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Building partnerships for public access to research

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Living Knowledge Website

www.livingknowledge.org

The newsletters are archived on the Living Knowledge website. Please recommend this newsletter to your colleagues and partners. You can subscribe or unsubscribe to the newsletter by sending a message to C.F.M.deBok@uu.nl.

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3rd International Living Knowledge Conference

30 August to 1 September 2007, Paris, France

The 3rd Living Knowledge Conference will be organised by Fondation Sciences Citoyennes (FSC), the International Science Shops Network, Living Knowledge (LK), the International Network of Engineers and Scientists for global responsibility (INES), the Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation, and the Unité Transformations Sociales et Politiques liées au Vivant.



This conference will provide a forum where information on community based research, carried out in both community and academic settings, can be shared and developed. It will reflect the social impact and scientific and democratic value of research from a range of disciplines including social, natural, physical and technological sciences. This conference will be of interest to people who are active in, or interested in, the field of community-based research.

The main conference themes will be:

- University engagement with communities
- Citizens' science and social movements
- Research policy - from local to global
- Innovation - added values for communities

Within the four main conference themes different topics will be discussed. In general the conference will focus on:

- Empowering of people and promoting of active citizenship
- Building equitable and supportive research partnerships with civil society organisations
- Developing scientists' and policy makers' awareness of public concern issues
- Developing concepts and tools for civil society research in order to contribute to the development of the research agendas and research methodologies at public research institutions like universities or research organisations
- Enhancing scientists' and researchers' capacity to work for and with citizens
- Developing concepts and procedures for transnational community based research co-operation.
- Developing strategies and concepts to help civil society organisations to influence Science & Technology policy agendas
- Supporting the development of new Science Shops and participatory research organisations

Key questions are:

- How does citizens' research work, what kinds of knowledge does it produce and with what consequences?
- How does citizens' research challenge traditional scientific frameworks and techno scientific paradigms and what new options does it open to scientists?
- What visions of society does activist research promote?
- What are the social and policy contexts necessary to promote community based research activities?



The conference is aimed at people already active in or interested in community based and participatory research (citizens, researchers, students, civil society organisations, administrative officers, policy makers, etc.). Our intention is to build bridges, explore ideas, and discuss strategies in order to empower one another. The conference aims to share best practice amongst community based and participatory action research networks.

Call for Contributions

The official languages of the conference will be English. The conference will include plenary sessions, oral presentations, workshops, and a marketplace with a poster session.

Practitioners from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research institutes, universities (both academics and students) and science and society policy makers are invited to share their experiences and to submit a short abstract for a presentation (max. 15 min.) or a workshop (105 min.) related to one of the conference themes. Please send us a short description of the workshop and the organisation/person in charge. [You can use the form on the Living Knowledge website to submit your proposal.](#)

Proposals for presentations or workshops must be submitted by email **before April 15, 2007**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent until May 30, 2007. Accepted proposals will be published.



Pre-conference session

A pre-conference session as second and condensed Science Shop summer school will give a general introduction on Science Shops. A draft programme is available at the Living Knowledge website (www.livingknowledge.org). More details, a preliminary programme, the conference background statement, and requests for support will be announced here as well as on the Living Knowledge discussion list. Please check for updates.

Printed copies of the Seville conference proceedings are still available. Please ask for a free copy by sending an e-mail to norbert.steinhaus@wilabonn.de or download the pdf-file at www.livingknowledge.org (follow reports-documentation-ISSNET).

Science Shop call

The European Commission published a pilot call for proposals („Science and Society 20”) specifically devoted to the financing of science shops projects. This call for proposals has been very successful: the Commission received 66 proposals. 27 of these proposals passed the evaluation thresholds and were considered worth to be financed, but due to the limited budget (1Mio. €) unfortunately only 4 projects could be funded. However, the pilot call proved a large demand and interest from the civil society and Science Shops (and similar organisations) for such a kind of financing. The successful projects are:

InMoSion - Innovative Mobility Solutions for Mobility Challenged Europeans

Europeans are rapidly aging, mainly due to the low birth rate and the increase in people's lifespan; new technologically advanced and flexible transportation solutions must be developed in order to address their constantly growing mobility challenges. Older people are usually unable to drive but prefer to live in low-density suburban locations. The transportation systems in these areas are often quite inadequate, which creates serious mobility problems, especially for elderly and disabled people. The project will develop all necessary expertise and know-how for assisting local communities with the deployment of an innovative transportation system to meet the mobility needs of elder and mobility challenged Europeans. The system will be a flexible, technologically advanced demand based paratransit system that combines algorithms and G.I.S, DB to compute the optimum mobility solutions for both passengers and system operators. The InMoSion project will be lead by the University of Thessaly in Volos, Greece and will support at first a Greek Capodistrian Municipality, the Municipality of Philippi, to deploy a paratransit system that will be tested in real time and real world situation. Due to the large travel distance and the low population density, the public transport system generally is not a viable option for the inhabitants in these villages and even if it exists, the bus scheduling is very sparse and inadequate in particularly considering the lack of accessibility to medical services. The InMoSion project will then help other communities across Europe and elsewhere that want to investigate the potential deployment of such a demand based paratransit system. The Science Shop will develop all necessary know how through this initiative and will create a core group of students and researchers that can support free of charge communities through the whole process: from conception, feasibility analysis, needs analysis, requirements analysis, system design, yield



management, deployment, evaluation and maintenance.

Consortium: University of Thessaly in Volos (GR), coordinator: Prof Ziliaskopoulos, ziliasko@uth.gr; Centre for research and technology Hellas; Hellenic Institute of transport; Middle East Technical University, Department of Civil Engineering, Turkey; The city of Paris Engineering School, France; CTL Cyprus Transport and Logistics; SRM Reti e Mobilità, Italy; Municipality of Philippi; Greece

VECTOR - Visualisation of the Exposure of Cyclists to Traffic On Roads

The still growing urban traffic intensity in many European cities strongly stimulates bicycling as alternative way of transportation. In its own, bicycling is considered relatively fast, cheap, healthy and good for the environment. Unfortunately it can also be unhealthy as cyclists often suffer from intense exposure to traffic exhaust. However, the actual exposure level of the cyclist is not explicitly documented (the average air-concentration serves as indication) and communication about the hazards involved is limited. As a consequence, cyclist interest groups have a hard time pressing policy makers to take measures to reduce the exposure. VECTOR (Visualisation of the Exposure of Cyclists in Traffic on Roads) will improve this situation by assessing the actual exposure of cyclists in 4 cities throughout Europe (i.e. in NL, DE, HU and LT) and by using combined analysis/video-recording measurements to improve the awareness raising potential of the data.

VECTOR will assess the exposure of cyclist by studying the fine particle air-concentration (PM_x) at the position of the cyclist on its bicycle. Hereby, a so-called "measurement bike" is used that was specially developed for such a purpose in a previous initiative by the Dutch Cyclists Association (the Fietzersbond). Combined with the state-of-the-art "real time visualisation" (RTV) experience of the Kooperationsstelle (Germany), actual exposure videos will be made on the exposure in various traffic situations. These will sub-



sequently be used to inform (local) authorities, cyclist interest groups and other stakeholders about the risks of exposure of cyclists to traffic exhaust. Especially also spreading knowledge about RTV as a tool to communicate science to society is an interesting added value of VECTOR. Close collaboration between the Vector consortium and universities will be realised by setting up a Virtual University in which an interdisciplinary student team will cooperate with social groups.

Consortium: IVAM, University of Amsterdam (NL), coordinator: Jeroen Terwoert jterwoert@ivam.uva.nl; Koop Kooperationsstelle Hamburg, Germany; ADFC Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad Club, Germany; fietserbond, the Netherlands; Du Ratai, Lithuania; The Hungarian Cyclist Club;



WINDFARMperception - Visual and acoustic impact of wind turbine farms on residents

There is a general public support for sustainable energy, but less support to actual plans to build wind farms as a result of local opposition. In the Netherlands growing public resistance to onshore wind turbines obstructs wind energy development. According to a recent study this opposition is now the main bottleneck in wind energy development. Due to the increase of wind turbine dimensions in the last decade it has been shown that the noise impact at night has changed disproportionately because of atmospheric characteristics. For modern wind farms the local environmental impact may therefore be significantly different from what was expected from older environmental impact studies.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the perception of a wind farm by residents living nearby such a farm. A survey will be held among residents living within an approximately 2 km radius of modern wind farms in the Netherlands. The analysis of the survey results will yield information on the impact of a wind farm on local residents, with an emphasis on visual and noise impact and the possible interaction between both. The result will help in understanding to what degree a wind farm affects residents and



what characteristics determine the impact. Also, the results will help in determining what mitigation measures may be effective in reducing local impact.

Internationally there is a lack of insight into the impact of wind farms on residents, but opposition to wind farms shows that this may be an important factor in future wind energy development. Though there may be some reports available of local studies, there is only one recent study published in a scientific journal. Recent studies are important as wind turbines have changed significantly in size over the last decade which has led to a greater visual impact and an increasing mismatch between predicted and actual sound exposure. It is therefore necessary to enhance objective and systematic knowledge of this topic.

Consortium: Science Shop for Physics Groningen (NL), coordinator: Frits van den Berg g.p.van.den.berg@rug.nl; Science Shop for Medicine and Public health University Medical centre Groningen, the Netherlands; Department of Public Health and Community Medicine Göteborg University, Sweden

NewCom - New Communities and Mental Health – A Needs Analysis

This project will be an example of good practice in community led research in the Science Shop tradition. The work is being performed on behalf of Cáirde a non-governmental organisation committed to reducing health inequalities amongst ethnic minorities in Ireland. The study seeks to investigate mental health needs amongst migrants in Ireland, including identifying needs, use and up-take of services as well as patterns of service use and perceived barriers to access. It will provide a community driven perspective that will be used to inform the development and implementation of policy and practice in the field of mental health. Also, due to the historical lack of research on the mental health needs of migrants in Ireland, it will begin the process of filling a significant lacuna in both local and European knowledge of the conditions surrounding migrants mental health needs. This research will enable Cáirde to assess the capacities they need in order to respond to mental health inequalities amongst their target populations. It will provide experience for an early stage researcher in working with a community organisation on a question of public concern. It will provide a platform for the School of Nursing at Dublin City University to develop a programme of community-led research. It will also serve as a pioneering study for the Community Engagement Office at DCU that is currently establishing a Science Shop based on community knowledge

exchange. Results will be widely disseminated as an example of good practice for community researchers in Ireland who may be setting up science shop type provision. The Science Shop at Queen's University, Belfast which has extensive knowledge of community led research, will provide mentoring and support. Results will provide a tool for local community organisations to identify health inequality risks and to influence policy and service delivery.

Consortium: Dublin City University, coordinator: Ronnie Munck, ronnie.munck@dcu.ie, Science Shop Queen's University Belfast (UK); Cairde, Ireland

Reflections on the experience and impact of applied social research

Student Experience – Barbara McNamara, Interchange student 2004



"I was fortunate enough to be offered the opportunity to engage in an Applied Social Research course through the Liverpool Science Shop Interchange, which was the first opportunity I had to test the theories and policies that I had learned in my first and second years to a practical setting. The course involved me in conducting 'real life' research in partnership with a community based organisation called Helplink Community Support based in the Wirral, Merseyside. The research with Helplink was negotiated and co-ordinated by Sharon Lockley of Interchange, who offered additional support to myself and the organisation throughout the life of the project. The research ran through the academic year from October 05-May 06, and was academically supervised throughout by Dr. David Hall, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Sociology, and Social Policy, The University of Liverpool.

As a student researcher I designed a qualitative research proposal which would enable me to encapsulate the real life social issues such as social isolation that are experienced by many members of the sample of the elderly population who were in regular contact with Helplink. Through semi-structured interviews, participant observation and the use of case studies I was able to ascertain for Helplink evidence that their services were unique in providing holistic care and therefore an essential and valuable addition to a statutory community care policy that was in much need of maintaining the right balance and revision in keeping pace with the increasing need for provision.



Through participation with Helplink I was able to grasp many of the real life social issues that older people suffered on a daily basis. As I was dealing with vulnerable members of society I had to carefully consider the ethical guidelines which guided me throughout the project and this enabled me to develop additional research skills, such as sensitive interviewing techniques, and confidentiality, which can be directly transferable to either employment or further academia.

Contact: Sharon Lockley, slockley@liverpool.ac.uk, www.liv.ac.uk/sspsw/interchange

Budapest Science Café

The Science Café in Budapest is a place where famous British thinkers and researchers come together to lecture and create sparkling debates over a cup of coffee or a glass of wine.

The Environmental Social Science Research Group (www.essrg.org) under the auspices of the first Hungarian Science Shop (www.scienceshop.hu) approached the British Council Hungary (www.britishcouncil.hu) with a proposal for co-operation on a so called Cafe Scientifique for debating science issues and promoting public engagement with science. The roles and contributions of these events are divided between three parties:

- ESSRG for providing professional organisation,
- MerlinTheater, Budapest (www.merlinszinhas.hu) for providing venue, and
- British Council Hungary for inviting lecturers.

The events are twofold: a science café for the general public and an expert workshop for professional researchers. The science café is free for the general public, anyone can participate, the selection criteria is only interest and some English language skills although translation is provided. The expert workshop is for a professional audience comprised of PhD students and specialists of the topic. The UK experts are asked to bring the theme of climate change as general example to illustrate their arguments.

On 25 January 2007 Kate Soper, Professor of Philosophy, Institute for the Study of European Transformations, London Metropolitan University, gave a public lecture at the Budapest Science Café entitled „Towards Postconsumerism: Nature, Culture and the Politics of Consumption“. In her lecture she reflected on concerns about the destruction and 'loss' of nature, but also on doubts about what is meant by the term 'nature' and what still counts as 'natural' in a world so technically controlled and made over by human beings. Arguing that the problem today is not so much

about 'getting back to nature' but about how to develop ways of living that are both ecologically benign and respectful of our distinctively human needs, pleasures and capacities, she focused on the importance of new thinking about human flourishing and the 'good life' to the development of a more sustainable form of consumption.

"The first public science café event in Hungary initiated by the Hungarian Science Shop received considerable media interest ranging from dailies and magazines to specialist blogs. Still it was rather uncertain how many people might turn up, and finally we were pleasantly surprised to see over 120 people in the cafe" – said Bálint Balázs, organiser of science café event at the Hungarian Science Shop. The speaker and the audience all found the evening a success. The topic proved to be rather engaging and after the lecture the questions were very diverse as well as very much personal and thoughtful.

www.cafescientifique.org/budapest.htm



Too few meetings between Politicians and Researchers

Politicians are not making use of important research results. This is one conclusion from an extensive three-part study carried out by the Swedish organisation Vetenskap & Allmänhet (VA) into Swedish politicians' attitudes to science and researchers.

The study involved a survey of national and local politicians, an analysis of science-related material in political party magazines and those of their youth organisations, and a book "Kunskapsbiten", in which 18 politicians and researchers give their views on the relationship between politics and science. A complete summary of these studies in English can be found at www.v-a.se/download/varapport2006_5_eng.pdf.

86% of politicians believe that medical research has a great influence on the development of society. This is followed by technology and natural science (72%), whilst for humanities and social sciences the figure is only 39%. The policy areas most influenced by research results, according to politicians, are health, the environment and energy.



Three out of four politicians seek out scientific research information in order to support political decisions. But paradoxically politicians seldom look for research information within the areas they believe to be most influential. Most frequently they make use of research results from the social sciences and the humanities. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that politicians often have a social science background, and so find information in other subject areas harder both to find and to understand. These figures are also reflected in the content of party-political magazines, where there are practically no articles concerning medicine, technology or natural science.

Almost all politicians have great trust in researchers at universities and three out of four extend the same level of trust to researchers at companies. Politicians believe, to a clearly greater extent than the public, that there is a good chance that research will help to increase economic growth and slow down climate change.

Three quarters of politicians think that researchers should communicate more with the public about their research. The majority of politicians have research contacts and report positive experiences of these contacts. The internet however remains politicians' main source of information.

The results also point to the fact that politicians and researchers speak different languages, have different perspectives and meet far too rarely. It is clear that researchers and politicians need new ways of interacting and new meeting places, as well as easy-to-read information on research. Together these measures can help to drive the two worlds closer, and to make research easier for politicians to access and understand.

For further information please contact Karin Hermansson, Research Manager at VA, karin@v-a.se, tel. +46 8 611 3047, www.v-a.se.

Science Shops

New Flyer, EU Website and Brochure

The EC printed a new flyer on Science Shops. This flyer focuses on different target groups, universities, students, citizens groups and local authorities. The flyer can be downloaded from the Living Knowledge website (www.livingknowledge.org, see section News). Printed copies can be ordered for free at the European Commission from monica.menapace@ec.europa.eu. The new Science and Society portal of the European Commission was launched on 14 November 2005. It replaces the previous Science and Society website. The portal is open to all news and organisations related to Science and Society http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/home_en.cfm.

Still available at the old EU website are specific pages with general information about Science

Shops as well as the minutes and single contributions of two Science Shop workshops organised by the European Commission ☺.

Living Knowledge Database

Over the last few years, there have been many requests for an overview of organizations and people active in community-based research. The Living Knowledge database will fulfil these needs.

The Living Knowledge Database is a free, public accessible resource for Science Shops and alike organizations, community-based (research) organizations, universities and policy makers worldwide. It is searchable on (type of) organization, people, country and (thematic) expertise in community based research, all over the world.

If you are an active organization dealing with community-based research, you are invited to add your information to the Living Knowledge Database at www.livingknowledge.org. Please send your remarks on or questions about the database to the [International Science Shop Contact Point](#). We need your feedback to optimise the use of the database.

FAQ's on Science Shops

The EC project TRAMS will deliver training and mentoring tools to support new and existing Science Shops and alike organisations. One of these tools is the section Frequently Asked Questions on the [Living Knowledge website](#). This FAQ section is a dynamic section. If you have any additional answers please feel free to contribute to the development of this section.

Conferences

April, 11-14, 2007, Toronto, Canada
Mobilizing Partnerships for Social Change, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health 10th Anniversary Conference, Details at: www.ccph.info

June, 17th-21st, 2007, Naples, Italy
How to design and organize public deliberation, CIPAST Training Workshop, www.cipast.org

30 August to 1 September 2007, Paris, France
Communities building knowledge: Innovation through citizens' science and university engagement, 3rd International Living Knowledge Conference, www.livingknowledge.org

For links and more conferences related to community based research, science and technology and science communication see 'news' and 'agenda' at the Living Knowledge-website www.livingknowledge.org