# **A picture containing text, aircraft, flag Description automatically generated** Keystone Conference

Record of the Plenary Session  
15 December 2021

The plenary session and held in the refectory of the Royal Academy with approx. 30 participants present. Sue Wright chaired and Andrew Gibson took notes,

1. **Network**

The aim of this project is to create a Europe-wide network of senior and early stage researchers concerned to respond to the widening mandate for universities by developing a new research agenda on the critical roles universities can play in Europe and bring research results into dialogue with the policy community.

As the project is about being a network, everyone should feel free to contact people about building relationships and doing exchanges. PhD candidates and post docs who are interested in participating in the activities of any of the working groups over the next year are welcome to contact the working group organisers directly or via Sue Wright.

Everybody in the room agreed to have their emails collated into a list to be circulated to conference participants.

Participants made two suggestions for activities for early stage researchers:

1. Session on how to write peer reviews of each other’s articles and work. The peer review system for journals is struggling because of academics’ time constraints. Que Anh Dang reported on a very fruitful training in review writing and expressed interest in developing a new community of peer reviewers, and learning to do reviews in a spirit of ‘critical encouragement’, which is good for offering each other feedback and helps build the network.
2. Session on how to write policy briefs, building on the session facilitated by NIFUStep in Oslo as part of the precursor UNIKE project.
3. **Working groups – future plans**

The aim of the final year of the project is for working groups to

1. consolidate the work they have been doing (this could include producing any publications, developing any funding application to develop the research further)
2. develop a dialogue with relevant members of the policy community (university leaders, national and EU policy makers, think tanks etc). This could include writing for a policy audience, holding events, etc.

All the **working group coordinators** are asked to **complete an updated planning document and return it to Sue by the end of January**. The working groups’ website pages will then be updated.

Working group coordinators who were present gave an outline of their plans.

# Gender and Precarity**:** (Sue reported on behalf of Lotte Snickare) The working group is continuing their seminar series, doing a literature review, holding an event in Oslo in the middle of the year, and has submitted a proposal for a special issue of the journal LATISS. The group aims to develop more links and would welcome new members.

# On dialogue with the policy community, a meeting has been arranged on 11th Jan with Gabi Lombardi, Director of EASSH for advice on how to engage with EC, seeing as gender equality is high on President von der Leyen’s agenda. (EASSH is the European Association of SSH – whose website says it is the largest advocacy and science policy organisation for the social sciences and humanities in Europe, which draws on members’ knowledge to inform and influence European policy- and decision makers).

Trust Beyond Metrics: Jakub Krzeski reported that they still have fieldwork to be completed, and they are a bit short-handed as there is only three in the group, but this work is now their priority. They have a draft text and after that is finalised, they will have some events to build on it. Everyone is welcome to join their discussions.

Changing relations between Faculty, Administrators and Leaders: Pusa Nastase explained that this group has lost members through both illness and career developments, and are quite short staffed, but a new member is joining them. They have been holding webinars to exchange ideas and debate each other’s research. Pusa Nastase is finishing a publication, and is also thinking about doing some journalistic pieces. Also welcoming to new members.

Alternative Internationalisms: Andrew Gibson reported that the group’s plans are produce a special issue of the journal LATISS (which is looking very coherent), and then turn that into a book. Some members are now doing exchanges to each other’s institutions. The group has held regular webinars and a lot has been achieved in a year, so now they are taking the time to reflect and see what is to be done next – what new conversations will start.

Alternative Conditions of Knowledge Creation: Eva Hartmann reported that they have held a series of webinars and one more is planned for the spring on how northern universities can support southern universities. Following the panel on research freedom at the conference, they will do more work on this topic. There is definitely scope to interact more with other WGs (reaching out to specific groups for different events). There are discussion about the best ways to produce publications from the webinar series.

# Access of Refugees to Higher Education: Nobody from the group was at the plenary but Sue reported that the group had held an excellent webinar series over the last year. Some members of the group had already published *Opening Up The University.*

## *Teaching and Learning with Refugees* in the Berghahn series, Higher Education in Critical Perspective: Practices and Policies *https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/CantatOpening*

Arising from the conference session, Katrin Sontag had circulated a Declaration to conference participants. Any comments should be sent to Katrin by Christmas. Katrin will also consult the members of the working group. (After the conference, Katrin and Sue arranged that once any changes to the working had been agreed, the Declaration would be available on a suitable site for people to add their signatures).

1. **Pandemic Study**

Tim Seidenschnur summarised the next steps: country teams will revise their draft reports, a peer reviewing system has been arranged, and Tim or Amelia Veiga will write an introduction and overview of the findings. Chris Newfield will be asked to write the excellent commentary he made at the conference. The whole will be published as a series of working papers. Following that, plans are to produce a special issue with the overview, 3 thematic issues and the commentary.

Discussion focused on opportunities for the Pandemic study to engage in policy dialogue

1. In the conference session with members of the policy community were asking us to set out what the future looks like – maybe we should use the pandemic study to give us a sense of what the future looks like.
2. We should go back to the leaders we interviewed, and tell them about the emerging issues. This would require writing an executive summary of policy brief – do not expect them to read 16-100 pages! It would be good to meet them in person and have a conversation.
3. Media coverage. Times Higher Education is interested in contacting the pandemic study group. If any of the country teams has contacts with their local media, please make contact and try to get coverage.
4. **Dialogue with policy community**

Arising from the conference session on how to generate a dialogue with members of the policy community, Sue Wright will write a note on the ideas they generated and circulate it. That session did not include unions, NGOs or consultancies (OECD), or the media. Working groups can think about what elements of the policy community might be relevant to their respective activities. Lina Christensen, AU’s senior EU adviser based in Brussels, has been extremely helpful in putting the project in touch with EUA, The Guild, EASSH, etc. and has offered to continue introducing us to the right people.

Lina Christensen has suggested that the project hold an event in Brussels in 2022. We should pick out issues that would be relevant to an audience there. The plenary agreed this was a good idea. We would need an MEP to host it, and Sonja Trifuljesko offered to contact one she knew.

Eva Hartmann pointed out that some members of the project have a lot of experience about getting in touch with politicians and policymakers. It would be worth sharing how we had our own involvement with that world. People often underestimate the complexity of getting in touch with policymakers. Maybe we could generate narratives on Zoom, write them up, along with the notes from the conference session and combine them into a working paper, or a page on the website.

Mark Dawson and Sonja Trifuljesko suggested the idea of organising a session for early stage researchers on writing policy briefs (see above).

1. **Dissemination and media**

Conference report: Some wonderful PhD researchers have offered to write up reports on the different sessions and many people have taken photographs. Sue Wright will compile these into a conference report for circulation and to go on the website.

Website: The website will be updated with recordings of some of the conference sessions on CHEF’s YouTube channel. Working group plans will be updated and their events can be advertised through their website page, CHEF’s Twitter and Facebook accounts. Please re-tweet and forward information to colleagues who may be interested.

Working papers: The CHEF working paper series is available to publish the reports of the pandemic study and any work arising from the working groups. <https://dpu.au.dk/forskning/omraader/chef/publications/working-papers> This is a useful way to get work in progress quickly into the public domain. Each publication is edited, has an ISBN number and the authors retain the copyright and can revise and republish in other places.

Journal articles and special issues: Working groups will obviously choose the outlets best suited to their research, but the journal *LATISS (Learning and Teaching: International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences)* edited by Sue Wright and Penny Welch is interested in receiving submissions for articles and special issues. The journal focuses on analysing teaching and academic practices in changing institutional, national, or international contexts.

Book series: The journal LATISS is associated with the Berghahn book series, Higher Education in Critical Perspective: Practices and Policies, also edited by Sue Wright and Penny Welch. Proposals can be based on republishing articles for a special issue of LATISS with additional articles, or can be completely new sets of articles.

1. **Conclusion**

This project has been phenomenal – with very little money yet huge outputs. Andrew Gibson and Sue Wright are working on a special issue arising from the June Workshop on European Universities in Changing Global Contexts. Alternative Internationalisms is working on a special issue and book. The Refugee group already has a book. Gender and Precarity has already sent in a proposal for a special issue. The Pandemic study has plans for a working paper series…

Matej Zitnansky was congratulated on organising a very successful conference that blended participants in the room with those projected on the wall. He was given a Danish ‘hurrah’ and present of wine. Sue Wright was also thanked with a round of applause.