

CREA Research Centre, Barcelona: overview of how the science shop is emerging in 2006

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Philosophy & values

Our science shop is an emergent science shop, not running yet, which will be included within the framework of the “Opening the Science Park” Project. We have always seen this project, since we joined the Livingknowledge Network, as a “science-shop like” initiative.

In 2003 we started the project “Opening the Science Park to the Neighbourhood” with the objective of creating channels of dialogue between researchers and civil society. We departed from the idea that there is a lot going on about science communication, but mostly in one direction: from researchers to citizens, but never the other way around. In this project we were interested in listening to people’s voices and concerns so that they could talk to researchers in the science park.

We see our emerging science shop like a window in which people could ask questions that we may address to research groups in the science park, as well as provide concerns that could end being part of research questions for some groups. The Barcelona Science Park (BSP) Science Shop could mediate this window. Our science shop is part of one of the lines of research of CREA¹, specifically of the line: dialogic theories, dialogue science and society, critical communicative research methodology, speech acts. The character and philosophy of our science shop will be very similar to CREA, basically this will always include everyone’s voice to contribute to the improvement of the research.

History

We are creating our new science shop right now, so we do not have a history as a science shop so far; but we have history as centre of research CREA, which our science shop is confined.

CREA is the Research Centre on Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities, which belongs to the University of Barcelona and is located in the Barcelona Science Park. CREA researchers’ expertise covers a wide range of disciplines (sociology, education, psychology, economy, anthropology, linguistics, biology, telecommunications engineering, etc.) and research areas

¹ CREA, Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities, works the next lines of research: dialogic theories, dialogue science and society, critical communicative research methodology, speech acts; social uses of the information and communication technologies; cultural groups, Romà community, Arab-Muslim community, Jewish community, migration; learning communities, development and accreditation of basic skills; gender, gender violence, the “other women” and other cultures, dialogic feminism, new masculinities; governance and active citizenship, participation of people and groups that are traditionally non-participatory.

(ethnic minorities, women, disabilities, labour inclusion, education, citizenship, social theories, art, science-society etc.). Since 1991, CREA has been participating and coordinating European and national RTDs. CREA served as the coordinator for the RTD “WORKALÓ” project (FP5) which objective was to define innovative strategies of economic and social development, focusing on the Romà community in Europe. Recently, has been approved an integrated project (IP) called “INCLUD-ED” with the objective of identifying educational strategies across Europe –looking at both EU25 educational systems and practices— that promote social inclusion and cohesion. Besides, CREA is currently coordinating projects on immigration, transnationality, prevention of gender violence, Romà inclusion and school failure. One of the main characteristics of these research projects is the use of the “communicative methodology”, which implies involving end-users from the beginning to the end of the study.

CREA is composed by more than 70 researchers (including professors, students and other professionals) from different disciplines and expertises. CREA’s research work is embedded within a solid theoretical background that has been developed throughout years working in dialogue with the most important contemporary authors (for instance, Ulrich Beck, Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas, John Searle, Amartya Sen, Alain Touraine, Gordon Wells, Michel Wieviorka, among many others). Also, CREA works closely with associations, representatives, end- users and a wide variety of stakeholders of the research is developing, through different modalities. For example, through the development of communicative methodology, advisory councils and multicultural teams, it is possible to guarantee a better connection with the end-users of our research. In this combination, CREAs work breaks down with the gap between theory and practice, researcher and researched, bridging through its scientific endeavour science and society. It also will be the character of our new science shop initiative.

We collaborate in a close and regular basis with professors from other universities from all around the world, in the USA, Latin America, Korea and the many European countries.

CREA is in charge of the project “Opening the Science Park to the Neighbourhood” oriented to promote the dialogue between researchers and civil society thus establishing a two-way communication in order to improve the research process and the social value of its outcomes. CREA has also coordinated the project “Contemporary Science Communication: Science is close to participate” funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science and addressed to open dialogues between researchers and citizens associations and organizations on the topic of nanotechnology. These projects are oriented to increase the number of citizens with access to science.

Organisation and methods

Our science shop is an on-line site up to now, since we do not get any funding for the project, but in case it was successful, we could think about the

possibility talking to the Science Park managers and consolidating this window of the Science Park to civil society. However, this is not possible right now, because it is not a main priority for the institution.

In addition to this window, and in the frame of the project “Opening the Science Park to the Neighbourhood”, we also think that part of the main tasks of our “BSP Science Shop” could be lead to creating citizens dialogues with researchers about specific topics, with the methodology of working groups we have already started. These dialogues could be promoted on the basis of people’s requests.

Parallel to that there should be some out-reach activities, in which a CREA researcher continues the direct contact with citizen’s organizations, as well as schools for adults and high schools, may be not only in the neighbourhood but in the Barcelona area.

Public Relations & media

Our new science shop is framing in the context of CREA, centre of research in the Barcelona Science Park. The centre’s participation as coordinator or as partner in a large number of projects has made possible to analyze the most significant exclusionary factors in today’s society, at the same time as proposing measures to overcome them. This experience is very useful for us, now as a new science shop too and which has permitted to constitute a network of public relations with other centres of research.

As we mentioned above, our science shop is included within the framework of the “Opening the Science Park to the Neighbourhood” Project that we started in 2003 with the objective of creating channels of dialogue between researchers and civil society, through this project we have been in contact with all associations and citizens organizations in the district, explaining them the project and it allowed us to create the “Friends of the Science Park Network” which includes a database and an email distribution list of people interested on it (now 130 people). The “Friends of the Science Park Network” is always an open network to everybody. One example of the dialogues we try to promote is: in the Barcelona Science Park is set the Institute of Biomedical Research (conducting research on structural and computational biology, molecular medicine, and cell and development biology). Some of this research is focused on finding find ways of curing de-generative illnesses. At the same time, in the neighbourhood associations, many families share the experiences of living with Alzheimer. They have many things to share and ask; therefore it would also help researchers to focus their questions and priorities.

In this sense, CREA also coordinated the project named “Contemporary Science Communication” by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science, this was oriented to contribute to the improvement of the scientific culture of our society, opening up the research conducted in the Barcelona Science Park to the public in general, and open dialogues between researchers and associations and organizations on the topic of nanotechnology in particular.

During this one-year-long project we carried out one survey on public knowledge about nanotechnology, we elaborated a questionnaire to detect and identify doubts, concerns and questions citizens had about this topic, so we contacted with diverse organizations and schools from several Spanish regions. We have received more than 500 questionnaires from diverse civil society organizations.

Both projects have permitted us to establish contacts with numerous organizations and schools such as: citizens associations, patients associations, consumers associations, cultural and educational associations, environmental NGOs, schools for adults and secondary schools in these regions.

Furthermore, if we think in the science shop, we will promote the creation of the web page which will permit to establish, on the one hand, new channels of communication or dialogue between researchers and citizens, and on the other it will provide free access to the information, the dissemination of results and services just as other experiences of other existing science shops. The web page will also represent a relevant background where people can freely express and declare their doubts, concerns and questions related to any research in the scientific area.

Curriculum / Community Based Learning

Although we have conscience of the importance of the science shops at university, at the moment we do not consider the integration of science shop projects in our university curricula. One of the main reasons is that we are located within a Science Park, where there are many research centres but no teaching is conducted.

However, we are thinking of the possibility of involving junior researchers and research assistants in the creation of citizen working groups and dialogues about scientific research current topics. Their contributions, therefore, will not be exchanged with credit points; it will be on the basis of interest in advancing science & society dialogues.

Key issues for partners:

The experience of CREA is long, on the one hand as a centre of research of the University of Barcelona, and on the other hand it has always been linked stronger to associative movements from its beginning. We do not have training materials but experience in working with NGOs, students and researchers, but always as a centre of research but not as a science shop.

3. Project management

We have experience as a centre of research but no as a science shop.

4. Project reporting:

publications

Next we present a set of publications that we think are interesting and appropriate for the science shops. We have we would like to mention the following books, book chapters and articles. (We could make some of them available to you if needed).

Books:

Touraine, A.; Wieviorka, M.; Flecha, R. (2004): *Conocimiento e identidad. Voces de grupos culturales en la investigación social*. Barcelona: El Roure. [Translation: Knowledge and identity. Voices of cultural groups in social research]

Flecha, R. (2000): *Sharing Words. Theory and Practice of Dialogic Learning*. Lanham, M.D: Rowman & Littlefield.

Book chapters:

Puigvert, L. & Valls, R.(2005): Dialogic learning in popular education movements in Spain. In Crowther, J.; Galloway, V.; Martin, I. (eds.) *Popular Education: Engaging the Academy: International perspectives*. pp. 88-99. Leicester: NIACE.

Flecha, R.; Gómez, J. (2004): Participatory Paradigms: Researching 'with' rather than 'on'. In B. Crossan, J. Gallacher & M. Osborne (eds.) *Researching Widening Access: Issues and approaches in an international context*. pp. 129-140. London: Routledge.

Articles:

Gómez, J.; Vargas, J. (2003): Why Romà do not like mainstream schools: voices of a people without territory. *Harvard Educational Review*, v. 73, pp. 559-590.

Rué, L.; Soler, M.; Flecha, R. (2005): *Opening the Barcelona Science Park to the Neighbourhood*. Living Knowledge. International Journal of Community Based Research. Num. 5, pp. 18-19. Bonn, Germany: ISSNET.

Santa Cruz, I.; Valls, R. (2004): *Adult Education, Democratic Manegement of NGOs and Social Inclusion*. Journal of Adult and Continuing Education Graduate School of Education. Tohoku University, Japan. n. 7, pp. 133-146.

assessment of impact on the community?

We have a document assessing the social impact of the Workalo project, providing the use of communicative methodology. In this particular research project, the involvement of Romà people (Romà representative from NGOs).

8. Websites

useful websites for appropriate CBR or science shops?

<http://www.incommunityresearch.org>

<http://www.neskes.net/workalo>