SSHA-DRIVEN KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER WITHIN THE THIRD MISSION OF UNIVERSITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Based on observations within the structural framework provided by the "Wissenstransferzentrum Ost"[1] (Knowledge Transfer Centre East), an inter-university collaboration project of all nine Viennese universities, this contribution is pointing out different elements driven by the sectors of "Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts" (SSHA) within the paradigm of a "third mission"[i] of universities. Besides the core functions of teaching and research, university outreach activities have developed different formats to provide services to populations who might not otherwise have access to those services. Historically the field of knowledge transfer has been dominated by valorisation and utilisation methods within the field of technology transfer, which is dealing mainly with the sectors of "Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics" (STEM). The SSHA had not been taken into account largely, since the significance for societal development and contribution were obviously integral to a greater good of humankind and by these means seemed obsolete for utilisation. On the contrary the SSHA field is forced to generate a rather radical and new approach of knowledge exchange with a multitude of peers – both within the academic community and with actors and stakeholders from society as well as economy – if they want to be part of the third mission paradigm. The paper elaborates on different approaches, formats and processes, which have been designed and applied within the collaboration project since its start in 2014, to exemplify such willingness. There will be a focus on examples from the knowledge transfer framework focusing on exchange methods from university to society at large and how impact have been catalysed within different levels of implementation. Based on these observations and learnings, the contribution reflects on target groups, such as researchers, alumni and university staff from different disciplines within the SSHA field, with a focus on inter- and trans-disciplinary endeavours. The aim is to figure out the potentials and methodological adaptions for a substantial integration of the SSHA in existing knowledge transfer structures, to describe pathways of impact oriented narratives, give examples from a process oriented and format driven participatory empowerment framework, to strengthen the position of SSHA at large in the field of knowledge transfer and to describe themes, formats and programme elements to illustrate the role of SSHA sectors within university outreach actions.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER – WITH STRINGS ATTACHED FOR SSHA

Knowledge transfer is often associated with utilisation of intellectual property, patent- or product-centred technical innovations. The so-called TTOs ("Technology Transfer Officers") are responsible to deliver hard evidence for businesses through lawyers and patent offices. Obviously there are several reasons why the SSHA fields cannot be very interested in participating within such kind of transfer business. It is even hard to say that the social sciences, the humanities and the arts are sharing the same viewpoint and goals within the knowledge transfer setup. For people outside these fields, the acronym SSHA is not even graspable and therefore has to be brought into attention by awareness activities and good practice examples. From a critical point of view, plenty of reasons have been brought into discourse about how and why the transfer of knowledge and the economic trigger behind it will corrode the core values of SSHA (e.g. Castells 1997, Lui 2004, Boltanski / Chiapello 2005). Nevertheless, the goal and motivation to create societal impact through knowledge transfer to communities and peers is seen as an important issue. On the one hand, the judgment is often driven by a strong mistrust (e.g. Raunig 2007)[2] according to the systematic approach to include neo-liberal and entrepreneurial elements into the freedom of sciences and arts. On the other hand, social impact and responsible innovations are identified as core drivers and motivations to contribute academic knowledge and research skills to a broader field of application within society. Still, we see problems on an individual level of precarity and stagnation arising, which have to deal with fundamental issues like "make a living" or feeling valuated for the work done, because academic assessment structures are not aligned to mark and qualify these actions. The claim is: Valuation processes in the SSHA with societal impact are developed; they "just" have to be applied in existing structures of knowledge trans-

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1   See also: http://www.wtz-ost.at (last accessed: 14.11.2018)
2   Creative Industries as Mass Deception, G. Raunig. See also: http://eipcp.net/transversal/0207/raunig/en (last accessed: 14.11.2018)

fer and exchange channels.[ii] This cannot be done within a top down super-structure treating all SSHA field and stakeholders with the same policy instruments. It might not be even possible to just apply something in an existing understanding of know-how transfer without sharing the same visions, agendas and tools.

THE CASE – "KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER CENTRES" IN AUSTRIA

The case is referring to a funding scheme introduced by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research in 2014 and is carried out by the funding entity "Austria Wirtschaftsservice" till the end of 2018.[iii] One Module of the funding scheme is dividing Austria in three regional centres (East, West, South). The eastern centre is Vienna with its nine Universities.[iv] Every centre is receiving about half a million Euro per year to create, develop and carry out knowledge transfer activities addressing society and economy. The important and new element within the action is a special awareness to the SSHA fields, designated through an additional budget to the mentioned funding earmarked for SSHA related activities only and thus the obligation for existing technology and knowledge transfer structures to include SSHA in their developments and actions. This rather new and experimental approach led to the development of several new knowledge exchange formats trying to identify and address new target groups. Including workshops, lectures and seminars to empower researchers, university stuff and doctoral students for participatory methods of knowledge exchange e.g. citizen science, or to develop training formats for alumni based on topics like social entrepreneurship and social business. The impact on this level of development could be described as "impact by design". Pre-existing pathways and approaches mainly focused on exploitation and valorisation of products (e.g. patents, inventions, technologies) instead of the empowerment of certain groups and stakeholders to contribute and distribute their knowledge and skills to society. To channel these actions a second level has to be delineated within an external cooperation framework of the knowledge transfer centre, to ensure external organisation units can receive and apply knowledge on inter- and trans-disciplinary level. By identifying and including external organisations and stakeholders as experts, mentors and partners, awareness raising and dissemination into new areas of application was accomplished. Furthermore a network of partners based on a qualitative cooperation experience can multiply outcomes and foment new actions. The implementation of the knowledge transfer centre showed, if a clear applicable cooperation framework is provided by universities, it is used by the mentioned target groups and partner organisations.

THE CHALLENGE – TAILORING PROCESSES WITHOUT BLUEPRINTS

The opportunity to create and develop a sustainable framework of SSHA knowledge transfer between all Viennese universities and all regional centres in Austria is an appealing challenge. The establishment of a communication pattern for all responsible university entities and centres is one of them. Another one is to establish a compliant form of interaction to find common grounds and languages of SSHA interests. The key question is about the implementation of support levels in different organisational structures and cultures within the university system. However the project structure given by the funding entity was rather vague and had not foreseen a clear structure of contents and transfer activities within the application. The project partners delivered the conceptual outline and main emphasis on content. The SSHA sector in Vienna is led by the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna dealing with the fact of minor preliminary work done concerning knowledge transfer at the partners, and hardly any structures established in the field. The main aim was to create new, open, flexible and interdisciplinary formats of exchange and transfer to support a bottom up process in the SSHA field based on projects, rather than defining knowledge transfer processes as tailor made blueprints. The organic vision for capacity building in the universities and the identification of cooperative communities in society and with economy still had to be narrowed down, especially concerning the mentioned target groups, contents, and channels to design tools and formats for several different patterns in the SSHA spectrum. For this reason, so called transfer and creativity hubs have been designed to deliver training programmes with certain SSHA relevant topics. One of the most integral parts within the development plan was relying on the empowerment of diverse target groups within the university system, such as university staff and researchers. Additionally, a priority was set on targeting alumni to broaden the responsibility of knowledge transfer and to create a level of exchange with their competences and needs, to offer new connectivity options and peer learning formats for all participants. By these decisions, a trust is laid in identifying unknown and upcoming actors of knowledge transfer within a broader angle of empowerment and knowledge production, in relation to universities but not necessarily only from universities. Kirsten Langkilde describes the interplay between a creative and critical culture and the realm of society as *"impact of culture"* (Langkilde, 2018, p 32). The process of production is understood as a contribution to society. Knowledge transfer channels can support such elements by tailoring processes to address special interest communities such as social businesses or impact investors to provide a participation or cooperation framework. To intermediate between academic projects and external partners the knowledge transfer centre helped to support on both sides of the spectrum.

IN THE MAKING – FORMATS AND TOOLS

First of all a multi-level participatory approach for target groups and cooperation partners was outlined to be adapted by different hosting university and opinion leaders. All of the designed tools and formats of knowledge transfer within the SSHA sector of the Knowledge Transfer Centre East are rather offers than instructions. Since not every partner university in the network is working under the same conditions and is having a similar development status, equally claimed needs had been replaced by offers that can be used, adapted and modified by the universities for their purpose. Working in a network made it easier to exchange offers and apply them within the existing structures. All actions are open to all university partners and free of charge to ensure an interdisciplinary exchange. The offers cover extra curricula courses, workshops and training programmes, called transfer and creativity hubs, to cover topics and aspects of diverse backgrounds identified from the SSHA fields. For example a continuing education programme[v] with more than forty workshops, lectures and seminars per year is hosted by the Viennese universities. Different locations and topics should help to identify potentials, support projects and catalyse communities around special interest groups. The low-threshold of the formats should raise awareness for upcoming and existing elements of knowledge transfer and attract peers to learn more about contemporary developments and upcoming topics within the SSHA transfer activities and its impact on society. Experts, partners and stakeholders from the region have been included in the activities as speakers and trainers to carry out a large proportion of the education programme, to multiply the channels of dissemination and to recognise new actors. This rather generic approach was driven by the fact that most of the actors within the SSHA field we are reaching are motivated to apply their expertise in meaningful actions, they want to make a living from what they do and are looking for cooperation and communities to expand their sphere of action. Supporting transferable skills and peer learning within a consistent setup of programmes is building trust in sustainable structures where individual know-how and expertise can be adjusted within groups, leading to connections with external partners and assuring the step by step development of a recognised practice for cultural wellbeing as integral part of societal challenges. From a technical level we used the extra curricula courses to identify the interest of participants on a quantitative and qualitative level to decide if a more intensive set up of a creativity and transfer hub is useful.

TRANSFER FOR THE PEOPLE – IT'S ALL ABOUT CONTENT.

Within the multitude of structures and interaction patterns built to identify and support the needs of transfer cultures in the SSHA and to deliver it to a larger context of society, precise examples and good practices are the key. Knowledge transfer and all its implications, especially in the SSHA fields, have to be channelled in tangible topics to observe a social or societal impact. By this means I want to point out some examples to elaborate on. Within the four-month training programme called "Make yourself an Expert Hub"[vi] we focused on different topics such as, how to make a living in the arts, how to set up a social business, how to create a crowdfunding campaign.[vii] The trainings always have been introduced by a call, assessed by a jury, carried out with external stakeholder and cooperation partners. Trainers and experts from the field delivered state of the art examples, helped with the setup of teams and contribute towards project management skills and supporting channels. By the establishment of micro-funding and financial support, structures external funding sources could have been convinced to cooperate, so called "impact investors" have been made sensitive to the contributions of SSHA to society at large and stakeholders had the chance to understand better why SSHA achievements are having a fundamental significance to society, which is under a heavy transformation process.

Using the example of the "Social Business Hub" we worked closely with partners like "magdas hotel" a social business operated in the framework of Caritas. They provide work for refugees from crisis-ridden countries to offer them the chance to demonstrate their abilities and talents.[3] In addition we included organisations like the "Impact Hub Vienna", the platform "Social City Vienna" and the "Social Entrepreneurship Center of the Vienna University of Economics and Business" to develop a training programme for the "Social Business Hub". Within the hub we called for projects from the university context with social business ideas do co-develop and co-create their ideas. Out of 25 applications ten projects have been selected to bring their ideas to life. After two month of intensive and productive training the projects pitched their ideas in front of the partners, potential investors and stakeholder from the field of social business.[4] More than 50% of the supported projects founded a social business. Others got offers to develop further within project cooperation or found partners to go on with.

CONCLUSION

One of the greatest achievements within the logic of knowledge transfer activities with people from a multi-disciplinary background is the belief to contribute something good and important for people and society. Even if this sounds pathetic, but the credo "to make the world a better place" is enabling a very contemporary culture of knowledge beyond the fact of economical reason. In general social, cultural and

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3   See also: 5 good reasons to stay at magdas Hotel: https://www.magdas-hotel.at/en/hotel/5-reasons (last accessed: 14.11.2018)

4   A video of the presentation event is available via: https://vimeo.com/182367688 (last accessed 12.11.2018)

5   Conference for Knowledge Exchange and Technology Transfer Professionals, Vienna 2018, Panel: On Arts Incubators & Cultural Accelerators. See also: http://www.wtz-ost.at/conference (last accessed: 05.11. 2018)

artistic approaches are often misunderstood as philanthropic, with a minor economical dimension. The mentioned trainings as well as „Artistic Incubators and Cultural Accelerators" as discussed at the „Conference for Knowledge Exchange and Technology Transfer Professionals, Vienna 2018"[5] are dealing with this bias by focusing on substantial transfer and exchange activities based on socio-cultural change and critical reflection to contribute deeply for societal challenges and the contemporary transformation of society. The empowerment of social scientist, artists and cultural workers in collaborative and interdisciplinary developments of new frameworks of action such as artistic incubators and cultural accelerators have led to a unique perspective on economic frameworks having the common good and social impact at stake. For the SSHA sectors and especially for researchers in the field, the described fields of action could be rather seen as a chance than as a burden. Taking these challenges with an understanding of diversity, responsibility, ethical guidelines and sustainability for the whole society into account will as well influence and change encrusted economical driven structures. Despite the commendable fact, monetary aspects cannot be disregarded. Furthermore, a clear vision of financial needs and compensation for these actions has to be developed within the SSHA interests, to deliver a serious approach beyond counter cultures and dependence on third party funding approaches. If the SSHA fields want to succeed in regard of the contemporary societal challenges they are forced to step out of the comfort zone. To help and support this process knowledge transfer between universities and society can be a useful tool.

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Endnotes

i   Survey by the Institute for Advanced Studies. (2012) (in German language): https://www.wien.gv.at/wirtschaft/standort/pdf/third-mission.pdf (last accessed: 15.06.2018)

ii   Benneworth B. and Jongbloed B.W. (2009). Who matters to universities? A stakeholder perspective on humanities, arts and social sciences valorisation. (Article is published with open access at: springerlink.com)

iii   Funding scheme and funding guidelines (in German language): https://www.aws.at/foerderungen/aws-wissenstransferzentren-und-ipr-verwertung-modul-1a-regionale-wissenstransferzentren (last accessed: 12.05.2018)

iv   The nine Viennese universities within the Knowledge Transfer Centre East: Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, University of Applied Arts Vienna, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, University of Vienna, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Technical University Vienna, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna, Medical University Vienna, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna.

v   Details about the actual education program of the Knowledge Transfer Centre East is available online (in German language): http://www.wtz-ost.at/veranstaltungen (last accessed: 17.06.2018)

vi   Video examples of projects and supported projects can be viewed via online streaming video channel: https://vimeo.com/akbild (last accessed: 17.06.1018)

vii   See also: http://www.crowdfundershub.at (Website in German language, last accessed 15.06.2018)