KEC IMPLEMENTATION SERIES 2022: DEFINING WHAT 'GOOD' LOOKS LIKE

WEBINAR PRESENTATIONS - SUMMARY

Wednesday 9th November 2022

Overview

The Defining What 'Good' Looks Like webinar brought together colleagues across the UK to explore the variety in 'good' KE and discuss some of the approaches, tools and services that can help to deliver 'good'. This summary highlights the key recommendations made by our speakers, which may be especially relevant for those seeking to support 'good' in KE activities involving legislatures, students and business.

We hope that this summary may help participants to reflect on what 'good' looks like for different KE participants, contexts and purposes, and that it might inform approaches that maximise the support for, and outcomes from, a wide range of KE partnerships.

We will continue to revisit these insights throughout the KEC Implementation Series 2022 and beyond, with the aim of testing and building on these learnings to make collective progress that helps knowledge exchange flourish.

In addition to this summary, we encourage the reader to consult the accompanying **Breakout Group Discussion Summary** for further ideas on defining 'good' in KE. We have also collated **a list of resources and further reading**, as recommended by our speakers. The full webinar recording and speaker slides are also available **here**.

This summary was written by:

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All errors are author's own.
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◉   Getting to 'Good': Academic Engagement with Legislatures,
Dr Danielle Beswick (University of Birmingham)

ABOUT

- Research project on academic engagement with UK legislatures
- Led by **Dr Danielle Beswick** (University of Birmingham) and **Dr Marc Geddes** (University of Edinburgh)
- Began in 2019
- 62 interviews with legislature officials, academics, university officials, and others
- Links to project reports, blog posts and other outcomes can be found in our **list of further resources** and **speaker slides**

BARRIERS TO 'GOOD'

COMMUNICATION

Research not presented in a way that is clear, accessible and appropriate for legislatures and non-specialists

RELEVANCE

Research is not directly or obviously relevant to the work of the legislature

RECOGNITION

Inadequate and uncertain recognition of KE activities by HE institutions and legislatures - e.g. unclear links to promotions and pay increments; concern over being penalised for engaging with legislatures if it doesn't lead to a strong and tangible impact case study (or similar)

GAP IN KNOWLEDGE

Lack of knowledge among academic researchers about the role of legislatures, their research needs, and expectations about research impact

RESOURCES

Lack of resources (time and funding)

WHAT 'GOOD' LOOKS LIKE

An engaged university:

- Permits and supports **fellowships with legislatures**

- Has staff who are **committee advisers**

- Allocates **dedicated staff time** within workload models or other arrangements to facilitate KE

- Has staff who **submit evidence** to legislatures and **participate in committee hearings**

- Recognises and supports **KE in its own right**, not solely as a way to achieve impact

- Has dedicated **internal funding opportunities** for KE

- Hosts **inward secondments** and supports **outward secondments**

- **Appoints officials** from legislatures to steering groups and/or advisory boards

- **Co-authors publications** with legislature staff

- Recognises KE in **workload models** and **criteria for promotion**

- Submits funding bids which include **legislative staff as partners**

◉   Creating, Supporting and Measuring Transformative
     Experiences through Student KE,
     Katie Stote (University of Plymouth)

ABOUT

- The **Engaging Students in Knowledge Exchange** project began in 2020
- Goals: to identify best practice and barriers to student KE; to create and evaluate interventions that boost engagement and accessibility in student KE

Successful Student KE is about creating **a transformative experience** for everyone involved in the exchange, through a **supported, engaged** and **personalised approach**.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

PERSONALISED

- *Facilitated*
  Ensuring that students are not on their own during the activity - e.g. one-to-one support with students/partners, workshops, online resources. A structure that supports students at specific touch-points throughout the experience and helps them to make the most of the KE opportunity.

- *Curated*
  Taking the time to create a structured experience that takes student, university and partner needs into consideration, and which is informed by authentic dialogue with each group.

  e.g. **Future Leaders Programme** - supported by bi-weekly change, leadership and personal development workshops, and one-to-one meetings with programme facilitator.

SUPPORTED

- ### *Resourced - people and tools*
  The team works as an interface between staff, students and partners - this enables support that draws on need and feedback from all stakeholders.

  e.g. **Students** - 10 e-learning pathways (The KE Toolbox), co-produced with students and designed to support students before, during and after their KE experience.

  Staff - student-facing materials, off-the-shelf workshops and an evaluation toolkit to help staff feel confident about supporting their students' KE experiences.

- ### *Evaluated*
  Longitudinal evaluation (with an external evaluator, SERIO). Types of data and feedback collected include case studies, in-depth interviews, and quantitative metrics of effectiveness and student/staff/partner benefits.

  e.g. The **impostor and assertiveness training pathway** was created in response to findings from the evaluation research undertaken during the first year of the project, and has helped to improve student confidence during the project's second year. The pathway includes infographics, worksheets and interviews with local business owners.

EVALUATED

- ### *Co-created*
  An authentic and patient approach focused on genuine collaboration, where every individual is empowered and has the equity and resources to shape the experience being created.

- ### *Place-based*
  A place-based approach can break down the perceived ivory walls of the university - co-creation is crucial to avoid the activity becoming something that is happening *to* the community, rather than *with* the community.

  e.g. **Professional Development Programme** for music students - student KE activities developed through collaboration with Plymouth Music Zone (a local charity).

◉ Lessons Learned from Building Successful Partnerships, **Shelley Breckenridge** (Interface)

ABOUT

- **Interface** offers a free and impartial service, and acts as a bridge between business and universities in Scotland
- Led by a business engagement team based regionally around Scotland
- Work with organisations of any size, any sector, seeking any type of expertise

KEY ELEMENTS OF 'GOOD' IN KE WITH BUSINESS

- **Continuation of relationships** beyond the original project

- Visible benefits that **help businesses grow**

- Impact that goes beyond economic benefits - increasingly, businesses are interested in **environmental and societal benefits** from collaboration

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 'GOOD' PARTNERSHIPS

BE FLEXIBLE IN YOUR APPROACH

- **Take context and regional differences into account**

  It can take longer to identify, reach and persuade businesses located in rural areas. They may also require more support during the project because they have no previous experience of engaging with universities.

- **Be open to alternative routes to partnership**

  Student opportunities can be a more viable route for building long-term partnerships than academic engagement (especially for third sector and community enterprises, who struggle with accessing funding).

MAXIMISE THE OPPORTUNITY

- **Focus on having a strong supply side**

  There is no shortage of organisations interested in engaging with universities but there has been a reduction in the number of academics open to working with industry, so it is really important that academics are aware of the benefits from and opportunities for collaboration.

- **Understand your USP as an institution**

  Whatever the size or specialism of your institution - you have specific strengths that matter for customer experience. Smaller institutions can offer faster communication with fewer gatekeepers, whilst a small portfolio of partners might mean that more time can be given to each partner and and that partners can feel more valued.

- **Look beyond the initial business challenge**

  Be aware of other opportunities (within your institution and beyond) to help your business partners.

- **Build an evidence base**

  Measure the economic, societal and environmental impacts of current and previous partnerships.

CLEAR COMMUNICATION

- **Tell stories that resonate with business**

- **Speak the language of business**

  Avoid jargon - instead of 'KE' or 'innovation', consider talking about new products, gaining resources and solving business problems

- **Manage expectations and explain the road ahead**

- **Recognise and reward successful collaboration**

◉ Enabling Technology to Support 'Good' KE Between Universities and Business,
Fariba Soetan and Shivaun Meehan (NCUB / konfer)

CHALLENGES FOR KE PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS

- **Recent research** into the modes and motivations of business collaboration with universities (2005-2021) found that **difficulties with identifying a partner** was an important barrier to interaction with universities for almost half of the businesses surveyed

- According to the upcoming **NCUB State of the Relationship Report 2022**, the total number of **interactions between universities and business declined by 2%** in 2020/2021, compared to that in 2019/2020 - this was largely driven by a decrease in the number of interactions with **SMEs**, which are currently below the five year average.

ABOUT KONFER

- **konfer** is a free, targeted collaboration platform
- It was developed by NCUB (in partnership with UKRI and Research England) as a practical solution to the challenges identified above
- konfer focuses on connecting partners and building relationships - it seeks to simplify and increase the number of introductions to potential partners at the very beginning of the R&D and KE processes

KONFER AS PART OF THE TOOLKIT FOR 'GOOD' KE

ALL IN ONE SOLUTION

- One digital gateway to information about research projects, 72,000+ innovative companies, current opportunities and funding calls

GATHER INFORMATION

- Powerful search function that can help users learn about technologies and markets, and how their research and ideas can be part of future developments

CONNECT AND RESPOND

- HE users can respond to industrial calls for research and expertise, or invite businesses to discuss research ideas
- konfer helps users to connect with partners beyond their usual network

EXAMPLES

University of Glasgow
used konfer to identify potential partners for more mature technologies relating to wind turbines and room/desk occupancy.

Read more here

Consortium Building
An academic colleague at Solent University used konfer to build an interdisciplinary consortium on global sustainability issues.

Read more here

THANK YOU

We would like to express our sincere thanks to our panel of speakers for taking the time out of their busy schedules to explore what 'good' can look like for KE, and for sharing their insights.

We hope that this webinar represents a useful next step in the conversation on how we can define and deliver 'good' for a wide range of KE partnerships and activities. We look forward to many more opportunities for collaboration on this subject in the future.

Our speakers:

Dr Danielle Beswick (Senior Lecturer, International Development Department), University of Birmingham

Katie Stote (Project Officer, Engaging Students in Knowledge Exchange), University of Plymouth

Shelley Breckenridge (Business Engagement Manager), Interface

Fariba Soetan (Policy Lead for Research and Innovation), National Centre for Universities and Business

Shivaun Meehan (Stakeholder and Communications Manager, konfer), National Centre for Universities and Business

Webinar chair:

Greg Wade (Policy Manager), Universities UK

Webinar organiser:

Dr Ariadna Tsenina (Policy Researcher - Knowledge Exchange Concordat), Universities UK

KEC IMPLEMENTATION SERIES 2022

Previous webinars in this series:

- **Measuring Non-Financial Impact** - *14th September 2022*
- **Engaging Academics** - *12th October 2022*

Upcoming webinars in this series:

- **Aligning KEC With Institutional Strategy** - *7th December 2022*

For more information, please visit:
https://www.keconcordat.ac.uk/events/kec-implementation-series-2022/