JPI Urban Europe – Experiences of promoting interdisciplinarity and co-creation in research programming

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Overview

• JPI Urban Europe
• Research programming in JPI UE
• Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation in JPI UE
Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe

• ‘Joint Programming Initiative’: to strengthen and align national and European programs in a specific area (10 JPI’s)

• JPI Urban Europe’s aim: to create attractive, sustainable and economically viable urban areas, in which European citizens, communities and their surroundings can thrive
Transition towards sustainable and liveable urban areas

- vibrant economies
- welfare & finance
- sustainability & resilience
- accessibility & connectivity
- governance & participation
Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe

- Activities of JPI UE include:
  - developing a strategic research & innovation agenda (SRIA)
  - issuing joint research & innovation calls
  - aligning national activities / programs
Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe

- Governing Board
- Management Board
- Funding Agencies Working Group
- Scientific Advisory Board
- SEiSMiC network (cities, regions, communities)
- Stakeholder Involvement Platform
- Urban Europe Research Alliance (RTO’s, universities/researchers)
Research programming in JPI UE

- Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda
- Joint Calls
- ERANET-Cofund Calls
ENC-Smart Urban Futures

ENSUF:

- 23.5 M€ public funding
- 18 countries
- 2-stage
- 187 pre-proposals
Research programming in JPI UE

Alignment framework

- Aligned Objectives
  - European hub for urban research

- Common Values
  - JPI Urban Europe
  - Principles & Research Approach

- Aligned Strategies
  - JPI Urban Europe Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda

- Common Frameworks & Infrastructure
  - Call Procedures
  - Programme Management

- Joint Action & Common Practices
  - Joint Calls
  - Urban Europe Research Alliance
  - Urban Observatories
  - Shared Data
  - Shared Infrastructure
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

In the core of JPI UE, SRIA (set of principles):

“Interdisciplinary approaches to enhance understanding of urban complexity and generate radical new knowledge and concepts to tackle urban society’s multifaceted challenges.”

(...) 

“Transdisciplinarity, in order to ensure impact and relevance.”

“There is an urgent need for transformative interdisciplinary research to radically improve our understanding of the complex, interrelated and competing factors influencing cities’ social, economic and environmental sustainability, underpinned by quantitative and qualitative research into cities’ functioning and the effectiveness of strategies and policy measures for improving upon this functioning.”
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

• Definition(s) used – Glossary of SRIA:

  “Interdisciplinarity -
  A collaboration spanning multiple academic disciplines (e.g. natural sciences, social sciences, engineering sciences, technological sciences, medical sciences) and involving the application of complementary methodologies to more innovatively and comprehensively tackle a common problem than would otherwise be possible.”

  “Transdisciplinarity -
  A collaboration spanning multiple partners, both academic and non-academic, to solve a common problem. Non-academic partners may include city officials, (non-) governmental agencies and offices, charitable organisations, firms, civil society, grassroots movements etc.”
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

- Operationalisation of inter/transdisciplinarity and co-creation in the calls
  - asked-for in call text
    - to be taken up in proposals/project via composition of the consortium, approach
    - definitions in call text glossary
  - evaluation criterions
  - composition of the evaluators panel

Pragmatism: ad-hoc definition, ‘local declaration’
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

• Possible operationalisation in projects
  – consortium composition:
    • interdisciplinarity: scientists with various disciplinary backgrounds
    • transdisciplinarity: scientists, authorities, entrepreneurs, citizens, citizen groups
  – research / project approach:
    • co-creation: urban living labs, user involvement, participative research, ...
    • transdisciplinarity: pilots, practical implementations
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

• Potential issues – call text
  – how to *align interests* of the SRIA and the various FA’s (incl. EC) – with varying aims & ambitions?
  – how to *appeal* to both scientists and practitioners*?

  *w.r.t.*: topic selection, selection of objectives, formulation of texts, definition of criteria, call conditions & funding opportunities, language & terminology

* for discussion purposes, highly simplified opposites are used
Inclusive, vibrant and accessible urban communities

Cities play an active role in shaping the connections and social processes which take place within them. Urban planning, design, and governance can help to support creative and inclusive communities, or they can literally build walls between groups and close down possibilities for interaction and innovation. This topic examines the everyday needs and challenges facing different social and cultural groups in the city, and how individual and community practices, urban governance, businesses, infrastructures and urban regeneration can support sustainable urban development and the peaceful integration of diverse communities.

Further progress on diminishing urban inequalities and conflicts requires the co-production of knowledge and solutions. Urban governance must effect local change and must contribute to implement broader national policy and legislative agendas successfully to alleviate pressure and promote cohesion. There are many innovations that could support new forms of engagement and support for communities, including approaches to the development of trans-disciplinary cooperation and co-creative experimentation, for instance by urban living labs and local community and individual practices, supported through a range of new forms of local community and urban areas.
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

• Potential issues – call evaluation
  – how to select and ‘rank’ non-scientists* for the panel?
  – how to assess the ‘quality’ of involved non-scientists* in proposals?
  – how to assess innovation/impact?
  – how to balance scientific impact vs. societal impact*?

* for discussion purposes, highly simplified opposites are used
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

• Potential issues – project phase
  – how to assure real collaboration between scientists with different disciplinary background?
  – how to assure real collaboration between scientists and non-scientists*?
  – how to get satisfying output/results for all stakeholders?
  – how really implement flexibility, urban labs (vs. funding rules)
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

- Possible ‘deep’ causes – to be assessed:
  - *inter/multi disciplinarity issues*:
    different language, vocabulary, frames;
    different research cultures, quality indicators, metrics;
    different application areas;
  - *transdisciplinarity issues*:
    different goals & ambitions;
    different ‘success indicators’, ‘KPIs’;
Interdisciplinarity & Co-creation

- Note: various challenges might be intertwined:
  - disciplinary differences
  - science – practitioner differences
  - national/cultural differences
    (research tradition, peers, competition, reference frame, language, funding mechanisms)
  - institutional differences
Summary

• JPI Urban Europe: joint calls & alignment actions
• Inter- and transdisciplinarity, co-creation in the core (SRIA, calls)
• Defined in glossary of SRIA
• Operationalised in calls (text, evaluation) and in projects
• Several (potential) issues and challenges in quality assessment, real collaboration, output
Thank you!

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