The evolution of a collaboration for tailor-made knowledge services to welfare directorates: lessons learned from Norway

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BACKGROUND

- Care and policy development should be informed by trustworthy research.
- But, ensuring systematic reviews’ relevance and utilization towards development can be problematic. Reasons:
  - research often inadequately tailored
  - researchers and policy makers often inadequately connected
- How to accomplish good collaboration between science and practice?
AIMS

To describe the evolution and characteristics of a collaborative partnership – between a review team and policymakers in Norway – for policy-oriented, horizontal knowledge services, specifically sharing strategies to strengthen the research-policy linkages and thereby improving the production and uptake of evidence in policy contexts.
METHODS

- Case-study method
- Phenomenon of interest: development of collaborative partnership for a policy-oriented, horizontal knowledge service for decision-makers within social welfare
- Based on researchers’ and clients’ views, historical documents, surveys, interviews, and focus groups undertaken over several years
  - 2018: qualitative study among 15 national directorates (48 informants)
RESULTS

**Demand**

- Policy makers have incentives to access and use research
- Policy makers have capacity to access and use research

**Supply**

- Relevant research is effectively communicated to policy makers

**Why use research?**

- Workshops about EBP, e.g. QES workshop

**How evidence-literate are policy makers?**

- Workshops, working group, advisory group members, regular meetings

**Policy makers access and use research to inform policy**

- Evidence-informed policy contributes to people’s health and well-being

**How well connected are policy makers and researchers?**

- Collaborative partnership (use points of contact) with regard to: prioritization of reviews, scope, production, dissemination

**How well is research communicated to policy makers?**

- Reports, presentations, partnership throughout, guide, tailored reviews, various pub formats, PIs
Collaborative partnership model

1st line users
Commissioners [Directorates]

Labour and welfare
Children, youth and family affairs
Integration and diversity
Health
Police

Coordination Dialogue

- Regular and frequent meetings
- Sharing of news and updates

Deliverables
[Research team]

Reviews
Workshops
‘EBP Consulting’

Concept stage
Planning
Commissioning
Decision making

E.g. SPARK
E.g. QES
E.g. EtD

Points of contact

Deliverables increasingly comprehensive and customized

Many fields for different research questions (>100): education, policing, housing, child welfare, employment, immigration, health ++
Systematic reviews

- Tailoring re. planned use, details, time, resources etc.

‘THIN’
- Evidence summary
- Policy brief
- Systematic literature search with sorting
- Rapid review
- Systematic scoping/mapping review

‘THICK’
- Evidence-and-gap-map
- Systematic review
- Mixed-methods review
- Social Technology Assessment
- OoO
Example

‘integrated collaboration’

from interested...

Collaboration with regard to:

Prioritization Scope (design) Production Accessibility Promotion & Dissemination

from interested...

...to invested!

April 2017

- Shared launch April 2017
- Co-wrote article April-May 2017
- Presentations 2017

Meeting Jan 2016

Prioritized Dec 2015

Received Nov 2015

Meeting Mar 2017

Publication

Meeting Apr 2016

Meetings, e-mail communication, presentations

Literature search May 2016 ➔ review

1 reviewer, 1 co-reviewer, leader

Discuss draft Dec 2016

Discuss report Mar 2017

Report draft

Report approval and publication

Meeting Jan 2016

Protocol Jan-Mar 2016

Protocol approval and publication Mar 2016

Peer-review Mar 2016

Peer-review Feb 2017

Discuss report Mar 2017
LIMITS

- Evaluation of a collaboration and package of knowledge services is challenging
- The information is largely descriptive
BOTTOM LINE

From nominal cooperation to partnership

- Focus is knowledge for action
- Optimizes the reviews’ relevance and uptake in policy contexts
- Increases first-line users’ capacity (access and use)

It is possible to narrow the research-policy gap, and ensure use of policy-relevant reviews, through
i) close collaboration between research and policy worlds, ii) provision of customized services