

Citizen Science and Frontier Research: ERC Annual Event 2022

7 December 2022

Talk: Young people engaged for the planet

Questions asked on Slido:

What do you consider to be the most interesting results derived from the impact of this type of projects on the community and stakeholders? Greetings from Mex!

Josefa Gonzalez: Regarding the community, the most interesting results are the long-term commitment of the participants in the communication of the citizen science project to their local communities, which raises awareness of the relevance of basic science. The participants also develop new skills related to the different activities of the project. Regarding the stakeholders, we would highlight the involvement of local authorities in the project.

Marcus Collier: For me the most interesting results are the ones I least expect, or perhaps that I assumed would not appear. For example, I did not expect so many citizen scientists would be curious about what the most common colours of urban wild plants would be. I was also not expecting so many artists wishing to engage as citizen scientists to co-create research questions.

Are any participation incentives (such as prize draws, or nominations, or a diploma) used to motivate citizens to participate?

Josefa Gonzalez: There are no participation incentives but the citizens' participation in the different activities is publicly acknowledged in all the communication activities of the project: the website, social networks, public talks, media.

Marcus Collier: In the past, I was able to use my funding to donate to a nominated charity for every participant who would volunteer. However, today this is not possible as funders do not wish this. Of course, I offer my volunteers certificates, and I also offer them the possibility to become co-authors on my scientific papers.

For Marcus: Do participants need to have insurance when they are out collecting data for your research?

Marcus Collier: No. All research is voluntary and in the public realm. Participants are asked not to engage in any risky behaviour and to be as careful as they would normally be when

outdoors. By asking the citizens to generate their own research questions, technically they are not engaged in my research, it is their research, so they are responsible.

Olá from Brazil! As early career researcher, my doubt re. ethical submission for establishing the citizen science initiative/project in genomics medicine. Any tips?

Josefa Gonzalez: Our project does not have ethical implications because we work with fruitflies. But, we do comply with the general data protection regulation (GDPR).

For Josefa: What would you have done if the methodology couldn't be replicated exactly as in your lab? For example with other groups of organisms (i.e. bees).

Josefa Gonzalez: We knew from the beginning that the fruit fly methodologies needed for the specific tasks of the citizen science project were easily replicated by citizens. Regarding other organisms, each one has specific methodologies that should be taken into account to decide if a citizen science project is a good approach.