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Building partnerships for public access to research

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Options for International Cooperation on local CBR Projects

By Caspar de Bok, Science Shop for Biology, Utrecht, the Netherlands

In the near future a thematic research cooperation might become an important activity and added value of the Living Knowledge network.

Science Shops and similar organisations are closely linked with local community groups, knowing their specific research needs. Many of these research needs are not local at all. At many places around the world local groups do have the same questions. With the help of Science Shops and the Living Knowledge network local organisations do have an opportunity to break out of the local. The results of an ISSNET workpackage made clear that there are good opportunities for research cooperation. If you run a project with a local group, or intend to start a project, that might be of relevance for local groups in other countries, please try to start an international cooperation. Options for funding these projects are discussed yet.



The EC intends to announce a call for proposals (by the end of 2005) to start international cooperation on community based research projects. The aim of this proposal will be to offer local community groups that deal with local research questions to break out of the local. In fact this call offers very good opportunities for research projects of science shops and alike organisations. If you run regular research projects (regardless the theme), or want to start one in close cooperation with local groups, which could be of interest for local organisations (and science shops) in other countries you can consider submitting a project proposal once the call has been announced. The local dimension of the research and the international cooperation with organisations dealing with the same kind of local research questions seem the key elements of this call for proposals. This call will be a pilot call in FP6. If it will be successful with many relevant proposals submitted it might become a structural call in FP7.

From this perspective it is important that the Living Knowledge network shows the potential of these type of calls by submitting a wide variety of proposals. It can be very useful to use the Living Knowledge list to share ideas for international cooperation.

With this special edition of the Living Knowledge Newsletter we want to give an overview of ideas in order to react pro-active on future funding opportunities. In the following you will find an inventory of the specific local research questions with a possible international relevance which were submitted on the Living Knowledge discussion list during the last months. This inventory will show the potential topics for proposals and the Science Shops that are interested in international cooperation on local community based research projects. It will be a good starting point for matching organisations and ideas to prepare project proposals.

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The Usefulness of International Meetings: Ideas for Joint Projects

By Jean-Pierre De Greve, academic supervisor of the Science Shop Brussels

Three possible projects for cross-border collaboration between Science Shops are briefly presented. The first one aims at introduction of Science Shop work into the higher education curriculum. The second one aims at distributing theme-oriented Science Shop research throughout Europe to serve groups of comparable ngo's, while the last one aims at optimization of the problem of "open" questions.

As a result of the fruitful discussions during the last Science-Shop meeting organized by the European Commission a number of possible collaborative projects came to my mind. Some might find their place in the just started TRAMS-project, others might be more suited for the call that the Commission probably will issue. They all aim at added value to the role of the Science Shops, internationalisation of our basic activities, and improvement of the service to the society. The underlying goal of all three of them is to stimulate other members of the Living Knowledge network (or interested organizations) to present similar ideas and to strengthen the ones presented below for initialization and implementation.

A portfolio of case-studies for problem-based learning in higher education.

This project focuses on the preparation of a set of suitable case-studies for use in higher education tutorials. The case-studies must base on previous Science Shop projects that were carried out with some success. They can be offered (depending on the subject of the case) to any course that uses problem-based learning as a tutorial exercise. The educational emphasis is on the development of the research attitude. Projects will be taken from different Science Shops on a variety of subjects. A small team first develops a format for the case-studies (i.e. the format and content of the teaching packages), including a description of the method of working and the needed materials. The team also defines the educational parameters for the selection of the cases. After gathering projects from different sources, a selection is made. The selected projects are then transformed into ready-to-use case-studies (teaching packages). This requires a translation to English as well as a remodelling of the content into a teaching package. The finalized cases are then advertised to interested parties, using the Living Knowledge network.

There are several advantages to this project. The use of case-studies with a Science Shop label by other academics makes our brand better known in the universities or related institutions. The problem-based learning approach contributes to the improvement and innovation of higher education. The content of the selected projects get a second life. And last but not least, it is international cross-border collaboration as projects from a Science Shop in one country result in case-studies used in another country.

Transnational mediation for ngo's.

Apart from carrying out projects for local ngo's, Science Shops can use their network to help a local ngo to liaise with ngo's and Science Shops in other countries with a similar interest. A case in point is the ngo "Zijn" ("Being") based in Brussels, dealing with domestic violence. At this moment, five students are working with the ngo in the

Brussels Science Shop framework, doing research on different aspects of the issue. But the ngo is aware of the fact that domestic violence is an issue in other countries as well. Its staff suspects that there may be other excellent expertise available in universities and research institutes in other countries. Hence, it would like to investigate collaborations with similar ngo's abroad and it would also like to tap into the expertise available elsewhere for research into common problems. The envisaged project contains the following actions: detecting organisations with similar interest in other countries as well as neighbouring Science Shops; investigate the research needs of the other ngo's; mediate between the group of ngo's to arrive at common or complementary research questions; determine the best ways to get these questions answered through research; develop a communication, reporting and press release scheme that serves all parties best (different Science Shops as well as different ngo's). I think this pin-pointed case offers a fine opportunity to give European added-value to our activities as well as learning experience in cross-border mediation.

Increasing the question-answering potential.

Science shops receive questions from groups in society for which an answer should be found through scientific research. Those questions often have a local or a regional character or background. However, it is quite well possible that a similar problem occurs more or less in the same way elsewhere in Europe. Think for example of air or soil pollution problems, migrant problems or knowledge, treatment and behavioural problems related to specific medical diseases (such as the Huntington disease). Some of the questions will be answered; some remain open due to lack of capacity, or unavailability of a student.

Therefore, an efficient procedure should be developed and implemented to distribute relevant open questions to Science Shops in other countries/regions and to have them placed there into research institutions for answering if no related report is found. The procedure includes the return of the answer in the proper language to the original client. I'm aware that this action is already in a way contained in the Living Knowledge network, but I feel that its effect and impact can be improved.

As a by-product, an adequate platform and procedure should be established to detect other groups in Europe for whom (or places where) specific studies from a Science Shop from another country/region might be interesting. This also includes an efficient method to produce the original report in the local language.

The project assures a European added value, as it only deals with those cases that have relevance elsewhere in Europe, or that require scientific/expertise available elsewhere. It also gives a new dimension to involved Science Shops as it requires international mediation between science and the societal client. It will also strengthen international collaboration between the Science Shops.

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Specific Partner Search

Air Quality

The Science Shop for Biology of Utrecht University intends to start a project on traffic emissions at a local level to give citizens a tool to evaluate their local air quality. We receive many requests from local groups for information about their local situation. For us it is clear there is a lack of practical information and a practical tool for evaluation for those groups, although there is a lot of documenta-



tion on air quality. We assume these questions will not only be asked by Dutch groups. We like to know what science shop is dealing with the same kind of questions on local air quality and is interested in starting an international cooperation on local air quality through emissions by traffic.

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Nanotechnology

For the forthcoming call we'd like to submit a proposal relating to nanotechnology. We have had preliminary contacts to CREA (Barcelona) and DTU Science Shop (Copenhagen) for participation. We are currently checking with our NGO contacts to see what their most important research questions are. Currently, we have a 4 year project from the Dutch Research Council for Applied Science (starting after summer) to study ways for meaningful communication among NGOs and researchers relating to nano-life sciences, on request of a Dutch NGO. We could add additional topics to that through EU funding. We'd be open to other participants and suggestions, since our thoughts are not yet concrete - this is just a first idea and Partner-search. Especially if you have requests from NGOs or articulated questions from citizens this would be helpful to design a good project.

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Education

Treasure Hunting: Discovering and exploring the soil. Further vocational training for child minder, teachers and nursery school teachers at primary schools and kindergartens.

This project intends to develop the curriculum, simple experiments and practical offers for nature experience. Training seminars for teachers and child minders will be included. Compilation and/or supply of the necessary materials, devices and aids for soil examinations, planting and animal observations and experiments. This project can be converted in the own school garden and/or schoolgreen and, in addition, in a natural close

environment of the school and/or kindergarten.

The idea got a positive feedback by the assigned officer for open allday schools and is welcomed by the education authority confirming the need and offering cooperation.

Wissenschaftsladen Bonn, Margret von der Forst-Bauer, margret.vonderforst@wilabonn.de

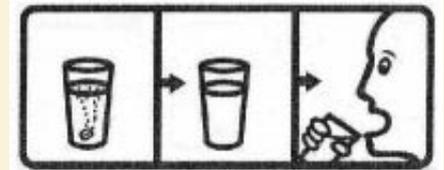
Migration and Medicines Communication

The Science Shop for Medicines and the Science Shop Language, Culture and Communication of the University of Groningen, NL are working together on the field of public health and migration in issues concerning drug information. Due to the interdisciplinary character of these projects, we are able to look at content and form of information. In earlier projects we have been looking at intercultural communication between pharmacy staff and refugees and the use of visual information, like pictograms. Presently research is being done on medication use in Islamic groups during the Ramadan period. We are interested in working together on these issues with other European partners on cultural differences in prescribing and taking drugs, intercultural communication and the use of visual materials.

Saskia Visser, Science Shop Language, Culture and Communication, tawi@let.rug.nl or Evelyn Schaafsma, Science Shop for Medicines, wewi@farm.rug.nl

Visual Drug Leaflet

The Science Shop Medicine and the Science Shop Language, Culture and Communication of the University of Groningen, NL introduced a new means to inform deaf people about their medication, the 'visual drug leaflet'. (For more information Living Knowledge 5 (April 2005), p.16). There is much to be done



in the development of the visual drug leaflet both in production as in research. Whereas the deaf in the Netherlands form a group that is too small to be important, we think that deaf people in the whole of Europe together can be interesting also for the big Pharmaceutical Companies. Therefore European co-operation can prove to be very important. Because the only specialised institutions for the health of deaf people in our country are in mental care, we are also interested in working together with institutions in countries who are organized differently. Furthermore we would like to explore the possibilities to adapt the visual drug leaflet for other groups that have difficulties understanding written language, like migrants or illiterates.

Saskia Visser, Science Shop Language, Culture and Communication, tawi@let.rug.nl or Evelyn Schaafsma, Science Shop for Medicines, wewi@farm.rug.nl

The Rights of Children and Immigration Procedures

The Science Shop Language, Culture and Communication of the University of Groningen, NL has just started a project on the rights of refugee children in Dutch Immigration Procedures. In these procedures the rights of children can be violated according to European and International law and declarations. We are concentrating on the fact that these children are not allowed to tell



their story and we would like to explore the way in which you can do so. Experiences from other European countries could be very helpful and together we could put our results and conclusions into a European framework.

Saskia Visser, Science Shop Language, Culture and Communication, tawi@let.rug.nl

General Topics for Cooperation Projects

Teaching Module on Health Questions

I am a community pharmacist, living in Athens, Greece. I've been working in a project of public health, dealing with people education/information (narcotic drugs, cardiovascular risk and relation with food, food contamination by insecticides). I have created a teaching module and I have implemented that in my neighborhood. Seems that it works. I would be interested in collaborating with others, exchange views, compare my work with their work and complete it and at this point, correlate human behavior with pollution.

Caterina Choreftaki, khoreftaki@YAHOO.COM,
www.pharmywithheart.com

New Technologies for Research Communication

On the issues of communication, I am working on using new information and communication technologies among research teams and community and consumer (health-term) groups-blogs, wikis, podcasting, vodcasting, instant messaging, text, etc. If you are interested I would love to help with this perspective. My affiliation can be either through the Centre of Excellence at the hospital or the University of Ottawa

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Patient Focussed Communication

We are very much interested in experiences in consumers or patients information/education. I was trained as a pharmacist, but I am currently working in the Science Shop for Medicines, University of Groningen, the Netherlands. We deal with all kinds of patient focussed research concerning pharmacy and medication. I am also teaching in the school of pharmacy. Currently we are active in the field of children and medication (e.g. risk communication on vaccines, pregnancy and drug taking) and drug information for ethnic minorities (e.g. drug taking during ramadan, for refugees) and other target groups who have difficulties to access regular drug information (e.g. deaf people).



For more information, read our English annual report at: <http://sff/fmns.rug.nl> (downloads of the department of social pharmacy and pharmacoepidemiology) Our Dutch website: www.rug.nl/wewi/gnm, Evelyn Schaafsma, Pharm D Director of the Science Shop for Medicines, Dep. Social Pharmacy, Pharmaco-epidemiology and Pharmacotherapy, Groningen University Institute for Drug Evaluation (GUIDE), A. Deusinglaan 1 9713 AV Groningen, The Netherlands, e.s.schaafsma@rug.nl, www.rug.nl/wewi/gnm

Magnetic Field Load by Transformer Stations

It must be assumed that in the urban range transformer stations are built relatively close to human neighbourhood. With a strong urban development there often is no other possibility than establishing transformer stations close to houses or sometimes even in cellar areas. Transformer stations produce magnetic alternating fields, which vary in their intensity, since the current consumption also varies. These fields exceed intensities, which are critical. Directly concerned are inhabitants in dwellings and office workstations, but different groups within the commercial range are also concerned



Investigations on transformer stations in particular are not well-known except on some individual case studies. There are a lot of international large-scale studies on high voltage transmission wires. So far no special research on transformer stations is known, which supplies loadable data. The number of concerned people stepping active into the public is quite small. In order to clarify the risk and options to avoid the risk, we would like to make representative survey and comparative inquiry.

Wissenschaftsladen Bonn, Dr. Klaus Trost, klaus.trost@wilabonn.de

Eat better, get more Exercise

In a quarter of Bonn the health situation of children is to be improved together with neighbourhood groups. The project will focus on nourishing questions and fitness exercises under participation and active inclusion of children, parents, experts of social institutions such as kindergartens, primary schools etc. Residents will also be involved to reach a sustainable reevaluation and additional identification possibilities for disadvantaged groups in the quarter. The goals should be reached by consultation, information, education and training offers for all involved groups. Cultural events in the quarter could be added to raise attention and support for goals of the project.

Wissenschaftsladen Bonn, Dr. Cornelia Voß,
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Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property

There is a need to include genuine local questions to help local groups through community based research. Complying with the call to enrich the inventory of local questions, I am submitting few local issues that reflect the local communities' research needs.



Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property

Obligated by the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS), agricultural research and educational establishments in countries in transition have to be more and more competitive. In addition, every technology innovated because of creative venturing and private investment needs protection from piracy. On the other hand, public interest research organizations in countries in transition have a stake to provide technology for the poor at affordable costs. Poverty stricken population needs technology and other inputs to raise their own per capita income. Moreover, the extent of land is diminishing and the population is burgeoning. Therefore, the onus is on technological inflow.

It is now increasingly recognized worldwide that farmers and (poor) local communities themselves are source of promising, innovative and sustainable technologies that are potential intellectual properties. These local innovations/ Indigenous Traditional Knowledge Systems (ITK) are now acclaimed internationally. But, multiple factors influence the extinction of local innovations: Many individuals and organizations (Transnational Corporations) are pirating (copying) the knowledge of indigenous and local communities and claim products and processes as their intellectual property. Moreover, ITK are increasingly lost due to westernization, formal education, globalization, urbanization, economic development, transfer of modern technology, demise of resource persons etc. If the loss has to be prevented, ITK has to be scouted and documented.

Hence, the important research issue is a technology development based on indigenous knowledge with an intellectual property rights protection of the technology developed based on indigenous knowledge. The developed technology / IPR must be commercialized and equitable shared in its benefits with the indigenous and local communities and innovators.

Organizing Local Communities for Knowledge Security

Indigenous and local peoples' knowledge are future's potential technologies as well as patents. Research on ITK can yield useful technologies beneficial to farmers and public.



Indigenous and local communities are deprived of the benefits due to companies or individuals who claim exclusive marketing rights through the patents based on the

ITK. No share is given to indigenous and local communities who have actually invented the ITK. Capacity building, reward system and success criteria (highest number of local innovations) for students are high-impact and best bet strategies conserve and sustain local innovations / Indigenous Intellectual Properties.

A digitized data management and decision support system on local innovations is necessary. ITK are maintained in the community by spoken word. So they tend to disappear. Indigenous and local peoples' knowledge is to be brought into the form of a written document as a 'recorded evidence' of their existence. ITK are to be archived for future use at times of need. Networking with this digitized data base and decision support system within

international knowledge networks is feasible. An on-line technology transfer service for large-scale dissemination of local innovations could be one of the further developments.

Please, kindly consider these two themes of local issues for international research cooperation. Dr.S.ANANDKUMAR, Assistant Professor (Agrl. Extension), Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru College Of Agriculture & Research Institute, Karaikal 6069063, India, Tel. 00 91 4368 261372, Mobile: 00 91 93 66 666 454, anandkumar_s1@rediffmail.com

Water Management or Pollen Allergies

Here in Oradea, Romania, we are interested in international cooperation on pollen allergies projects and water management, water quality.

Diane Cupsa, dcupsa@uoradea.ro

Unspecific

The Geographers Group for Social Ecology, a research team of the University of Barcelona is working for many years in local environmental auditing in collaboration with citizen groups. We have developed a methodology to analyse with citizen participation the diagnosis of each theme of the local environmental auditing and also to debate the proposal towards sustainability, including the changes in environmental plans as well as in the behaviour population, the enterprises, etc. In the phase of the diagnosis we treat together the relations within the local situation and some global impacts of determined aspects, as for example, the consumer of water, the production of wastes, the growth of the energy supply, etc. In this context we work the social aspects (for example the arrival at the municipalities of people from Magreb and South America countries), the air quality, the water management and the public health. I suggest to add the waste prevention, and also the urban planning and the nature protection. We work, also, with municipalities in the field near the metropolitan areas where the pressure to change the use (rural to urban and industrial) is very strong.

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General interest in any kind of cooperation

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ISSNET Thematic Research Cooperation

One of the work packages of the EC project ISSNET (Improving Science Shop Networking) is focussing on thematic research cooperation. The final report of this work package will be available after summer. At the Living Knowledge website you can already find some documentation about the ISSNET pilot on research cooperation.

www.livingknowledge.org