

POLICY@SUSSEX





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## FOREWORD



When Policy@Sussex first launched the Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowships we were eager to see the response!

It was clear that we had tapped into a rich stream of enthusiasm and work. We had strong interest from the outset and high quality proposals submitted. The response from our academic community – across diverse fields – showed a shared commitment to impactful research and societal engagement.

The fellowship scheme demonstrated what can happen when you create the time and space to build bridges between academic research and policy. It encouraged our researchers to experiment with new ideas and approaches. Not all of them panned out as planned, but we value these ‘failures’ as part of a progressive approach – learning every step of the way.

In this publication, we share insights on successes and the invaluable lessons learned from the challenges encountered by our fellows. These insights help us to refine our tactics and methods and will enhance the effectiveness of our impact work going forwards.

You will see how relatively small pots of money have catalysed many excellent contributions to policy development and implementation. We know that impact is often a long game. But in the case studies featured here, you will see strong roots taking hold that seem likely to underpin future success.

We are excited to see how the insights from this pilot influence future thinking around policy engagement, inspire more applications and foster even further innovation, in the next academic year and beyond.

Thank you to all colleagues and collaborators who embraced the experiment with us – and if you have your own ideas on how we can support effective engagement with public policy, do get in touch.

**Professor Debbie Isobel Keeling**

Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor for Knowledge Exchange





# POLICY@SUSSEX

A bridge between research and policymakers.



**8**

Years since formation

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**36**

Staff in the  
Policy@Sussex network

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**11**

Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowships  
funded across the University\*\*

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**£70,941**

Total value of  
fellowships funded\*\*

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**5**

Schools receiving  
fellowship support

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**6**

Briefings produced\*

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**7**

Events held\*

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**150**

External stakeholder  
organisations engaged\*

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\* through KE Policy Fellowships \*\* in 2022/23

# A NOVEL APPROACH TO RESEARCH AND VISUAL STORYTELLING IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

**Smart Local Energy Systems (SLES) are crucial to the UK's transition to a Net Zero energy system. SLES are connected systems made up of technologies that generate, store, and manage renewable energy. For example, a SLES might be a household with solar panels, battery storage, smart appliances and smart meters, that integrates into the local energy network to contribute their energy output.**

Over the last two years, as part of an ESRC-funded research project led by Professor Adrian Smith at the Sussex Energy Group within the University of Sussex Business School, developments in inclusive innovation and Smart Local Energy Systems (SLES) in the UK have been analysed.

**Comic Strip: People Power – Smart Local Energy Systems** – <https://bit.ly/3yCxsXf>



The analysis looks the level of inclusion that households and local communities had in the design, development and operation of SLES. Despite SLES being essential for a just transition, insights indicated that policy approaches do not fully harness the transformative opportunity available. This policy and business message, that SLES are essential for a successful sustainable energy transition, forms the crux of the comic strip idea developed to communicate these research insights to policy, business and practitioner core audiences in a meaningful and impactful way. The issues involved are complex and range from understanding diverse household dynamics and situations – especially for those already struggling with their energy bills – through to the way SLES can balance local renewable electricity supply and storage with incentives for households to be more flexible in their energy demand.

By choosing to develop a comic, the research team could present the issues in a more interesting and clear way that built up the connections and issues over the space of the comic strip format.

Working with a comic artist with a developed specialism in academic research, the project team produced an engaging, people-centred visual narration on a research topic which is highly technical and complex to communicate. The comic book uses visual storytelling to demonstrate the key importance in the sustainable energy transition, of SLES.

A multifaceted topic was translated into a succinct graphic storyline to illustrate the key issues within Smart Local Energy Systems. Namely that SLES

need to be:

- People-focused
- Create trust
- Provide social inclusion.

As Professor Smith puts it: “The comic illustrates complex issues and different scenarios in a novel way that challenges conventional thinking. We worked closely with the artist to develop images of people using future systems, and to highlight the consequences of paths not taken. It was a good way for us also to bring household issues to the attention of policymakers.”

Professor Smith describes the unfolding collaboration and exchange between the researchers and research communicator:

**“Working with Tim (the comic artist) was brilliant. Because the comic was a novelty to us, it was particularly engaging.”**

This new visual concept for representing research insights demonstrates the power of creativity that can exist at the intersection of academia and policy worlds. Embracing novelty and stepping out of traditional practices leads to exciting fresh perspectives and new approaches. The Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme embraces and supports trajectories that take research outcomes to new places. This internal funding provides the opportunity to create innovative ideas in research communications that can effectively reach policymakers, practitioners, and the public. Complex insights become illuminated in new ways for greater engagement.





**COP28: the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai in 2023 where the comic was available for delegates**

Moreover, Professor Smith explains how simplicity can be a complex process:

“This was the first time for us, so we learnt good lessons. It really forced us to think about the research in very everyday terms. How to articulate insights in short, clear sentence with captions and scenarios which could illustrate the points well. It was beneficial for us as researchers. It captures important issues, conveying the complexities of Smart Local Energy Systems, in a straightforward way.”

Professor Smith describes the process of applying for the fellowship:

“Accessing the funding was simple and quick. We would not have been able to work on this idea without it.”

“The comic has tremendously benefited our project. We received positive feedback from the energy and environment social scientist community. One academic called it perhaps ‘the future of academic publishing!’”

“The ESRC ACCESS network, which is dedicated to improving social science engagement in sustainable development practice, has taken a particular interest in the comic process. I anticipate it being used in other contexts. It is helpful also for teaching purposes.”

“Communicating insights in this appealing manner has led to further policy and academic partnerships. We are exploring the evolution and development of the comic strip approach across our networks by presenting the use of comics as a method for other researchers.”

“I would encourage University of Sussex colleagues to apply for the Policy@Sussex fellowship funding. It allows you to do some additional impact activities or policy influencing that perhaps wasn’t in the original conception of the project. This is what happened with us. The fellowship gives the chance to explore ideas and create new channels for engagement in policy and practitioner worlds.”

## RESEARCH TEAM



Professor Adrian Smith, Professor in Technology and Society



Dr Marie Claire Brisbois, Senior Lecturer in Energy Policy



Dr Gerardo A. Torres Contreras, Research Fellow in Energy Justice and Transitions



Dr Richard Flockemann, Senior Research Communications Officer

## DEPARTMENT

Science Policy Research Unit at University of Sussex Business School and part of the Energy Demand Research Centre

## RESEARCH PAPER

*Inclusive innovation in just transitions: the case of smart local energy systems in the UK*

Adrian Smith, Gerardo A. Torres Contreras, Marie Claire Brisbois, Max Lacey-Barnacle, Benjamin K. Sovacool (2023)

## POLICY COMMUNICATIONS OUTPUT

A comic strip for policymakers, practitioners and public to engage with inclusive smart local energy systems

## PROJECT COLLABORATORS

Tim Zocco, Comic artist

# ILLUMINATING TEACHERS' COMPLEX EMOTIONAL CLASSROOM LIFE

**Schools were at the forefront of dealing with the complex social and emotional impact of the Covid lockdown period from 2020 to 2021. On a day-by-day basis, this anthropological research project captured the happenings and consequences of the pandemic in classrooms across Sussex.**

By giving teachers each day, who were supporting key worker and vulnerable children, the opportunity to express and record their thoughts and feelings, crucial qualitative data provided insights and evidence to support ongoing recommendations for policymakers, and other actors, concerned with retention and recruitment in education. Through daily voice notes data, the illuminating experience of teachers were recorded and analysed by the research team. Insights demonstrate how policy

Article in House of Commons Parliamentary Magazine for MPs.



adaptations could support the complex emotional labour being undertaken by teaching staff through, and following, the pandemic. The ongoing impact on the social emotional wellbeing in the classroom was demonstrated showing the significant impact on teaching staff, and therefore teacher job satisfaction and retention.

The research identified key policy recommendations for recruitment and to prevent attrition:

- Create paid peer support, facilitated by experienced teachers, to allow teaching staff to share issues and process feelings of difficulty and overwhelm.
- Establish trust by communicating a clear message of support for teachers' work, underpinned with a commitment to understanding and addressing the structural factors affecting teachers and children.
- Analyse the scope, intensity and expectation of a primary school teacher's role, with the objective of making the profession an attractive and sustainable livelihood option, and incorporating in this, the reform of the external assessment process.

Dr Dinah Rajak, the project's lead expands: "When a teacher leaves a school, the problem isn't just one of recruitment. There's a huge impact on the children. This is a particular issue in disadvantaged areas, which face even higher teacher turnover and that have more problems attracting teachers. If we can keep teachers in the workforce, we can enable more children to reach their potential and contribute positively to society."

By accessing The Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme, these important policy recommendations, evidenced by the anthropological research, were presented to the policy audiences and partners who can effect change to improve the educational environment.

Dr Rajak shares: "If I'm honest, when we saw the Policy@Sussex funding opportunity, we just hoped it would at most fund more of the post-docs time who were working on temporary contracts, and then, a little extra to support outreach activities."

Dr Rajak explains:

**"Teachers don't need to be told what works. They know what works and have developed some truly innovative adaptations to teaching under pressure in extraordinary conditions. What they need is a forum, a space to be listened to by those who hold the power and the purse strings to support their expertise and resource their initiatives."**

She continues: "As a research team we realised that this is not what teachers really require. They have awareness and experience of what works. What teachers need is for their experience and requests for support and change to be heard at a policy level. Teachers need to be able to share their insights and to amplify them up to a policy level where they are heard and actioned upon."



### THE PRINCIPAL OUTCOMES OF THE FUNDING WERE:

- The guidance and support provided by the P@S team

“This was an absolute game-changer in that it provided expert input, inspiration and momentum to create impact with the research findings, to get the insights across to a policy audience who then elicited direct contact and engagement.”

- A salary resource for the research project’s policy engagement activities.

“The fund helped support dedicated part-time positions for two postdocs to work solely on the policy brief, the parliamentary evidence submissions, the podcast and the toolkit. This resource was essential in being able to communicate the research findings to crucial policy partners.”

“I have been at the University of Sussex a long time and I never knew about Policy@Sussex and the expertise and support on offer – what a team! It’s made the single biggest impact for dissemination and engagement, having the support to target policy audiences; having help with writing articles on the research for publications that we didn’t even know existed, for example the House of Commons magazine. It was phenomenal!”

“We had a number of MPs contact us and ask to follow up. It was amazing to open up these channels of communication, to actually reach people. Working with the P@S team gave momentum and push. The encouragement and support were invaluable. I recommend engaging with this team and accessing the funding. I want them on every project!”

Dr Rajak finishes:

“Using the fellowship funding helped make the research extra meaningful. It made it matter, making it so the headteachers and staff had their voices heard. It made their voices valuable to the people that can instigate change.”

### RESEARCH TEAM



Dr Dinah Rajak,  
Reader in  
Anthropology and  
Development



Dr Sarah-Jane  
Phelan, Research  
Associate



Dr Jenny Hewitt,  
Research Associate

### DEPARTMENT

Anthropology, Global Studies  
School of Education and Social Work

### RESEARCH PAPER

*Care in the classroom: informing policy to reflect the complex emotional labour of teaching staff through and beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic*

### POLICY COMMUNICATIONS OUTPUTS

- Article in House of Commons Parliamentary Magazine for MPs. *Turning around teaching: how to boost recruitment and retention*
- Public Affairs All Party Parliamentary Group Evidence; Education Committee: teacher recruitment, training and retention: written evidence submitted to committee
- Policy brief with stakeholder mapping to distributed to MPs, teaching unions, headteachers and teachers
- Podcast interviews detailing the experience and findings to illuminate to key education audiences

### CORE POLICY AUDIENCE

- Headteachers
- Teachers
- Education Ministry
- Education Select Committee
- MPs
- Teaching unions



# HOW AGILE WORKING BENEFITS THE NHS AND BEYOND

**Dr Russell, a practising occupational psychologist and Reader in Occupational and Organisational Psychology, began her research collaboration – agiLab – with the NHS in 2021. Following the implementation of the COVID lockdown and the societal imperative for changing working patterns, agiLab was established to help the NHS deliver on the people promise – ‘We Work Flexibly’.**

agiLab was set up as a University of Sussex-NHS research and practice knowledge exchange collaboration. Funded by the NHS Confederation, it is dedicated to evidencing and establishing best practice on agile working at all levels of the NHS. Regular online conferences have been central to the collaboration, providing the latest academic research in specific areas of NHS interest. In turn, researchers hear concerns to focus on for future research projects. Dr Russell explains the research-policy dynamic:

“We co-design all our agiLab activities with our NHS colleagues. It is us responding to them and also us seeing how we can benefit from all of their knowledge on the ground. It has been beneficial because our practitioner colleagues raise things that perhaps, as researchers, we have not thought about. We can then integrate this into our research projects and in turn feed the findings back to impact policy and practice immediately.”

This excellent research-policy collaboration demonstrates how positive strategic partnerships create programmes of research and insights that can meaningfully enhance conditions and outcomes in the environments they serve. agiLab’s co-designed research is focused on creating beneficial and productive working practices for both workers and the organisation.

By driving tangible change with this policy-oriented research, this partnership epitomises the transformative potential of policy engagement that the University of Sussex’s Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme supports. With this funding, in collaboration with research communication specialist Gemma Smith, from the Digital Futures at Work Research Centre, engagement materials were created with Ticktockrobot to reach and influence NHS policy networks. These outputs and the channels used, included:

- Video, posters and leaflets about agile working, featured front and centre on the agiLab website
- Dissemination across LinkedIn networks
- Presentation and discussion of research findings and best practice at the agiLab conferences to around 100 NHS trusts and bodies
- A policy brief on agile working distributed to a relevant stakeholder list compiled by research communications consultancy Lodestone

- Used in ESRC and Digit Funding applications for further research funding

Dr Russell explains: “I think we have some good, accessible and easy to digest materials and messages to help get the agile working approach out there into people’s awareness, and to make real changes on how policymakers think about flexible work.”

“The policy fellowship was extremely helpful because it facilitated the creation of an engaging video that summarises our research over the past three years of agiLab. It aided us in highlighting some specific recommendations and advice that we can now impart to the NHS, and the wider public and private sector.”

By engaging with Policy@Sussex, and the expert guidance of research communication professionals, Dr Russell received invaluable support in project planning, stakeholder mapping, production of advisory outputs, and targeted distribution. Furthermore, the scheme’s support facilitated collaborations with external creative partners such as Ticktockrobot and Lodestone, enhancing the reach of the research.



Dr Russell explains how the funding added resource and value:

“As a result of the funding, we got in touch with a video production company and also used a public sector strategy and communications agency (Lodestone) after they came to the university to give a talk on policy engagement. They really knew their stuff, so we used some extra resource, after the video was made, to get assistance with our policy brief and primarily, the stakeholder mapping to target who the research was important for. Those helped us to reach those who cared about the findings.”

The Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme empowered Dr Russell to further amplify the impact of her research beyond academia and present policy partners. This outreach enhances the visibility of Dr Russell’s insights and contributed to informed decision-making and policy development.

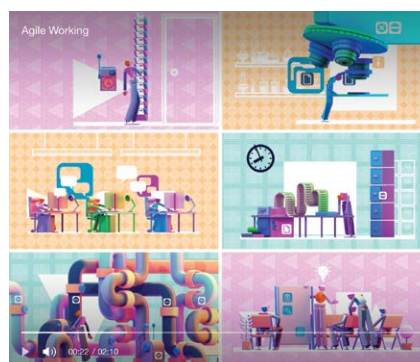
Reflecting on her experience, Dr Russell offers recommendations to fellow researchers embarking on policy engagement initiatives. She emphasises the importance of having a clear plan and leveraging communications support from university networks to maximise the impact of the funding opportunity.

Dr Russell concludes:

“Have a clear plan and also, really think about who you have around you that can support you, including the Policy@Sussex team and research communicators in the wider university network. Having Gemma’s input, using Lodestone and TickTockRobot really meant that I got great value. It can be time-consuming to generate impact, so utilising expert input is crucial.”

As Dr Russell’s example indicates the University’s Policy@Sussex Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme demonstrates the potential of positive policy engagement by academics. Through co-creation, responsiveness, creativity and targeted dissemination, researchers can harness the power of their work in driving positive policy practice for a brighter, more impactful research and policy landscape.

Video on agile working and how to approach it for the workforce



## RESEARCH TEAM



Dr Emma Russell, Reader in Occupational and Organisational Psychology and Occupational Psychologist



Gemma Smith, Research Communications & Impact Manager, ESRC Digital Futures at Work (DIGIT) Research Centre

## DEPARTMENT

University of Sussex Business School and School of Psychology

## RESEARCH PAPER

*Getting on top of work-email: A systematic review of 25 years of research to understand effective work-email activity.*

The British Psychological Society  
<https://bpspsychub.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/joop.12462>

## POLICY COMMUNICATIONS OUTPUT

- Media engagement with research on agile working for the NHS
- National press coverage of the research on agile working
- Video on agile working and how to approach it for the workforce

## PROJECT COLLABORATORS

- Lodestone
- Tiktockrobot

## CORE POLICY AUDIENCE

- NHS HR directors
- Health workers
- Health workers’ unions
- MPs
- Public sector management

# IDENTIFYING GAPS IN RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE TO IMPROVE HEALTH IN ETHIOPIA

**In the arena of global health, partnerships and collaborative efforts are often the keystones for impactful change, especially in regions with unique challenges and needs. Partnering with the University of Hawassa, one of the largest universities in Ethiopia, the Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme helped deepen the understanding of the policy environment in Ethiopia that related to Professor Vera Rojas' vast research into sexual and reproductive health services (SRH).**

To achieve equitable access to SRH in Ethiopia, which includes universal testing for STIs and HIV, a coordinated effort is required among clinicians, academics, community organisations and policymakers to better understand barriers to access and to facilitate meaningful interventions in the community.

The impact of the Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme has seen the creation of a multidisciplinary action research and policy network that extends across Ethiopia, the Netherlands, and the UK. With the facilitation of a participatory workshop, community knowledge and insight has led to the policy design and implementation of interventions in SRH care that were acceptable and successful within communities in Southern Ethiopia.

While achieving significant policy impact, the partnership between the University of Sussex and the University of Hawassa was also strengthened alongside improved engagement between members of the federal government, healthcare practitioners and community organisations, all responsible for developing and

delivering these crucial interventions in Southern Ethiopia.

The principal outcome of the Policy@Sussex funding was the creation of this action research and policy network through the facilitation of the participatory workshop. This workshop served as a platform for brainstorming, situational analysis, and priority setting. By engaging stakeholders from different sectors and regions in Southern Ethiopia, the delegates aimed to understand the nuanced needs and challenges faced in delivering sexual and reproductive health services to be able to design a successful community intervention programme.

One of the key outcomes of the workshop was the identification of gaps in HIV and syphilis testing, particularly in antenatal care settings. Consequently, recognising the critical importance of early detection and treatment, funding was acquired to initiate a PhD study that focuses on implementing rapid HIV and syphilis testing across three hospitals in the region. This tangible outcome underscored the effectiveness of collaborative research in translating priorities into actionable interventions

helping to extend knowledge and capabilities across healthcare in the Global South.

Professor Vera Rojas emphasizes the importance of co-designing research agendas with local partners, ensuring that solutions are contextually relevant and sustainable. He explains:

**“We need to co-design. To just ask the simple questions. As you see it, what are the problems here? Because our problems are different to your problems, our solutions are going to be different to your solutions. You need to find your local solutions differently. We are just facilitating...”**

The Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme facilitated collaboration by empowering local researchers and institutions, fostering a participatory model that created capacity building and long-term, meaningful impact. The success of the project in Ethiopia paves the way for future endeavours,







with potential expansion to other regions and research areas. The partnership between the universities has resulted in several publications and research proposals.

Presently, preparations for a larger external funding application to the Medical Research Council / National Institute for Health and Care Research are being made. The activities funded by Policy@Sussex, are acting as a foundation to secure a substantial global health grant that can continue to design, develop, and evaluate interventions to further improve access and services in SRH both in Southern Ethiopia and across Africa. These outcomes represent the ongoing and lasting impact that the Policy@Sussex fellowships have had to help create improvements in SRH research and policy in the region.

Professor Vera Rojas concludes:

“Having this type of funding is crucial particularly in the earliest stages of action research and policy

engagement. It gives the chance to connect with potential collaborators, particularly in the Global South. It provides the necessary resources to set up initial projects. For me, having this support has been immensely helpful. Often, you need just a little bit of money to organize meetings or start new initiatives, which can then lead to larger grant applications which is what we are doing. The Policy@Sussex Fellowship funding has acted as a springboard, propelling us on to the next level. I strongly encourage continued use of and provision of these funds, as they significantly enhance research output and impact, benefiting both individual researchers and the University of Sussex as an institution.”



## RESEARCH TEAM



Professor Jaime Vera Rojas, Professor in HIV Medicine at the Centre for Global Health Research at Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS)

## DEPARTMENT

Brighton and Sussex Medical School

## KEY RESEARCH AIM

Improving access to sexual and reproductive health of key populations particularly in the Global South

## POLICY COMMUNICATIONS OUTPUT

Participatory workshop that facilitated an action research network with researchers and practitioners from Ethiopia, the Netherlands and Sussex, UK.

## PROJECT COLLABORATORS

University of Hawassa, Ethiopia

## CORE POLICY AUDIENCE

- Health policymakers
- Health practitioners
- Health researchers
- Community organisations

# SHAPING VIDEO-GAMING AND VIOLENT-EXTREMISM POLICY RESEARCH

**Dr Lakhani's project aims to guide long-term policy development for both governments and internet companies on tackling violent-extremism across video-gaming platforms. The primary goal of his research and subsequent policy report is to facilitate knowledge exchange that leads to significant and sustained policy influencing with robust evidence-based recommendations and productive engagement with key stakeholders. Resourced by the Policy@Sussex fund and VOX-Pol, Dr Lakhani's report is being published by VOX-Pol, a leading global research network with extensive connections to governments, influential internet companies, and counter-terrorism organizations like GIFCT.**

VOX-Pol reports have significant reach and influence. A previous VOX-Pol report co-authored by Dr Lakhani contributed to a 4 star Impact Case Study for REF 2021 showing the profound impact on policy practice.

The Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme, which enabled the report's creation, has facilitated further engagement with various primary stakeholders including the New Zealand Government's Christchurch Call, Ofcom, Extremism and Gaming Research Network (EGRN), Global Network on Extremism & Technology (GNET), global technology companies and the gaming industry as a whole. Changes to aspects of the forthcoming report were presented on a panel at the 2024 GNET conference, attended by academics, policymakers, policy, law enforcement, intelligence services and internet companies.

The recommendations and tactics, produced in the report, look to profoundly influence counter terrorism policy to influence strategies to reduce the risk of video-gaming being exploited by violent extremists.

Dr Lakhani explains the impact of receiving the fellowship on his work:

"It was an important starting point that kicked off this crucial work. The groundwork I did during this period, with the support I received, was extremely beneficial and helped to set the foundation for some important on-going work and engagement".

Research and policy landscapes are dynamic, with key events and debates often shaping the urgency and relevance of research. Dr Lakhani's research area epitomises this challenge.

"The intersection of artificial intelligence and violent extremism, particularly within the context of video gaming and the metaverse is rapidly evolving. Having the fellowship support meant I focused intensely on this ever-changing environment. The Policy@Sussex team allowed me to adapt, as necessary, when external factors shifted. The swift progression of AI, and its application, means that

I have to stay attuned to technological advancements and the consequences for policy debates. Having funding to analyse this shifting context allowed me to position my research optimally and to contribute urgent, meaningful insights to industry and policy discussions."

Dr Lakhani continues:

"Academia significantly influences evidence-based policy making, especially when findings bring innovative solutions to the table. My work on the exploitation of video games by violent extremists underscores the need for stringent policies and operational frameworks in the gaming sector."

"With this new report I provide recommendations based on lessons drawn from other online spaces and real-world examples, which resonate with policymakers and tech companies alike."

Leveraging key third sector intermediaries is also a further cornerstone of this work. Dr Lakhani explains how these organizations and service providers are powerful allies in advocating for change:



“Collaborating with the sector’s intermediaries amplifies my voice and helps bridge the gap between research and policy implementation. Their support is instrumental in navigating the complexities of policy engagement and in ensuring that my findings translate into action.”

Dr Lakhani’s interaction and experience with the Knowledge Exchange Policy Fellowship Scheme offers valuable lessons for other researchers:

“It’s worth having a conversation with the team there to understand the breadth of possibilities. Their approach

is incredibly flexible and tailored to the evolving nature of your research. Don’t be afraid to pivot if necessary. Research landscapes, particularly in policy relevant areas, can shift rapidly and being agile can lead to more impactful outcomes. The application for funding is also a simple process. There is flexibility with what is needed dependent on the research environment. I thoroughly recommend applying for the fellowship and integrating appropriate engagement activities into your research plan.”

GNET 2024 Panel on Youth Radicalisation in Gaming Communities



## RESEARCH TEAM



Dr Suraj Lakhani  
Senior Lecturer  
in Sociology and  
Criminology

## DEPARTMENT

· School of Law, Politics and  
Sociology

## PROJECT TITLE

Shaping video-gaming and  
violent-extremism policy research

## POLICY COMMUNICATIONS OUTPUT

- Research fellowship
- Policy brief with strategic  
recommendations
- Conferences & Networking

## CORE POLICY AUDIENCE

- Extremism and Gaming Research  
Network (EGRN)
- Global Network on Extremism &  
Technology (GNET)
- National and international  
policymakers
- Technology platforms
- Gaming industry



## FINAL REFLECTIONS



“Many of the KE Policy fellows commented on the support given to them by members of the Policy@Sussex network, and it was great to see academic and professional services staff working in partnership. We’ve sought to offer further policy engagement training and development opportunities to our fellows throughout the year.

Key lessons learned by us included the need to launch the scheme earlier in the academic year, to allow academics more time to develop and deliver their plans – and for unexpected events to be mitigated and plans adapted.

For 2023/2024 the scheme launched well before Christmas and was delivered in a more co-ordinated way by the new Sussex Knowledge Exchange and Impact Support Programme Team, alongside a suite of other fellowship and funding opportunities. We had excellent support from colleagues in research finance to make this happen.

The success of the pilot gave us the assurance and confidence to expand the scheme and this year we’ve seen even greater interest. Next year we hope to expand the scheme even further with additional funding.”

**Alex Waddington,**  
Strategy Manager, Policy@Sussex

## THE POLICY@SUSSEX NETWORK

Established in 2016, Policy@Sussex is the University’s dedicated policy engagement initiative that acts as a bridge between policy-relevant research and the world of public policy. It comprises members of staff from across nearly all schools and disciplines, who have an interest in supporting and enabling policy engagement and impact using research.

Since its inception, Policy@Sussex has supported hundreds of researchers seeking greater policy influence, helping facilitate pathways to impact in several REF2021 case studies. Members of the network work with professional service colleagues in areas such as public affairs, media relations, research quality and impact, knowledge exchange and impact support, and innovation and business.

Find your relevant school contact and more information about the support offered at

**[www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/engaging-policymakers](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/engaging-policymakers)**

Email: **[a.waddington@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:a.waddington@sussex.ac.uk)**

# ALL FELLOWSHIPS

NAME	SCHOOL	TITLE OF FELLOWSHIP
<b>Dr Ahmad Al-Hiari</b>	Law, Politics and Sociology	Improving international anti-corruption measures by addressing informal practices in Middle-Eastern public administrations
<b>Dr Alexander Ghionis</b>	University of Sussex Business School	AI-anxieties and the chemical and biological weapons prohibition regimes
<b>Professor Michael Hopkins</b>	University of Sussex Business School	Engagement to learn lessons of ongoing relevance around Covid-19 diagnostic testing
<b>Dr Helena Howe</b>	Law, Politics and Sociology	Reforming the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to address the breeding of dogs with harmful conformation
<b>Dr Suraj Lakhani</b>	Law, Politics and Sociology	Shaping Metaverse Policy Development
<b>Dr Dinah Rajak, Dr Sarah-Jayne Phelan and Dr Jenny Hewitt</b>	Global Studies	Care in the classroom: informing policy to reflect the complex emotional labour of teaching staff through and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic
<b>Dr Chantelle Rizan</b>	BSMS	Integrating environmental impact into medical products procurement decisions
<b>Dr Jamie Vera Rojas</b>	BSMS	Identifying gaps in research, policy and practice to improve sexual and reproductive health services in Southern Ethiopia
<b>Dr Faith Matcham</b>	Psychology	The psychological experience of loneliness in older adults: Developing a culturally appropriate conceptualisation of loneliness to improve engagement with seldom-heard communities
<b>Professor Adrian Smith</b>	University of Sussex Business School	A comic strip about inclusive Smart Local Energy Systems
<b>Dr Emma Russell</b>	University of Sussex Business School	Making agile working policies 'work' in the NHS, and beyond



[sussex.ac.uk/research/about/policy-at-sussex](https://sussex.ac.uk/research/about/policy-at-sussex)



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