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Engage, Innovate, Transform: E³UDRES² Ent-r-e-novators news and events



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We connect
various actors
and break down
barriers

Enhancing Citizen Engagement in Scientific Research: the WP5 results

The Work Package 5 of the Ent-r-e-novators project, titled "Creating Proximity and Engaging Citizens and Society," aims to promote and enhance citizen and societal engagement in scientific research. Citizen science is characterized by active public participation in the research process, adhering to principles such as collaboration and the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

In pursuit of its objectives, Task T5.1 endeavors to establish a format of best practices for citizen science projects. This involves synthesizing insights from current participants to enhance the efficacy and impact of such initiatives. A key component of this effort is the production of podcasts that capture and disseminate the perspectives of all stakeholders, thereby providing an accessible platform for sharing experiences and insights from those directly involved in the research process.

One of the pivotal activities under WP5 was the Delphi study, which was instrumental in developing new engagement models involving researchers, educators, entrepreneurs, and community builders. Through multiple rounds of feedback, the Delphi study identified 52 potential engagement strategies, of which 48 were retained after rigorous evaluation. These strategies aim to foster more effective and meaningful interactions between the scientific community and the public, ensuring that engagement is widespread and impactful.

Podcast interviews with citizen science experts revealed that active participant engagement significantly enhances project outcomes. This is particularly evident in improved data collection and a better understanding of local community needs.



A comprehensive literature review was conducted to gather policy documents and engagement models outside the E³UDRES² consortium. This review aimed to integrate successful strategies and models from various contexts into the project, thereby broadening the scope and applicability of the engagement practices.

However, several challenges were noted, including difficulties in participant recruitment, insufficient resources, and communication barriers. Addressing these issues is essential for the sustained success of citizen science projects.

Enhancing Citizen Engagement in Scientific Research: the WP5 results (cont.)

Experiences from participating universities provided further insights into the impact of citizen engagement. The Polytechnic University of Timișoara (UPT) emphasized the importance of building community trust and the role of informal learning for students. Trust is crucial for ensuring ongoing public engagement and support. The St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences (STPUAS) highlighted the increased awareness among citizens about local issues and the benefits of non-formal learning methods, which can lead to more engaged and informed communities. Meanwhile, Polytechnic University of Setúbal (IPS) faced challenges in maintaining family engagement, pointing out the need for a paradigm shift in how science communicates with society. Innovative communication strategies are necessary to keep families and other community members engaged.

Both the Catholic University of Louvain (UCLouvain) and the University Colleges Leuven-Limburg (UCLL) stressed the crucial role of intermediaries in facilitating communication and maintaining citizen engagement. Consistent and clear communication is key to sustaining interest and participation. UCLL specifically addressed the inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities as co-researchers and explored the digital sense of belonging among the elderly. These initiatives highlight the importance of inclusivity and addressing diverse needs within citizen science projects.

In summary, WP5 of the Ent-r-e-novators project seeks to identify and implement effective methods for engaging citizens and other stakeholders in scientific research. The project recognizes both the challenges and opportunities inherent in citizen science. The engagement strategies and models developed through the Delphi study and podcasts offer valuable guidance for future initiatives, aiming to create a more inclusive, effective, and collaborative research environment. By leveraging the insights gained from this extensive analysis, WP5 aspires to foster a deeper connection between scientific endeavors and the communities they serve, ultimately contributing to a more scientifically literate and engaged society.



We are playing in the “Champions League”

A project of people, made by people and that grows with people.

"Managing a university is very much like conducting an orchestra," says Professor Hannes Raffaseder, who is also a musician and composer of classical music, a path that has always been intertwined in his life with teaching and research. In the interview we had the pleasure of conducting, Hannes told us that he began his academic journey in the Electronic Communications Engineering program at the Technical University of Vienna. He reflects on how his academic path flourished at the dawn of the internet era, which "sparked an interest in music," leading him to discover his more artistic side through classical music. Combining his interests in technology with sound and music, he became both a professor and a significant researcher in the field. He uses the metaphor of a simple triangle, "a small instrument that many might find annoying," to illustrate how it can positively contribute to an orchestra's performance, relating it to his work as an administrator at St. Pölten University in Austria. He describes Ent-r-e-novators as "a very special project," focused on promoting innovation, startups, and small businesses, and breaking down language barriers between people and regions.

According Hannes Raffaseder, the project allows for the globalization of regional universities, putting them on a higher playing field: "A few years ago, we were a relatively small university; thanks to this project and the E³UDRES² alliance, we are competing in the Champions League".



Hannes Raffaseder believes the Ent-r-e-novators project enabled his university's working groups to secure financial support, "allowing us to expand our horizons". Hannes Raffaseder admits that the project brought opportunities the university didn't have before: "Ent-r-e-novators is a critical enabler for achieving our goals and building a European network".

Hannes Raffaseder states that, in his opinion, the most important aspect is the interpersonal relationships and the "European Network" of support and communication that has formed with such projects: "We are encouraged to unite Europe and see it as our playground". Regarding developments and achievements in social and scientific projects, he admits he can't reveal much: "Studies are ongoing between social and technological sciences (...) We have, for example, a project from a group developing a vacuum cleaner robot designed to detect if there are any problems with elderly people, if they have fallen, for instance," and adds that he admires the achievements already reached and hopes for "more and more".

Hannes Raffaseder emphasises the importance of collaboration between institutions and countries, which allows for acquiring "intercultural and international competencies, helps institutions grow and those who constitute them," believing that investment in research is the key piece that ensures the work's results leave a mark on society. When thinking about the future, he believes the work never ends: "We finish one study, another appears. These types of projects must reinvent themselves and not end," and concludes by mentioning that "people make the project; we must always strive to improve the environment, and the people involved, because these kinds of alliances are like a romantic relationship, we cannot take anything for granted and must always try to improve".

“Research Embraces Everyone” - Wishes for an Optimistic Future with Sarah De Coninck

In this edition of the Newsletter, Pedro Ventura and Cátia Duarte (students from IPS) spoke with Sarah De Coninck, project coordinator of E³UDRES² Ent-r-e-novators, outlined his profile and got to know his vision on the project and its results so far.

An entrepreneur is someone who puts an activity or event into practice. An innovator is someone who introduces new things and seeks change. What would be the meeting of these two terms? An Ent-r-e-novator, as is the case with Sarah De Coninck, one of Belgium's representatives from the University of Leuven-Limburg, in this European project, which brings together six different countries in the E³UDRES² consortium. Sarah has a background in psychology but has recently become a researcher, more specifically in "citizen and stakeholder research in sustainability", i.e. the best way to introduce citizens and stakeholders to the field of science aimed at sustainability. The Belgian representative defines the results obtained from this new project as "testing what works and what doesn't through practice within the Living Labs, where there are stakeholders from companies working with students from different institutions".



As she comes to the end of her journey in this project, there are certain elements that must be kept in mind and never forgotten, especially when it comes to "creating equality" so that there is no discrepancy or confusion in research, which belongs to everyone: "research involves everyone".

With the aim of creating a research space in which no one is left out, it ensures that real problems are solved by real people with the power to change and alter what needs to be changed. Elaborating on the importance of all areas for research, she readily describes the role of communication, which is one of the key points in building bridges between citizens and stakeholders, making sure that "you are inclusive".

For the UCLL researcher, "inspiring and motivating people to use these strategies" is one of the main points for the future of this project, giving it even more value as it doesn't have to be a project with a set end, assuming that it will play an active role in the future. Sarah recognizes that there is still a long way to go, visualizing all that remains to be done within the project, however, she believes that it is possible to meet the objectives set at the start of this journey.

“There's a long way to go, it always takes time to build... building relationships with regions, stakeholders, citizens takes work and time.”

Sarah De Coninck, 2024

Interview conducted by Guilherme Cabral, Social Communication student at the Polytechnic University of Setúbal

Ent-r-e-novators' cluster project

CONNECT: Revolutionizing Research Collaboration with AI



In the ever-evolving landscape of academic research, the ability to identify and collaborate with potential research partners is paramount. The Horizon Europe project "Boosting INGENIUM for Excellence" (BI4E), launched in October 2022, is pioneering this effort through its innovative CONNECT platform. This initiative aims to enhance the research and strategic capabilities of partner universities, with a particular focus on institutions in Widening Countries.

CONNECT, launched on December 12, 2023, is hailed as a "game-changer for finding potential collaborators with artificial intelligence." This platform facilitates transnational collaboration by leveraging AI to match research interests across the INGENIUM network, which includes universities from Italy, Romania, France, Bulgaria, Ireland, Germany, Spain, and Sweden.



The project's innovative approach begins with researchers inputting details about their research topics, methodologies, or results into a search field. The platform, trained on extensive databases like SCOPUS and Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID), then scans these resources to match the input with relevant research abstracts. This process generates a list of potential collaborators, enabling researchers to view profiles, ORCID identifiers, and the best-matching research abstracts.

The platform's impact was immediate and significant. During the INGENIUM Alliance's first call for proposals in December 2023, CONNECT played a crucial role in forming many of the 19 research groups awarded funding in May 2024. This call, aimed at fostering interdisciplinary research, provided up to €20,000 per project, demonstrating CONNECT's utility in assembling strong, diverse teams for grant applications. Professor Marcello Constantini, Erasmus Institutional Coordinator and Head of BI4E at the D'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara, highlights a case where CONNECT facilitated the assembly of a highly effective team for a European grant proposal. Researchers used CONNECT to identify up to 20 potential collaborators, leading to a successful and enthusiastic response from many.

CONNECT is not limited to the INGENIUM network; it is a valuable tool for researchers across the European Higher Education Area seeking partners for European project applications. It promotes equal opportunities for researchers regardless of geographical location, enhancing the visibility and impact of research from Widening Countries. Professor Irina Lungu, Vice-Rector for Internationalisation at the Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iasi and BI4E Coordinator, emphasizes CONNECT's unique capability to support direct research collaborations based on published work in Scopus and ORCID databases. This feature encourages researchers to maintain up-to-date profiles, further integrating them into the European Research Area.

The CONNECT platform exemplifies the transformative potential of AI in research collaboration. By breaking down barriers and fostering connections among researchers with shared interests, CONNECT accelerates innovation and knowledge exchange across Europe. As Professor Jesús Daniel Santos from the University of Oviedo aptly notes, CONNECT enhances the visibility and impact of research conducted by universities in Widening Countries, ensuring equal opportunities and fostering a more integrated European Research Area.

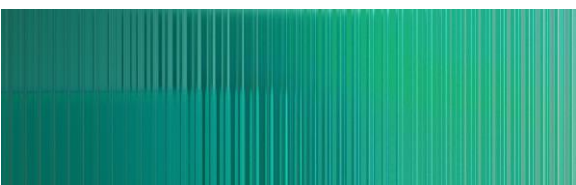
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Ent-r-e-novators' cluster project

Energytran: the first semester of the cooperation between Europe and Latin America for energy transition

The first semester of the Energytran project has marked a significant milestone in the cooperative efforts between Europe and Latin America for energy transition. Launched in January 2024, Energytran represents a pioneering Horizon Europe initiative led by the Organization of Ibero-American States, driven by Europe's urgent energy crisis, Latin America's substantial potential in providing solutions, and the promising opportunity for interregional collaboration.

The Energytran project, formally known as "Research Infrastructure Cooperation for Energy Transition between European and Latin American and the Caribbean Countries," brings together 11 partners from six countries, encompassing a diverse array of profiles. Over the next 24 months, the project aims to address the multifaceted challenge of energy transition through the exchange, generation, and transfer of knowledge. This approach is grounded in a multidisciplinary perspective—technological, environmental, and social—with the ultimate goal of supporting the development of public policies and regulatory frameworks that promote a clean, sustainable, and equitable energy transition, thereby advancing towards a resilient society.



Energytran

During its inaugural semester, the project has made substantial progress across its three core pillars: technological, environmental, and social. The technological pillar, which focuses on fostering cooperation between European and Latin American research infrastructures, has already seen the fruition of its initial virtual thematic event held in June 2024. This event, titled "Strengthening Europe-Latin America Cooperation in the Energy Transition: Exploring Innovative Technologies, Policies, and Practices," featured discussions on emerging technologies, their associated challenges, and their social and environmental impacts. Noteworthy actions within this pillar include technical assistance for concentrated solar thermal technology in rural areas, a comprehensive inventory of energy transition research infrastructures, and collaborative assessments on solar thermal energy and lithium extraction.

In parallel, the environmental aspect of the project, spearheaded by LifeWatch ERIC, has introduced several key initiatives. These include the development of an e-learning course aimed at training participants in open science principles to address global challenges such as climate change, a software tool for data traceability, and the establishment of a collaborative environment for knowledge exchange

Ent-r-e-novators' cluster project**Energytran: the first semester of the cooperation between Europe and Latin America for energy transition (cont.)**

The e-learning course, scheduled for delivery in Costa Rica in 2025, adheres to the European Open Science Cloud and UNESCO recommendations, emphasizing open scientific knowledge and engagement with societal actors.

The social dimension of Energytran, led by the Spanish Higher Council of Scientific Research (CSIC), is centered on ethnographic research into the social impacts of energy transition on local communities. A forthcoming virtual thematic event in October 2024 will provide an overview of ongoing research and related issues, to present case studies from participating countries including Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, Portugal, and Spain.

The project's efforts are further supported by planned researcher mobilities, with nearly 40 European research infrastructures expressing interest in hosting Latin American researchers. These exchanges, scheduled from September 2024 to September 2025, will facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Reflecting on the first six months, it is evident that the Energytran project has generated considerable interest and engagement from both regions. This initial success not only reinforces the project's potential but also lays the groundwork for future collaborations that will ensure the sustainability of this bi-regional alliance.

[For more information, check out Energytran website.](#)

E³UDRES² Alliance News

E³UDRES² Establishes Scientific Council: A Milestone in Collaborative Research



(c) St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences

The E³UDRES² alliance proudly announces the formation of its Scientific Council, marking a significant milestone under Work Package 4 (WP4): "scientific body installed". This new governing body will play a crucial role in guiding and overseeing the research activities within the alliance, ensuring they align with broader European Union policies and leverage the collective expertise of all partners.

The Scientific Council is composed of esteemed representatives from each of the nine partner institutions, including Wolfgang Aigner (STPUAS), Martin L. Bennink (Saxion), Cindy Casteels (UCLL), Luís Coelho (IPS), Karlis Kreslins (ViA), Sirpa Laitinen-Väänänen (JAMK), Liviu Marsavina (UPT), Quang D. Nguyen (MATE), and Claudia Wiesner (HFD). Notably, Liviu Marsavina from UPT was elected president of this body by ballot.

The Council has a broad and impactful mandate since it provides expert recommendations and oversees research efforts under WP4, ensuring that activities are strategic and well-coordinated. It validates the updated joint E³UDRES² Research Strategy, developed by the WP4 team, incorporating EU policies, past activities, and the capacities of all nine partners, before presenting it to the Executive Board for approval. Additionally, the Council supervises the implementation of the E³UDRES² Research Networks Policy once approved by the Executive Board. The Scientific Council also plays a crucial role in developing the E³UDRES² Applied Research Centres of Excellence (CoE) given that it supervises the concept development, defining criteria, characteristics, roles, and potential benefits before submitting proposals to the Executive Board, meaning that the Council identifies and selects potential Centres of Excellence from expressions of interest received through the E³UDRES² Call, recommending them for further development and decision by the Executive Board.

Regarding doctoral programmes, the Council oversees the definition and validation of the E³UDRES² Joint Doctoral Programmes, which includes developing criteria, methodologies, models, mobility frameworks, candidate conditions, and financing models, before seeking Executive Board approval. The Council also supervises the implementation of the approved Joint Doctoral Programmes.

Moreover, the Council monitors the quality and performance of joint research activities within the alliance and advises on any issues related to E³UDRES² joint research activities.

The establishment of the Scientific Council represents a robust framework to enhance the quality and impact of collaborative research within the E³UDRES² alliance. By fostering a cohesive and strategic approach, the Council ensures that the alliance's research activities are not only aligned with EU objectives but also leverage the unique strengths of each partner institution.

02 OCT 24

Upcoming E³UDRES² Ent-r-e-novators Event: Workshop on Citizen Science at UCLL

We are pleased to announce an upcoming workshop on citizen science that will take place at UCLL Campus Diepenbeek on October 2nd from 14:00 to 17:30 CET – and by zoom.

The workshop will begin with an introduction by Sara Gilissen, followed by a keynote address from Simona Cerrato of ECSA, who will explore advancements in citizen science. Cerrato will discuss crucial strategies for attracting new participants, emphasizing the importance of engaging schools and teachers in real research to foster independent problem-solving among children.

Annelies Duerinckx from Scivil will then delve into the current state of citizen science in Flanders, sharing findings from a comprehensive study that maps the landscape and identifies challenges in engaging hard-to-reach groups such as entrepreneurs.

Following this, Käthe Robert from Universiteit Antwerpen will present the 'Teek-a-Break' project, providing insights into the realities of citizen science, including barriers, lessons, and successes. Robert will illustrate the impact of media attention on citizen engagement and the dual role researchers often play as communicators in such projects.

After a short break, Karel Moons from UCLL will introduce the 'Learning Bubbles' project, discussing the unique experiences and insights gained when individuals become the subjects of research.

Workshop on Citizen Science



Elisabeth Cans, head of the research center Inclusive Society at UCLL, will then address the topic of inclusivity in citizen science, highlighting the challenges and strategies for ensuring inclusive participation.

The workshop will conclude with a presentation by Raquel Barreira from Polytechnic University of Setúbal (IPS), who will provide an overview of the advancements within the E³UDRES² work package dedicated to research. Barreira will also introduce the new Bank of Researchers, aimed at promoting greater participation among the audience.

The event will culminate in a panel discussion featuring all the speakers, moderated by Sara Gilissen. This interactive session will allow for an engaging exchange of ideas, with questions from both the host and the audience. The workshop promises to be an enriching experience, offering valuable insights and fostering a deeper connection between scientific endeavors and the communities they serve.

We look forward to welcoming. Don't miss this opportunity and [register now and join us in shaping the future of citizen science!](#)

[See the agenda on the next page](#)





Workshop on Citizen Science



UCLL Campus Diepenbeek, Belgium | online via zoom



October 2nd | 14:00 to 17:30 CEST

Agenda

- 14:00 - 14:05** Introduction
Sara Gilissen, UCLL
- 14:05 - 14:45** Advancing Citizen Science
Simona Cerrato, European Citizen Science Association
- 14:45 - 15:15** Exploring Citizen Science in Flanders
Annelies Duerinckx, Scivil - Cooperation Network for Citizen Science Flanders
- 15:15 - 15:45** 'Teek a break': Citizen Science Realities: Barriers, Lessons, and Successes from the Teek a Break Project
Käthe Robert, Universiteit Antwerpen
- 15:45 - 16:00** **BREAK**
- 16:00 - 16:25** 'Learning Bubbles': Citizen Science in Education: What if you are the subject of research? (Erasmus+: Learning Bubbles)
Karel Moons, UCLL
- 16:25 - 16:50** Inclusivity and Citizen Science
Elisabeth Cans, UCLL
- 16:50 - 17:00** E³UDRES²: Advancements in Research - Bank of Researchers
Raquel Barreira, IPS
- 17:00 - 17:25** Panel discussion: Speakers, Sara Gilissen (moderator)
- 17:25 - 17:30** **CLOSING AND CERTIFICATES**

| E³UDRES² EVENTS



10 – 12 DEC 24

Mark in Your Calenders! Hackaton 2024

Join us for the One Health Hackathon from December 10th to 12th, with the theme "One World, One Health, One Water." This event brings together diverse stakeholders to address health challenges through a multisectoral and transdisciplinary approach, recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. Participants from public health, business, food and agriculture, and environmental science will collaborate to tackle issues like water contamination and scarcity of potable water. Don't miss this opportunity to innovate and drive change for a healthier, more sustainable future!



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