

We're back! In France, where I'm based, the frenetic, post-holiday start of the new school year—going back to work, to politics, to “real life”—is called *La Rentrée* (literally, in English, reentry or return).

After an August break, *Policy Commons* is *rentrée*-ing our newsletter, and we've got four tips to support your fresh start.

#1: For the big picture, zoom out to year 1

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the late Angus Maddison's two-part magnum opus, [The World Economy](#), a work that was heralded as a pioneering effort to quantify the economic performance of the world's regions and nations for the past 1,000 years.

Maddison was one of the world's greatest economic historians. His data and legacy live on as the [Maddison Historical Statistics Project](#) at Groningen University in The Netherlands.

Over the past month, as part of our program to secure content from inactive websites, we've retrieved some gems from Angus Maddison's personal webpage, such as his 2005 [evidence to the UK House of Lords on climate change](#), an unpublished paper on [Brazil's development between 1500 and 1929](#), and another unpublished paper on the [importance of studying national accounts](#), or “Political Arithmetik” as it was known in the eighteenth century.

Naturally, we also added his [final excel database](#) covering world population, GDP, and GDP per capita from year 1-2008 CE.

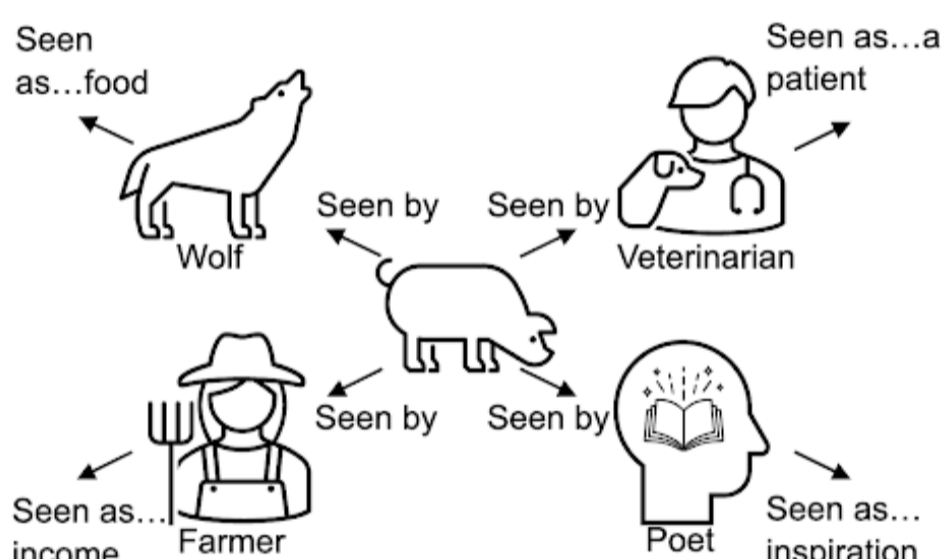
#2 Envision your problems as pigs

You know how it is. You're trying to design a new policy, but you get stuck arguing with stakeholders about the best way forward. Well, maybe thinking about pigs will break the deadlock.

We're referring to the “pig model” (see diagram). It works like this... Ask each stakeholder group to think about the policy challenge from the perspective of other stakeholders. It should lead to a greater understanding of who the other players are and, importantly, how they see the problem.

By increasing common understanding of the different perspectives across stakeholder groups, a solution is more likely to be found. This technique for better policymaking—and many others—can be found in a [new toolkit](#) recently published by the UK Government's Office of Science.

Policy Commons has [>300 toolkits](#), including a classic from 2017 that can help you [plan into the future](#).



#3 Get organized with Lists

Bringing grey policy literature together can be like herding cats. University of Adelaide, our newest member in Australia, wrote, “Grey literature is much more difficult to find than peer-reviewed literature. You need to look in many different places, and even with Google Advanced, you need to know which organizations to target. *Policy Commons* is a much more efficient way of finding and organizing policy documents.”

Here's a case in point: [Trust for London](#) has been funding research into poverty and inequality since 1891. In 2008, they launched a longitudinal study into poverty and commissioned different research groups to do the work year by year. The upside is a valuable, growing, resource tracking poverty in one of the world's great cities. The downside is that Tfl's website features just the [latest report](#). To find the rest, you have to trawl the websites of the different research groups Tfl used over the years.

We created a List that brings the Tfl unique series together [in one place](#). It's just one example of how our powerful Lists tool can help you organize your public or private reading lists. A [3-minute video tutorial is available here](#).

#4 Accept help from others

There's a reason we need to go on holiday in August, and it's because the rest of the year is so busy. One strategy to cut down on your load is to truly embrace help from others.

I'm constantly scanning for new organizations to index via *Policy Commons* and would be delighted to add the organizations you need.

I've added more than 150 since January. Here are some that particularly caught my eye:

- [The #Breakfreefromplastic Movement](#), a global NGO based in the Philippines whose mission is to highlight problems of plastic waste by looking at the entire plastics supply chain;
- UK's trades union supported [Centre for Labour and Social Studies](#);
- [Minority Rights Group International](#) (MRG) which campaigns worldwide with around 150 partners in over 50 countries to ensure that disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard; and

- [SPOTT](#), an online platform that checks on commodity producers, processors and traders on their public disclosure regarding their environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies and practices.

Please share your suggestions by [emailing me](#) or filling out this [simple form](#).

As a friendly reminder to our institutional members, your membership includes our custom harvesting service for up to ten organizations.

Happy Rentrée!

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