The Social Nature
of
Global One Health

An analysis of life science and social science interactions within Wageningen University and Research's 2014-2018

investment theme

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Social Nature of Global One Health

Wicked problem solving: Transdisciplinary research (TR)

How transdisciplinary was GOH in terms of social science (SS) and life science (LS) interactions?

What are barriers and where do the possibilities lie?

Method

10 semi-structured interviews:

- 7 life scientists
- 3 social scientists (but: LS education)

Bottom up analysis

3 groups of factors

- **Constraining**
- **Facilitating**
- Undecided

Results: Constraining factors

1. Value judgments

- Negative toward to other
- Positive towards own capabilities

2. Institutional Context

3. Preferred practice

SS = giant, amorph substance

SS ≠ real science

SS are fuzzy

LS don't understand social relationships and shouldn't meddle in that

SS results are often truisms

SS is seen more as an **addition** than a branch of science with its own status

Value judgments

- *"OK, now let's go back to science"*

Results: Constraining factors

1. Value judgments

- Negative toward to other
- Positive towards own capabilities

2. Institutional Context

3. Preferred practice

SS = giant, amorph substance

No **added value** of SS

SS ≠ real science

SS are fuzzy

LS don't understand social relationships and shouldn't meddle in that

SS results are often truisms

Excessive word use in SS

SS is seen more as an **addition** than a branch of science with its own status

Results: Constraining factors

1. Value judgments

2. Institutional context

3. Preferred practice

International

National

WUR

GOH

Results: Constraining factors

1. Value judgments

2. Institutional context

3. Preferred practice

Funders prefer
monodisciplinary
projects

Publishing a transdisciplinary article is harder than a monodisciplinary article

Performance criteria

International collaborations limit interdisciplinarity within WUR

Institutional context

- "*It's very often about money here at WUR: that people try to claim a large chunk of the funding for themselves. That is kind of* ***ingrained*** *in the WUR performance* ***criteria****, because well, every euro that goes into my pocket, will not go into yours of course. And my boss always appreciates it when I bring in as many euros as possible.*"

Results: Constraining factors

1. Value judgments

2. Institutional context

3. Preferred practice

Funders prefer monodisciplinary projects

Opportunism

Positive succes bias

Pressure

Pillarization

Publishing a transdisciplinary article is harder than a monodisciplinary article

Not enough **stimulation**

Hierarchy university vs. applied research

Performance criteria

GOH funding came from medical domain

Client decides

Hard to connect to researchers with shared goals

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For quality of life

Results: Constraining factors

1. Value judgments
2. Institutional context
3. Preferred practice
   - Discipline
   - Individual

Hiring gamma people themselves

New theories vs. discoveries

Working in a cocoon

Shared research question

Different substantial focus

Scale levels

Methodological preferences

Preferred practice

*"Scientists are not necessarily busy trying to solve things; they are busy with generating knowledge. That is something different entirely. When you want to reach **solutions**, you need an integration of disciplines.*

*For the **development of knowledge**, I do not need any social science, a bit simplistically said; but to take the knowledge and pour it into a solution, you probably do need social sciences.*

*I think this is the **crux**: what I like to do best is generate knowledge."*

Results: Constraining factors

1. Value judgments
2. Institutional context

3. Preferred practice

- Discipline
- Individual

Hiring gamma people themselves

New theories vs. discoveries

Generating knowledge vs. solving problems

Working in a cocoon

Different substantial focus

Shared research question

Scale levels

Methodological preferences

Bringing in SS at the end of the project

Results: Facilitating factors

1. Personal factors
2. Overlap in desired practice
3. Mutual adaptability, respect and benefit
4. Organisational factors

Personal interests

Individualized actions

Taking initiative

Good connection; liking someone

Open mind

Responsibility

Taking risks

Intrinsic motivation

Goodwill

Personal Factors

- *"When researchers of different disciplines are asked to collaborate with one another, they will become much more **aware** of that collaboration and they will start to think more **positively** about it."*

Results: Facilitating factors

1. Personal factors
2. Overlap in desired practice
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Results: Facilitating factors

1. Personal factors

2. Overlap in (desired) practice

3. Mutual adaptability, respect and benefit

4. Organisational factors

In-depth vs. contextual?

Shared methodological tools

Common language

Joint start

Integration

Joint problem definition

Shared substantive focus

Joint RQ relevant to both disciplines

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Results: Facilitating factors

1. Personal factors
2. Overlap in desired practice
3. Mutual adaptability, respect and benefit
4. Organisational factors

Become 'one'

Total more than sum of its parts

Capabilities

Willingness

Tools

Flexibility

Mutual adaptability, respect and benefit

- *"The experience within GOH is that when researchers from different disciplines get to know one another, they will develop more **understanding** of the **importance** of each other's discipline."*

Results: Facilitating factors

1. Personal factors
2. Overlap in desired practice
3. Mutual adaptability, respect and benefit
4. Organisational factors

Become 'one'

Total more than sum of its parts

Mutual benefit

Capabilities

Willingness

Tools

Mutual respect

Flexibility

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Results: Facilitating factors

1. Personal factors
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Offering options

Linking pins

Dedicate role SS

Connecting person

Care for the process

Project leader:

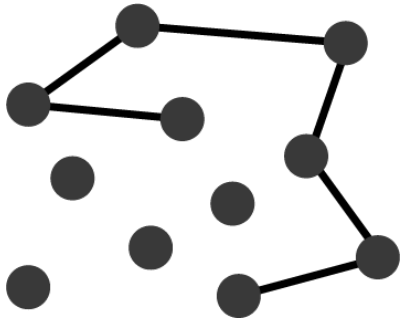
- Valuation
- Intrinsic motivation

Results: undecided factors

1. Top down enforcement

Or: stimulation?

2. Knowing specific (SS or LS) groups very well



Conclusion

CONSTRAINING

1. Value judgments

2. Institutional context

3. Preferred practice
   - Individually
   - Discipline

FACILITATING

1. Personal factors

2. Overlap in (desired) practice

3. Mutual adaptability, respect and benefit

4. Organisational factors

UNDECIDED

1. Top-down enforcement (stimulation)

2. Knowing specific groups very well

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For quality of life

Examples of adjustments

- Familiarizing LS and SS more with (1) each other and (2) their added value
  - E.g. internal education, thinktanks, expanding TR-network
- Contextual stimulation
  - E.g. rewarding system, requirements in research calls
- Proposals should start more from SS
- Developing a systemic approach
- Creating shared interest
- SS integral part of other disciplines

Final note

CHANGE WOULD BE BENEFICIAL

- Systemic context
- Intrinsic motivations

<u>Both LS ánd SS</u>

→ *Something to think about.. What SS domain thrived in GOH?*