Informing social policies through research

The context of ex-ante and ex-post approaches

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Informing social policies through research, but when and how?

- **When** during a policy cycle are research and evaluation effectively conducted?
- **What kind** of research is most suited to inform policy?
- **How** is research effectively conducted?
Models of how research relates to policy

1. Research → Policy
2. Research ← Policy/politics
3. Research ↔ Policy
4. Research ← → Policy

Source: Boswell C & Smith K (2017) Rethinking policy 'impact': four models of research-policy relations, Pelgrave Communications 3.44.
Scientific support along the (social) innovation life cycle

- Scientific policy support should start early on and continue in an iterative fashion
- This process could be combined with ‘horizon scanning’ to identify promising social innovations

*Own figure adapted from Ijzerman & Steuten, Appl. Health Econ & Health Pol. 2011
Scientific support along the policy cycle within multilevel governance

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*Figure from Geyer & Boehler et al., 2019*
Scientific support for cross-sectorial decision-making across traditional silos of governance

**Space of social innovations potentially subject to decision making**

- **Relevance**
  Cross-sectorial needs & relevance assessment for social innovations

- **Coherence**
  Geographic transferability of social innovations

- **Effectiveness**
  Multi criteria decision analysis of social innovations

- **Value for money**
  Cost-effectiveness of social innovations

- **Impact**
  Full-population long-term effects

- **Sustainability**
  Multi-domain budget-impact

**Social innovations deemed suitable for a specific context**

*Figure adapted from Boehler et al., 2020*

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Research and policy process (spinning top model)

- Ex-post research
- Evaluation
- Implementation research

**Project examples**

- Interreg Age-friendly Region (AFR)
- Kosovo social services for the most vulnerable
- Implementation of an integrated system for long-term care (LTC) in Slovenia (EXPO_SI)
- Feasibility study (SOSCV)
- Situation analysis Croatia (UNICEF)
Take aways to maximise research use

• Consider timing!
• Let research methods be driven by policy questions
• Stakeholder-participatory approach
• Do not forget to thoroughly plan dissemination!
• Follow-up even after project ended!
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