Optimising international networks

Part II: Communicating with policy makers, the media and the general public
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Workshop Metropolis International, Lisbon
October 5th, 2006

‘How do we communicate our research results to a broad audience?’
What is a Network of Excellence (NoE)?

NoE’s are meant to overcome the fragmentation of European research by:

- Gathering the critical mass of resources
- Gathering the expertise needed to provide European leadership
- Spread excellence beyond the boundaries of its partnership
What does IMISCOE do?

- IMISCOE is a network focusing on the topics of
  - Migration
  - Integration
  - Social Cohesion
- The network brings together more than 400 researchers from 22 European institutes
- We have three main tasks:
  - To build a European research programme
  - To build a system of training in the field(s)
  - To build a system of communication and dissemination
How did we build a system of communication and dissemination?

• Established a structure for internal communication to maintain a strong network:
  – Managing teams, programming boards and executing committees
  – IMISCOE members connected to research clusters
  – Conferences and workshops
  – Extranet and Newsflash

• Established a structure for external communication to spread our knowledge and disseminate our results
How did we establish a structure for external communication?

With whom do we (want to) share our knowledge?
1. Other scientists in the field

How?

Classic communication tools
- Publication programme
- Website
- Newsletter
- Workshops and conferences
With whom do we (want to) share our knowledge? (cont.)

2. A broader public, but specifically **policy makers**, **stakeholders** and **media**

Why?
- We address topics at the heart of society and policies
- One of the requirements by our funder
- To strengthen our research programme
Assumptions when developing tools to reach our specific target groups

- They do not have time to read lengthy publications
- They do not have time to find relevant expertise
- We do not necessarily speak the same language or use the same concepts
- Our research results need explaining

BUT:
- They are interested in what we do
- Our research results can be useful
Communication tools developed to reach other audiences

• **Translating research results in meaningful messages**
  – Executive summaries and policy briefs
  – Policy workshops and training sessions
  – Targeted website links: Expert database/Online Library/Specific search options

• **Looking for partners in the field**
  – NGO’s/social partners
  – Media
Obstacles we encounter when developing these tools

Motivation and time
• How can we motivate researchers to `translate’ their ‘research results?
• How can researchers find time to write other than scientific publications?
• What is the best timing to publish certain results?

Translation and expertise
• Do researchers have the capacities to translate their scientific results?

Available means
• Are we really informed of the various means we can use to translate and disseminate our results?

Control and trust
• How can researchers control what will be done with their output and guarantee scientific relevance, objectivity and quality?
Thoughts for discussion

• Are our assumptions of our audiences correct and do we develop communication tools that will reach them?

• How do we overcome the obstacles described? Motivation and time/Translation and expertise/Control and trust

• Do we make enough use of the various media?