Communities of Practice and Innovation for CSO and WASH Sector Learning

Bronwyn Powell | 12 July 2016

Fostering knowledge and learning for improved WASH

1. Communities of Practice

2. Tips for CSO learning

3. Innovation in WASH - more than a buzz word

Knowledge and learning in WASH

Strong emphasis within CS WASH Fund

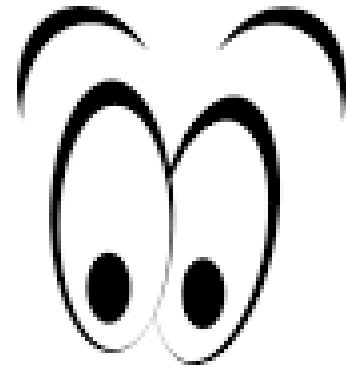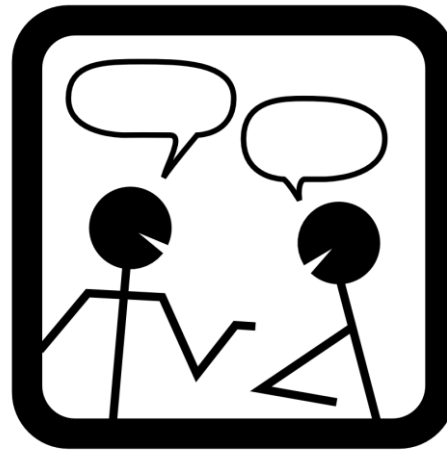- All projects have a Knowledge and Learning (K&L) component

Fund-wide K&L component

- A unique aspect of the Fund design, aiming to:

1. Improve CS WASH Fund project implementation and effectiveness capture and sharing of good practice

2. Generate evidence-based knowledge and innovation

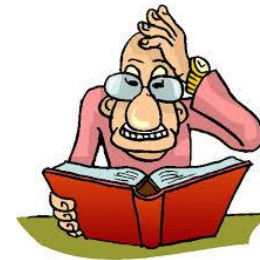3. Share knowledge and learning between CSOs and with the wider WASH sector

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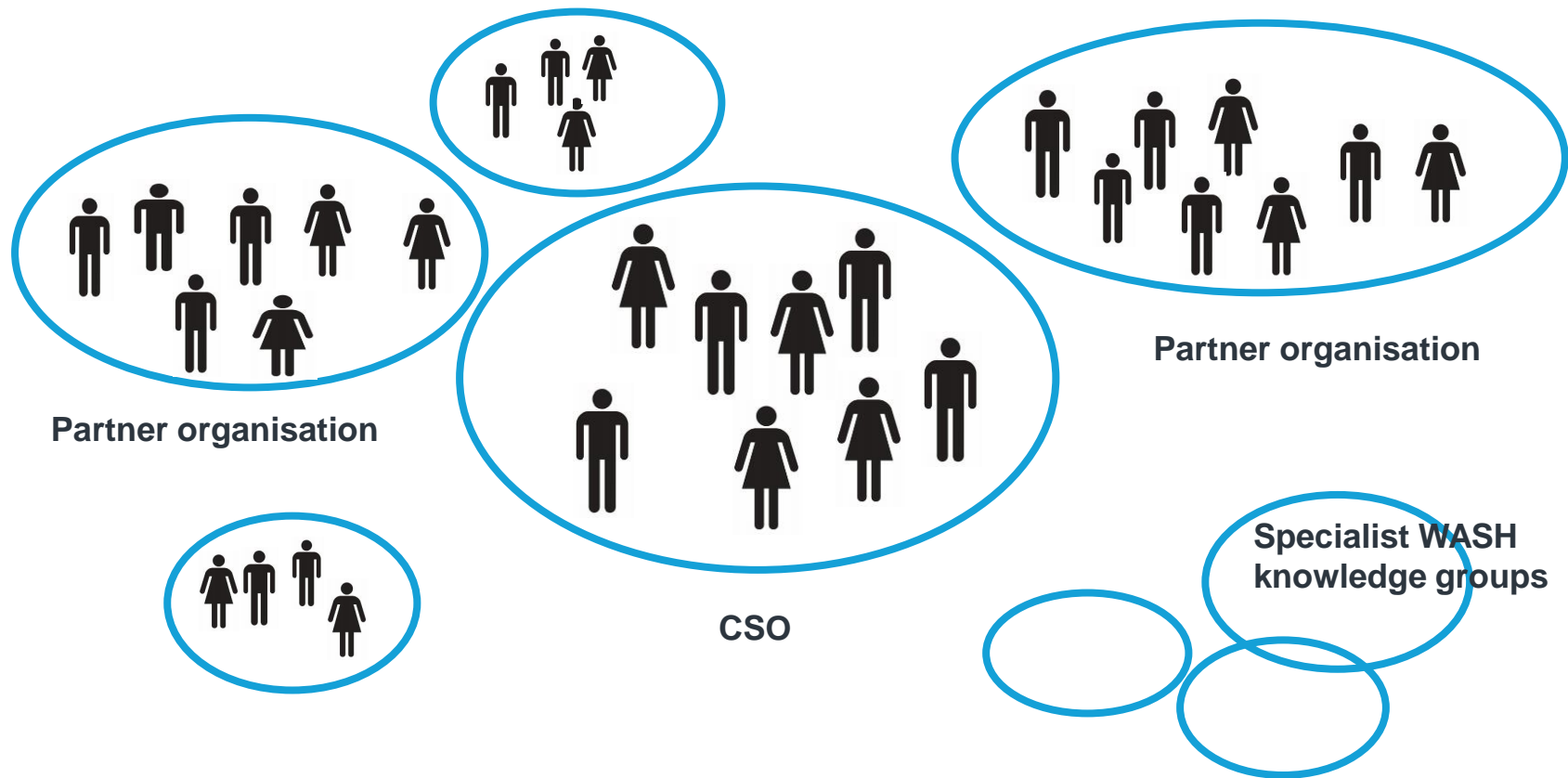# WASH practitioners

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How do we Learn?

Delivery Team
Civil Society Organisation
(CSO)

How do we as WASH practitioners interact, learn and improve?

Partner organisation

Partner organisation

CSO

Specialist WASH knowledge groups

How do we as WASH practitioners interact, learn and improve?

Partner organisation
Eg. Local government

Partner organisation

CSO

Specialist WASH knowledge groups
Eg. RWSN, SuSanA

How do we as WASH practitioners interact, learn and improve?

Partner organisation
Eg. Local government

Your organisation
Eg. CSO

Knowledge partner

Specialist WASH knowledge groups
Eg. RWSN, SuSanA
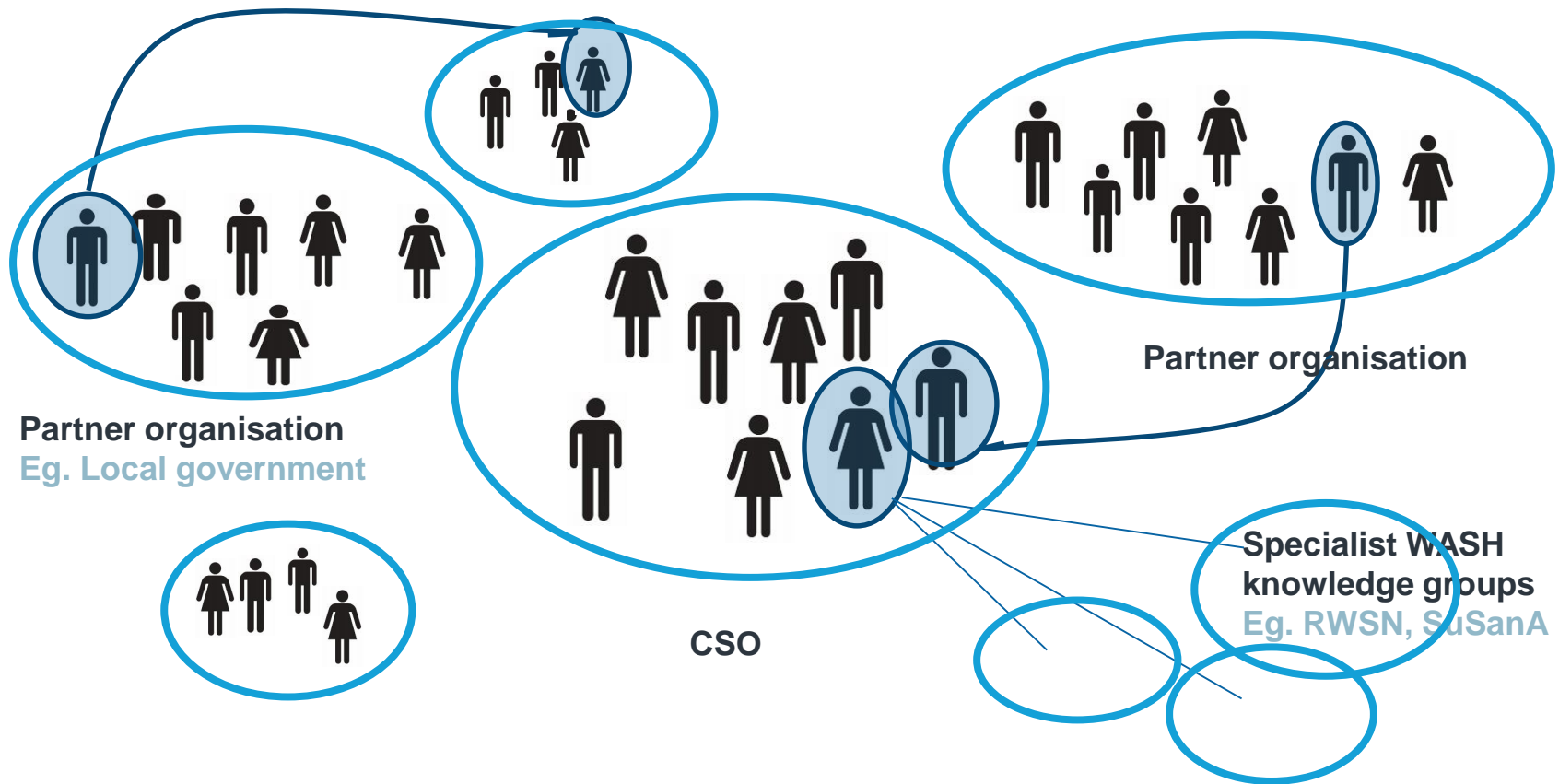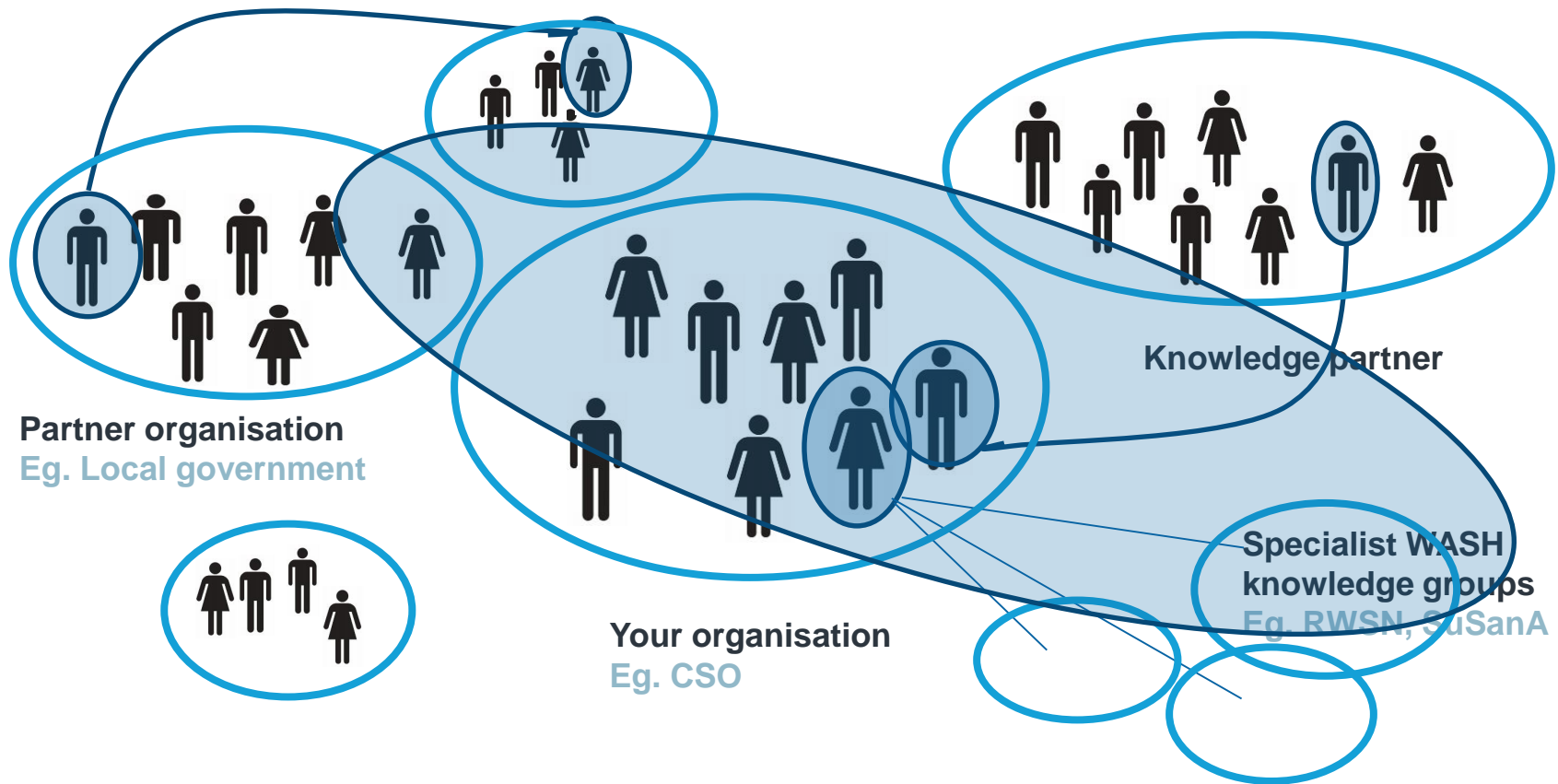
Community of Practice

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

The practice of a community is dynamic and involves learning on the part of everyone.

Wenger, E. (2011)

CSO Learning for Impact

Research questions

1. **How do CSOs learn and improve WASH programming** and practice to align with evidence-based approaches?

2. **What materials, formats and communications mechanisms are most preferred** in influencing CSO learning?

3. What materials, formats and communication mechanisms **are most effective** and innovative in improving CSO WASH program in alignment with good practice?

What enables learning within CSOs?

Findings

1. Opportunities for **peer-to-peer learning**
2. Time for **reflection processes**
3. **Leadership** driving a learning culture
4. Knowledge and learning duties identified in work-plans
5. Time to engage with **networks**
6. Adequate **resources** (time and funding)

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Preferred types of communication

Legend: First choice (blue), Second choice (red), Third choice (green), Fourth choice (purple), Fifth choice (cyan)

Chart showing preferred types of communication (horizontal stacked bar chart):
- Conferences, presentations and face-to-face networking
- Reports and working papers
- Fact sheets and case studies
- Toolkits and training materials
- Manuals, field guides and "how to" guidance notes
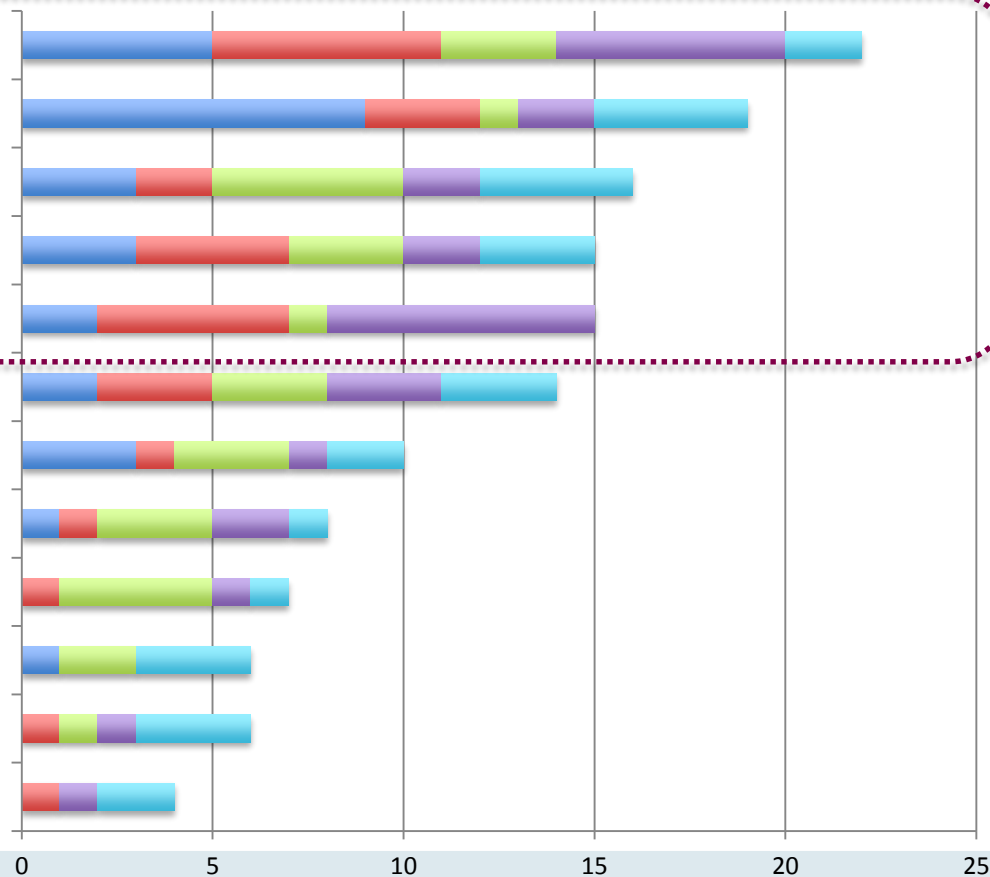- Briefing and policy notes
- Social media
- Videos (e.g. TED talks, animations)
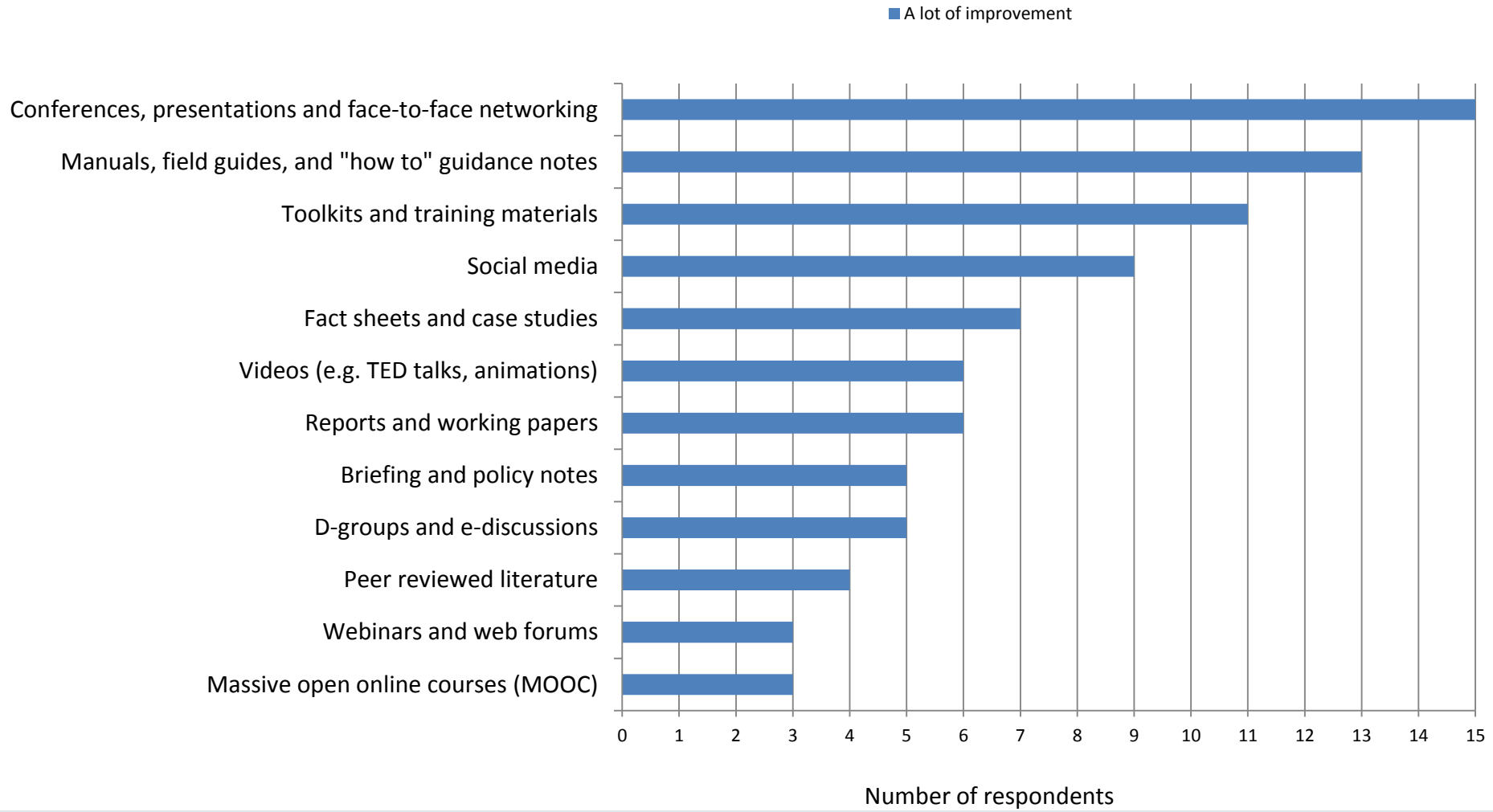- D-groups and e-discussions
- Peer reviewed literature
- Webinars and web forums
- Massive open online courses (MOOC)

X-axis scale: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25

Types of communication perceived to have led to the greatest level of improved practice

■ A lot of improvement

Number of respondents

Supporting Innovation

Addressing priority WASH challenges: Innovation and Impact Grants

5 grants currently underway
2 focussed on sanitation

- Mobile desludging business - Zimbabwe. Welthungerhilfe/IRC

- Smart subsidies for rural sanitation - Cambodia. iDE/ Causal Design

Another in East Asia region

- Strategic gender impacts in WASH – Vietnam. Plan/ISF UTS

Civil Society Innovation Award

1. Nudging for handwashing in schools. Save the Children Bangladesh

2. Low cost solutions for Faecal Sludge Management. Water for People Uganda

3. Sanitation solutions for floating communities. Wetland Work! Cambodia

15

Key messages

- Make the most of this opportunity for face-to-face learning with peers and sector specialists

- Look to the evidence-base and innovation to improve practice

- Consider how your organisation can be the most effective in enabling organisational learning, K&L capture and sharing findings

Thank you

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