Citizen science – engagement and empowerment

Enthusiasts, people with hobbies, with spare time or concerned about their environment – you and me: all of us are potential collectors of data and information that can add a dimension to research projects. How can participation empower volunteers? And what’s the benefit for scientists? Listen on to find out!

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Insights and ideas

LIDAR, high-resolution satellite images, advances in computational power – new ways of collecting data are creating vast quantities that need to be analysed and
interpreted. At the same time, citizen science is gaining traction: with 2.5 million volunteers using the Zooniverse citizen science app, the movement is clearly growing.

But is it just a gimmick, or is there a clear value for both researchers and participants?

This episode considers the best ways to inspire volunteers and keep them motivated. Does participation empower people? And can projects gain their own momentum, carrying on after the funding ends?

Listening to these three researchers, it is clear the inspiration is a two-way street: volunteers find they can actively contribute to understanding issues that matter to them, and the participants’ enthusiasm can energise researchers.

If you are into the idea of counting killer whales around the Aleutian Islands from the comfort of your living room, or if you are a scientist keen to make the most of the resource a network of motivated volunteers can bring, this episode is for you.

To discuss Citizen Science – engagement & empowerment are our three guests, whose work has been funded under the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme:

Xavier Basagaña is associate research professor at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health. Basagaña’s CitieS-Health project was interested in evaluating the health impacts of urban living. The project set out to encourage collaboration between researchers and citizens, to generate solid, unbiased scientific evidence.

Professor of Environmental History at the University of Stavanger in Norway, Finn Arne Jørgensen is the coordinator of the EnviroCitizen project. The team wanted to understand the ways in which citizen science projects can be used to cultivate new ways of thinking and acting in all aspects of life, to promote environmental, rather than national, citizenship.

Kris Vanherle is a transport policy researcher, working at Transport & Mobility Leuven, a spin-off of the University of Leuven, Belgium. Vanherle was the coordinator of WeCount which wanted to give people the tools they needed to monitor traffic, and to co-design solutions to tackle a variety of road transport challenges.

If you are interested in checking out what other projects are involved in citizen science, take a look at our recent Results Pack on the subject.

The CORDIScovery team wishes you a merry Christmas and we hope our podcast
can keep you company as you prepare food and wrap gifts! A very successful and productive New Year to all our listeners.

**Happy to hear from you!**

If you have any feedback, we’re always happy to hear from you! Send us any comments, questions or suggestions to the usual email address, editorial@cordis.europa.eu.

**Keywords**

CORDIScovery, CORDIS, CitieS-Health, EnviroCitizen, WeCount, citizen science, traffic, environmental, transport, urban, health

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