

Implementer Portrait: Alexandra Ziemann



Dr Alexandra Ziemann is a Senior Research Fellow at the [Centre for Healthcare Innovation Research, City, University of London](#), UK. Her research focuses on improving the scale-up, spread and sustainability of innovations in health and social care. Alexandra is a Board Member of the EIC (2018 – today) and an Honorary Board Member of the [UK Implementation Society](#).

Alexandra is a German native but has lived in England for many years. In German, she says 'Implementierung' (implementation) and 'Wissenstransfer' (knowledge translation).

What is one of your favourite articles on implementation?

[“Explaining Matching Michigan: an ethnographic study of a patient safety program”](#) by Dixon-Woods et al., 2013. It is one of very few empirical studies that highlights the importance of outer implementation contextual determinants particularly in the case of replicating an innovation in a new (country) context. It also shows the relevance of qualitative methods in uncovering reasons why an innovation was not successfully replicated. This publication was an early influence on the way I approach implementation science.

What are you currently working on that relates to implementation?

I am working on the development of a framework on outer implementation contextual determinants and a practitioner-oriented process framework for adapting innovations that are transferred from high to low-and-middle-income country contexts. I am analysing strategies for spreading innovations across diverse contexts, exploring rapid implementation approaches and methods, and re-conceptualising implementation outcomes.

If you were to have lunch with another ‘implementer’, whom would you pick?

Professor Penny Hawe, University of Sydney, Australia. I very much like Penny Hawe’s way of thinking and way of writing. An early pioneer in implementation science (before it was called that), and coming from a public health perspective, Penny Hawe highlighted the importance of systems thinking and complexity theory, of a social sciences perspective in a very biomedically influenced field, of the necessity of adaptation of interventions to local context, and of the concept of functions being more important than the form of an innovation which I think is key to overcoming the challenge of replicating or spreading innovations successfully in different contexts. Further, Penny Hawe’s papers make for an engaging read, often starting with a story, which I find is a great showcase for how scientific knowledge can be made more accessible without losing intellectual value.



If you had the resources for it, what within implementation science or practice would you want to work with next?

I would like to explore citizen science methods for implementation science that would engage members of the public in collecting data for implementation science projects. I find citizen science a fascinating way of public engagement and knowledge translation, and I would have enjoyed contributing to actual science projects as a kid or teenager, by counting bees or classifying galaxies, but that wasn't a thing back then. I would love to open up my own scientific work but usual citizen science methods are not really applicable as my research is not dealing with bees or galaxies (...why not, actually?!). But that means there is room to explore new citizen science methods that might work well for implementation science.

Get in touch with Alexandra via email at Alexandra.Ziemann@city.ac.uk and follow her on Twitter [@aziemann](https://twitter.com/aziemann)!
