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ACCOMPLISSH newsletter, edition 7, December 2017



Skills for the science-policy interface

In the age of ever-increasing knowledge, there is an urgent need for effective knowledge management and sense-making. Effective knowledge management for policy, scientific advice to policy and evidence-informed policymaking are synonymous values which underpin a need for a new profession with a collective skillset.

As the European Commission's science and knowledge service, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) is in a good position to experiment with approaches for more evidence-informed policymaking. This has resulted in a mapping of skills essential for researchers and policymakers active in the science-policy interface. The primary focus is on the collective skillset of the new knowledge brokers (researchers and policymakers) in boundary-spanning organisations at the evidence-policy interface. Whether producing scientific knowledge or developing policy, both sides involved with evidence require a collective skillset to address the challenges of this field.

The skills framework consists of 8 clusters of skills, with each cluster addressing a specific part of the collective skillset required to increase the impact of research evidence on policymaking:

- **Understanding Policy & Science.** Effective researchers understand the key drivers of the policy process – which can never be as simple as a policy cycle – and adapt their evidence presentation strategies to the policy context. Effective policymakers anticipate what evidence will be needed in the future.
- **Interpersonal Skills.** Being able to interact well with others – using verbal and non-verbal communication skills - is essential to building trust and solving problems that occur in creating and applying knowledge to policymaking.
- **Synthesising Research.** Effective knowledge management will provide policymakers with access to more robust and fit-for-purpose evidence. Effective researchers employ methods and tools to make better sense of the wealth of knowledge ('secondary research') available on a given topic.
- **Managing Collaborative Expert Communities.** 'Communities' of experts, sharing a common language or understanding, are fundamental

to creating and applying knowledge to complex problems. Effective researchers develop networking and facilitation skills, through digital and physical interactions, to reduce disciplinary and policy divides.

- **Communicating Scientific Knowledge.** The communication of research to a non-scientific audience requires effective communication skills, using content-related tools like infographic design, succinct writing, public speaking and data visualisation tailored to the audience.
- **Advising Policymakers.** Effective science policy advisors go beyond simply communicating research evidence towards identifying options, helping to understand the impact of policy choices during and after implementation, and providing policy advice from a scientific viewpoint.
- **Engaging with Citizens & Stakeholders:** Engagement with the public and stakeholders is essential to build trust and legitimacy of evidence to be used in policy.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Framework.** Monitoring and evaluating the impact of research evidence on policymaking is a specific skill needed to continuously improve the influence of evidence on policymaking.

The full paper behind the skills framework is available on the [EU4facts – Evidence for Policy](#).

On 13 & 14 November 2017, ACCOMPLISSH organised her second open event, named ACSIS 2017: ACCOMPLISSH Co-creation and Social Innovation Summit. This event was held at the University of Tallinn, in Tallinn, Estonia. During this 2-day working conference, around 100 participants were actively involved in workshops, training- and live co-creation sessions. One of the plenary sessions focused on the skillsmap and its evidence-informed policy making, which is explained above.

For an impression of the event: [Link to pictures](#) or [link to program](#)



Publications and deliverables

With ACCOMPLISSH we still have 14 months to go! It is an exciting time, especially for Work Package 4 & 5 who test and train models of co-creation and work on the development of the valorisation concept along the value chain.

At this moment, we are proud that we can share 3 wonderful deliverables on our website:

- Work Package 2A: Analysing co-creation in theory and in practice – A systemic review of the SSH impact literature - [Read document](#)
- Work Package 2B: Quadruple Helix Co-creation in SSH– Experiences, Considerations, Lessons Learned - [Read document](#)
- Work Package 3: Principles for promoting the impact of SSH research by co-creation: key issues in research design and communication - [Read document](#)

Enjoy reading and if you have any additional questions about our deliverables, don't hesitate to contact us.



Seminar at European Parliament: "Towards a Social and Democratic Europe. How can we accelerate the societal impact of social sciences and humanities?"

On 21 November, ACCOMPLISSH organised a seminar at the European Parliament hosted by Mr. Dimitrios Papadimoulis MEP, Vice President to the European Parliament. The focus was on the important topic of accelerating the social impact of social sciences and humanities research.

Coordinator of the Horizon 2020 ACCOMPLISSH project, Sharon Smit, stressed in her [opening statement](#) the importance of bridging the gap between science and society. There is an urgency to develop new collaboration approaches in an eco-system of equal entities to gain innovative insights. To address societal challenges in a sustainable way.

During the seminar, four speakers with all totally different backgrounds in SSH showed incredibly important insights from their own research, with the public. People present were from policy, the European Parliament, the European Commission and from universities all over Europe.

Professor Wolfgang Merkel (professor of Political Science, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Germany) showed us that social inequality leads to democratic inequality. More and more people have little trust in government and this is strengthened when they have a low socio-economic status. Research is needed to address this question and to make sure that our democratic institutions keep the people (demos) centered. To do this we should look at history. Even history as long ago as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The events preceding the Dead Sea Scrolls influence our day to day behavior. Even when we are not aware of it. Religious literacy is therefore key according to Professor Mladen Popović (Professor for Old Testament and Ancient Judaism, University of Groningen, The Netherlands). To understand the world we originate from cultural heritage is influential according to Gábor Sonkoly (professor of History, ELTE University of Budapest, Hungary). Although, this is key in understanding our world we should be sensitive for the different meaning of the same words. For example cultural heritage has a different meaning in Eastern Europe compared to the Anglo Saxon world. It is important to society at large to keep our health care affordable. A significant amount of research says that the scarring effect of temporary employment is enormous according to Duncan Gallie (professor of Sociology, University of Oxford, United Kingdom). He addressed the importance of SSH research on the labour markets, employment and inequalities.

All these distinguished speakers agree on the same thing. The Social Sciences and Humanities are important in the way we look at society. It is key that this research field thinks of new ways to connect to a broader audience. Therefore Jonas Stier (member of ACCOMPLISSH and professor of intercultural studies, Dalarna University, Sweden) pleads for investment by universities in outreach and social impact professionals. In order to make sure that the benefit we have from SSH research is adequately disseminated in Europe. To be able to do our research it is of utmost importance that funding on SSH research goes up. **Therefore Vice-President Papadimoulis calls upon a doubling of the research budget in FrameWork Programme 9 and within it a significant part should go to SSH research.**

Watch the opening speech of Mr. Dimitrios Papadimoulis MEP, Vice President to the European Parliament [here](#).



university of
 groningen

Advisory group

Meet Trudy Dehue - member of the Advisory group

In May 2015 I received an enthusing email from a person named Sharon Smit. She told me she discovered a congenial spirit in me when listening to a podcast interview. That is how she came to tell me about ACCOMPLISSH, it's ideals and endeavors. And, indeed, these were highly on a par with the ideal role of universities I had been expressing in that podcast. We should abandon the classical hierarchy among the sciences and also stop thinking in terms of academic knowledge as the one and only best kind of knowledge possible. Instead, academics should be willing to learn (1) from one another and (2) from a variety of other experts.

An example of the first necessity I recently came across is that of climate change that urgently demands a great variety of knowledge. As Anne Beaulieu, programme manager of Energysense in Groningen, explained the humanities also need to be involved because we need to gain an in-depth understanding of the values embedded in people's views of a good life. For, most of our values - of prosperity, freedom, equality, etc- are still implicitly based on a growth model of available energy. A classic example of the need to learn from experts who aren't university researchers is that of doctors who can learn from their patients. This is not only a matter of listening to patients in clinical practice. Why not turn patients into co-researchers who, for instance, can help researchers to make adequate surveys? One of my favorite other examples is that of the fishermen in a little village at the very north of the Netherlands. University researchers tried to

convince them of necessary measures against the decay of particular fish. However, the fishermen replied that they, as the fourth generation of fishermen, possessed some relevant knowledge too.

Biography Trudy Dehue

Trudy Dehue worked in a child psychiatric clinic, next graduated in psychology and subsequently also in philosophy of science. The combination of health care practice, psychological knowledge and reflection on both became her core interest. As a full professor at Groningen University, she at one point purposely decided to stop writing for fellow academics only. She started to publish books in Dutch with a high standard, but non-academic, publishing house, and began to write articles for newspapers and magazines. To date, this work yields inspirational mutual feedback among people within and outside of academia.



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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 693477

