information and knowledge held (e.g. in people's heads, documents, databases)?
In your view, what are the major constraints to obtaining it?

Decision makers to be influenced by advocacy
How does this advocacy initiative aim to influence decision makers?
What do you consider is the key information and knowledge to have about decision makers in order to influence them successfully?
Where is that information and knowledge held (e.g. in people's heads, documents, databases)?
In your view, what are the major constraints to obtaining it?

Allies (other INGOs)
Why are you working with other INGOs in this case?
What is the most relevant information and knowledge to obtain from/about other INGOs for the success of this advocacy work?
Where is that information and knowledge held (e.g. in people's heads, documents, databases)?
In your view, what are the major constraints to obtaining it?
What have been the main challenges to agreeing a common advocacy message and strategy with allies?

c) Knowledge bases: Message and approach
What is the key message to decision makers for this advocacy initiative?
What have been the main challenges to defining a message and approach for this advocacy initiative?
How are you making this message compelling[69] for decision makers?
Has an alternative scenario been presented about how the solution of the conflict in Colombia may come about?
Is there any gap of knowledge that is affecting the message or the approach of advocacy?
How is the knowledge about the message and the approach held and shared within the organisation (people's heads, documents, databases)?
What is the shape of an advocacy strategy in your area? Could I see some examples of advocacy strategies?
What organisational systems/ databases do you use in advocacy work?

d) Effectiveness of advocacy strategy
What do you think is the chance of influencing decision makers on this occasion?
What changes in decision makers' policies and behaviours need to happen in order to consider this advocacy work successful?
Which have been the major achievements of the advocacy initiative so far?
How is this advocacy initiative being evaluated?
How are past evaluations used when planning new advocacy work?
What are the lessons so far from this advocacy initiative for future advocacy work?

[69] Compelling: Comprehensible, that attracts attention and encourages action.

e) Closure
Could you suggest other people whom it would be important to interview?
Do you have any questions or would you like to add anything?

11.2.2 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR DECISION MAKERS

a) Introduction
Could you tell me more about your background?
Could you tell me more about your role and your involvement in the donors for Colombia meeting?
Could you give me your perspective/highlights of the process so far?

b) Relevant knowledge for advocacy around donors for Colombia meeting
I am going to ask you some questions about each stakeholder taking part in the advocacy work around the donors for Colombia meeting:

<u>INGOs</u>
How would you describe the relationship between your organisation and INGOs?
Why do you think INGOs are taking part in the donors for Colombia meeting?
What is the key message you are receiving from INGOs?
How has this message reached you?
What is your opinion of the validity and consistency of this message? Is there any point that could be improved?

<u>Domestic NGOs</u>
How would you describe the relationship between your organisation and Colombian domestic NGOs?
Why do you think domestic NGOs are taking part in the donors for Colombia meeting?
What is the key message you are receiving from domestic NGOs?
How has this message reached you?
What is your opinion of the validity and consistency of this message? Is there any point that could be improved?

c) Advocacy message and approach
How well supported do you think advocates' arguments are? How persuasive are these arguments for you?
What sort of evidence do you look for in deciding whether you should pay attention to an advocacy message? What makes you listen or not listen?
What do you think about advocates' strategies to influence decision makers?
What do you think about the quality of decision makers' information and knowledge provided to advocates?
Has an alternative scenario been presented to you about how the solution of the conflict in Colombia may occur?

Is there any gap of knowledge that is affecting the advocates' message or the approach of advocacy?

d) Effectiveness of advocacy strategy

From your perspective, how have advocates influenced this process?

Advocates are basing their advocacy work on the understanding they have, specifically on the work they have done in some areas. What other sort of knowledge do you think they may be lacking?

In what way could advocates achieve a more persuasive message?

What results would you like to see from the next donors for Colombia meeting?

e) Closure

Could you suggest other people whom it would be important to interview?

Do you have any questions or would you like to add anything?

11.3 APPENDIX 3: DISPLAYS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This appendix provides two examples of displays used for data collection and analysis. The first example shows a time-oriented matrix about the development of the London meeting, as seen by INGOs. This display compares events of the London meeting with simultaneous events in the general context. The second example shows a variable-oriented matrix centred on advocates' effectiveness, as seen by decision makers.

11.3.1 TIME-ORDERED MATRIX

Table 58. Highlights of the London Meeting process according to INGOs interviewed

	London meeting process	General context
Previous relevant events	• In 1997, the high levels of displacement in Colombia persuaded INGOs to create DIAL, an INGO alliance for advocacy. The same year, the ABDC Group (later ABC Group) is created in London by seven INGOs working on Colombia. • In 2000, DIAL and ABC Group take part in the donors meetings in Madrid (7 July 2000), Bogotá (24 October 2000) and Brussels (30 April 2001).	• In the Madrid donors meeting in 2000, the European Union governments refuse to support Plan Colombia. • 11 September 2001. The terrorist attacks in the United States caused a shift in international cooperation agendas to 'fighting terrorism', affecting advocacy on human rights. • Uribe's agenda is formulated within the framework of the war on terror and aims to weaken rebel groups through military action.
Prior to London Meeting: May-July 2003	• **April**. The ABC Group meets with the UK Foreign Office and is informed about the donors meeting in London. • **May**. INGOs start lobbying embassies in Colombia to obtain places for domestic NGOs at the London Meeting. • **June**. INGOs and NGOs do not accept CEPEI's role as coordinator of the 9 July meeting, and ask the UNDP office in Colombia to coordinate that meeting. • **July**. The Colombian government holds a meeting with domestic NGOs to present its strategy for international cooperation. • The Colombian government on 3 July sends the final numbers of places for domestic NGOs to the UNDP office. INGOs help their domestic NGO partners to fund their attendance of the London Meeting.	
London Meeting, Canning House, London **9-10 July 2003**	• **9 July**. Meeting hosted by the Colombian government between governments' representatives and civil society organisations. INGOs are disappointed with the low attendance of governments' representatives. • **10 July**. Meeting hosted by the UK government between the Colombian government and donor governments. One representative from INGOs takes part in the meeting and presents INGOs' position document. INGOs are disappointed by the support of the international community for the Colombian government.	• **9 July**. The Guardian publishes a report about the UK's secret military aid to Colombia. A group of INGOs lobby some MPs to raise parliamentary questions about this. The UK government answers that it cannot give more details about this for security reasons.
After London Meeting: From 11 July 2003 onwards - focus until March 2004	• **July**. Meeting on 11 July between the UNDP, INGOs and domestic NGOs to evaluate the London Meeting. • **August**. INGOs define a work plan for lobbying donor countries' embassies in Colombia about monitoring the London Declaration. • **October**. The Colombian government launches the working groups or 'mesas', to collect feedback about the priorities for international cooperation, in advance of the fourth donors meeting. INGOs take part in these working groups. • **November**. 'La Alianza'- an umbrella organisation of domestic NGOs - invites donor governments' representatives, INGOs and domestic NGOs to a meeting (on 26 November) in Bogotá to discuss developments after the London Declaration.	• **August**. The Colombian government announces that the London Declaration contains suggestions, not obligations. • **September**. On 9 September, Uribe accuses some domestic NGOs of being allies of rebel groups. He refers specifically to the group of 'NGOs that went to London'. INGOs claim that the president's speech contributes to alienating the public from human rights NGOs; to exacerbating threats and stigmatisation, and to breaking down the dialogue between NGOs and the Colombian government. • **October**. The Colombian government loses its campaign for a referendum to change some laws. The international community reads this as a challenge to Uribe's high popularity in most of the country.

11.3.2 VARIABLE-ORDERED MATRIX

Table 59. Effectiveness of INGOs' and domestic NGOs' advocacy according to decision makers interviewed

Interviewees	Effectiveness of INGO and domestic NGO advocacy about the donors for Colombia meeting
DM3	• 'INGOs and (domestic) NGOs have a space that they did not have before'. * • The coordination among NGOs is an achievement.
DM8	• The Colombian government received strong support, but with some conditions (the 27 UNHCHR recommendations on human rights).
DM9	• The Colombian government received strong support, but with some conditions (the 27 UNHCHR recommendations on human rights). • There were only six representatives at the meeting on 9 July.
DM10	• 'NGOs were very successful during Plan Colombia, especially in Europe, and their voice was listened to. They did very important lobbying work. I would consider that successful, especially if you see the European support (for them) in relation to Plan Colombia'.
DM11	• 'The advocacy by INGOs was an important factor in achieving that (domestic) NGOs could attend the donors meeting'. • 'The advocacy by INGOs and NGOs was a decisive factor in achieving that the United Nations coordinate the process of consultation among (domestic) NGOs, and CEPEI stepped down to a more logistical supporting role'. • 'After the donors meting, the international community and the Colombian government listened to INGOs and NGOs more carefully. They are more recognised now'. • 'With La Alianza, civil society organisations have a channel for better advocacy than before'.
DM13	• 'I think that the emphasis on human rights in the London Declaration is primarily because of INGOs' and (domestic) NGOs' influence and work'.
DM14	• 'NGOs were able to solve their differences and to agree a message about their concerns that was useful'.

*Note: Entries in quotation marks indicate a textual answer. Entries with no quotation marks indicate a summary of interviewee's answer.

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