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ENHANCING THE RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE EXPANSION OF THE SCIENCE SHOPS ECOSYSTEM IN EUROPE

Modules for Training of Science Shops Staff

Science Shops: Communication and Public Awareness

Objectives

In the area of expanding knowledge, after this module, participants will:
- Be familiar with the principles of effective communication for Science Shops
- Know how to set objectives for an effective communication strategy, targeting audiences and crafting effective messages
- Have an overview of communication planning and evaluation activities

In the area of skills and attitudes, they will:
- Be able to map different channels to communicate messages
- Gain skills about how to monitor and evaluate a communications strategy
- Develop a strategic mindset to plan effective communications

Session outline

Methodology	Material required	Duration Total: 3hr 30 min
1. Welcome	Training agenda (printed)	5 min.
2. Personal introductions and initial evaluation	"Post-it notes" (different colours)	15 min.
3. Presentation	- PowerPoint projector & large screen - Key messages - PowerPoint presentation	90 min. (including Q&A and discussion)
4. Interactive exercise 1 "Crafting targeted messages"	- Cards with different types of stakeholders	40–50 min.
5. Interactive exercise 2 "From theory to practice: Deciding communications"	- Notepads or sheets of paper, pens	40–50 min.

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Description of methodologies

Welcome

The trainer welcomes participants, presents the session's aims, distributes and comments briefly on the training agenda.

Personal introduction and initial evaluation

If there is a need (depending on the training programme), the trainer can ask participants to present themselves.

For the initial evaluation, attach 2-3 sheets of paper with questions for the participants on the wall. Questions could be:

- How important is communication for a Science Shop?
- How difficult is for Science Shops to implement communication activities?
- How do you define if a communications activity has been successful?

Distribute post-its to the participants, ask them to write answers to every question and stick them on the wall. At the end of this training, invite all participants to the wall to go through all questions and comments together to see if they were answered during the day.

PowerPoint presentation

Introduction

The objective of this presentation is to highlight the importance of planning communications activities as a crucial part of any project, specifically for community-based research projects and the establishment and sustainability of Science Shops.

The training is aimed at providing the basic knowledge and tools to set up an effective communications strategy and define objectives and methods for evaluation. In addition, the presentation will include some tools and recommendations to optimise time, resources and efforts when planning and implementing a communications plan.

The focus of this training is on the communication and dissemination of Science Shop projects and their results. However, the whole approach contributes to the development of a general communications strategy for the whole Science Shop (also see 'General communications activities conducted by Science Shops' included in 2.6. Planning communications activities section in this training module).

If a Science Shop is undertaking a large number of projects, it will be difficult to carry out a significant communications strategy for each project. However, the Science Shop should look at using all the

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resources available to them for the communications work, including those of its mother organisation, the participating researchers/students, and the community organisations and other organisations involved in the project. The development of a communications plan at an early stage of the project will help in deciding where to concentrate the communications efforts to gain maximum impact.

Key messages corresponding to the different slides

1. Why communicate/disseminate? The importance of communicating Science Shops projects and results

A communications strategy should be developed during the early stages of a project's development in order to achieve the best results. This part is usually overlooked, especially when the people in charge of the project don't have a communications background.

This represents a common challenge within research projects, where the focus is often given exclusively to the study: the methodology, the sources of information, the reliability and utility of the results. However, the time and the effort required for planning how to communicate the project and its outcomes is often underestimated.

Within the context of Science Shops, communication activities can be divided into two broad objectives:
- **Communicating to raise awareness of a Science Shop**; for example, with the aim of raising the profile of the Science Shop, attracting researchers/students to participate, advertising the services of the Science Shop to local community organisations, building up awareness and trust within local communities.
- **Disseminating the outcomes of a community-based research project**; at the end of the project, conducting the right communications activities can help to reach people that can benefit from the results of the research: e.g. other researchers, students working in the same field or the general public, where the findings are of broader public interest. Also, the dissemination of the findings of the research can lead to changes and improvements at the local level, serving as a tool for advocacy and influencing policy-makers to make decisions based on the results and demands of the community. Dissemination of project results also helps to contribute to the first objective i.e. raising broader awareness of the Science Shop.

What are the benefits of undertaking communications activities?
- **Obligation to communicate**. If society is not aware of how research impacts their lives, they never will know the importance of the work undertaken by researchers, specifically research of direct benefit to communities. There is an obligation to communicate with society especially when the project is funded by public organisations and institutions (funding coming from taxpayers). As a result, this also helps to build public trust in science.
- **Promoting the Science Shop.** Communication is needed to promote the service offered by Science Shops to local communities and civil society organisations and get new research requests.
- **Staff recruitment**. Communication helps to attract new researchers and students interested in undertaking community-based participatory research.

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- **Multiplication of impact.** Giving visibility to the results of each community-based research project can improve the possibilities of multiplying the impact: influencing policy-making processes, helping to fund local initiatives, inspiring other communities regardless of geographic locations etc.
- **Reputation building**. A well implemented Communications Plan also benefits the researchers and their institutions: enhancing their reputation, increasing the opportunities for support (financial, potential partnerships and synergies, etc.), raising the profile of the institution/researcher/initiative within the scientific community, and leading to cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary new approaches for the research (Scherer et al. 2018).
- **Inspiration to others**. Raising awareness of a Science Shop's project can inspire other initiatives that can lead to different uses of the results and other community-based projects, and as a result contribute to a more democratic and open use of Science.

2. Creating a Communications/Dissemination Strategy

The successful implementation of communication and dissemination activities requires some planning. It is inadvisable to carry out actions without any strategy. Thinking in advance and creating a plan with key points about why and how these activities are going to be developed will help to optimise resources, costs and time; thus increasing the possibilities of success and the effectiveness of the communications and dissemination efforts. In addition, some funding programmes, for example Horizon 2020 require this strategic approach for all projects, and a communication and dissemination strategy can often be a prerequisite for grant applications (Communicating your project: Participant Portal Horizon 2020 Online Manual, at http://ec.europa.eu).

The following sections outline the steps to be undertaken to create a strategy.

3. Objectives

The first step to developing a strategy is to decide and define the objectives, i.e. what we want to achieve with our communications efforts.

Starting from a general communication/dissemination objective such as raising awareness, persuading, involving, building trust or informing our audiences, it is important to turn the general objectives into more specific ones. We need to define **SMART objectives**:

- **Specific**: avoiding generalities, focusing on concrete and more tangible goals.
- **Measurable**: add numbers (wherever possible), i.e. metrics and indicators that can be easily measured. Thanks to a series of online tools, it is easy and possible to measure the impact of digital communication activities such as social media engagement, website traffic, readers of an article, etc.
- **Attainable:** It is fine to be ambitious when setting objectives, but it is also important to be realistic. A previous analysis of the resources (time, budget, task force) and available channels and opportunities can help to define good objectives that are actually achievable.
- **Relevant:** communication objectives have to be always linked to the project purpose, expected impact, as well as the context and characteristics of the research.
- **Time-bound:** each objective should be set within a time period i.e. to have a start and an end point. This is also necessary to be able to evaluate the success of the actions.

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Example of a 'SMART' objective: to raise awareness of the Science Shop at the local level: to get three articles about the new Science Shop published in three different local newspapers within three months. This objective is specific, measurable (3 articles), it seems possible to achieve (local newspapers are easier to contact and they are normally interested in what is happening in the city/region/village as local initiatives are one of their main sources of content), relevant to the development of the Science Shop (it will help to raise the profile of the Science Shop), and a deadline has been set up.

Other examples could be:
- Dissemination of results> Raise awareness of the results of a research project > three articles in three different scientific publications within a year after the end of the project.
- Dissemination of results> Persuasion> Statement from one relevant decision-maker (politician, local administrator, private company) to improve/make a change on a situation based on the results of the research after the results are published and maximum one year later.
- Communication of the Science Shop> Raise awareness> Achieve 600 monthly visits to the website or 1000 subscriptions to the Science Shop's newsletter/mailing list in one year (should be realistic according to the size of the Science Shop: local/national, existing networks to invite to join the newsletter, etc.)
- Communication of a project> Raise awareness>Elaboration of a mailing list of interested stakeholders to send them relevant updates about the project. Target: collection of 50 emails for this mailing list by the third month of the project.

4. Stakeholders

When creating a communications strategy, we need to select and analyse the target audience we aim to reach with our communications activities. **Who will be the recipient/s of our messages?**

The first step is to know who your stakeholders are (the question that is addressed comprehensively in Module "Stakeholder analysis"). In the broad sense, target audiences of Science Shops can be understood as their stakeholder groups. A stakeholder is "an individual, group, or organisation, who may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project" (Project Management Institute, 2013). Science Shops' stakeholders can be classified into **internal stakeholders** (individuals and groups from within the organisation that are a part of the project implementation, such as project supervisors, researchers, students, interns or volunteers) and **external stakeholders** (those groups from outside of organisation that are affected by the project or are otherwise involved in project activities). External stakeholders can be grouped further into four broad groups: stakeholders from civil society (the main stakeholder are CSOs who provide research requests), the public sector, the business sector, and the general public (see Module "Stakeholder Engagement" for more information).

However, not all stakeholders of the Science Shop or its specific project will be the target audience, as the Science Shop may decide to focus its communication efforts on just some of them, depending on the stakeholder's importance or concrete communication objectives at that time. For example, all of students at a university might be defined as stakeholders, but specific communication efforts might be

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targeted only to students in science disciplines. Thus target audiences are more specific groups that are intended recipients of the messages.

Another point to consider is whether the outcomes/or the project are relevant at a local, national or international level. For example, if a Science Shop is conducting a research about the effectivity and sustainability of a waste collection system in a village, it would not make sense to put effort into targeting the national media. However, it might be meaningful to target local associations, administrations and local media, among others - in order to raise awareness of the issue.

Once the target audiences are defined, you need to decide the best way to reach them: i.e. what are the best messages, channels, activities to use to communicate with the stakeholders to meet the objectives of the strategy.

5. Targeted messages

In order to craft effective messages that catch the attention of the audience and increase the likelihood of achieving the desired effect, here are some recommendations to consider:

- Think first about the **audience's needs** rather than those of the research/or your organisation. Appealing to their interests or offering a solution to their problems is a good way to start the message.
- Take into account **the characteristics of the audience** with regards to their level of knowledge, background, any language barriers etc. when formulating messages. A message aimed at members of the public will be different to one addressed to professionals with a research background. Likewise, a message aimed at a scientific researcher from the same field will also be different to one addressed to an expert in another area.
- The message should be shaped **according to the characteristics of the channel** where it will be shared e.g.: the size and style of a message posted on Twitter will differ from a message contained in an email or article.
- Less is more: the shorter, the clearer and the more relevant a message is for the recipient, the more effective it will be.

6. Channels

In Communications, the most commonly used channels are generally classified according to two groups: **online and offline**.

Online includes:
- Websites
- Social media
- Online publications
- Press (online)
- Blogs
- Podcasts
- Video
- Emails, newsletters, etc.

Offline includes more 'traditional channels'. Those of most relevance to Science Shops include:
- Press (offline) (e.g.: local or national newspapers)
- Television and Radio (local or national)
- Magazines and journals (e.g.: with a specific scientific focus)
- Books and other publications
- Leaflets, brochures and printed material
- Events and Meetings
- Exhibitions

Channels can also be classified according to whether they are **generalist channels** addressed to a wide audience (i.e.: large newspapers, TV and national radio channels, etc.) or **specialized** channels in one topic/area, targeting specific communities and stakeholders (scientific and social science magazines, research publications, Open Science repositories, conferences, etc.). The selection of specialist or generalist channels will depend on the nature of the research project and the aim of the communication activity (e.g.: to inform the general public, to raise awareness within the scientific community, etc.).

7. Communications activities

Once the objectives, audiences, main messages and the channels have been worked out in the strategy, it is time to make concrete plans for how this information should be turned into specific communication activities that will seek to achieve the objectives defined at the beginning of the strategy.

Creative thinking can lead to great ideas, but it is necessary to keep in mind the rest of the strategy when deciding which activities are going to be carried out to promote the project or its results. The cost, the reach, the relevance to the objectives and the target audience all have to be assessed while making decisions.

One of the main communication activities that a Science Shop needs to do is to **promote its services to community organisations and create public awareness of the Science Shop**. This can be done in a variety of ways and some examples are listed below:
- Targeted information on the Science Shop's and/or mother organisation's website (perhaps with a simple enquiry form)
- Use of social media channels
- A drop-in facility, whereby the office is open to the public at specific times of the week
- Presentations at local events and conferences
- Face-to-face meetings with individual community organisations
- Targeted mailings (via post or e-mail)
- Flyers and leaflets to hand out
- A regular newsletter (to the Science Shop's mailing list)
- Articles in local media and/or interviews with the Science Shop coordinator
- Briefing events to which community organisations are invited
- Use of external networks, websites, newsletters

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Again, particular consideration needs to be given to the key messages used to promote the services of the Science Shop, making them as relevant as possible to the needs of the community organisations.

Some of the activities that can be used to **communicate the results of Science Shops projects** (partly based on Russo et al. 2018) are:
- Use of own and/or mother organisation's website and social media
- Press releases (distributed to relevant media) and other collaborations with the media
- Annual or other reports (printed or online)
- Knowledge cafés and other public engagement events, workshops, exhibitions
- Scientific publications
- Presentations and posters at conferences
- Policy briefs and papers
- Use of Open Access/Data repositories

One very important channel for a Science Shop is **direct personal communication**. Many Science Shops, particularly younger ones, indicate that often it is direct face-to-face communication that helps them to get research requests and engage other stakeholders.

A **website** is a key communications tool for a Science Shop, which can be used to host general information about the Science Shop and is a key reference point to which to direct stakeholders interested in the work of the Science Shop; it can also serve as a platform to host and disseminate information about individual projects. A Science Shop may be able to use the website facility of its mother organisation e.g. to have a section on a university or NGO's website dedicated to the Science Shop. If a Science Shop needs to set up its own website, consideration needs to be given to the development and maintenance of the website and whether external resources are required.

One of the most well-known and more intuitive Content Management Systems (the tool used to update and modify content on a website) is Wordpress.org. The creation of the website can be delegated to an expert web developer (as mentioned above), but it is advisable to request a 'friendly' and easy-to-use interface that will allow others to make changes and create new pages on the website. You do not need an extensive knowledge of website management to use WordPress and there are many tutorials available on Internet (a quick search on Google or YouTube would be enough to answer many common questions about the use of WordPress). In that way, coordinators, researchers, students and/or volunteers can be in charge of content on the website regardless of their background and knowledge.

Other Content Management Systems can be used, for example, the web developer can create a new one 'on demand' specially for the Science Shop. The key point is to ask those responsible for building the website to provide tools and instructions so that content can be managed by the person who will be in charge of those tasks within the Science Shop.

External resources (that might incur costs) might also be needed to implement other communications actions too. For example, the design and printing of leaflets, brochures or other graphic materials. It may be necessary to hire a graphic designer or require help from a student, trainee, volunteer with skills and/or background in graphic design.

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Examples of activities undertaken by existing Science Shops can be found below. The examples mainly include the use of channels such as websites, social media, publications and events.

Examples of websites
Example 1

The Netherlands: Science Shop, Wageningen University & Research (WUR)

One of their main channels of communication used to raise awareness about their Science Shop and research projects as well as to disseminate results is **the university's website** (https://www.wur.nl/en.htm). In this case, we observe how the Science Shop benefits from an already established channel owned by the mother organisation from which it is receiving support (the website of the Science Shop can be found at https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/science-shop.htm).

The Science Shop website is clearly structured in a way that makes the search easy. The visitor can see at a glance what the Science Shop is about - thanks to a clear and visible message on the central-left side of the homepage:

Wageningen University & Research Science Shop supports non-profit organisations by implementing research projects with a potential societal impact in the fields of nutrition and health, sustainable agriculture, water management, environmental quality, and processes of social change.

The navigation makes it easy to find project information and results. It is interesting that the site includes an area (also quite visible) to share testimonials from clients that have used the Science Shop services about their experience. These types of messages help to build up the reputation of the Science Shop.

The use of a plain language makes the content easy to read and understand for the wider public (not only students and researchers, but also including a broader public from different backgrounds and with different levels of knowledge).

Example 2

Northern Ireland: Community University Knowledge Exchange, Queen's University Belfast

This is another example of a Science Shop that uses the resources of its mother organisation; the webpage of the Science Shop (https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/ScienceShop/) is hosted on the University's website (https://www.qub.ac.uk/). The design is very visual, using big pictures and short text containing clear 'Call-to-action' messages well targeted to the different type of audiences. Some examples are:

I'm a student, where do I start? [...] Make a difference by applying your knowledge, skills and experience, working within your course to address real issues facing communities today.

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The message is crafted from the students' perspective and not as a mere description of the Science Shop's work. This is important, as if you want to connect with the audience, you need to appeal to the audience's needs and interests ('what's in it re for them?') and not just one's own.

Other clear messages to other audiences are:

- For academics:
  I'm an academic, where do I start? Find how you can support students in their projects

- Communities:
  I'm a community group, where do I start? Find out how we can help

Example 3

Canada: Office of Community-University Engagement, University of Victoria

Looking at the University of Victoria's **website** (https://www.uvic.ca), you can see how the University is communicating the work of the Science Shop to build up their reputation as an institution with extensive expertise and high quality research:

Dynamic, hands-on learning; research that makes a vital impact; and discovery and innovation in Canada's most extraordinary academic environment provide an Edge that can't be found anywhere else.

This is clearly a message targeted to students, researchers and other stakeholders where community-based research (or, as they call it, 'civic engagement') is promoted as an added value to those who engage with the University's programmes and activities.

Example 4

Germany: District Future - Urban Lab, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

The **website** for this project has a really minimalist and visual design. This shows that a website does not have to be complex. It is quite the opposite, here the information is presented in a really concise way, and the language used is simple and clear to understand.

They have also added a **blog** section (http://www.quartierzukunft.de/en/blog/) where they publish news articles about project developments and results.). This is a more easily digestible and accessible way to present the outcomes of research. It is also a good idea to spread and disseminate the results through social media channels and newsletters by sharing links to articles on a website; it is also easier to ask other partners and stakeholders to share the information as they simply have to share the url with their networks.

Other examples of communication activities undertaken by Science Shops are presented in the box below.

Examples of other communication activities

Social media

There are not many specific examples of how Science Shops use social media to promote the work of the Science Shop. We observe that many Science Shops use the Social Media channels of their mother organisations (e.g. Universities). Science Shops can take advantage of existing, channels, sending content to the people in charge of Social Media at their mother organisations, as they usually already have a well-established audience and can easily help to spread messages about the Science Shop and its projects. However, when this is not possible, it can be useful to create a dedicated profile on Social Media (or a group) for the Science Shop. By inviting peers to join Facebook/Twitter and participating in groups with similar interests (e.g.: about sustainability, if the Science Shop tackles these kinds of issues), it is possible to build up a community on social media interested in the Science Shop.

- Facebook page of the Green Office of KU Leuven: https://www.facebook.com/pg/greenofficekuleuven/posts/. This Facebook page does not have a huge audience (less than 3000); however, a good level of engagement is observed: many posts have more than 30 likes, which is a good number, taking into account the small audience and the increasingly restrictive Facebook changes that make it difficult for publications to reach audiences when they are not paid ones. On the page, they share news and videos about their activities.

Video

- European University Cyprus; video presenting the EUC Science Shop: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEq1dinbyYI
- Short films presenting case studies of projects undertaken by the Science Shop at Queen's University Belfast: https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/ScienceShop/Students/StudentCaseStudies/
- UTS Shopfront YouTube channel with videos presenting projects, programmes and events: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDwpYw9DarjqEgdmY4uiO0Q/videos

Leaflets, brochures and printed material

- UTS Shopfront Impact 2016 brochure (Community-University-Engagement): https://issuu.com/utsshopfront/docs/shf057_fa1_impact_brochure_a4
- The Living Lab for Health Infographic explains in a visual way the different stages of their Community-Based-Research project called 'Sana Ment': http://www.irsicaixa.es/en/living-lab-health/sana-ment-project

Awards

- Awards presented to students for Outstanding Community Engagement projects at a celebration to mark CARL's (Community-Academic Research Links) 50th student-community project: https://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/news/carl50---celebrating-our-50th-student-community-project.html

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● The Science Shop, a joint collaboration between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster, presents annual Science Shop Awards. News about a Science Shop project run by the University of Ulster for the Giants Community Foundation that won second prize in the 2010/2011 Science Shop Awards: https://www.ulster.ac.uk/news/2011/december/science-shop-success-for-ulster-students

Some useful resources for further information and tips on how to use some of these channels can be found in the Annex (which can be used to facilitate the training of participants by handing them out as printed document).

8. Evaluation

The last step when planning an effective Communications Strategy is to define how it is going to be evaluated at the end of the project.

Best practice communication evaluation requires careful planning ahead and "on time" measurement. Once your communication activities are completed, it is usually too late to measure – it may even be too late to measure once you have just started your activities.[1]

● It is important to stress that this is a crucial part of the strategy that needs **to be decided at the beginning**, before the activities are implemented. Here is where the results at the end of the execution of the communications plan will be assessed against the set objectives in order to determine the effectiveness of the communications activities.
● Tools/mechanisms should be established to measure the completion of the objectives. Those can be qualitative, such as **interviews or focus groups**, or quantitative e.g. **surveys, participation records, website metrics** etc. The more specific an objective is, the easier it will be to find a way to measure the level of achievement.
● **Monitoring communications activities** and producing interim evaluations will help to optimise and make modifications to activities, if required, in order to reach the objectives.

An Excel sheet or another sort of document can be shared with staff members in order to gather information about all of the communications activities and to track them. A simplified template for a Communications Monitoring Tool is presented in Annex. The tool consists of a table for monitoring communication activities, with columns representing the main information on the communication activities undertaken: "Who published", "Type of activity", "When", "Where", "Type of audience", "Link", "Results". Alternatively, the monitoring tool can include a series of such tables for different types communication measures, e.g. Articles, Social Media, Newsletter, Events, Other activities.

Even if a Science Shop does not evaluate its communication activities, it is useful to track communication activities for the purposes of accountancy (e.g. for use in reports, in reporting to its mother organisation). This information can be used in conjunction with figures on the inflow of research requests and the number of students or volunteers who want to take part in Science Shop

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[1] Source: TOOLKIT for the evaluation of the communication activities. Directorate-General for Communication: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-evaluation-toolkit_en.pdf

activities, because it might help to identify which communication activities are most effective at increasing awareness of the Science Shop and participants willingness to collaborate.

One simple action that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities is collecting information on where new 'clients' of the Science Shop, students who decide to carry out its projects, and volunteers have heard about the Science Shop.

9. Roles division for Communications and Dissemination activities

Who is going to take responsibility for the different tasks related to communications and dissemination efforts? That is a question that does not have a unique solution, as each Science Shop will have their own resources and limitations.

Some of the factors affecting the task division regarding Communications/Dissemination are:

- **Budget** for the project: some projects have very small budgets (or even just consist of voluntary work and donations), others may be funded by specific grants, a part of which can be allocated for Communications and Dissemination activities.
- **Staff**: Is it possible for the Science Shop to hire part-time/full time professionals to carry out these activities? Does the Science Shop have access to internal communication resources elsewhere in the organisation, if part of a larger organisation? Does the community organisation or other participants have resources that can be utilised? Maybe a call for volunteers will be needed? (e.g. students, researchers, staff from mother organisations).
- **Time:** How much time can be dedicated to develop communications activities? Can part of the staff involved in the project allocate some hours to communication and dissemination as part of their work on the project?

Science Shops can consider giving the main responsibility for the planning, coordination and implementation of Communication and Dissemination to the following profiles:

- **Employees**: If the Science Shop has part-time and/or full-time employees (within the Science Shop itself or in the mother organisation), they can take the lead in conducting Communications/Dissemination activities. They may be already working as coordinators, in a secretariat or in other roles and add these tasks to their responsibilities. Some Science Shops may also have access to dedicated staff for Communications (e.g.: Science Shops with mother organisations such as NGOs, universities, Foundations etc.)
- **Researchers:** when the budget is limited, the researcher/s could be in charge of these activities. The disadvantage of this option is that the researcher may lack the time or skills to undertake communications work (this is where some training is highly recommended). On the other hand, they have a good understanding about the Science Shop and research findings.
- **Students:** This is a good option for small budgets, as students conducting the research can help to implement the communications tasks. Offering internships in communications can be even a better solution. In that way a student enrolled in related studies can gain experience and. at the same time. the Science Shop can benefit from the knowledge and skills of the intern.
- **Volunteers:** the same as above can apply when calling for volunteers to contribute in the project to cover communications' needs - exclusively or in addition to other tasks.

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- **External (outsourcing communications)**: Communication/Digital Agencies, freelance employees. When the budget allows it, hiring external services can be an optimal option that will save the rest of the Science Shop team time, reducing workloads and enabling the Science Shop to benefit from the expertise of communications professionals.
- **Members from the Community** participating in the project can be also encouraged to share content about it, acting as amplifiers of the communications and dissemination efforts. This offers two advantages: involving the communities according to the main values of the CBPR concept, and also as a valuable (and low cost) way to promote the Science Shop and/or the results.

When someone (or a team) is taking responsibility for leading and/or implementing communications tasks, it is important to ensure that they have the right skills to develop these tasks or that they are given the necessary training and support.

Interactive exercises

Exercise 1: "Crafting targeted messages"

Aim: The exercise aims to improve the participants' skills in writing tailored messages for different kind of recipients (audiences) and different objectives.

Number of participants: not limited; participants are asked to form pairs or groups of 3-4 depending on attendance.

Duration: 30 min.

Process: Participants should write key short messages crafted specially to catch the interest of one of type of stakeholder.

In order to be able to develop the exercise, some cards should be given to each group containing 1) The stakeholder and 2) The type of research conducted.

Some examples that can be used to create these cards are:

1) **Stakeholders:**
- Private sector: SMEs, LEs
- Policy Makers/Local Administrations
- Existing projects/initiatives
- Research and education sector (Universities, Research Institutes)
- NGOs
- Community-based organisations
- Public/Society (in a wide sense)

2) **Type of Research[2]:**
- Study for a more effective and community-friendly design of the city
- Effect of natural anti-microbial substances (lemon acid or vinegar) on the reduction of the microbial population on freshly prepared salads
- The student movement and feminism through social networks
- Improving food health and increasing access to healthy food for low-income communities
- Greening and the long-term sustainable development of industrial parks

The examples for the exercise can be modified by the trainer to better adapt them to the participants needs (i.e.: if the new coordinators of a Science Shop already know the research topics/areas they will be addressing, those can be used on the cards instead).

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[2] Some examples are taken from SciShops Deliverable 2.2: Existing RRI tools and successful participatory community-based research case studies report.

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The messages should focus on: 'how can the stakeholders benefit from the community-based research project?' Each group of participants have to write at least three different messages. 10-20 minutes will be given for the writing part, and 20 minutes for discussion.

Wrapping up: Groups are asked to share what they have written with everyone, and others invited to provide comment on ways to improve the messages. The outcomes can be written down and hosted in an online document to share with the participants after the session as a source of inspiration.

Exercise 2: "From theory to practice: Deciding communications"

Aim: This exercise helps to apply the main points that have been taught during the training into practice.

Number of participants: not limited; participants are asked to form pairs or groups of 3-4 depending on attendance.

Duration: 30-40 min.

Process: Keeping the same cards (stakeholders and types of research). The participants have to think about 1-2 communications objectives (i.e.: Raise the profile of the Science Shop/Institution, Raise awareness of a local issue, Lead to policy changes, Connect with other initiatives…). They can be both general communications objectives aimed at promoting the Science Shop or aimed at disseminating specific results of projects. Once the objectives are defined, they will have to think about suitable communication activities to reach the stakeholder that has been given to them (the stakeholder can be changed if the one on the card is not relevant to the research). For example:

- Effect of natural anti-microbial substances (lemon acid or vinegar) on the reduction of the microbial population on freshly prepared salads> Dissemination of Results> Persuade SMEs and LEs producing salads to incorporate natural substances to preserve the food instead of using chemical ones. > Publish an article about the outcomes of the research in a food-industry specialised magazine (i.e.: trade unions monthly publications).

Wrapping up: Groups are then asked to share their ideas with all of the participants and to have an open discussion about the adequacy and effectiveness of the proposed actions. The objective is not only to boost creativity but also to highlight the importance of thinking beforehand about the potential impact of the activities and optimise the effort; learning how to select the most effective ones, always bearing in mind the objectives and the target audience.

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