**SUCCESS STORIES**

If you are visiting a museum or a science center these days, there is a chance that you come upon an exhibition set up by the Sparks project. This is even more likely if the exhibition is dealing with hot scientific topics taken up by citizen scientists. Because this is exactly what the Sparks project is about.

The Sparks project mainly consists of a travelling exhibition called "Beyond the lab: the DIY science revolution" put together by the renowned Science Museum London. Its main objective is to engage the audience in responsible research and innovation (RRI) through the topic of citizen science. What makes the exhibition unique is that it tells the stories of so-called ‘DIY scientists’ who are experimenting, researching and even inventing – often hand in hand with professional researchers – and hereby contribute to better scientific solutions in line with actual needs of people.

The exhibition's guiding theme “technology shifts in health and medicine” was chosen to reflect its great importance for European society. Since health is a topic affecting everyone, all citizens can easily connect to this theme. It furthermore establishes a direct link to one of the societal challenges of Horizon 2020 (Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing).

### 7 DIY stories, 3 artworks, 29 local case studies and numerous participatory activities

The exhibition contains seven different health- and medicine-related stories from DIY scientists from five European countries. The topics that the citizen scientists have been working on cover a wide range of current health challenges such as Parkinson's disease, diabetes, air pollution, potential disease outbreaks and antibiotic resistance. Fascinating stories about developing portable labs the size of a laptop or setting up an organisation to share DIY medical solutions are also being told.

Together with these real DIY stories, four artists who position themselves at the border between art, science and technology were selected to create three innovative artworks related to a possible health topic (solution) of the future. One artwork, for example, is a 3-D-printed headset in the shape of a unicorn horn that keeps track of the attention of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to improve ADHD care. Another one engages with the idea of inhalable nano-gadgets that will block your appetite for junk food, further exploring the relationship between robots and humans. The “creative disruptions” - in the form of artistic inputs and questioning - help to engage more stakeholders and to promote innovative ways to enter into communication and to gain new insights.

Every venue that hosts the exhibition 'Beyond the Lab: The DIY science revolution' also provides space for a case study/research from local researchers, thus embedding RRI in various local contexts and contributing to the project's intention: to communicate Responsible Research and Innovation in an innovative...
way, allowing the public to un-derstand that important health challenges may be tackled more inclusively. What all 29 case studies have in common is that they demonstrate how RRI and public engagement are or can be applied in research in the field of medicine and healthcare. One case study has covered, for example, an interactive tool for diabetes education (in Ljubljana, Slovenia) and another one the relation between nutrition and dementia (in Bonn, Germany).

Last but not least, involving citi-zens is at the heart of the Sparks project and the travelling exhi-bition. Every time the exhibition is on display, a series of public events will take place which relate to local scientists and to the topics addressed by the exhibition. Participatory activities such as Science Espressos, Scenario Workshops, Pop-up Science Shops and Reverse Science Cafés are used widely to give citizens a voice, to communicate more effectively on the exhibitions’

European-wide outreach ensured: Beyond the lab stops at 29 countries

The Sparks exhibition “Beyond the lab: the DIY science revolu-tion” runs at four locations in Europe in parallel for at least two months. All countries of the European Union plus Switzerland will be covered during the pro-jects runtime. Not surprisingly, such a great outreach is possible only with a large consortium and strong partnerships. The project coordinator is Maria Zolotonosa from ECSITE, the European Network for Science Centres and Museums, which is based in Belgium. 33 institutions altogether - science centres, science shops, science institutes, universities, renowned international networks and organisations active in the scientific and creative fields - are involved as part of the develop-ment team and/or the local implementation team of Sparks.

The work of Sparks is not done with the travelling exhibition. It will be complemented by policy recommendations to feed research and innovation policies with soci-etal inputs and to facilitate RRI. The policy document will bring the topics that the general public sees as relevant in the field of health and innovation to the policy makers’ attention. To achieve this, for example, the participatory activities will be analysed on the basis of data collected from par-ticipants through questionnaires.

A project such as Sparks demon-strates the strengths of the Science with and for Society pro-gramme of Horizon 2020: it is a great example of how citizens can shape science for the benefit of all, how their beliefs, interests and expectations can be integrated and how new ways on how to do research and innovation can lead to innovation. It also shows how to successfully communi-cate these new approaches.

The project manager, Andrea Troncoso from ECSITE, points out that so far the Sparks exhibition has received very satisfactory attention from the public and the local media. By the end of 2016 the exhibition had been displayed in eight European countries (Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Luxemburg, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom), attracting more than 700,000 people to the exhibition and the side events. The Sparks exhibi-tion will run until May 2018. To find out whether it will be shown at a place near you, please visit http://www.sparksproject.eu... get involved, get inspired!