

Partnerships for improving population health between regional universities and governments - The WHYs, WHATs and HOWs

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WHY?



Research:

- Theory orientated
- Solving research questions
- Scientific publishing
- Loooooong timeframes
- Loyalty to scientific methods
- Academic freedom
- Accountability and transparency

Practice:

- Context oriented
- Solving practical issues
- Participating approaches
- Now!
- Loyalty to political decisions
- Hierarchy
- Reputation management and marketing

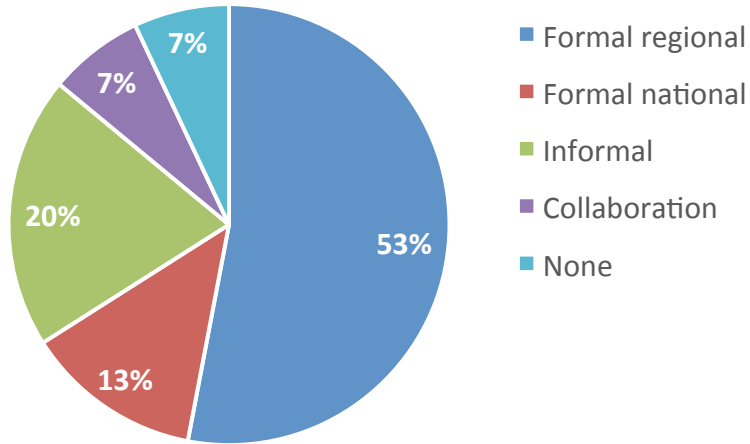


WHAT did we do?

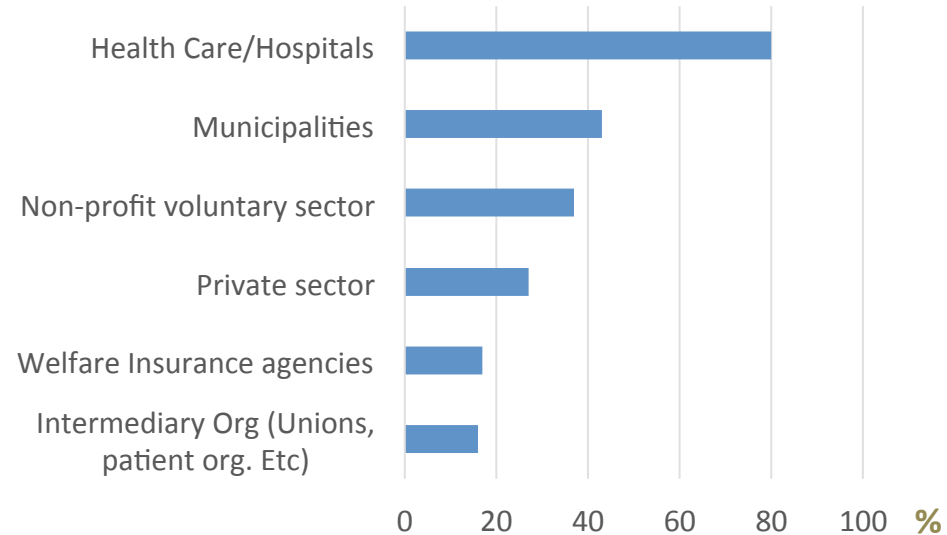
- Electronical questionnaire sent to focal points of all member regions (RHN), 31 regions (72%) answered.
- Group interviews with 4 (best-practise) cases:
 - Østfold, Norway
 - Varna, Bulgaria
 - Utrecht, the Netherlands
 - Saskatoon, Canada

WHAT's going on in RHN?

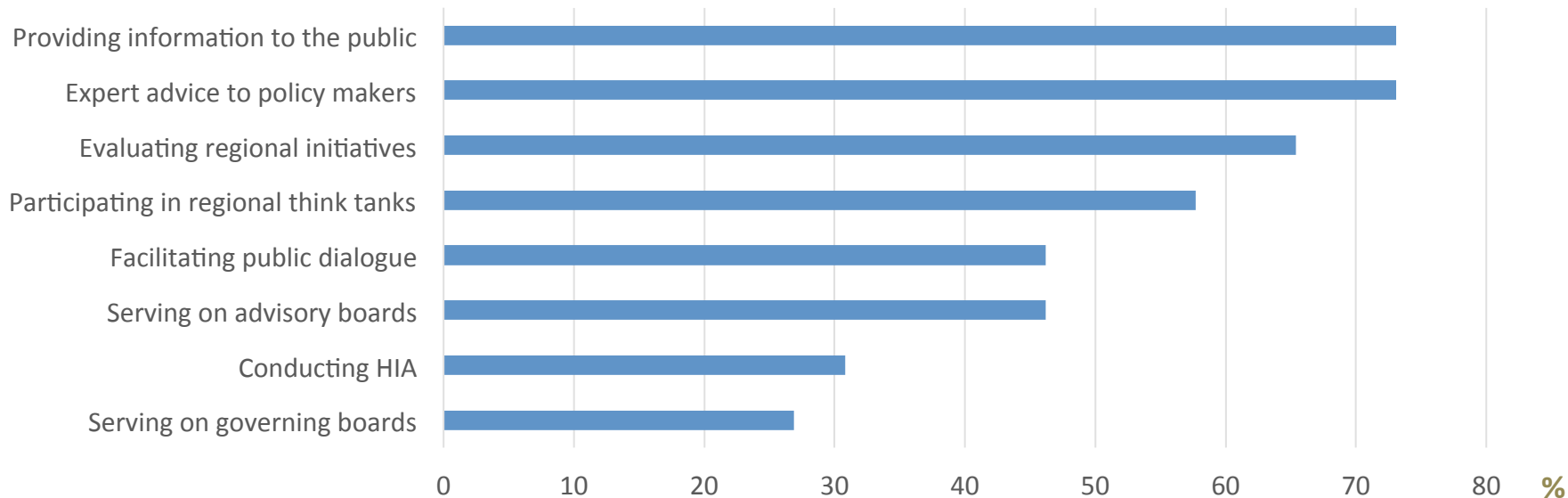
Partnership with academic institutions



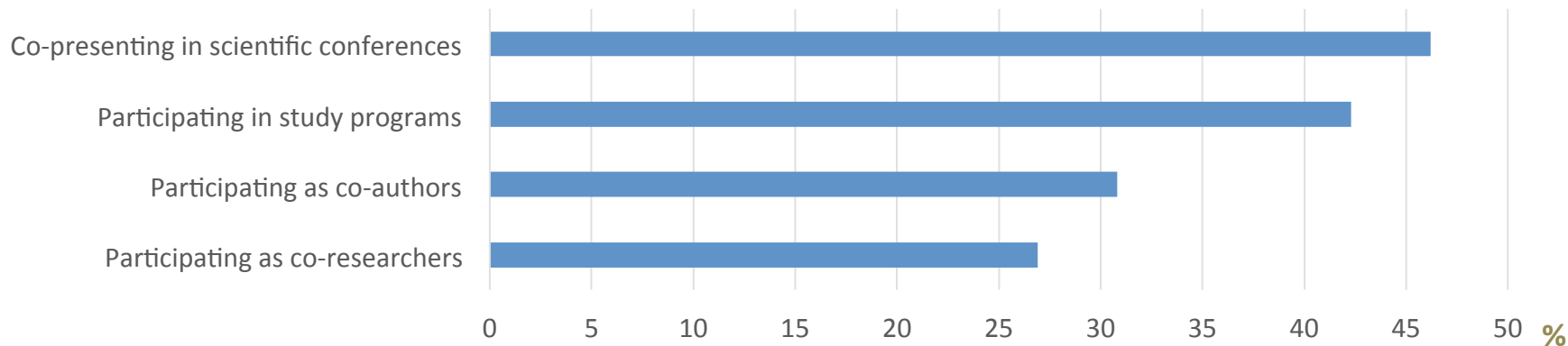
Other stakeholders in partnership



WHAT's in it for the regional governments? (Universities' contribution to region)



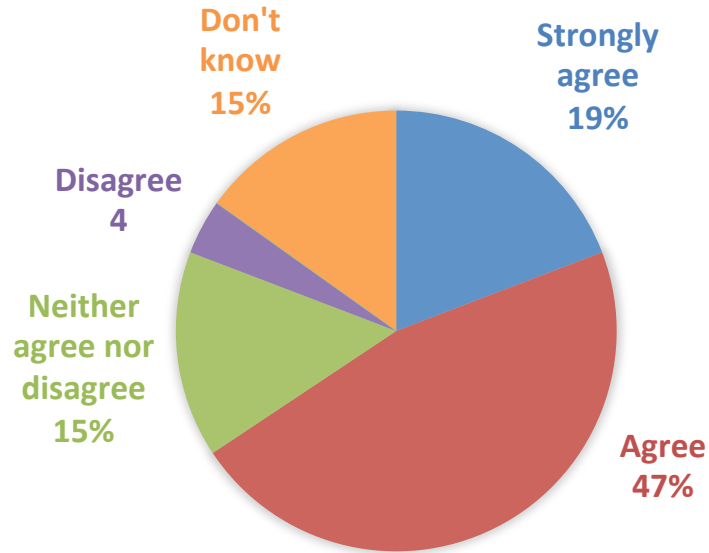
WHAT's in it for the regional university? (Regions' contributions to academia)



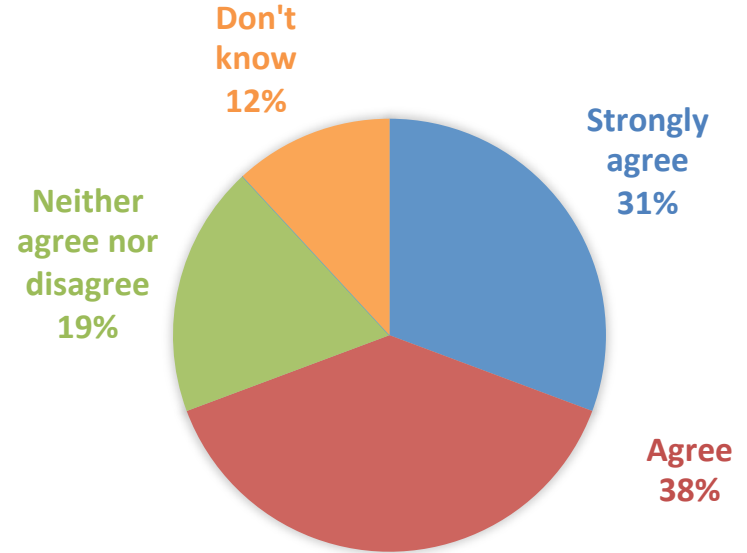
+ Funding possibilities, access to data, translate scientific knowledge into practice, fulfilling “third mission”, and possibility to impact society

WHAT are the experiences?

SUBSTANTIAL ACHIEVEMENTS



BENEFITS THE INHABITANTS



HOW to do it?

- Spend time and be patient

“We’ve spent a number of years trying to explore a deeper relationship and see how we can all work together to improve individual and community well-being.”

HOW to do it?

- Build personal relations, trust and common identity

“It is very important to have and build trust within the partnership, to “be out there” and meet, and spend time together”

“Build a strong sense of “a WE” – be generous in crediting partners for work even if they were not the ones that actually initiated it or did the work”

HOW to do it?

- **Build a sustainable partnership organization**
 - 90 % of formal partnerships had a structured organization (strategy, budget, steering committee etc.)
 - 73 % of informal and formal partnerships have part-time or full-time staff employed

HOW to do it?

- Have an open mind and develop an understanding

“[It was important to] Getting to know individuals that could ‘translate’ the other organization for us.”

“We had to realize that WE needed to change before we could expect that others (i.e. the University) could change”

HOW to do it?

- Don't be grandiose – start small

“You should start with small steps and show results. It is not a good idea to start with big projects. But start with small projects and with dedication. Dedicated people”

HOW to do it?

- Setting up for “big wins”

“There was a ‘big win’ that could not have occurred without the partnership, and that boosted our confidence and created a shared narrative within the partnership. This single event created momentum that still exists”

WHAT to remember?

It is possible to build sustainable partnerships between regional governments and universities for addressing public health challenges.

Such partnerships are perceived as beneficial for both partners

Factors that enable and sustain partnerships are consistent across geographical, thematically and sosiodemographic differences.