


Linking Knowledge-to-Action through Community Engagement

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Why Knowledge-to-Action? Countering the Loading Dock Approach



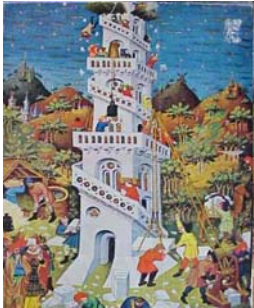
The co-production of knowledge that will leads to improved decision making must be (Cash et al.):

- Salient
- Credible
- Legitimate

Descending the Ivory Tower

Gunasekara's Triple Helix Model:

- Not just teachers & researchers; Architects and drivers of regional economic and social development
- Requires collaboration, trust, communication, commitment



Sustainability Science: The need to Link Knowledge with Action

"There is a growing realization that more of today's research, particularly in domains of immediate social concern, needs to move beyond such use-inspired basic research to address directly the creation of solutions most needed by society."
Clark & Holliday



K-A involves:
Diverse communities & stakeholders
Dialog & action
High degrees of interdisciplinary collaboration
Changes in universities

Linking "K-A"

- Scientists' research priorities should complement decision makers' priorities
- Move beyond use-inspired basic research to create solutions most needed by society
- Involves collaborative user-driven dialog with diverse stakeholders: citizens; all levels of government; business and industry; local to global NGOs
- K-A researchers study action, barriers to effective linkage, and need for further research.



A K-A Model: Community Engagement

- "A Virtuous Cycle of Improvement" (Silka & Farrant)
- Develops economic, intellectual, and cultural strength
- Involves partnerships & coalitions
- Shifts the work and evaluation of university faculty



Why Community Engagement?

- Establishes trust with communities
- Helps define problems
- Supports improved decision making
- Improves economic development opportunities
- Leads to stronger, more relevant research
- Breaks down town/gown barriers



Best Practices

Examples of Guiding Questions for Setting Up Research Partnerships (Adapted from Silka, Cleghorn, Grullon, and Tellez, 2008)	
• Who are parties to the collaboration?	• Who will be able to propose changes to the research protocol?
• How will each party benefit from the research and how will funding be shared?	• What will be each party's role in collecting data?
• How will the parties communicate and understand each other?	• What will be each party's role in analyzing data?
• What will be the opportunities for mutual education?	• Who will have access to the data and who will have control and/or ownership of the data?
• What will be each party's role in identifying, defining, and prioritizing research questions?	• What will be each party's role in disseminating and sharing results with other researchers, funders, government agencies and representatives, and community members?
• What will be each party's role in designing the overall research protocol and deciding how the research questions will be answered?	• What will be each party's role in using results to support new policies, programs, and research projects?

What does Community Engagement look like?



- Citizen Science
- Community-based journalism
- Collaborative research, e.g. CBPR (Community Based Participatory Research)
- Community arts programs
- Dialogs
- Media strategies

Some Sustainability Science Projects in Maine:

- GET WET!
- The Emerald Ash Borer and Maine Indian Basketmakers
- The Gorham East-West Corridor Study



The Road Ahead: Tales of Encouragement

- UMass Lowell Toxic Use Reduction Institute
- Community Based Science: The Native Community Action Council
- Portland State University