PERARES Deliverable Report D7.1

Handbook of Models of Community Engagement Strategies in Higher Education Institutions: Policy and Curriculum Development

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1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This handbook draws on key learning from workpackage 7 in the Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society (PERARES) project.

The PERARES project aims to strengthen the interaction between researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and citizens in Europe. The project is made up of twenty-six partners from 17 countries. Partners include Science Shops, social organisations and higher education institutions (HEIs). The project actively involves researchers and CSOs, and explores how both CSOs and the general public can be supported to articulate research questions which can then be put on the research agendas of the partnering research bodies such as HEIs and Science Shops.

Science Shops are small organisations that carry out research, both theoretical and applied, in a wide range of disciplines – usually free of charge, on behalf of and with citizens and local civil society. They operate under various names such as Community Knowledge Exchange, Interchange, , Knowledge Co-Op. The fact that Science Shops respond to civil society's need for expertise and knowledge is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms. Science Shops are often, but not always, linked to universities, where students conduct the research as part of the curriculum. Science Shops can therefore fit within the education, research or engagement elements of HEI mission statements. This report focuses on policy and curriculum development issues within university based Science Shops.

Work Package 7 of the PERARES project has sought to strengthen the position of Science Shops and similar initiatives in Higher Education policy, by encouraging them to think from the start about how to embed the project within their HEI, in particular using policy and curriculum development to ensure longer term security. This report distils the learning from work within WP7. It examines the steps taken by long established Science Shops to ensure their project survives, including: Developing an exemplar project; Working with people who develop policy and strategy and ensuring that they can see the connections between their work and Science Shop work; Developing an elevator pitch; Developing a range of good publicity materials; Developing strong curriculum links and utilising good examples from other projects.

This report therefore offers tools for use by Science Shops to help them become embedded in policy, models for embedding Science Shop projects in the curriculum, and lessons learned from a process of sharing curriculum development tools across Science Shops in different contexts.

The experience of longstanding Science Shops suggests that policy work is vital to long term success. Embedding Science Shops in strategies for teaching and learning, research and/or engagement within HEIs takes time, knowledge and skill. The knowledge and skills can be learned and we hope that this handbook will go some way towards supporting this learning.

We would like to thank those people who took the time to share with us information about their work which provides the raw material for this report.

We would also like to gratefully acknowledge the hard work of all of the partners within workpackage 7 of the PERARES project who have contributed to this report. In particular Catherine Bates, Dublin Institute for Technology for sharing her work on the Dublin Institute of Technology Foundations in Community-Based Research Module pro-forma, Jozefien De Marrée, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Kenneth Burns, Catherine O'Mahony and Anna Kingston, University College Cork, and Hansje Eppink and Gerard Straver, Wageningen University, all offered valuable insights.

We hope this report will be of use to colleagues in new and emerging Science Shops in terms of thinking about their own possibilities for contributing to policy development in this field.

Methodology

Given the scope of the study, a range of methods were employed. Initially, a review of existing literature was carried out, examining lessons learned both from previous projects undertaken by the Living Knowledge Network[1] and by other related bodies. Early stage outputs from the PERARES project were also utilised, particularly the reports from fledgling Science Shops which were established with the support of the project.

A questionnaire was carried out to obtain an overview of how and where Science Shop-type initiatives were located within HEIs and whether they were written into policy within those institutions. The data was collected via an online survey tool. In total there were 31 responses from HE based science shops, including four Science Shops still in development. In addition, a template was created to gather information on policy development within HEIs and at a broader level within national governments. In total 14 templates were completed by HEI based community engagement initiatives, both by email and via telephone interviews.

Models of how Science Shops activities were embedded in the curriculum were also collated and evaluated. Embedding within the curriculum is one way to bring the work to the attention of policymakers, and to draw on relevant policies and amend them to include references to this work. There was a considerable cross fertilisation between this and the policy development work since tools being developed for policy intervention were also utilised within the curriculum development strand of the work and partners fed back on their experiences with this.

Building on this, good practices were shared at an operational level, with partners in the workpackage sharing and piloting models of curriculum intervention that had worked elsewhere. The sharing of good practices and tools was undertaken in two phases. First, all relevant documents, exercises, slides and manuals were shared with all PERARES members using DropBox, a cloud-based online file sharing service. Each partner evaluated the suitability of these good practice models for their contexts. At PERARES consortium meetings structured dialogue and exchanges led to the selection of pilots suitable to each context. In phase 2, partners implemented the pilots with the support of the partner institution where the good practice had originated. Appendix 1 provides an outline of the pilots undertaken by each partner in this work package. Figure 1 overleaf summarises the main tasks and outputs from the workpackage.

Further discussions took place, both formally and informally, with the wider Living Knowledge network where these ideas were discussed in more detail.

This handbook distils and summarises the learning from this work with a view to supporting existing new and emerging community engagement initiatives in developing strategy, policy and practice which may help to generate long term security for such initiatives.

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[1] Living Knowledge is the International Science Shop Network. It offers resources for people interested in building partnerships for public access to research. It gives members of the network an opportunity to exchange information, documentation, ideas, experiences and expertise on community-based research and science and society relations in general.
www.livingknowledge.org

Figure 1: PERARES project Workpackage 7 Methods and Processes

Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3

Literature Review from Previous EC Projects

Online questionnaire: policy and curriculum → Milestone 7.1

Policy information gathered via template → Milestone 7.2

Review of Science Shops in the curriculum → Milestone 7.3

Exchange of materials

Trialling of good practices → Summary Report on good practices

Deliverable 7.1: Handbook of models of community engagement strategies in HEIs

2   CONTEXT

**Science Shops and Community Engagement Strategies**
Where community engagement strategies exist within HEIs, they specify the ways in which the HEI will work with local business, community and government.   Information gathered for this workpackage suggested that many HEIs do not have such strategies. Therefore this handbook examines methods for writing community engaged (e.g. Science Shop) work into all three main missions within HEIs – research, learning and teaching, and engagement.   Longstanding Science Shops report that the model can contribute to all three missions. So in the UK for example, one Science Shop is strategically embedded in teaching and learning whilst another is embedded in public engagement policy. In the Netherlands one finds Science Shops embedded in any of the three missions..

Policy or strategy?
A **policy** is a plan or course of action intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters. Policy is important because it sets the overall direction of an institution; this is then translated into key targets and goals.   **Strategies** are created to implement policies and deal with the deployment of resources necessary to do so, whether human, financial or physical.

Sometimes policy is seen as academic and remote. In the experience of longstanding Science Shops, policy is created by people, and is continually evolving. It can therefore be influenced. The following flow chart suggests key players and stages in the creation of HEI strategies and policies.

Figure 2: Key Structures in HEIs for development of strategy and policy
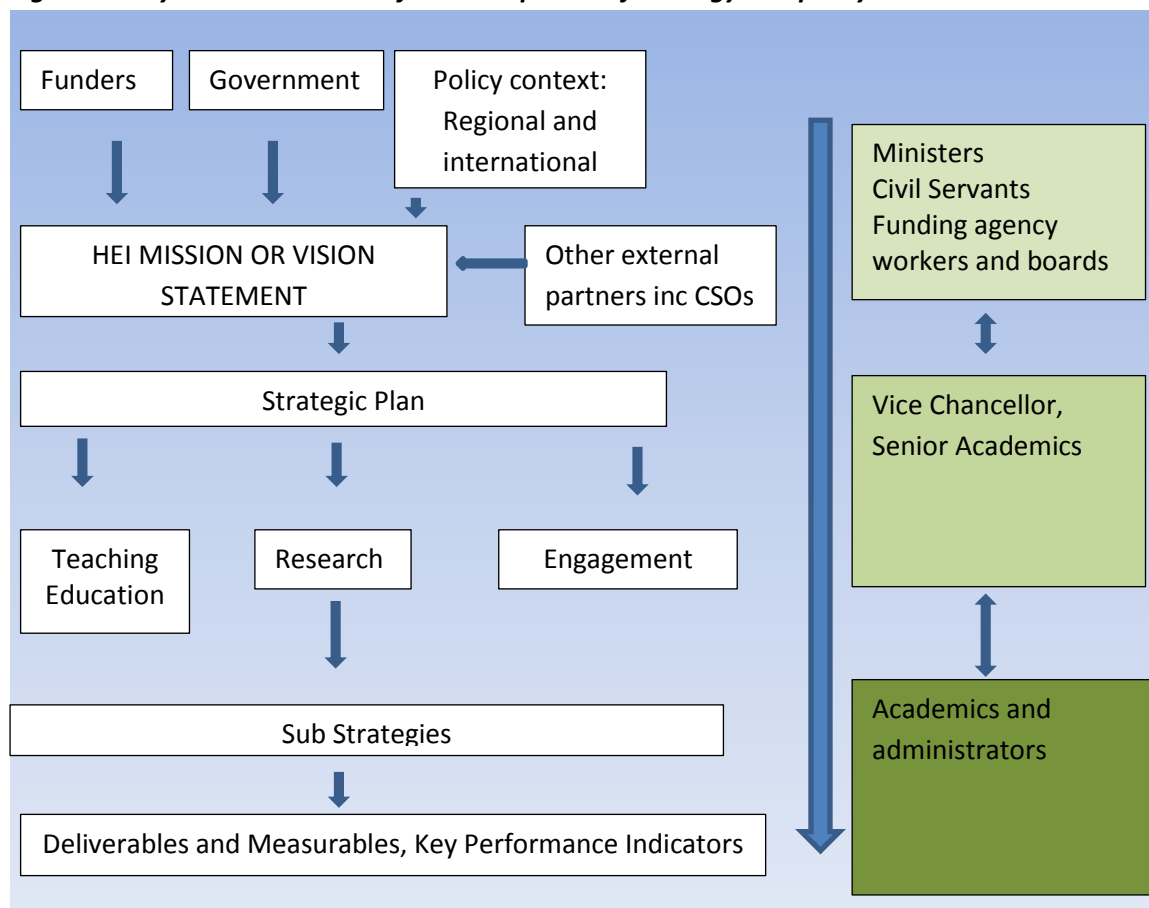
Policy to Support Community Engagement within HEIs

This section draws on information gathered from the questionnaires and policy templates described in the methodology.

All HEIs surveyed had strategic documents on a range of issues. At the highest level, there were mission statements and strategic plans which were set by the top level management of the HEI, sometimes in discussion with partners such as government, funders and business. From this flowed other strategies, such as the strategies for teaching and learning, for research and sometimes for engagement with business and society. These strategies created the key targets and goals that the HEI was setting for itself and normally included measurable outcomes. Beneath this, Science Shops were also written into the curriculum and into the plans of particular academic departments.

Longstanding Science Shops attributed their continuing success in part to the fact that their objectives were written into policy and strategy both within and outside their HEI, for example within broader policy frameworks such as local and national government policies. Where they were delivering on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the HEI, they contributed towards the overall success of the HEI. Successful Science Shops also worked directly with HEI funders and government where possible to ensure that external agencies were also encouraging the HEI to continue to support and embed this work.

> *"Our new manager wanted to cut our budget but our funder protected us because we had worked closely with them in the past" (Established Science Shop)*

> *"A Science Shop can't succeed without doing the policy work" (Established Science Shop)*

How Policy is Created

People make policies based on many things – often research evidence and information from a range of sources are used, but in the end, policies usually come from ideas that people have about how to make something better. The experience of Science Shops is that for an idea to be written into policy it must make sense to the person or team doing the writing and it must also deliver on bigger agendas within their organisation or within their country or region. So for example because Science Shops so specifically delivered on the European Commission's Science and Society workplans, and because Science Shop practitioners have taken time to find the points of shared interest with EC policymakers, they have been mentioned in specific policy documents within the EC. This support has been vital to support new Science Shops through projects such as PERARES and in creating a strategic context for Science Shops in many EC countries. National HEI policy is also a key driver.

> *"I lobbied all over the globe. It is important to have 'science shops' mentioned in all kinds of policy documents and talks by VIPs…We have (just one) inroad at the Ministry of Research... Through this contact we are also consulted on new draft work plans for EU work programmes. And our comments are also taken up in new versions of the draft!" (Established Science Shop)*

> *"Luckily someone in the Administration Department is pro-Science Shop and wants to help through giving advice" (Established Science Shop)*

Science Shops and Policy Development

Science Shops have found different ways to navigate policy and strategy development within their own HEI. Given that they are located across both academic and administrative structures in universities, the measurable outcomes from one Science Shop may be quite different from another. How they are reflected in HEI policy also varied. Some were viewed as public engagement with research initiatives, others as teaching and learning vehicles. Key to their work has been connecting with the people who either write or approve policies and strategies, helping them to understand how Science Shops can deliver on their targets.

Some Science Shops have also had success in leveraging policy developments within their HEI based on the external policy developments. So for example United Kingdom (UK) policy is strongly in favour of public engagement with research and enhancing the student experience and student employability skills. Science Shops in the UK have used these external policy drivers to demonstrate the value of the model within their own HEIs.

"Developing relationships with policymakers based on shared interests and goals is the best way to give your ideas a chance to become policy" (Community Based Researcher)

The following section offers a practical guide on how to connect with policy and policymakers and demonstrate the value of the Science Shop model to achieve policy goals.

Figure 3: Why HEI managers may be interested in the Science Shop model

- They see valuable learning experiences for students
- They see the value of Science Shop as 'public engagement with research' initiatives
- They see the value of Science Shops to civic engagement or to 'third mission'

3.0   A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO DEVELOPING POLICY AND STRATEGY

One of the goals of this workpackage is to develop a set of practical actions which can help Science Shop practitioners develop their own strategic context to enable community engaged project work. What follows is a distillation of good practice from existing Science Shops. It is designed for use by Science Shops who are seeking to embed their activities and it will be produced separately as a brief reference guide. It offers four steps in developing strategy to support community engagement in HEIs: Surveying the territory; building alliances; making your case; and being prepared for challenges. The key findings are summarised in Figure 4 overleaf and a PDF summary of this work is available at
http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/D7.1Practical-guide-to-developing-policy-and-strategy_FINAL_Nov-2013.pdf

Figure 4: Methods for developing strategy to support community engagement in HEIs

Steps	Methods	Concepts	Practical actions
Step 1: Survey territory	Literature Research	Strategic Plans. Education Strategy and policies. Research Strategy and policies. Funding Streams. Strategies of Key Funders.	Online.
	Background Research	Find people who know about policy in the HEI What are the interests of senior managers – research and personal? Relevant academic departments	Examine networks. Use Blogs, Twitter, CV, Research profiles. Use contacts in different academic departments.
Step 2: Build alliances	Networking	Identify like minded people For non-academic Science Shop co-ordinators, identify academic partners to supervise projects. Create national and international links	Practice your arguments Create an exemplar project (see Figure 5). Attend conferences, network. Use Living Knowledge website.
Step 3: Make your case	Lobbying	Inform	Send information to key decision makers.
		Involve	Ask decision makers to do something for you, or ask how your science shop can help them fulfil their objectives.
		Participate	Contact relevant staff to ensure you are on the mailing list for policy document being consulted on. Volunteer for policy working groups or strategic committees. Contribute info/words to key policy documents. Go to consultations and events and talk to people, formally and informally. Use your elevator pitch (see figure 6)
Step 4: Be prepared	Maintenance	Watching brief	Identify new policy coming up and existing policy due to be reviewed. Volunteer for committees/strategy groups.
		Maintain and build relationships	Informal meetings, send info, attend events.
		Maintain and build PR	Take photos, write up press releases using good practice examples – see Figure 7 Gather testimonials from students, staff and CSOs Evaluate qualitatively and quantitatively, have statistics and stories ready.

Step one: Survey the territory

Getting to know your HEI and the broader government policy context for the work of the Science Shop is the first part of successful policy development. How to go about this will vary from one HEI to another. Each HEI is unique. Some are very formal and it is difficult to break through layers of administration. Others are much more informal and it is easier to directly approach people in different areas. Desk research is a good starting point regardless of HEI structures.

Get to know the policy context in your HEI by doing desk and background research:
- Read key documents - strategic plans, research and teaching strategies for the HEI and for academic or administrative departments. *What are the key priorities the HEI/department is delivering on? Where can the Science Shop model best make a contribution? Who writes the strategic plan? What are the timescales for the next version? Where is the HEI/department having trouble delivering on the strategic plans?*
- Examine funding streams and what they are designed to deliver. *Can The Science Shop link to any existing funding streams? Is it able to deliver added value? Is it able to deliver on an area that is currently underachieving?*
- Talk to colleagues and friends who know the policy context – do you know anyone who is very good at policy influence? *Can they lobby on your behalf? Can you use them to practice your elevator pitch (see Figure 6)? Are there people outside the HEI who can break through the structures?*
- Get to know the agenda of your Rector/VC/Dean/Head of School – you may want to focus first on the person you have most access to, but it is worth knowing about the others as well. *Read their documents, look at their research interests, read their biographies, Google them and see what comes up. Are they on social media? Follow them. Do they have a blog? Can you see any points of connection to what The Science Shop is doing? Be prepared for a time when you may meet them unexpectedly.*
- Get to know the formal and informal agendas in relevant academic departments. *Which are more linked to CSO agendas? Where do they have trouble getting experience for students? Where are the opportunities in the curriculum? Check formal requirements for academic skills for students/graduates and see how science shop projects can support these.*
- Look out for other documents that may be useful – anything that comes across your desk, think about it through the frame of Science Shop – academic quality assurance documents may help, as may academic council reports or minutes.
- Watch out for opportunities and threats - who will support or work against Science Shop agendas? *Keep a general watch on what is happening in the university, use contacts to keep in touch with who is working on what.*

"My colleague can talk to anyone. He spotted our Vice Chancellor on the train and decided to go and tell him all about Science Shops. He has a really persuasive way with him and was able to do this, I never could!" (New Science Shop)

Step two: Build alliances

Find the people who are likely to be supportive of the work you are doing. Some may support you on a personal or collegial basis. Others may be supportive of the transformative effect of the work on students or on CSOs.

- Analyse your social and professional networks to see where there are people who might support the Science Shop. Look across the academic structures.
- Practice your arguments. Talk to colleagues and friends about why you are committed to the Science Shop. See what connects with people. See what they want to know and whether they have any problems with the concept. If necessary, identify training to help you with this.
- Create an exemplar project (see Figure 5 below).
- Make use of tools developed within international networks – they can lend credibility to your arguments. http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/science-shops/toolbox
- Attend national and international conferences and events and build links with other Science Shops in your region and internationally – for example the biannual Living Knowledge Conference. Often your senior managers will be persuaded by what is working successfully in other HEIs, particularly those they regard as competitors or leaders.
- Identify venues and opportunities to talk to policy makers about what the Science Shop can do for them – inside and outside the HEI.
- Talk to people at all levels - sometimes junior people within a HEI can influence policy agendas and are easier to reach than senior people.
- For academics – your head of department or head of research or teaching group may be your route to senior management. Get to know how the Science Shop might fit their interests. Make them your advocate or champion if possible.
- Find venues in the HEI where people connect across faculties and the hierarchy, formally or informally. For example, learning and teaching or research seminars, or the university gym, crèche, dining facilities, etc. Where do people go to connect with others?
- Develop relationships with policymakers – once you've found what they're interested in and their key targets and deliverables, find ways to connect them to the Science Shop agendas.

"If you aren't good at communicating why your project is important then you need to learn. Train, practice, research, watch people who are good communicators and learn from them"
(New Science Shop)

"One professor realised that the project was carried out in the village where she was from, and something started to click" (Established Science Shop)

Figure 5: Creating an exemplar project

- For academics, look for a manageable research topic, ideally within your own academic area
- For administrators, identify an academic supervisor who is supportive of the Science Shop concept and has a flexible approach
- Pick a topic that will provoke interest within your HEI – either because of the subject area or because it targets a geographic or other area of strategic importance
- Find a good student who is likely to produce a strong result and who is likely to speak positively about the learning from the project
- Work with an organisation which understands that this is a pilot project and is enthusiastic about the concept as well as the output – someone who will speak positively about the idea even if outcomes aren't perfect
- Take plenty of photos or video footage and get permission to use them publicly

Step Three: Make your case

Once you get to know the agendas of your senior managers, the next step is to start to lobby them. There are softer and harder lobbying techniques and not all will be appropriate in every context, so choose what is most likely to work within your HEI and what works best for your skill set. The first goal is to make sure that policy makers know what you do, the second step is to try to involve them (even in an honorary capacity) and the third goal is to get them to participate.

> *"We don't really lobby, but we do go to places where we know people with influence will be and we make presentations and talk to them afterwards"*
> *(Community Engagement Initiative)*

Inform by:
- Inviting people to your events, sending them information and keeping them in touch with what you are doing. Get in touch with their secretary and see if you can get time held in their diary to attend your event.
- Using internal communication routes, magazines, staff newsletters etc to make sure your work is known within the HEI.
- Getting public profile for successful projects – use your press office or build links with local press. Take photographs and get consent to use them publicly. Make videos if possible.
- Using social media – website, Twitter, Facebook - and linking to the people you are seeking to influence.
- Developing a website to highlight your work.

See figure 7 for examples of websites, leaflets and videos from existing Science Shops

Involve by:

- Giving senior managers an honorary role, for example in an advisory board or a student awards panel.
- Taking photos and videos which include senior managers (with their consent to use them for publicity).

Participate by:

- Contacting relevant staff to make sure you are on the mailing list for policy consultations.
- Reading draft policy documents and commenting on them, adding in specific words where possible. Small and specific changes are often easier to implement than big changes.
- Ensuring that any targets you add to documents are deliverable by you personally or by trusted partners – at this level, success is vital.
- Going to policy consultations and telling policy makers why and how the Science Shop delivers on their agendas. Asking them directly to write it in, giving them direct words where possible to make it easier for them.
- Volunteering or getting nominated for policy working groups, strategic committees, boards, advisory groups etc where possible to help build connections.
- Going to places where policy makers will be and talking to them.
- Watching out for opportunities for informal discussion – using people you know to help.
- Keeping a watching brief on what is coming in the future – for example EC policy.

"I commented on an educational philosophy paper for the HEI, suggesting adding in the words 'and community' where business was mentioned. [The policymaker] was really grateful because I was the only person who had commented at all…now community is written right through our Educational Philosophy" (New Science Shop)

"I'm well connected, better than a lot of people more senior than me. I sit on committees and on strategy groups and it means I get talking to a lot of people and they know me….often I can move things on a bit" (Senior Manager)

"Just try it – I was told at the start that these colleagues would not be interested in the Science Shop but they were!" (New Science Shop)

Figure 6: Developing your elevator pitch

It is important to have a strong elevator pitch ready for the times when you unexpectedly meet a policy or decision-maker. For example, if you meet a Pro-Vice Chancellor over lunch or your Head of College in a lift, and you get an opportunity to pitch your Science Shop, what do you say to them? A pre-prepared 'elevator pitch' (so called as it is meant to be delivered in the time it takes you to take an elevator ride) is a 30 second - 2 minute piece that could outline:

- The name of the initiative (a snappy name is useful), your name and role, a short summary of your goals and activities, key achievements. If possible, identify an issue currently concerning senior management in the HEI. Draw clear links between your work and the strategic needs of your School/College/University. Ensure they know how to contact you for further information.
- The key point is to emphasise the "so what?" element: our initiative, if supported, can help you/the School/College/University meet its goals/deliverables/tasks/key performance indicators (KPIs) in the area of University/National policy, strategic plans, etc. in the following way(s)…

To deliver an 'elevator pitch' effectively, experience suggests that there is a need for academic staff in particular - who may be discipline, teaching or research-focused - to become knowledgeable about the bureaucracy of their HEI, the names and roles of key policymakers, the specifics of School/College/University strategic plans and KPIs, and relevant county or national education/research policies which can be linked to a rationale for CBR activities. For some, this may involve an uncomfortable closeness with the language of new-managerialism; however, it is possible to translate the unrelated language of HEI 'business' into more appropriate language to describe civic engagement activities such as CBR.

Step Four: Prepare to Mobilise

Almost every longstanding Science Shop has experience of having someone in a position of authority who does not understand what they do or support what they do. Many have also faced budget or staffing cuts due to changing priorities or overall reductions in HEI funding. Successful Science Shops have understood the need to keep engaging with people at a broad level across their HEI so that they have strong support if a threat emerges. Some have also successfully shifted the focus of what they do whilst keeping the main goals of the work the same. It is important to work with every new manager and find a way to connect, mobilising other supporters where necessary. It is vital to anticipate this threat and be prepared!

Prepare by:

- Understanding that policy and strategies continually move on. Many successful Science Shops have reinvented themselves where necessary.
- Ensuring that The Science Shop is written into as many different policy areas and strategic aims as possible. This means it can continue to exist even if one area loses priority.
- Continuing to maintain a listening ear and build relationships. You may rely on these relationships if a threat emerges.
- Continuing to use PR mechanisms to ensure there is an information flow on successful projects and to keep the project in the public eye and visible. Invisible projects are much easier to cut. See Figure 5 overleaf for examples on how other Science Shops do this.
- Continue to work with international colleagues to help develop new ideas and for mutual support

"One needs to talk to every new person in power and make the case for a Science Shop again"
(Established Science Shop)

"We got a new manager who is less interested in Science Shops and now I need to mobilise all positive forces with me"
(Established Science Shop)

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested a range of practical actions to help new and emerging Science Shops examine the policy context within their HEI and understand how they can influence it. More than anything, being aware and prepared is vital. It is important to both create and seize opportunities and to have the arguments ready ahead of time.

The next section offers a specific focus on embedding Science Shops within the curriculum of HEIs as a way of connecting with policy makers, particularly those interested in students and learning but also those interested in supporting early stage researchers. Becoming embedded in the curriculum has been a key route to sustainability for many longstanding Science Shops and the policy lessons above also apply to developing curriculum spaces where Science Shop projects can flourish. Demonstrating the value of the model for student learning and skills development is one of the most obvious ways in which Science Shops deliver and demonstrate their value for HEI policy makers.

Figure 7: Examples of Publicity Materials and Engagement Activities

Leaflets and newsletters
Queen's University Belfast Science Shop
http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/ScienceShop/FileStore/Filetoupload,259705,en.pdf
DIT Students Learning With Communities leaflet
http://www.dit.ie/ace/studentslearningwithcommunities/imastudentwheredoistart/
Vrije Universiteit Brussel Newsletter
http://www.wetenschapswinkel.be/Nieuwsflash/nieuwsflash_11.html

Module
University College Cork Community Academic Research Links
http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/module/
http://www.asph.org/UserFiles/Module4.pdf
http://individual.utoronto.ca/sadaf/resources/cbpr2007.pdf

Photographs
University College Cork Community Academic Research Links
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/s3w6b68zffsf5eg/W3jd5iO3By

Publications
Wageningen Science Shop - publications
http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/science-shop/Publications-and-reports.htm
Vrije Universiteit Brussel Science Shop
http://www.vub.ac.be/wetenschapswinkel/publicaties/thesisonderzoeken.htm
DIT Students Learning With Communities – newsletters.
http://www.dit.ie/ace/slwc/wherecanireadmoreaboutstudentslearningwithcommunities/

Social Media - Twitter
Living Knowledge Network, Europe @scienceshops
National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, UK @nccpe
London School of Economics Impact Blog, UK @lseimpactblog
Community University Engagement Project, UK @cuppbrighton
Simon Fraser University Engagement, Canada @sfuengage
Pascal Observatory @pascalobservatory
UNESCO Chair for CBR and Social Responsibility in Higher Education @buddhall
Community Campus Partnership for health, USA @CCPH2010

Videos
Queen's University Belfast Science Shop
www.qub.ac.uk/scisho
http://www.youtube.com/user/qubsshop?feature=watch
Dublin Institute for Technology's Students Learning With Communities
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8saFZ15QE9E
Vrije Universiteit Brussel Science Shop
http://www.vub.ac.be/wetenschapswinkel/
University College Cork, Ireland, Community Academic Research Links
http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/

4.0   EMBEDDING SCIENCE SHOP IN THE CURRICULUM

Two of the major tasks of workpackage 7 in the PERARES project were to provide information to help advance the embedding of Science Shop type initiatives at a strategic level within HEIs and to advance the uptake of the research needs of CSOs within academic curricula. University based Science Shops rely on students to deliver research projects through the curriculum on behalf of CSOs. This workpackage reaffirms the work undertaken in previous EU Commission funded projects, particularly the Sixth Framework Programme, *Training and Mentoring of Science Shops (TRAMS)* project and the InterActs (Improving interaction between NGOs, science shops and universities: experiences and expectations) project undertaken under the Fifth Framework Programme. This section gives examples where Science Shops have been embedded in the curriculum and also offers good practice lessons from the sharing of tools and good practices.

Figure 8: Embedding Science Shop projects in the curricula: Strengths and weaknesses

Activity	Strength	Weakness/Challenge
Msc/Bsc thesis	• All MSc programmes include an academic thesis research period • Supervision time is standard for dissertations	• Individual work, which means that the students gains fewer competencies in comparison with group work • Results depends on quality of student
Disciplinary group work	• Individual students can gain interest in the Science Shop and can return for their thesis • Groupwork can give students extra competencies • Working in a team students bring their own frame of references which can benefit the end result • Supervision time is standard in pre-existing courses	• The group process can influence the end result negatively. • The organisation is time consuming in comparison to a MSc thesis
Multi-Disciplinary group work	• Individual students can gain interest in the Science Shop and can return to the Science Shop for a topic for their MSc./Bsc. Thesis • Working in a multi-disciplinary team can result in more realistic solutions since challenges faced in society are not single discipline • Students gain expertise of working in multidisciplinary teams, similar to future working environment	• The group process can influence the end result negatively • The process becomes more challenging and needs more support • The organisation is time consuming in comparison to a MSc thesis
Setting up a Science Shop course	• Individual students can gain interest in the Science Shop and can return for their thesis • The students can work on similar (CSO gets a lot of input) and different cases (Many CSOs can gain support).	• Adding a new, compulsory course to the curricula means that something else needs to be removed. This can be challenging to achieve. • Time consuming for Science Shop staff

Science Shop Processes within the Curriculum

Methods for embedding Science Shop in the curriculum include: Incorporating Science Shop projects in existing courses; Using a Science Shop project as the subject of a thesis (BSc, MSc and PhD;) and creating a module specifically for Science Shop projects. Figure 8 offers a range of options for how Science Shops have been embedded in the curriculum in different HEIs, together with the strengths and weaknesses of each method.

Classically, Science Shops have worked with individual students undertaking either MSc or BSc dissertations or theses across all academic areas. Student dissertations get academic supervision time as a standard part of teaching and often require a significant investment of time by students, so there is an opportunity for the research to be useful for organisations. However the fact that the work is undertaken by an individual means that the quality of the output depends on the quality of the student themselves and the quality and commitment of their supervision.

Disciplinary group work is becoming more common as a vehicle for Science Shop projects, where students from one academic department work in groups on Science Shop questions. This has the advantage of bringing several minds to the question and there can be fruitful interactions between different students. However working in groups can also be challenging for students and this can negatively affect the outcome for the organisation.

Multi-disciplinary group work is less common, but offers the benefits of students bringing different disciplinary backgrounds to a research question, which can strengthen the end results. This process can also be challenging which carries time implications for both academics and science shop employees.

Finally in some cases, Science Shop courses have been set up, particularly in more established Science Shops in the Netherlands. The benefit here is that the course is set up in a way that means the outcomes for CSOs are a major part of the course. However adding new courses to the curriculum is very time consuming for Science Shop employees. A compulsory course may be difficult to integrate in curricula; adding it as an 'optional course' may be a first step.

Figure 9 overleaf gives examples of how Science Shop courses have been set up in the curriculum. In Groningen University, there is an optional Science Shop course where students undertake a Science Shop project, whilst examples given from Wageningen University, Queen's University Belfast and Dublin Institute for Technology demonstrate incorporating Science Shop projects into existing courses.

Figure 9: Examples of Science Shop courses in the curriculum

> **Setting up a Science Shop course at** *Groningen University, The Netherlands*
>
> The course is an optional course for final year BSc students or MSc students. The amount of credits awarded is 5 or more ECTS. These credits count in the "Free space" that every student has (depending on their discipline they have from 10-30 credits to obtain at their own choice during their studies). (ECTS = European Credit Transfer and accumulation System. 1 ECTS = 28 hours study)
>
> **Incorporating Science Shop projects in existing courses**
>
> *Academic Consultancy Training at Wageningen University, The Netherlands*
> The Academic Consultancy Training (ACT) is an MSc level course (9 ECTS) within Wageningen University in which most masters' programmes participate. In the context of ACT, teams consisting of students from different masters' programmes execute assignments, commissioned by external professional organisations. A few of these assignments are Wageningen UR Science Shop projects.
>
> *Business Analysis Module at Queen's University Belfast, Ireland*
> Science Shop, Queen's University Belfast works with undergraduate Management students on a Business Analysis module. The Module is compulsory for students on the BSc Business Management and BSc Business Information Technology degree programmes. Unless students have strong researcher ideas themselves, they must choose a Science Shop project. Students work in groups where they carry out research to address specific business concerns in CSOs. The module is worth 30 CATS points (Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme. 1 CATS = 10 hours study).
>
> *CBL as an alternative to industrial work placement, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland*
> Since 2008, in Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) several programmes have turned to CBL as an alternative to industrial work placement and they are very motivated to design more CBL placements. Their experience is that the CBL projects are often more effective than a traditional work placement module, giving students a particular project to work on rather than being limited to photocopying and observation of the workplace. CBL integrates working towards community goals with the enrichment of learning experiences. CBL adds value for the community partner and the students involved. It gives students work placements which are not always easy to find in times of economic downturn and it prepares students for a future as active citizens. For further details see
> http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/alternatives-to-industrial-work-placement_hemp-23-5kg9p3j5300v

Science Shop Processes within the Curriculum

Figure 10 gives a general outline of the process of how Science Shops work within the curriculum. This may vary both within different HEIs and within different academic courses and subject areas however the broad principles are the same in most cases.

The first phase is developing research projects with CSOs. There are generally three criteria for accepting a research request **–** the research is possible on the topic, the results can be made public, and the CSO is not able to finance or perform the research project themselves.

Phase Two (which can run alongside phase one) is where the research request is reformulated in such a way as to meet the needs of the organisation whilst also meeting the requirements of the

curriculum and the learning needs of the student(s). This can involve discussion between the CSO, Science Shop employee and sometimes the potential academic supervisor or student. There are a range of methods for attracting students to projects some of which are identified in figure 7 previously. They include advertising on the university or Science Shop website, distributing posters and flyers, giving short presentations at relevant courses and speaking to academics and supervisors to convince them of the value of the work. It also includes identifying relevant courses where Science Shop projects may fit within pre-existing structures.

Figure 10: Science Shop Processes Within the Curriculum

Community group poses research question(s)

Identification of student(s) and supervisor(s)

Clarify, negotiate and reformulate research

Meeting between CSO, student(s) & researcher, staff Science Shop and sometimes other stakeholders

Additional research considerations: Practical and Ethical

Research undertaken by student(s);

Send report to CSO - make recommendations and discuss with CSO how to implement findings

Write summary research report for CSO in accessible language

Submit thesis for marking. Report may be placed on Sc. Shop website

Consider publication options: article in newspaper, journal, website, book chapter, conference paper, presentation, etc.

Phase 1 Identification of research questions

Phase 2 Pre-planning: Clarify research questions/ evaluate feasibility/ map concrete needs

Phase 3 Science Shop project management: plan project, formal acceptance of project by all parties, sign research agreement

Phase 4 Follow-up, dissemination and publications

Working through the curriculum is the preferred option, although for some Science Shops it may not be possible to integrate Science Shop projects in the curricula of their HEI, particularly in early or pilot phases. Those Science Shops may choose work with students on a voluntary basis. Many experienced Science Shops prefer to work through the curriculum however since it enables a level of academic input and often yields better results for CSOs.

> *"Our experience with this [student volunteering] has been largely negative, in that students who do not have a commitment through the curriculum to carry out the work almost always give up before the project is completed" (Established Science Shop)*

Phase Three is the management of the process, where Science Shop staff mediate between the CSO, researcher and student, filling in any gaps. Agreements may be signed detailing the work to be undertaken alongside timescale, ownership issues and resource issues. In some cases groups of students may work on projects and these groups may be inter- or trans-disciplinary which requires more support from the Science Shop. Such groups may yield better results for CSOs but the process is more challenging for both Science Shop employees and academic staff, who often have concerns about how such courses fit within the curriculum and how the work can best be assessed.

In **Phase Four** the research results are submitted for academic marking and are returned to the CSO where they may be evaluated, disseminated and published depending on what is agreed. Some Science Shops support the CSOs in helping them to decide on the first steps to take to implement findings. Research results may also be made public by publishing them on the Science Shop website, organising a public event and/or articles in newspapers, journals, conference papers etc.

Student Learning Outcomes
Focusing on student learning outcomes can also encourage HEIs to support Science Shops. The current economic downturn in Europe is causing higher unemployment rates, cuts in working hours for employees and closure of businesses. This has led to a decline in the number of work placement opportunities for students. The Dublin descriptors, designed to improve transparency with regard to qualifications in Europe, provides a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral level. At all these three levels, the ability to communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences is a prerequisite for achieving a degree. Therefore, at many HEIs a work placement is mandatory or strongly recommended for the students. Science Shops can benefit from this drive, since they are firmly rooted in their social context and have strong contacts with CSOs. In their collaborative research projects they can add value to the curricula of HEIs. They can offer students real, demand driven and participatory cases to work on which can have all the benefits of work placement type experiences.

The nature of the relationship between students and CSOs depends on the nature of the research. Some students work closely with the CSO, others are able to work independently. When student work within the CSO, this can impact on other aspects outside the scope of the research. Besides this mostly positive impact for the CSO, the student learns more about practical work and how to communicate knowledge to professionals. Science Shops find that students can gain access to a

broader network, as well as having the opportunity to present their research results to a broader public and being more motivated, since the research results are often directly used by the CSO.

Sharing Tools and Good Practices in Curriculum Development

A further element of this workpackage has been examining how workpackage members have been trying to improve Science Shop practice in their own HEIs. Models of good practice were shared amongst members who then selected examples from other Science Shops to try out in their own context. Figure 11 below shows the good practices selected and implemented by each partner.

Figure 11: Overview of Good Practice Pilots

Dublin Institute for Technology Ireland	1. Creation of community-based research process map and implementation, drawing on good practice from UCC. 2. Research agreement form and public dissemination of research reports, drawing on good practices from UCC. 3. Careers service pilot to recruit students to community-based research projects, drawing on good practice from VUB.
University College Cork, Ireland	1. Development of a 5-credit Community-Based Research module, drawing upon good practices from partners in the wider *PERARES* community - University of Lyon, Queens University Belfast, University of Groningen and Dublin Institute of Technology. 2. Building of long-term community-based research relationships with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), drawing on good practices from Queens University Belfast (QUB). 3. The establishment and operationalization of a community-based research advisory board, building upon the work of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). 4. The creation and trialling of a community-based research process map, drawing on the work of the University of Groningen. 5. Embedding of community-based research into School, College and University's strategic plans.
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium	1. Integration of community-based research module materials into the curricula, drawing on good practices from Wageningen University, ACT (Academic Consultancy Training) and Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). 2. Enhancing links between the Careers Service and the Science Shop, drawing on good practices from Queens University Belfast (QUB).
University of Stavanger, Norway	1. Development of the Research Marketplace, drawing on good practices from PERARES partners, especially RUG and VUB. 2. Building of long-term community-based research relationships with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), drawing on good practices from Queens University Belfast (QUB). 3. Enhancing student recruitment for community-based research, drawing on good practices from University College Cork (UCC)

More details of the tools and experiences outlined above will be available in a report on the Living Knowledge website.

The sharing of tools and good practices can help establish a new community-based research initiative and also [re]invigorate existing community-based research initiatives to enhance their engagement work with communities. It enables an efficient use of public funds and resources, since new Science Shops do not have to continuously re-invent the community-based research process and tools but can learn from existing good practices on an international level.

While there is an ever growing 'toolbox' of community-based research resources available (see, for example, www.LivingKnowledge.org), each initiative must make sense of the process for themselves by taking into account the culture, policy, resource and staffing context in each geographical area. There is still a considerable labour involved in adapting documents and processes to a new geographical context and that rigid or inflexible systems may mean a successful tool or mechanism from one geographical area will not successfully transfer to another. The key learning from the process is summarised below in terms of facilitators of curriculum development and issues to consider in implementing curriculum changes. In addition, the policy and strategy development tools discussed earlier in this report were utilised in this element of the work, so learning from this is also reflected since workpackage members sought to influence key decision makers within their HEIs in terms of encouraging participation in pilot projects. Figure 11 below summarises good practices trialled. For more detailed information and evaluation of these pilots, see..

Facilitators of curriculum development

"Supported by partner materials I also felt more self confident and better prepared to launch new ideas and collaborations" *(New Science Shop)*

- Existing documents/templates and practice examples can help new community-based research initiatives to set up, especially when resources are scarce, and can also [re]invigorate established initiatives. These resources should be clearly written and relatively short.
- Access to people who have experience of developing and trialling these tools is *as* important as the written documents, to discuss, for example, the nuances of implementation, the facilitators and barriers to implementation, and to make sense of the cultural context in which the practice developed.
- Relationship building within your institution is critical to helping to support curriculum development. Ensuring that relevant committees understand what you're trying to achieve with your curriculum interventions is vital in implementing curriculum based engagement practices.
- Community-based research initiatives that can recruit a mix of academic staff, administrators, students and policy-makers will benefit from the skills and knowledge mix of these participants as well as access to their networks. Furthermore, such a diverse mix of

people will facilitate work to be undertaken at a number of "levels" within the Higher Education Institution to embed and support civic engagement within the curriculum.

- Relationship building between community-based research initiatives within and between countries is as important for the embedding of good practices in curriculum development as the sharing of tools and practices.

- A clear, transparent community-based research process can inspire confidence in those who you are trying to influence (e.g. academic supervisors), and those more familiar with this work can see the evolution of the materials over time through feedback and revision, demonstrating the coordinators' commitment to constantly improving the services they provide. A one-page diagrammatical representation of this process, has been shown in this work package to be a useful visual tool to convey the community-based research process to students, academics and policy makers, and as a planning tool for the development of the CBR curriculum.

- Developing policy 'literacy': Linking curriculum interventions to national and local HEI policies were critical to this work. The linking of these good practices with national and local engagement policies – utilising the policy intervention tools discussed earlier - proved to be a successful catalyst for policy change. 'Translating' front-line engagement practices on academic courses into key performance indicators (KPIs) and policy objectives can assist managers and decision-makers to further support this work.

- Leveraging a key debate: What are Universities for? Asking this question has been central to garnering support to trial and sustain curriculum intervention pilots.

Issues for the successful implementation of good practices for curriculum intervention

In some cases, the process of designing curriculum interventions was challenging. It can be difficult to ensure that the intervention meets the needs of all partners and that the values of the partners are shared.   It is important to acknowledge these challenges when working at a policy and curriculum development level, and to attempt to work around them. The following are issues which were raised when implementing curriculum interventions:

- The values of community engagement and community-based research are not universally prioritised in Higher Education Institutions that are focused on other 'higher level' objectives such as research funding, student retention, developing income-generating initiatives and the research needs of business and governments. The successful embedding of engagement practices requires science shop coordinators to garner support at all levels in your HEI: course team, department, school, college, senior management and committees. Partners involved in the pilot successfully used the policy development tools to support this element of the work.

- Notwithstanding the proven success of a tool or good practice in another country, rigid organizational structures and certain 'views' of higher managers and systems can impede the successful adoption and/or 'translation' of the tool/good practice. On the positive side, there is still a good degree of autonomy at programme level and it is possible to develop relationships and work creatively with programme level champions.

- Getting a programme level champion, university-wide champion, and a favourable resource and policy context, all at the same time, can be challenging. The successful embedding of engagement practices throughout a HEI requires one to work at all of

these levels. The adoption of good practices from other HEIs can help a science shop to demonstrate the success of their work and/or offer tools to address some of these domains.

- The economic context matters (a lot). During the trialling of these good practices, a lot of the Higher Education Institutions' energies were taken up with dealing with the impact of the global financial crisis on HEI budgets. This meant that the energies and resources of key managers were diverted and Higher Education Institutions were less facilitative of initiatives that did not generate their own incomes. Times of crises and uncertainty can also create positive opportunities for change: it is still possible to be creative by working on submissions to strategic plans processes, organising public lectures on community-based research, networking, and working on making each community-based research initiative as good as it can be, making a contribution to communities and highlighting the impact the initiative is having on the lives of community and voluntary groups, as well as participating students and academic supervisors.

- The distance of front-line academic teaching staff from key policy-makers and budget holders in large Higher Education Institutions can be a barrier to the expansion of community-based research initiatives located in Schools. However, the successful deployment of good practice examples - such as the ones outlined in the reports – can raise the profile beyond one's School.

5   CONCLUSIONS

If HEIs and research institutes are to truly respond to the research agendas of CSOs, Science Shop need to be more than small marginal enterprises within HEIs. They need to be embedded within the HEI and to have access to a range of supports and mechanisms to disseminate research requests and have them responded to.

The experience of longstanding Science Shops is that embedding a new initiative in policy and successfully developing the curriculum to enable the work to flourish takes time, energy and focus. Developing example projects is important but it is vital to create a policy environment for the work by widening the circle of people within the HEI and beyond it, who are invested in the success of the project.   Building relationships is at the heart of this process.   Practitioners need to establish themselves as credible and passionate, while accommodating the needs and priorities of those they work with.

For many people this means moving outside of their comfort zone. It means taking risks and doing things differently from how they have done them before. It means developing a broader knowledge about their HEI, which should benefit them in other ways.

> *"It is not easy to play chess simultaneously on different boards. Many Science Shops are understaffed and ….do not know how to give more priority to their strategic development within international, national, regional or university policies" (Established Science Shop)*

> *"Getting a copy of a proposed policy within your HEI or funder and suggesting a few changes can make a big difference to the survival of a CBR project." (Established Science Shop)*

However this also offers exciting opportunities to connect the work to other people and to ensure that the value is acknowledged by other people. Policy work and creating a strategic context for Science Shops to flourish are opportunities to be seized, not jobs to be dreaded. Small things can make a big difference. Experience from longstanding Science Shops suggests that this work can assure the success of a Science Shop or protect it in times of danger.

> *"We started out in the educational office, then moved to our research office. We're now in student support.   Our targets have varied from number of subjects, to number of community groups to numbers of students we work with. The context changes but the core work stays the same." (Established Science Shop)*

Through Science Shops, the *combination* of research, teaching and learning and outreach can be embedded in the curriculum and higher education policy.

Appendix 1: **Dublin Institute of Technology Foundations in Community-Based Research module Module pro-forma**

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Contents:

1. Validated module descriptor – p.1.

2. Key elements of module – p.3

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4. Additional key readings – p.7

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6. Rationale behind key elements, recommendations and proposed structure – based on experiences in iteration 1 and 2 – p.9.

7. Contributors – p.12

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Validated module descriptor written by Catherine Bates, Elena Gamble, Edward Brennan, Brian O'Neill and John Donovan.

1. The validated module descriptor is as follows:

> **Module Aim:** The aim of this module is to give students a solid grounding in the principles and practice of community-based research (CBR), including the opportunity to carry out a small CBR project, and to evaluate and reflect on their work.

> **Learning Outcomes:** On completion of this module, the learner will be able to:
>
> - demonstrate an understanding of the historical and theoretical context, and key principles, of action/participatory/community-based research
>
> - demonstrate an understanding of the current social structures from which NGOs/community groups in disadvantaged areas have emerged and in which they exist
>
> - identify current patterns of challenges and opportunities facing a range of NGOs/community groups
>
> - critically analyse the current challenges and opportunities facing one NGO/community group of their choice
>
> - evaluate a range of CBR methodologies

-   negotiate with an NGO/community group of their choice an agreed design and structure for a small CBR project

-   complete a small CBR research project

-   demonstrate their ability to critically appraise their learning experience

Learning and Teaching Methods:

-   Class-based seminars, including input from visiting representatives from NGOs and community groups. There may also be site visits to NGOs/community groups

-   Tutor-led group reflection sessions

-   Self-directed site-based research and project work

-   Web-based resources will facilitate independent research, including on-line reflective logs

-   Supervision/feedback at all stages of design, execution, evaluation and final presentations of site-based CBR projects

-   Community feedback on oral/written presentations

Module Content:

-   Theories of CBR, action research, participatory research

-   Methodologies for CBR, action research, participatory research

-   Irish sociological context

-   Case studies – NGOs/community groups in Ireland

-   Theory and tools for reflective practice

Module Assessment:

100% continuous assessment

Assessment may take a variety of forms, individual or group-based, including:

1. Reflective appraisal of learning from this module.

2. Verbal/written/audio/visual presentation of research outcomes to NGOs/community groups in usable form, as well as submission of written version

for assessment.

Examples of specific research project outcomes may include: a needs analysis with recommendations for future action; evaluation of a recent/current programme being run by the organisation; collection and/or analysis of primary data for the organisation; development of business or public relations plan for the organisation (possibly including funding and partnership opportunities).

Essential Reading:
Kerry J. Strand, Nicholas Cutforth, Randy Stoecker, Sam Marullo, Patrick Donohue (2003) *Community-Based Research and Higher Education: Principles and Practices*, Jossey-Bass. Chapters 1-5 and 10.

Recommended Reading:

Living Knowledge: International Journal of Community Based Research.
http://www.scienceshops.org/new%20web-content/content/reports-journal.html

Reason, Peter and Bradbury, Hilary (2008) *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: participative inquiry and practice*, Sage, London.

Supplemental Reading:

Web References, Journals and Other:

www.cbrnet.org

www.scienceshops.org

2. Key elements of module.

Following 3 iterations of this module as an elective module on the MA in Public Relations in DIT, and reviews with students, staff and participating community partners in 2011/12 and 2012/13, we propose the following ideal components for such a module (which we will implement in 2013/14 and subsequently review):

1. **Theory of CBR – context, approaches, philosophy of co-creation of knowledge.** Taught content and interactive exercises (such as case studies).

2. **Sociological theory, focusing on reflective practice, and on concepts of power, domination and inequality (in society, and in research – students to understand the links between both).** Students should be given a theoretical framework (such as Pierre Bourdieu, with a key paper on reflection being 'Participant Objectivation') which will encourage them to understand social constructionism, the social construction of power, domination and inequality, and also the role of reflection and the importance of it to their own practice as researchers, allowing them to relate this to the philosophy of CBR.

3. **Introduction to, and collaboration with, community partners to define focus and outcomes of CBR project.** After an initial presentation to students on their organizations, contexts, and research goals, meetings of small student groups with their choice of community partner, supervised by lecturers, will result in written agreements (research question, schedule of contacts, Intellectual Property agreement and format for dissemination) on the structure and focus of the research process, including plans for primary research to address the organisation's research question. We will require signed timeline agreement sheets to be scanned and e-mailed to all participants by end of week 5.

4. **Collaboration with community partners as well as independent work to collect data; practicing analysis and the co-creation of knowledge – with feedback from community partners/lecturers/peers.** There should be some general provision of support for students on data-collection methods (eg how to write open-ended questions; how to run a focus group). There should also be tailored support for each group, such as small-group tutorial clinics where progress can be discussed, and challenges identified and addressed. This should include at least one class roughly mid-way through the module where student groups present to their peers, lecturers, and community partners, on their data collection and analysis so far, and progress on addressing the research question. This should maximize the impact of the research through feedback by all stakeholders on each group's progress to date. These presentations should be assessed (up to 20% of module marks) to ensure that students participate fully. Also some classes towards the end of the module can be left open (designated as research tutorials/clinics) so that lecturer and students can collaboratively decide on the most relevant content for these classes, as needs emerge.

5. **Final analysis and production of material for assessment and for handover to community partners, in the form of a group research report,** including findings/points for discussion. This should be closely preceded by a class where student groups present their almost-finalised analysis of the data to their peers, lecturers, and community partners, in order to maximize the impact of the research through feedback by all stakeholders on their

conclusions and focus. These presentations should also be assessed (up to 25% of module marks). All outputs agreed with the community partner at the first meeting, and recorded on the timeline agreements, must be included in the final written submission (worth up to 40% of total module marks), which should incorporate reflection on the feedback received in the class presentation.

6. **Individual reflection on the module.** Each student should submit an individual reflection on their learning on the module alongside the group research report, as part of their assessment (up to 40% of module marks). Ideally this should be in the form of a written response to a relevant theoretical text (such as Bourdieu's 'Participant Objectivation'), to ensure students' understanding of the relevant theories, as well as an opportunity for them to reflect on how their learning and experiences on the module have developed their understanding of their own learning, of the collaborative research process, and of their social context and social and professional roles, in relation to those of their community partners.

7. **Assessment and feedback – academic – and handover and feedback - community**. The final report submission should involve two stages – the first where the students submit the report for assessment, and the second where they have the opportunity to edit this report to bring it up to professional report standards, based on feedback from the lecturer(s). This second submission should happen before the finalization of the module mark, and some marks (up to 20%) from the final written submission allocation should be withheld until this final edit has been submitted, to ensure that the report can be given promptly to the community partner.

3. Sample 12-week module schedule

Week 1: Introduction to course and sign-up, introduction to module brief with interim deadlines. Introduction to idea of co-creating knowledge and valuing a range of experience and sources of knowledge. Team-building interactive exercise, exploring own backgrounds, strengths, areas of expertise/discipline, learning goals etc at start of module, as a reflective exercise.

Week 2: Starting the debate: What is community-based research? How does it relation to perception, inequality and power? – exploration of principles and ethics of CBR. Class input and discussion. Slides/discussion on CBR generally – history, philosophy etc. Exploration of concepts of power, inequality and perception through the use of Bourdieu's theoretical framework. Introduction to reflection –group work – with feedback.

   Readings:

   Kerry J. Strand, Nicholas Cutforth, Randy Stoecker, Sam Marullo, Patrick Donohue (2003) *Community-Based Research and Higher Education: Principles and Practices,* Jossey-Bass. Chapter 1

   Wacquant, L. 1998. 'Pierre Bourdieu', pp. 215-229 in Stones, R. (ed.), 1998. *Key Sociological Thinkers.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schnarch, Brian (2004) 'Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) or Self-Determination Applied to Research: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary First Nations Research and Some Options for First Nations Communities' in *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, Vol. 1, No.1. Available in a revised format at:

www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/pdf/human/nonspecific/OCAP%20principles.pdf

Week 3: Presentations by interested invited community partners to students on possible projects. Student group to lead on asking relevant questions to community partners (to have prepared research on each partner beforehand).

Reading: Kerry J. Strand, Nicholas Cutforth, Randy Stoecker, Sam Marullo, Patrick Donohue (2003) *Community-Based Research and Higher Education: Principles and Practices, Jossey-Bass.* Chapter 5. (This gives an outline of the CBR process)

Week 4: Collective selection of student groups. Exercise facilitating students in identifying the learning opportunities offered by each community partner, and relating these to their own learning goals, leading to the formation of groups to work with each community partner.

Week 5: Meetings between student groups and community partners and lecturer(s) to define scope of research projects, including completion of timeline agreement forms.

ALSO: Focus Groups. Hands-on workshop on writing, planning and running focus groups/interviews. Students must have read the key reading in order to participate.

Reading: National Service-Learning Clearinghouse and RMC Research, Section 3 'detailed guidance on conducting research', pp.14—38 in 'The Educators' Guide to Service-Learning Program Evaluation': www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/37/EvaluationToolkit.pdf

Week 6: Research clinics - Each research group is timetabled for a meeting with the lecturer to discuss mindmaps/plans for research, how to plan data collection and so on. There will also be room for discussion of relevant theories or conceptual models. All of the research clinics will be open for everyone to attend, to provide opportunities to learn from the ideas, experience or difficulties of other research groups.

Week 7: Sociological theory and the need for reflection. This class will be based on a discussion of a key reading, and will involve critical reflection on plans for next week's presentations from the perspective of the community partner

Reading: Bourdieu, Pierre (2003) 'Participant Objectivation', in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 9: 281–294.

Week 8: Data collection/analysis presentation 1 – student groups to present their analysis of their data collected so far, to peers, lecturers and community partners. This is an assessment.

Weeks 9 – 11: format and content to be collaboratively agreed by students and lecturer according to emerging need. This should include troubleshooting sessions; clinics; and workshop as required. There should also be a discussion revisiting Bourdieu's Participant Objectivation in light of the students' experience and reflection of the module, as a preparation for their final written submission.

Week 12: Data collection/analysis presentation 2 – student groups to present their almost-complete analysis of their data collected, to peers, lecturers and community partners. This is an assessment

Final submission date of group and individual assignment – week 14.

Final submission of second edit (to professional standard) of group assignment – week 15.

4. Additional Key Readings (to those in module descriptor).

Bourdieu, Pierre (2003) 'Participant Objectivation', in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 9: 281–294.

Dorfman, L., Wallack, L. 2007. Moving Upstream: The Case for Reframing Obesity. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior.* Vol. 39: 45-50. Available at http://www.bmsg.org/pdfs/Dorfman%20&%20Wallack%20JNEB.pdf

Hall, S. 1980. 'Encoding/Decoding'in Hall, S., Hobson, D., Lowe, A. and P. Willis (eds), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies.* London: Unwin Hyman, pp.128-38

Mills, C.W. (1967) *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 'The Promise'.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse and RMC Research, 'The Educators' Guide to Service-Learning Program Evaluation'. Available at: http://www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/37/EvaluationToolkit.pdf - the required reading is Section 3 (p.14-38) - detailed guidance on conducting research.

Schnarch, Brian (2004) 'Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) or Self-Determination Applied to Research: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary First Nations Research and Some Options for First Nations Communities' in *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, Vol. 1, No.1. Available in a revised format at: http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/pdf/human/nonspecific/OCAP%20principles.pdf

Wacquant, L. 1998. 'Pierre Bourdieu', pp. 215-229 in Stones, R. (ed.), 1998. *Key Sociological Thinkers.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

5. Additional recommendations on delivery of module

We have developed a timeline agreement sheet to use in meetings with community partners, students and lecturer(s) when agreeing the format and structure of the research and module, with interim and final deadlines. This also includes contact details for all involved, an agreement about joint ownership of the intellectual property (otherwise normally owned by students in DIT), and an initial agreement about how the report will be disseminated by all parties. This can be found at
http://www.dit.ie/media/ace/slwc/cbrforms/Collaborative%20research%20agreement%20form%20Sept%202012.docx

We work with a small number of community partners (approximately one partner for every 3-4 students) who are specifically interested in having research done into the impact of aspects of their public relations/external communications. We then collectively assess the learning opportunities offered by each community partner, and group students with their preferred community partner for the project, as far as possible.

We have found it is desirable to provide community partners with timeline/gantt chart to show expected milestones on the module, as well as giving them: a description of the student learning expected; a short summary of what's expected of students academically; the time which the community partner might need to commit to the project; as well as some background information on the students – ie level of students, range of background disciplines, level of experience in this particular area of research.

Regarding the required readings, we require students to take responsibility for reading these in advance of the class.

We also build an evaluation process into the module, where students, lecturers and community partners fill out pre-project questionnaires, mid-point evaluations, and post-project questionnaires. If possible we also ask a colleague to complete a focus group with students at the end of the module on how it could be improved. We also do phone reviews of the module with participating community partners, to get their views on the research report they received, and on how the module could be improved. Finally, the lecturers review the module at the end of the classes, and also after the assignments have all been marked, to discuss how it can be improved for the following year.

6. Rationale behind key elements, recommendations and proposed structure – based on experiences in iteration 1, 2 and 3

a: Group work with invited interested community partners. In year 1 we asked students to work individually and identify an interested community partner themselves. This led to situations where charities/community groups were being asked to give up their time to become involved in a project that they had not initiated, placing a further burden on resources. Some students worked with community partners that they had a family connection to, or other involvement in, and they did not manage to effectively identify and manage their dual roles as members and researchers of the organisation. This is why we now work with partners who we know are interested in PR research.

b: Working with one key sociological theorist/theory. In earlier years we introduced students to a wide range of social theorists, such as Habermas (on the public sphere), Bourdieu (on different forms of capital), and Goffman (on symbolic interactionism and stigma), in the hope that students would select a theory they felt was particularly relevant to their research and use this to help inform their analysis. In fact they struggled to grasp most of the theories in sufficient depth to use them productively in their research design or analysis. In 2013/14 we will pilot teaching the theoretical framework of a single theorist, Pierre Bourdieu, and revisiting the theory at different times during the module, to allow students' understanding of it to develop over time. This fits in with our aim of encouraging students to become reflective practitioners, and to have an understanding of social context, power, and inequality when working with community partners, or respondents in focus groups etc. This links with *c: Rather than a personal reflection, students will be asked to write individual responses to the theoretical article given, in relation to their experience of research on this module.* This is because we found that students, even when given reflective frameworks and models (eg Gibbs' reflective model), tended to write very superficial reflections of their experiences, without drawing on any theory. By asking them to reflect on a piece of theory in light of their experiences, we see the potential to draw out more depth and critical thinking in their responses – in the first iteration of this exercise in 2012/13, the students certainly took the assignment more seriously than in previous years when we just asked them to reflect on their own learning.

d: Use of timelines, preparatory material for community partners on the module and likely time commitments, and timeline agreement sheets confirming the focus and format of research, to be collectively signed and scanned and returned to all partners. This came from our experience in the first year of this module, and in facilitating other CBR projects across DIT, where we realised that some formal signed undertaking was advisable, to facilitate the collaborative process and to ensure student and community commitment to the project. Supplying contact details, and agreeing interim and final contact dates, and issues such as intellectual property and dissemination, at the start of the module enhance transparency and the likelihood of good quality contact between all involved on the project. Clarifying the expectations of students and community partners alike in some preparatory material can make everyone feel more confident and build capacity for future collaboration. Having the lecturer, students and community partner meet to complete the timeline agreement form came from a negative experience in year two, when lecturers did not attend these meetings, and some student groups initially agreed briefs with community partners which did not involve significant research, and did not relate to their module learning outcomes (eg two groups proposed devising and running a small PR campaign). After mini-tutorials, and e-mails to community partners, to refocus the briefs on students' needs and communities' research goals, we decided that in future, lecturers should attend the initial meetings between students and community partners to define the specific research project briefs. This worked very well in 2012/13.

*e: Students are required to do **primary research** related to perception/reception of an aspect of the community partner's PR/external communications.* In the first year of the module, we did not specify that students had to do primary research, so most gave their own personal analysis of the PR material, which undermined the validity of the analysis and recommendations in the research reports. In the second year we required the students to do primary research, but in one case this was limited to two short interviews, both with different questions, with representatives of two

different stakeholder groups. In 2012/13 we specified a minimum number of interviews/focus groups – eg minimum 5 interviews/2 focus groups/60+ on-line surveys, or a combination of these.

f: Assessed oral presentation to peers, lecturers and community partners mid-module, and again just before finalisation of written report. Students need to be motivated to start research design and data collection and analysis as early as possible in the module. Having failed two years running to ensure that the students started early, we consulted with community partners and arrived at the idea of 2 presentations, both assessed. (In the first year we did have assessed presentations on research, but community partners weren't present, which probably made it seem less serious to students, and many students had not yet started their research by then, so the presentations were quite limited in content.) That all community partners can view all presentations also should lead to capacity-building within the sector, as well as giving student instant feedback from community partners and lecturers, to increase their learning and the relevance of the work to the brief and to the community.

g: teaching focus group/interview methods. In the first three years we didn't do this, and by this time it was becoming apparent that it was essential, as students were conducting significant levels of primary research (following point e), and were not necessarily getting the benefit of their research interactions, due to poorly constructed questions, and a lack of confidence in conducting primary research (which many were doing for the first time). Following on the improvements in motivation prompted by the assessed oral presentations (point f) in 2011/12, this was particularly evident, as some students ran focus groups very early in the module, without clarifying their thinking on the research question, or consulting with lecturers. Since 2012/13, students have been instructed NOT to start data collection until after the class on focus groups/interview methods, which runs in week 5, which should ensure better quality of question design and of research data.

h: leaving three classes unallocated, the content of which will be agreed together by lecturers and students, based on identified needs. This is a good way to 'walk the talk' of valuing every participant's expertise, and using it to co-create knowledge. We demonstrate that CBR is an emergent process, that we as lecturers don't have all the answers, and that we want to work with students to collaboratively determine the focus of the last 3 classes, based on the students' assessment of what is required of them in the module, and of the skills and knowledge they need to develop in order to complete the work.

i. Having a 2-part final group report submission process. This is a new development which we will pilot in 2013/14. Some student groups have been more diligent than others in making the edits that have been recommended by the lecturers, prior to sending their report to the community partner, particularly when this process took place after the assessment of their work, and after the start of the following semester. This has occasionally resulted in unacceptably long delays in getting the report to the community partner, and lecturers have sometimes had to edit documents themselves when students failed to do so. As a result we recommend building in this review and editing process to the module itself. The students will now submit the report for assessment in the final week of the module, when it will be marked, and recommendations for editing given to the students by the lecturer(s). 10% of the mark will be withheld for one week to give the students time to complete all these edits (and if they excel at the edits, the mark can rise accordingly). The students will not be given information on the marking until the second submission has been received and marked – just

recommendations for editing. The recommendations will focus on the *professional communication standard* of the report, with a view to completing it to the standard required to the community partner, and *not* on the academic marking criteria. This should ensure that the report is a professional, clear piece of communication, and that it can be given promptly to the community partner.

8. Contributors.

This module pro-forma has been compiled by Catherine Bates.

The following have contributed enormously to the thinking involved in developing and delivering the module and in compiling this pro-forma:

- Edward Brennan, co-deliverer of this module since its inception

- Siobhan Long (Enable Ireland), community partner on the module in 2011/12, who co-wrote an evaluation of the module for presentation at the fifth Living Knowledge Conference.

The following have offered significant critical reflection and support for the ongoing development of the module, which is reflected in this module pro-forma:

- John Gallagher, course co-ordinator of the MA in Public Relations.

- Community Partners participating in the module since 2011: Leslie Shoemaker (OCD Ireland); Tara Singleton and Sarah Miller (Ballymun Rediscovery Centre); Niamh Farrell and Aoife McGrath (Amen); Mary and John Coyne (Wells for Zoe); and Tiernan Brady (GLEN).

- All the students who participated in the module since 2010

- Elaine Ward, who ran a focus group with students in 2011.

The validated module descriptor written by Catherine Bates, Elena Gamble, Edward Brennan, Brian O'Neill and John Donovan.