

# PERARES – WP 4

## Feasibility Report

### *The Grenoble Science Shop* *L'Échop' à Sciences de Grenoble*

ADReCA  
Grenoble, 15th of January 2011

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#### **Introduction and Background**

ADReCA – Association pour le Développement d'une Recherche Citoyenne et Active<sup>1</sup> exists as an NGO since 2007, originally formed by an interdisciplinary PhD student group in charge of the (self-chosen) project to perform a feasibility study of a Science Shop in Grenoble and its surroundings<sup>2</sup>. Two polls were performed by two different student groups : in 2006, the poll was aimed at a mixed group of people interested in Sciences (visitors of the annual “Fête de la Science” in Grenoble<sup>3</sup>), and in 2007, the target group was the regional scientific community<sup>4</sup>. In both cases, the results indicated a large interest, but a lack of knowledge about Science Shops and Community-Based Research in general (even though a Science Shop existed in Grenoble (and in several other places in France) in the 1980s). The most common point of critique or questioning was the financial aspect (even though in the 80s one problem was apparently the lack of organisation on the demand side).

Together with the tutors of the initial student projects (members of the academic staff of the university) and other interested persons (CSO members, participants of European projects like SOKORI, etc.), ADReCA was founded in 2007 with the aim of setting up a Science Shop in Grenoble

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1 NGO for the Development of Active Citizen Research

2 The French system of PhD schools obligates those PhD students who prepare for teaching (monitorat) to form groups for supplementary projects that can be chosen from a list or proposed by the students themselves ; the latter was the case for the Science Shop feasibility study.

3 Fête de la Science : University research laboratories are presenting their work in a forum in the city centre

4 The reports of these two studies are available in our archives on demand (in French).

or the Rhône-Alpes region.

Since 2007, among other activities around the Science Shop concept (see Appendix), ADReCA has pursued the aim to set up a Science Shop by getting in contact with all the necessary actors and presenting the idea of Science Shops to them : students, CSOs, university staff, local authorities, politicians. In 2007, a Scenario Workshop was organised by ADReCA and the FSC (Fondation Sciences Citoyennes) to gather the four basic partner groups for a Science Shop project (students, CSOs, professors/researchers and politicians) and to figure out together a functioning scheme for the future Science Shop<sup>5</sup>.

### **Basic structural and administrative problems ...**

Being a CSO, ADReCA encounters the classical funding problems which are due to structural particularities of the French public administration. Regional funding (as well as national or local city founding) for CSOs is mostly distributed for occasional projects meeting always changing criteria, and not for the permanent functioning of a structure ; secondly, the originality and the “innovative” character of every project needs to be very convincing in order to rule out the other actors of “scientific culture” which has become a real fashion in the last years, but which is not really matching our objectives (see below).

These points, together with a general decrease of public funding for CSOs, are common basic problems many CSOs encounter in France.

Concerning university, since the beginning many researchers have been expressing their interest in our approach and giving us moral support, but their possibilities of practical implication were always attenuated by the following questions :

- *Who will pay the research the students will do in our laboratories ?* → Costs for the laboratory : current consumables, hours of machine utilisation or technicians' time, ...

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5 The report of the Scenario Workshop is available in our archives on demand (in French).

- *Who will pay the hours I have to spend supervising them ?* → The fear is that the Science Shop work is not fitting to the evaluation criteria of the laboratories which are orientated towards the funding (result-orientated funding on short-term projects is more and more common).
- *How can students be recompensed ?* → In France, it is very difficult to get ECTS credit points for extra work done, and almost as difficult to have methodically different or interdisciplinary work officially recognised.
- *Who will pay the students ?* → In France, laboratories have to pay students for internships of more than 2 months (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year); volunteer work (outside the curriculum) is more and more disappearing because most of the students need to work in order to finance their studies.
- *How can I get the allowance to make students go outside university to meet CSOs ?* → In most of the Teaching Units (Unités d'Enseignement, UEs), moving physically outside the campus, associating CSOs or changing issues needs to be planned precisely or requires special authorisations, in order not to counter general instructions or insurance policies.

Waiting for an official “pilot project” meeting all the criteria of successful scientific and educational work in order to prove the pertinence of Science Shop projects, academics and politicians were (or are still) waiting for us to convince them of the practical success (advantages for them and for the students) and to bring the necessary money in order not to give them supplementary or volunteer work to do.

### **... and possible Do-It-Yourself solutions**

Since ADReCA has been operating for several years calling attention to the Science Shop work, the concept of University-Society-Cooperation is entering more and more into consideration around us. Most of the projects currently in progress have been brought to us by people of our personal networks, or people that are familiar with our ideas because they followed our activities for the last years.

In the university landscape of Grenoble, improvising, interpreting, transforming and by-passing rules had become the means by which some motivated researchers (that are actually joining our team)

were already operating towards associating CSOs to their research and teaching activities, with good feed-back from their students. Some UEs (educational units) can be used for that purpose, but apparently the opportunities are becoming less and less, since the administrative charge is becoming heavier and the educational charters more and more precise.

In spite of these difficulties, since the creation of ADReCA, we can report the following Science Shop activities in Grenoble :

Already accomplished projects :

- April 2009 : “*Organic food in collective restoration / university catering – environmental, social and economic impacts*”, study by three students in Biology, Informatics and Geography (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year), on demand of Fac Verte (Green Campus), NGO and student union
- December 2010 : “*Does the history of human activities on the Campus zone permit the establishment of collective gardens ?*” by three 1<sup>st</sup> year students (Physics-Chemistry, Geography) on demand of the Collectif Jardins Campus (collective of CSOs on public gardening, formed *ad hoc* to formalise the demand) ; this work represents the preliminary investigation that has led to two 5<sup>th</sup> year internships and three 4<sup>th</sup> year internships on soil pollution

Projects currently in progress :

- “*Research for past pollutions on a future gardening site on the Campus of Grenoble – Environmental pre-screening*”, two studies (physico-chemical pollution, organic pollution) by two 5<sup>th</sup> year students in Environmental Sciences (Collectif Jardins Campus, see above)
- “*Measuring nutritive pollutions and organic micro-pollutions in the atmospheric, soil and river compartments of the Campus, in view of the creation of a pedagogic garden*”, study by three 4<sup>th</sup> year students in Energy and Environment (Collectif Jardins Campus, see above)

- “*Contemporaneous history of travelling communities (gypsies) and settlement in Grenoble and its suburbs*”, study by a 5<sup>th</sup> year History student (outside curriculum, remuneration by ADReCA on regional funding), in collaboration with two NGOs close to the inhabitants of the settlement districts and the local gypsy community
- “*Precariousness in the emerging third sector and renewing practice of labour unions on the local scale*”, study by a 4<sup>th</sup> year PhD Economy student (end-of-PhD remuneration by ADReCA on regional funding) on demand of and in collaboration with a group of university labour unions and the Collective of higher education and research

Future projects to be scheduled for the next university year :

- “*Language didactics and learning of French as a foreign language by populations with immigration background*”, study by a 4<sup>th</sup> year Linguistics student, in collaboration with the ODTI (Observatory of discriminations and intercultural territories, Grenoble), (financed by ADReCA on regional funding if integration into the curriculum is not possible)
- Anti-seismic prevention in house construction with respect to local construction techniques, pedagogic accompaniment in Southern Countries (NGOs linked to Mali, CraTerre, Caritas), 3<sup>rd</sup> year Mechanics student (+ offer for a student in Architecture)
- Two project offers for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year mixed Natural Sciences student groups from different disciplines : “Composting” and “Dry toilets” (Collectif Jardins Campus)
- Study on the navigability of the Isère (local river), Geography
- Study on the post-colonial relations between France and Africa (History) (Survie Isère)
- Study on popular education and alternative pedagogy (local collectives)

These projects are very encouraging for us because they prove the existence of the demand, and

the students give us positive feed-back on their experience. These results also augment our visibility for university, students and CSOs. We hope that the ongoing research projects of this year and their results will help to ameliorate the academics' view on the scientific credibility and the pedagogic advantages of Science Shop work.

For our future work, we dispose of a list of local, regional and national CSO partners (who manifested their interest or already participated in meetings) that are willing to work with us. Some of them already submitted us projects, others are waiting for us to “unlock” the access to university via the internships (for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students) and UEs (for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students).

Alpesolidaires	Network of Solidarity and Fair Economy CSOs
CENG	Collective on the stakes of nanotechnologies Grenoble
Confédération Paysanne	Agriculture Federation
Contact Isère	Fight against Homophobia
CRIIRAD	Independent research on radioactivity
École de la Paix	Peace Culture and Training
Entr'Actifs	Citizen Solidarity
Fac Verte	NGO and student union for a green campus
Ingénieurs Sans Frontières	Engineers Without Borders, international solidarity
Jardins d'Utopie	Public and pedagogic gardening
L'Autre Cercle	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and society of today
Les amis de la terre	Environment
Les Petits Débrouillards	Science and Society, Animation and Education
Modus Operandi	Social cohesion, management of conflict and violence
Mosaikafé	Cultural diversity, discrimination, urban young people
NSS Dialogues	Nature, Science and Society Dialogues
Scop La Péniche	Solidarity and Fair Economy
SERA	Environment and Health
Survie Isère	Independent Information on France-Africa relations (Françafrique)

Moreover, we have identified a list of local CSOs to contact in order to present them our approach and to identify the possibilities we can offer them.

## **Towards integrating university ?**

In 2010, ADReCA received regional funding for a project with the Natural Sciences University as the academic partner of ADReCA, via the call for proposals “Université citoyenne et solidaire” (University, citizenship and solidarity). ADReCA yet lacking institutional influence concerning the educational programs, we are currently discussing and negotiating the possibility to conclude “conventions” with the academic partners in order to integrate or to create specific UEs in which interdisciplinary and methodologically different projects can be done. The frame of Science Shop projects is now set in theory (inside the limits of some UEs accessible to some students in some curricula), so we have to built up a clear organisation of responsibilities and legal representation issues. We need to be recognised as a legal partner to be able to sign internship conventions with the students.

During the mentoring visit of Gerard Straver (Wetenschapswinkel (Science Shop) University of Wageningen) in December 2010, we organised a meeting gathering researchers, including those in charge of administrative and strategic decisions inside the four universities of Grenoble. The possible integration of Science Shop projects in student's curricula, the status of the Échop'à Sciences as a partner of university and the implication of CSOs as supplying research with knowledge and demand were discussed. The following requirements and propositions (without yet any precise commitment) have been raised by academics :

- The University needs to precisely categorise and control all projects in order to emit ECTS points.
- An advisory board (“comité de pilotage”) should supervise the big strategic decisions of the Science Shop and could meet twice a year.
- The interdisciplinary character of many Science Shop projects is an advantage for the students and meets the criteria of the quadrennial pedagogic plans.
- Can existing UEs (educational units, optional or obligatory) be used to integrate interdisciplinary projects ?
- Research concerning society exist in many laboratories / faculties, so the demand side should be in congruence with a possible supply by university ; the demand should be identified, mapped

and linked to the laboratories.

- The new PhD contracts contain the possibility of external services by the PhD students (included in or added to their pay) (today : university teaching, counselling in the private sector) ; we could try to negotiate working with CSOs as a PhD service.
- The French doctoral schools have created “labels” for PhD formation units (a minimum number of units is obligatory during PhD studies and teachers' formation) ; the Science Shop activities could integrate one of the existing labels “local collectivities”, “engineering” or “scientific mediation”, or lead to the creation of a new label.
- The principle question remains if Science Shop work should be considered as a part of a PhD student's work (included in his contract and pay), or if these “services” should lead to supplementary activity and remuneration.

The following points have been raised and suggested to the assembly by ADReCA and Gerard Straver ; they concern internal rules and procedures and stay part of what will be discussed as a second step :

- The students' role as “experts at the service of society” can be a rich and interesting experience for them ; concerting different actors around a research project can be a rich and interesting experience.
- Public meetings outside university should be organised in order to discuss the results and outcomes.
- A voluntary “scientific coordinator” could be a competent person (researcher in the domain) in charge of the project coordination, if the Science Shop doesn't have any permanent staff available for that purpose.
- The Science Shop projects are, in best case, available to CSOs without financial resources, and their outcomes are not to be commercialised.
- The financial participation of the demanding CSO can be discussed and openly negotiated between all partners on a case-by-case basis.

The engagement of university remains to be discussed in detail and an action plan is about to be elaborated. However, there is the opportunity for us to integrate the unique “University of Grenoble”

who is currently under construction (the four more or less independent universities of the Grenoble Campus are about to be merged) and to have influence on its quinquennial action plan, particularly on the interdisciplinary aspects of education.

## **Institutionalisation vs. Autonomy**

Concerning independence as a principle of our structure, one question remains. By integrating university as an institutionally recognised structure (f. ex. in analogy to the existing “Bureaus of industrial / economical valorisation” in charge of knowledge transfer to industry), we would run the risk of a “takeover” by opportunist politicians or academics because of the vocabulary that has become a fashion of the moment (citizen participation, sustainability, local development, ...) but that is, in fact, used by authorities and funders to express something radically different from what we defend : outside university (but in cooperation), the CCSTI of Grenoble<sup>6</sup> is a classical *top-down* structure whose aim is, to simplify, “educating the profane”. Scientific communication and education being for us too unidirectional as an approach, we have to make clear that we are aiming at a *bottom-up* organisation in which the demand side is taking influence on research orientations.

The same danger lies in cooperating with university : the key words in the centralised research agendas and project calls for university research (which is more and more dependent from private industrial stakeholders) follow the same scheme, and even if the principle of Science Shops can be understood as a competitive advantage for the image of university, the idea of a *bottom-up* organisation is rather uncommon inside university.

However, we need to put the accent on the educational advantages and the abilities students acquire through Science Shop projects, and convince researchers and professors that engagement in society and forming students on this issue should not be considered as supplementary work, but rather

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6 The CCSTIs (Centres de Culture Scientifique, Technique et Industrielle) are independent from each other ; some are university services, some are NGOs, some are run by the local authorities, etc. There is no common political line, apart from the principle of constant public funding (which has been to the detriment of the “concurrent” Science Shop funding since the creation of the CCSTIs in the 1980s).

as part of their role.

## Next steps

Two different committees will be formed which represent two distinct entities : an advisory board and a scientific committee.

The “comité de pilotage” corresponds to an advisory board that will meet 3 or 4 times a year ; the first meeting of the scientific part of the board will take place in the end of January or beginning of February, where the general functioning will be defined<sup>7</sup>.

Secondly, the scientific committees will be the *ad hoc* structures deciding on the acceptability of incoming projects, making feasibility and budget estimations, time schedules, recommend the required level for the students, etc.

Since several projects are already in progress, the detailed functioning of this second instance will result from the practice. At the moment, a “referent” for each project (ADReCA staff member) is collecting all the necessary information and coordinating the meetings.

One of our next steps will be to further develop mapping of the demand inside society, to enlarge our address book of CSOs, and to continue raising conscience for the possibilities the Échop'à Sciences offers to the local CSOs. We shall ask CSOs to expose their problems and their concrete demands to us, in order to get aware of their needs.

The WP 3 work (permanent debate) done in parallel to the Science Shop activities will also help to bring up ideas for Science Shop projects. In practice, both activities are linked and the emerging networks can be joined.

One of the objectives of how we understand Science Shop work being communication and free access to results and outcomes, we need to set up a tool to communicate results and have a public follow-up of how the CSO is able to appropriate them.

At the moment, the rubrics for depositing projects and consulting project reports are under construction on our website ; meanwhile, the idea of public meetings outside university as proposed by our mentor

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<sup>7</sup> We plan to have equal representation of Academics (students + professors + researchers + other university staff), ADReCA staff members, and Civil society (CSOs + local collectivities) ; as an example, the advisory board could consist of 12 members, that is 4 elected members of each group.

will be considered and possible ways to perform them will be figured out. We may also contact local student or CSO press organs in order to have a paper support for open access publication.

On a more theoretical and methodological level, one of our objectives for the future is to go through the university statutes in detail and to point out the advantages of Science Shop work for the students, in order to build up a catalogue of common criteria between the university statutes and the Science Shop work.

## **Conclusion and Perspectives**

From the planned meetings with academics and university deciders (first meeting of the scientific part of the advisory board : end of January or beginning of February), we expect to know more clearly what possibilities ADReCA has as an NGO to enter into legal negotiations with university. In addition, we will operate to enter into consideration for the quinquennial action plan of the new University of Grenoble and to make sure that our interdisciplinary (and for them still a bit exotic) approach can be recognised as providing additional skills and practical knowledge to students. We need to clarify if an additional structure is required or if we can integrate existing structures and procedures that are flexible enough to be modified for our purpose.

Furthermore, we would like to get in contact with our WP 4 partners in Lyon to explore the regional dimension (Région Rhône-Alpes) of a (common) Science Shop project. From a strategic point of view, the regional dimension is important because regional funding is available for projects linking the different cities (universities or other structures) of the region, and it will be crucial for us to find university-independent funding in order to perpetuate the Grenoble Science Shop.

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## APPENDIX

### ADReCA's activities from 2007 to 2009 (before PERARES)

- **June 2007** : Organisation of a Scenario Workshop (with methodological help from the Fondation Sciences Citoyennes and financial support by the Rhône-Alpes region) gathering researchers, CSOs, students and politicians around the question “What opportunities and obstacles to the creation, development and consolidation of a Science Shop in the Rhône-Alpes region, as part of the structuring process of a national network ?” (The Workshop report is available in our archives on demand)
- **August 2007** : Participation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Living Knowledge Conference in Paris, France (the participation of five ADReCA members was financed by the GIERE (Inter-university Group of Ethics in Research, Grenoble))
- **December 2007** : Participation (stand) in the World-wide meeting of participatory democracy in Lyon, France
- **January 2008** : Public meeting on the Campus of Grenoble to present the Science Shop concept and to gather new collaborators and ADReCA members
- **March 2008** : Visit of Henk Mulder and organisation of two public conferences “Science Shops – opening research to civil society” in Lyon (INSA, Engineering university) and Grenoble (Campus)
- **May 2008** : Presentation of ADReCA and the Science Shop concept on the International Days on Communication, Education and Scientific Culture in Chamonix, France (the communication is published in the proceedings of the conference)

- **September 2008** : Participation in the seminar “How can the social demand be taken into account ?” in Lyon, France
- **Winter 2008** : Preparation of PERARES
- **January 2009** : Participation in the local Social Forum (Campus Grenoble) in parallel to the World Social Forum in Belem, Brazil (stand, conference, posters, ... )
- **February 2009** : Beginning of the projects proposed to students in interdisciplinary Educational Units (UEs)