Why Engage With Policy?

Written by Hana Morel (University College London)

This is not a question that gets asked enough. Engaging with policy is often understood as an expected requirement of funding obligations, therefore "How to engage with policy" has taken precedence over the question of "why engage with policy."

Yet, engaging with policy is so much more than just complying with the research framework requirements of today. At its core, engaging with policy is a pillar to any democracy, a sort of social contract or responsibility to ensure that we the people are governed effectively and efficiently. If we think about good governance, we can link it to bringing together a wider plurality of voices, or a plurality of stakeholders, to the decision-making process, and also to policy implementation. It's about working alongside each other and encouraging participation in innovative ways, to drive a culture of engaging with policy making in all of its various stages.

Navigating through the complex landscape of policy production can often be discouraging. As a researcher, it is difficult to keep on top of emerging issues, spot released calls for evidence or consultations, translate complex research into chewable catch-phrases, or even find in government the stakeholders who would welcome a researcher's work. But researchers *can* influence the development of policy through robust evidence-based research.

At "Heritage and Policy", a workshop I am co-convening with Praxis at the University of Leeds on 6 December 2019, the "why" of policy engagement will be discussed alongside the "how to." The workshop aims to support Global Challenge Research Fund projects to apply their research findings to the development of UK policy, enabling better and more informed governance.

This is just one of a series of activities which aims to address some of the obstacles researchers find during their push for more involvement with government departments, and provides some useful tips and insights into how to think about your work and the interfaces its impact may have with other sectors.

TAGS: AHRC ARCHEOLOGY HERITAGE AND POLICY POLICY PRAXIS UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS