The 7th Living Knowledge Conference 2016.

We were delighted to host the 7th Living Knowledge Conference 2016 in Dublin Institute of Technology on behalf of the Living Knowledge Network. The friendliness, cooperation and the shared thirst for knowledge of all the guests truly enhanced the atmosphere of this event and made it a thoroughly enjoyable three day conference!

The conference kicked off with the Pre conference activities on June 20th and 21st 2016, including the two day Summer School and pre-conference site visits to three community partner organisations who have worked on collaborative research with DIT students and staff. These local not for profit organisations invited participants to discuss their work and exchange ideas on the issues that they are looking to overcome to enhance the communities in which they are working.

With much anticipation, conference day one had arrived and so had the guests! Many guests had travelled from far and near to attend the conference. 256 people had registered to attend the conference from 28 countries and from 5 different continents. It was a multinational event which made it all the more exciting to meet and network with people from all over the world.
Each day opened with a plenary session introducing the main process requirements for Responsible Research and Innovation, each plenary was chaired by a member of the EnRRICH consortium or advisory board, and each involved active participation from those attending, with a focus on interaction which was a central feature of the conference. The opening plenary input by Professor Jacqueline Broerse introduced the challenges and benefits of incorporating RRI into the curriculum, and the final reflective plenary facilitated by Réka Matolay from Corvinus University Budapest encouraged participants to make a personal action plan based on what they had learned at the conference, with inputs in the plenaries in between from academics, students, community partners, and a UNESCO Co-Chair in Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, from India, Ireland, the UK and Netherlands.

The plenary sessions were followed by the parallel presentations given by our many participants who generously shared their experiences by presenting on their work or their goals in relation to RRI and the curriculum – from examples of RRI projects on the ground to discussions on the challenges and benefits of collaboration, to planning for policy change to support RRI. The parallel sessions included interactive presentation formats including workshops, roundtable workshops, discussion sessions, ultrashort presentations, collaborative presentations, and the poster presentation networking event involved ice-cream, canapés and prosecco.
On the evening of day 2 we hosted a public event called “Building excitement about Science and Technology through collaboration between Higher Education students and young people”, kindly supported by Campus Engage. This involved brief talks from students, community partners and academic staff from Ireland and the US who have run collaborative projects to engage young people with science and technology. It was followed by hands-on workshops involving chemistry experiments, analysing water sample data and designing a storm drain, and building robots.
We also had a post-it wall for our guests to share any ideas or thoughts that they had throughout the conference!

Here are some interesting quotes from the post-its:

“A group of 4 very different people sharing the same thoughts on RRI challenges is amazing!”

“Learn how to manage expectations of both researchers and societal organisations”

“I am going to “just do it!!” (RRI) in our next research study”
On the social side, the Soccer game and Gaelic Football workshop were a real hit, a great way to meet new people and to run about after many hours indoors! We were lucky with sunny weather.

The dinner was held in the Radisson Blu Hotel, a fun event with an introduction to some traditional Irish dancing with live music from DIT students and graduates after the meal, and it was lovely to see all the guests dancing and enjoying themselves. The Lord Mayor of Dublin and the President of DIT welcomed guests to the conference.
From talking to the guests during the conference and from the feedback from the post conference evaluation survey, we could see the 7th Living Knowledge Conference 2016 was a success! The 7th Living Knowledge conference we feel helped to build policy, practice and partnerships to create a better awareness of the value of RRI in the curriculum, and to build the capacity of students across Europe to engage in collaborative, ethical open research with communities.

We are looking forward to the 8th Living Knowledge Conference being held in Corvinus University Budapest in 2018, we can’t wait to see what the future holds for Responsible Research and Innovation in Higher Education.

The conference organising team would like to thank all those who helped make the conference so interesting and engaging – we couldn’t have done it on our own! We would also like to thank the European Union Horizon 2020 programme for funding the conference as part of the EnRRICH project.