



Knowledge broker Delft
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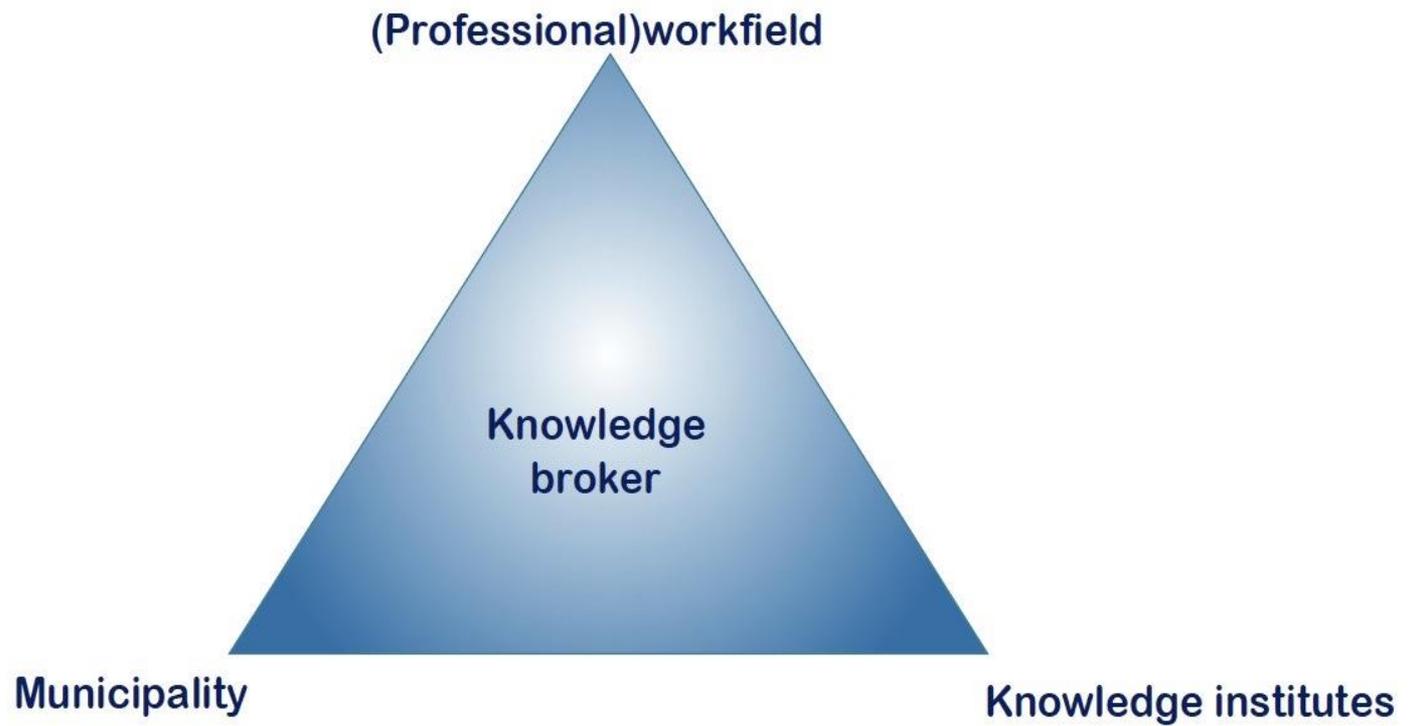


Role knowledge broker

“In the years 2020 and 2021 diverse research-and expertise questions stemming from citizens, civil society organisations situated in the neighbourhood Tanthof (Delft) as well as the municipality will be actively connected to the research groups and curricula of the three knowledge institutions [in Delft]. In this way, more professionals, researchers and lecturers will gain experience with, and increase in enthusiasm for applied research. Also, it will ensure an increasing number of students, lecturers and researchers to be involved in societal challenges. [.....] To stimulate and support this process, a knowledge broker will be put in place that will establish connections between all parties and will help to set up research trajectories.”

Research question

What are the benefits and challenges of the knowledge broker, according to the parties involved?



Municipality

Benefits

- Embedded in municipality and all knowledge institutes in Delft
- Independent position
- Time, structure and continuity

“I have had student projects before, I counsel students in the city, about five to ten per year. But these projects miss the connections, structure. That is the strength of the knowledge broker: continuity and structure. Long-term connections and long-term projects that show a follow-up.” (R3)

“A lot of things failed simply because you were not able to spend enough time on it. That has changed radically since we the knowledge broker is appointed for two days in a week.” (R3)

Municipality

Challenges

- Integration of the questions of the municipality and the neighborhood in the programs of the three knowledge institutions
- Manage everyone's expectations and the output delivered by students.

“Students were confronted with residents that were fired up: the topic was a hot topic in the neighborhood, students may not have realized it. So, when they did their presentations, they met some feisty residents. We had to intervene, and remind people that they were talking to students, not to professionals.” (R8)

Professionals

Benefits

- Effort / research from students
- Knowledge broker as a 'real matchmaker'
- Easier to participate in student projects (less guidance)

"If the knowledge broker had not maintained such active contact, this research would never have happened [...] I would never have had the collaboration with THUAS without him. I hadn't known the way to the university or just wouldn't even have thought about it." (R1)

Professionals

Challenges

- Expectation management
- Different roles and interest partners involved
- Time

“You have to discuss the expectations of the different parties. Make sure that people realize it is student research – and students are learning to do research.” (R2)

Knowledge institutes

Benefits

- Knowledge broker as a linking agent between knowledge institutions and relevant stakeholders in Delft
- Knowledge of local network and context (saves a lot of time)
- Independent role
- Longitudinal presence

“It was great that the knowledge broker knew the setting. [...] The added value of a knowledge broker was that he knew the local context; he could support me in managing the field. [...] He can just point out things to the students that I just can't think of. I do not know Tanthof, I'm here in The Hague, I don't know the (local) situation.” (R9)

“He coordinated and streamlined the project. That was helpful. He was also able to jump in when one of the guest lecturers cancelled due to Covid-19. It's just really handy to have a person as the knowledge broker around. To arrange things and who thinks along.” (R5)



Knowledge institutes

Challenges

- Embedding often impromptu demands from civil partners and/or municipality into educational programs.
- Expectation management
- Integration of the educational tracks from the different knowledge institutes involved

“You have to understand that a knowledge institution has a slightly different pace than a municipality, which has a slightly different pace than what the residents prefer.” (R4)

Knowledge broker

Benefits

- Connecting and managing the interests of the different stakeholder involved
- Critical friend for all partners involved
- Positioning: independent from all partners but also supported by all parties (financially and strategically)
- Continuity in student projects: sequenced and connected to earlier research in a relay fashion.

Challenges

- Role and involvement in relation to student projects
- Power relations between knowledge institutions involved.
- Governance and finance

Conclusion

- Collaboration between all partners involved improved
- Independent position and match maker role highly appreciated
- Time, structure and continuity great advantages
- Governance and future financing greatest challenges



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