

University of Dundee

Citizen Science Projects (MOOC) 2.12

Woods, Mel; Coulson, Saskia; Ajates, Raquel; Amditis, Angelos ; Cobley, Andy; Domian, Dahlia

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Video type: Talking head

Speaker: Mel Woods

Filming location: X

Producer: X

Run time: X

Filming date: X

Script	Visuals
[Music]	FutureLearn opening animation
[Music]	WeObserve logo University of Dundee logo
<p>MEL WOODS: Having the tools and technology to help collect data is important. But it is even more important that everyone knows how to collect data. This includes understanding of how to use the tools and devices for data collection and also when, where, and how often measurement should be taken. For example, each GroundTruth 2.0 citizen observatory was built by focusing on an issue that interested local stakeholders. The technologies used and the data collected are different for each observatory. In the Swedish GroundTruth 2.0 citizen observatory called VattenFokus, the Earthwatch FreshWater Watch platform and toolkit are used. So the members were trained in how to use these. In Belgium for the Meet Me Mechelen Project, citizens use professional air quality sensors to collect data.</p>	
<p>They were trained on how to collect data whilst riding their bikes and when not to use them, for example, when it was raining. They had to come up with plans for handing over the sensors to other observers so that the agreed routes could be covered. Because air pollution can change quickly, the volunteers agreed to make sure that all collected data could be jointly analysed to obtain the bigger picture. In the GROW observatory, it is empowering citizens to gather and share data about soil and the land. Soil issues affect growers and land managers and include degradation, compaction, erosion, and the loss of land to desertification. And the Mediterranean communities are affected by drought and wildfire.</p>	

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<p>In other areas, communities are more concerned about flooding or erosion. GROW scientists proposed protocols and ways to gather data on soil moisture in order to assure quality. The measurements included soil texture, land cover, and other data, such as regional planting and harvesting dates. GROW has a combination of training methods, face-to-face meetings in specific GROW places with communities, a mix of online courses, online forums, and social media groups for anyone anywhere. This peer-to-peer social learning ethos provided the opportunity for community champions and citizens to learn from each other. All aspects of GROW, including training and education materials, platforms and apps went through citizen evaluation and feedback to allow a user-led development of materials.</p>	
<p>This was particularly helpful for the observatory to discover steps or activities that were particularly time-consuming or problematic. One of the key challenges for participants was they discovered the difficulties some would have because of the complex scientific requirements. For instance, sensors couldn't be near buildings or isolated trees and issues when sensors stopped working or were damaged by animals, machines, or in extreme weather. These challenges were overcome through training. And because GROW learned about these issues in the early testing phase and were then able to prepare participants from the start. It's important to learn about the challenges that might be faced during the training period. This can help you create a set of guidelines and help future projects.</p>	
<p>It's also important that, in any project, the participants are armed with as much information and know-how to feel confident to overcome challenges and understand how to use the tools given to them.</p>	

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[Music]	Partner logos
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