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International Science Shops Brokers with a solid reputation worldwide

In the Chinese metropolis of Shanghai almost 100 Science Shops have been set up over the last three years, while the government of Canada has invested millions in founding Science Shops. Science Shops are a successful model worldwide, but one that has had almost no effect on Germany.

The initial impetus for the Science Shop movement in China came in 2006 from the Dutch university of Utrecht. For a week, in the course of a summer school, staff from European Science Shops informed participants from abroad of what Science Shops are, what they can achieve and how one sets them up. What they had to say fell on fertile ground with the Chinese guests: at the moment no other country has as many Science Shops as China. The students offer their university know-how wherever they can: How can one save electricity? How can the energy supply be ensured in the first place? Is drinking water clean? How can one invest the little money one has in a sensible way? How can one improve children's schooling? China's Science Shops are open to questions around the clock. When issues are more complex, students work on the answers together with their professors.

What literally amounts to development assistance in China, Mongolia or even Japan, Latvia and South Korea, where Science Shops have sprung up in recent years, is also important for western countries. In a knowledge society which aspires to being more than

simply a knowledge economy, Science Shops occupy an important position, according to Maria van der Hoeven, for-

stance, they have mediated successfully between local residents, the management of two carpet factories and the local authorities. Residents had thought that the emissions from the factory were responsible for frequent cases of illness. The Science Shop staff engaged experts (at no charge to the residents),

The Bonn Science Shop is one of the world's leading models of bringing society into the scientific discourse. It is an important example that I consistently refer policy makers, scientists, and community leaders to when they ask about social innovation in science. The staff and their work is always of the highest quality and often sets the standard that others need to meet. Congratulations on the 25th anniversary and I look forward to celebrating the next 25 years of leadership and innovation.

Peter Levesque

Director of KMBW – Knowledge Mobilization Works, Ottawa/Canada

mer Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science. As Van der Hoeven, now Minister for the Economy, says: "Through the supporting of citizens in increasing their knowledge, more people gain the possibility of taking on responsibility for structuring their own lives and environments".

Because this is worth a lot to the Netherlands as a state, they have been funding more than 30 Science Shops for decades now. Based at the universities, the so-called Wetenschapswinkels have long enjoyed a good reputation with the public. In Groningen, for in-

carried out measurements, and brought all involved to one table.

The EU Commission also places high value on the work of the science brokers: In 2001 the Commission set up the "Science and Society Action Plan" ▶

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Science Shops

- ▶ revolving around a dialogue between citizens and the scientific community, today's fast-moving and complex knowledge society cannot function without. The Commission supported the brokers between the public and the scientific community in a correspondingly strong way. With financial support from the European Commission, the Science Shops throughout Europe have managed to organize themselves in a global network called Living Knowledge. Online information, training material, reports, meetings and conferences are now provided. Above all, though, the network is a help to all those wanting to set up their own Science Shops. They can inform themselves about the different models of Science Shops and choose which suits them best.

In Romania, eight Science Shops developed out of a cooperation project



run by Dutch and Romanian universities. And the universities provide the Science Shops with a sphere where they can function: students can fulfil a part of their study requirements by working for Science Shops. In China as well, citizens' involvement is also part of

The Wissenschaftsladen Bonn, on an international scale better known as Science Shop Bonn, has become a major player in the international network of Science Shops. Over the years the Science Shop Bonn has become the engine that keeps the network going. It is obvious that the Science Shop Bonn has given, and still gives, an impulse to new Science Shop initiatives outside the academia, but inside the traditional habitat of Science Shops as well.

The Science Shop Bonn is an atypical Science Shop, but a very good example of a non-university based organisation that fits in the Science Shop concept.

With its 25th anniversary, the Science Shop Bonn is one of the good oldies, congratulations! I wish the Science Shop Bonn a brilliant future in the local, national and international arena.

*Caspar de Bok
University of Utrecht, former coordinator of
the International Science Shop Network*

the syllabus. According to Qu Bin, director of the Science Shop at the University of Donghua: "It's a win-win situation: students apply their know-how to everyday life and thereby serve the community." At the same time the students understand what they have learned during lectures much better by applying it in a practical way.

Unfortunately there does not seem to be such leeway for this type of social commitment at Germany's institutes of higher education, particularly not in view of the recent, intensively structured bachelor and master courses. There are seven Science Shops in Germany, most with only a few members of staff. The Bonn Science Shop on the other hand, with its 30 permanent members of staff, is the largest Science Shop in Europe. The Bonn institute is independent of the local university and finances itself via projects that are supported, for example, by the EU, federal or state ministries, or foundations. Nothing else seems to be forthcoming, as long as there is no conscious public promotion of and call for such an opening of the universities. This is also the experience made by the staff of the Dortmund Science Shop. On their web-

site they say: "In the past, there have been various attempts on the part of WiLa Dortmund to achieve better cooperation with people at the University of Dortmund. All in all, however, the impression is that the people at the university are much more concerned with their own interests and the university itself than with the 'world outside!'" ■

The development of the Science Shop movement

The universities were not only rigid and hierarchically structured; with a view to making profits they even assisted large businesses, students and researchers criticized in the mid-seventies in the Netherlands. Their demands: It was high time that researchers devoted themselves to topics that interested the public, such as health and ecology. Citizens who could not normally afford academic services or who were not in a position to interest established academic circles in their issues and problems should finally have access to information and scientific research.

The Bonn Science Shop – An Overview

Our institution

The Bonn Science Shop was founded in 1984. With 30 permanent employees it is the largest of the nearly 60 European Science Shops. The Bonn Science Shop, which is administered by its employees themselves, works on three main topical areas: the environment and health; civil society and sustainability; the labour market and further qualifications.

Our way of working

Almost everyone knows of a building site in the vicinity where a road is being widened or a new house or industrial area is built. But who links this to the fact that the gigantic consumption of land is one of Germany's biggest ecological problems? Creating awareness and showing individual citizens what paths of action are open to them – that is one of the essential tasks of the Science Shops. However Science Shops, like the one in Bonn, do not only see themselves as neutral mediators of knowledge but rather as citizens' advocates. If local residents resist the setting up of a new mobile telephone mast because they are worried about their health, the Bonn Science Shop provides them with expert advice. By way of events, exercises, exhibitions, computer software, info brochures and personal advice we provide citizens with the tools and know-how to participate actively better in socially pressing issues.

Fields of work

The labour market and qualifications

• Job offer evaluations

Each week the labour market experts at the Bonn Science Shop review current job offers in more than 100 individual print media and 50 job exchanges or company web portals. On this basis, firstly the two weekly information pam-

phlets "*arbeitsmarkt* (The Job Market) – Environmental Protection/Natural Sciences" and "*arbeitsmarkt* (The Job Market) – Education/Culture/Social Sciences" are compiled; these provide job



seekers with a national overview of job advertisements in the corresponding fields of work. Secondly the Bonn Science Shop uses its comprehensive evaluation – something no other institute has for the German labour market – for studies on labour market trends. For example, it investigates which qualifications specialists in the field of renewable energies require if they are to be properly qualified for this growth sector.

• Further training in parallel to one's job

In view of the exacerbated situation on the labour market, the education centre of the Bonn Science Shop has extended its extra-occupational offers over the last years. Workshops and courses - for instance, rhetoric, job application strategies, mediation or professional project

development – have been aimed at helping participants to develop their personalities further, at the same time as enhancing their professional skills. In addition, the Bonn Science Shop has created a special focus on environmental pedagogy. In workshops and series of seminars, teachers especially from primary schools and day care centres can learn how to guide even very small children towards ecological awareness and exploratory ways of learning.

Citizen society and sustainability

With its projects and specialized fields of work, the Bonn Science Shop is attempting to encourage citizens to participate actively in democratic processes. The aim of the projects is to involve various groups of actors and to close gaps in information. In doing so the Science Shop supports groups – for example, in setting up citizens' foundations, designs exercises and websites on land use and international environmental policy, provides information on religious communities in North Rhine-Westphalia and helps support the Science Shop network worldwide.

The environment and health

The academics at the Bonn Science Shop analyse and evaluate results and research findings, making them available to consumers in a practical and accessible way. The Science Shop compiles expert reports and specialist publications, offers measurement services and analysis locally; for instance it advises both consumers and public institutions on topics like electromagnetic radiation, ecological construction and lifestyles, as well as nutrition and food safety.

In addition to this, the Environmental Theatre UNVERPACKT (Unwrapped), attached to the Bonn Science Shop, introduces children and adults in a playful way to environmental topics. ■

The Bonn Science Shop: Projects and Milestones

Everything began in 1984 with free lectures at the University of Bonn and the answering of citizens' questions. Now the spectrum of topics dealt with has grown – as the selection here shows – along with the size of the projects.

2013 PERARES (project start 2010): The project "Public Engagement in Research and Research Engagement with Society" is intended to encourage researchers and civil society organisations to work together on research questions. This is based on public debates; 26 partners from 18 countries; Funding: EU

2012 Leuchtpol – Discovering energy and the environment anew (project start 2009): Training pre-school teachers within the largest German educational project on sustainable development. The Leuchtpol Regional Office of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) is attached to the Bonn Science Shop and is intended to reach more than 800 day care centres in NRW within four years; Commended as an "official project of the UN Decade Education for Sustainable Development"; Partner: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Natur und Umwelt (ANU, Nature and Environment Association), Sponsor: E.on

2010 COMSCIENCE (project start 2009): Communication of the most recent scientific findings about health and nutrition in five EU countries. The Bonn Science Shop is implementing this in Germany via Science Cafés; Funding: EU

2010 Fit for the Future – EE (renewable energies) reporters on the road (project start 2009): Training prospective teachers from various towns who work on the topic "Energy supplies worldwide" during a holiday programme. There young people learn where and how energy is produced by renewable energies. Project outputs: radio contributions by the young people, training material for teachers; Funding: Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (German Federal Foundation for the Environment), Stiftung Umwelt und Entwicklung NRW (Environment and Development Foundation of North Rhine-Westphalia)

2010 Job portal "Energy jobs North West" (project start 2009): The conceptualisation, setting up and running of a web-based job exchange for renewable energies, energy efficiency and savings in the northwestern urban area of Germany; On behalf of the town of Oldenburg and Energiekonsens Bremen, among others

2010 Role play "Up close to international environmental policy" (project start 2008): Here young people take on the roles of UN delegates of various countries. "Negotiations" take place on the topics of forests and biological diversity, water as a resource, or climate change and CO₂. The international negotiations are then transferred to the local and individual levels. Commended as an "official project of the UN Decade Education for Sustainable Development"; Funding: Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (German Federal Foundation for the Environment), InWEnt from funds of the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), various sponsors

2010 Soufflearning (project start 2006): Development of a method of individual coaching at the work place. Application of Soufflearning (prompting and learning) in small businesses; In cooperation with netz NRW (Network NRW). Funding: European Social Fund, State of NRW within the framework of the initiative Innovation Weiterbildung NRW (Further Training Innovation NRW), companies' own funds

2010 Orientation for choosing a career: Tomorrow's professionals (project start 2005): Individual coaching of school students at schools in the Bonn/Rhein-Sieg Region; Development of material for lower and intermediate secondary school teachers so that they can offer their students more support in choosing a career. Exercise folder for classes: "What do you want to be? – Tomorrow's professionals – Individualised choice of profession at lower and intermediate secondary schools"; Funding: NRW Employment Ministry, as of 2007 Federal Employment Office, Bonn, Stiftung Jugendhilfe (Youth Support Foundation) of the Sparkasse Bonn, European Social Fund

2010 Tenth forestry education training course (project start 1998): "Kindergarten in the forest": Certified extra-occupational training for pre-school teachers, in cooperation with the Freiburg Nature School

2009 Fifth nationwide job and education fair "Renewable energies": Organisation and conceptual planning of the fifth EE (renewable energies) job fair at the Gelsenkirchen Science Park. The fair is the largest job platform of this growth sector; Website: www.jobmotor-erneuerbare.de; Own project

2009 "Young people in the knowledge-based society of the EU": Contentual support for the German delegation of

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young people who discussed central issues of today with the 300 young delegates from all the Member States of the European Union as well as with researchers and politicians; Funding: French government

2009 Funding sources for sustainability: Fifth updating of the online financial advisory site. The advisory site informs citizens and citizen groups of funding sources for projects and initiatives in the fields of environmental protection and development cooperation; Funding: Service Agency Communities in One World

2009 Play Area (project start 2007): Creation of a computer game which sensitizes young people in an entertaining but nonetheless well-founded way to the issues of land use; Funding: BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research)

2009 Magic Kitchen for Kids (project start 2006): In the "magic kitchen", children learn that healthy food is tasty and that cooking is fun. The concept of the project that has mainly been tried out in day care centres is to win parents over to healthy nutrition via their children. In 2008, the "Magic Kitchen" won the advancement award "Strong Kids Network" of the AOK (statutory health insurance), Project funding: among others, Aktion Mensch, BKK Rheinland, HIT Foundation

2009 Evaluation of the "Hot times" campaign and the campaign on sustainable land use development (project start 2008), Funding: Stiftung Umwelt und Entwicklung NRW (Environment and Development Foundation of North Rhine-Westphalia)

2008 Training and jobs for renewable energies (project start 2005): Within the third labour market project, the Bonn Science Shop compiled a status report on training and jobs for renewable energies. It was based on the results of expert conferences and workshops at the job and education trade fair "Renewable energies" as well as on expert questionnaires. The analysis of job offers allowed assertions to be made about qualification requirements in the sector; Funding: BMU (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety)

2008 Survey: Impairment of health through mould: Support for the parents' initiative "Healthy schools in Oedekoven" by the evaluation of questionnaires on the health of the school children. Comparison of health impairment between children in classrooms where there was mould and in those where there was none; Own project

2008 Dig and Learn – Kids explore the Ground (project start 2006): Development of teaching material for teachers and pre-school teachers about soil. The aim is to develop with international partners attractive and sustainable forms of teaching and learning that will encourage children throughout Europe to carry out their own research. The project is described on the website www.teaching-soil.eu; Funding: EU

2008 TRAMS – Training and mentoring of Science Shops (project start 2006): The project supports groups of persons who want to set up new Science Shops by offering training and further education. Development of service offers via the Living Knowledge Network; 17 partners from 14 countries; Funding: EU



Role play "Up close to international environmental policy": Young people in the role of UN delegates

2008 CIPAST – Citizen Participation in Science and Technology (project start 2005): The project is intended to promote the development of a European culture of citizen participation through the exchange of best practice experiences and the transfer of expertise and training material; 12 partners from 7 countries; Funding: EU

2008 Role play "Using space instead of wasting it" (project start 2005): The exercise puts young people in the position of local politicians and thereby sensitizes them to concrete decisions concerning the land development plan of their town; Funding: Stiftung Umwelt und Entwicklung NRW (Environment and Development Foundation of North Rhine-Westphalia)

2007 International garden Bonn: Foundation of an international garden which since then has made it possible for 22 families from 17 different countries to "put down roots abroad"; Own project

2007 Green playtown: Taking over responsibility for the former EXPO 2000 exhibition area "Green playtown – Turning

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hedges into houses". The area is used for environmental events and is open to visitors on various days of the year; Own project

2007 Manuals: Insulation Materials and Electromagnetic Radiation from Mobile phones

2006 Religious diversity in NRW (project start 2005): Compilation of a map of the religious communities of NRW, Project management University of Bochum; Funding: Ministry of Science and Research, NRW

2006 Land – without end? (project start 2005): 19 exhibition boards and a brochure give a graphic impression of the way land use in various towns has developed: NRW-Stiftung Natur, Kultur, Heimat (NRW Foundation Nature, Culture, Home)

2006 The wind energy labour market: The study verifies that there was a lack of specialists in the field of wind energy; Funding: BMU (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety)

2006 Gallery of jobs for the future: The eleven banners of the touring exhibition "Gallery of Jobs for the Future" offers insight into vocational biographies in regenerative energy; Funding: BMU (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety)

2006 Land use in NRW (project start 2004): Construction of the website "Land use and land consumption in North Rhine-Westphalia", project among others with scientists from the universities of Bonn and Karlsruhe under the management of the Bonn Science Shop; Aim: construction of an information and discussion platform that makes it possible to look at local areas using satellite photos, identifies problematic issues and lists examples of best practice; Funding: Ministry of Environment, NRW

2006 Electromagnetic radiation manual for house buyers; Own project

2006 "Playing and crafting – but in a healthy way" appears in two issues with a total circulation of 130,000; Funding: DAK (statutory health insurance)

2005 Study – Mobile phone systems near kindergartens: 32 kindergartens and primary schools in Bonn are near mobile phone systems and thus fall short of the clearance distance specified by international precautionary figures. This was ascertained for Bonn by the Bonn Science Shop in 2005. As a result the town decided on new guidelines for dealing with the mobile phone issue; Own project

2005 Series of articles "Working abroad": First article "Working abroad" in the "arbeitsmarkt" information pamphlets. Since then the series describes monthly what the chances on the labour markets of various countries are and what hurdles need to be surmounted; Own project

2005 Stiftungsnetzwerk (Network of Public Foundations) (project start 2002): Support of Agenda 21 groups in forming citizen foundations through publications, an internet platform and workshops; Project funding: Federal Environment Agency and Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)

2005 Improving Science Shop Networking – ISSNET (project start 2003): Thirteen European Science Shops set up an international Science Shop network aimed at giving citizens EU-wide access to the results of scientific research, presented in a way they can understand. The task of the Bonn Science Shop is above all to design and produce newsletters and a Science Shop periodical (Living Knowledge); Project funding: EU

2004 Job and education fair "Renewable energies" (project start 2003): The Bonn Science Shop planned and organised the first country-wide career day in this growth sector, with workshops for specific job areas and a conference of experts; within the framework of the worldwide conference "Renewables 2004" in Bonn; Project funding: BMU (Federal Ministry for the Environment)

2003 "A Matter of Faith (Glaubenssache) – Religion in Bonn": A publication, in book form (in German), on the topography of religion in Bonn; an objective and easily understood presentation of the 30 different religious communities



Leuchtpol – Discovering energy and the environment anew: Training pre-school teachers


Citizens' forum

in Bonn; the aim: to promote co-existence through better mutual understanding; Own project

2003 Nutrition – a discovery walkway: Development and production of a didactic environmental concept for the Neanderthal Museum in collaboration with the Information and Advisory Centre for Environmental Education; Topic: Forms of nutrition in the history of mankind; On behalf of the Neanderthal Museum

2002 The SCIPAS Project (project start 2001): In the fore-runner project to ISSNET, 20 European Science Shops – including the Science Shop in Bonn – agreed on both a definition of and working areas for Science Shops within the EU; Project funding: EU

2002 Training seminar – Managerial assistants: Project of the Bonn Science Shop and netz NRW (Network NRW) offering additional qualifications for women re-entering the job market; Project funding: European Social Fund and the Ministry of Labour, North Rhine-Westphalia

2000 Fourth Theatre Festival of the Environment in Mainz: As with the previous Theatre Festival of the Environment, the aim was to increase awareness of and information about the environment through drama and other forms of art; Project funding: Central Office for Environmental Awareness, Rhineland-Palatinate

1999 Pilot project "Environmentally-sound driving": Driving training and presentation of the Science Shop publication "Der Weg zum sparsamen Fahrstil" (How to drive economically) on the occasion of the City of Bonn Action Day on the same subject; Project funding: City of Bonn

1999 Expert seminars "Eco-audit and Eco-profit – Community projects for the economy and the environment within the Local Agenda 21 process": The aim was the further development of environmental management systems; In collaboration with the Federal Environment Ministry and the Federal State ministries

1999 Theatre competition for Expo 2000: Development of the concept for a competition on the topic of "People, Nature, Technology" for Expo 2000, followed by the actual competition itself "Environmental Theatre for Expo 2000" in conjunction with the third Theatre Festival in Bonn; Funding: Environment Ministry, NRW

1998 "Urban infrastructure network": Compilation of a handbook documenting the research results, methods and solutions in the area of "Promoting a sustainable urban infrastructure"; Project funding: EU

1998 "Local Agenda 21 Handbook": This information and methodology guide was produced jointly with the registered association "TU WAS (Do something) e.V."

1998 Extension of the educational programme by taking over the Ecological Education Centre

1997 "Development of a project to implement Local Agenda 21": Concept for and management of seminars in various towns; Project funding: Ökologiestiftung (Ecology Foundation), NRW

1997 Pilot projects "Reintegrating people receiving social security into the job market": Together with the Social Security Office of the City of Bonn, the Bonn Science Shop offered those participating in the project further training and regular advice; Project funding: City of Bonn

1997 "Art as a medium of environmental education" (project start 1995): The exhibition in the Bonn Botanical Gardens and the guide "Art d'éco" came about as a result of research and discussions in cooperation with artists, the University of Lüneburg and the Institute of Cultural Studies of North Rhine-Westphalia; Project funding: Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (German Federal Foundation for the Environment)

1996 Second Theatre Festival of the Environment in Bonn and brochure "Theater für die Umwelt" (Theatre for the environment) on behalf of the Environment Ministry, NRW

1995 Expert congress "Citizen participation as the driving force in the politics of local climate protection": Climate

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congress in cooperation with the City of Bonn, the Ökologie-stiftung (Ecology Foundation) NRW and the Climate Alliance of European Cities

1995 "Information and animation of the consumer in regard to natural textiles": Guidelines, videos and workshops on the theme "Can fashion be ecological?" as well as a concept for and organisation of a municipal Environment Day under the same motto; Project funding: EU

1995 Project "Environmental education in kindergarten": The manual was the result of seminars and working groups in which environmental educationalists, pre-school teachers and specialists took part; Project funding: BUND Freiburg

1995 Information pamphlet "*arbeitsmarkt Bildung und Kultur*" (The job market – Education and Culture): Weekly evaluation, compilation and dispatch of the job vacancies in various print media in the field of education and culture; Own project

1995 Opening of the testing and advisory office for electro-smog: Own project

1994 First countrywide Theatre Festival of the Environment in Bonn; Project funding: Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (German Federal Foundation for the Environment)

1994 Coordination of national libraries for the environment: Publication of a library guide to environmental libraries; Project funding: Federal Environment Agency

1994 Information pamphlet "*arbeitsmarkt Umweltschutz*" (The Job Market – Environmental Protection): Weekly evaluation, compilation and dispatch of the job vacancies in various print media in the field of education and culture; Own project

1993 Designation of textiles: Production of working materials for multipliers; Own project

1992 "The environment: Practical field of work and job market": This series of seminars was supported by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, and the Federal Ministry of Education

1991 Second round of further education measures "Specialist for environmental protection": Support from the relevant employment offices; third round of further education measures 1992

1991 Union of German Science Shops into the association "Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Wissenschaftsläden (AWILA)"

1990 Environmental Theatre UNVERPACKT (Unwrapped): Setting up of the theatre group; Project financed by the ABM centres which promote work opportunities

1990 Pilot project – Further education and the opening up of new occupational areas (project start 1989): Environmental consultant for households, local administration and businesses; Project funding: European Social Fund, Employment Office Bonn (until 1990)



Gallery of jobs for the future: Insight into vocational biographies in regenerative energy

1989 Opening of the environment library; Own project

1989 "Water used to be ... clean": Series of lectures within the framework of the Studium Universale at the University of Bonn

1989 "Guidelines for Environmental Consulting": Publication based on a study entitled "Environmental consultant – Job profile and training concepts"

1988 Book "The individual, the environment and philosophy"; based on the series of lectures held within the framework of the Studium Universale at the University of Bonn

1987 Study on training measures for environmental consultants: Job profiles, situation and developments in the area of environmental consulting, and the corresponding training; Project financed by the ABM centres which promote work opportunities

“arbeitsmarkt” Information Pamphlets

Systematically thinking outside the box

Which other print media have survived the last decade and a half without a grand re-launch, without a completely new orientation or a refurbished concept? Surely not many. Fifteen years ago, the Bonn Science Shop published the “arbeitsmarkt” information pamphlets for the very first time. They still exist today, re-worked somewhat graphically, but their concept is as relevant as ever. The information pamphlets still have their subscribers, although competition from free internet job forums and career magazines has grown immensely.

At the beginning of the nineties, the idea for the information pamphlets was in the air: our further education courses for unemployed academics entitled “Specialist for Environmental Protection” were moving into their third round. For a long time we had not only been offering further qualifications to the participants of our training courses but had also been trying to support them in accessing their job market. Week after week we analysed the vacancy notices in the most important daily newspapers, making this assessment available to the participants in the form of a newspaper. Gradually word spread, and soon there were a few hundred subscribers outside the course itself interested in our job market analysis.

But it didn't stop there: in view of the increasing unemployment, more and more academics in the arts, humanities and social sciences began asking for a similar service for their target group. That's why, as early as one year after the start of our information pamphlet “arbeitsmarkt (The Job Market) – Environmental Protection”, we began publishing an additional pamphlet “arbeitsmarkt (The Job Market) – Education/Culture/Social Services”.

The secret of success: More than just a newspaper

From the very beginning we have offered our subscribers more than just a pure job service. That is surely one of our secrets of success: And, as our publications began to spread, the number of letters, telephone calls and mails we received increased. In them readers asked for advice or inquired after tips and

people looking for jobs write very openly in the column “Readers' letters” about success or lack of success in finding work, thus passing on their experiences. On the other hand, the feedback from readers also helps the editorial staff to orient themselves as to the problems job seekers face and where solutions need to be found. Because of this and its choice of subject matter our informa-



information about job applications, occupational support measures, further qualifications and new occupational areas. Since then, the editorial department of the Bonn Science Shop which was consequently expanded has been analysing and regularly reporting on the current situation and the on-going developments of selected job markets. At the same time, the exchange of information between the subscribers and the editorial staff quite literally keeps the publication alive: on the one hand,

tion service has always managed to stand out against usual vocational and career magazines.

A qualified “media advisor” from Berlin wrote to us for instance about her own “personal balance”: “At the moment it's probably more likely that I get the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for social commitment than a job via a job advertisement! But thanks to the info pamphlet I've now managed to set up a project in the social sphere and thus also my position as

25 Years of the Bonn Science Shop

Small-scale policy written large

In 1984 the Bonn Science Shop was founded by a handful of academics and students. Today it is the largest of the 60 Science Shops in Europe. An interview with the Managing Director, Theo Bühler, on the role and development of the Bonn Science Shop and its task in knowledge transfer.

? *"Knowledge doesn't keep any longer than fish," the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once said scoffingly. So what's left of 25 years of knowledge transfer?*

Bühler: Hopefully a great deal: Because we're not concerned with force-feeding people with as much knowledge as possible. On the contrary, the newly found knowledge is intended to encourage developments and make people self-assured and more able to

act. For example, when we let young people slip into the role of local politicians for a day during a project and they then fictitiously decide in a role play whether a new housing area should be built on a green area in their town or instead one should use waste land, then they have not only learnt something about the ecological problem of land consumption. We want to motivate people to participate in decision-making processes concerning socially important issues.



? *But the work of the Bonn Science Shop wasn't always like that ...*

Bühler: The focus of our work has changed over the years. In the early years we mainly reacted: citizens asked us for instance what washing powder was ecologically acceptable. We found the corresponding experts at the university, examined the findings critically, "translated" them into comprehensible speech and passed this back to the citizens. At that time that was a very important function because the scientists sat in their ivory towers – much more so than nowadays. The public heard very little of the results that were reached at the universities. And the researchers were little interested in what the public or citizens' initiatives thought to be important or useful. Science Shops like ours bridged the gap between laypeople and experts. But the impetus always came from a member of the public.

? *And he/she can't ask you any questions any more?*

► PR officer/fundraising. Unfortunately I didn't get any support from the Federal Employment Agency the whole time I was trying to create my own job".

Research and teaching profit

But not only those looking for a job became interested in our evaluations and expert advice: universities, research institutes, the state employment administration and ministries gradually did too. The reason: no other institution in Germany is in the position we are to make such precise forecasts regarding what qualifications will be required for certain professional fields, which academic degrees are especially in demand, and in which regions the job market for academics is currently booming.

Our job evaluations are based on precisely analysed competency and professional fields which have in turn been organized according to individual occupational and labour market segments. This offer is accompanied by current analyses of the labour market and is simultaneously evaluated empiri-

cally so that tendencies for change can then be presented in the information pamphlets at an early stage. Through this, our labour market experts provide both an evaluation of previous trends as well as a future-orientated communication of coming developments and corresponding opportunities on the labour market, both in and with the information services.

Our philosophy: No hectic changes

At the beginning of this decade, experts said that in future nobody would look for a job by reading a newspaper. Our info services prove the opposite is true. And as long as internet search engines are not in a position to search more intelligently, sort job offers according to professions, identify jobs for historians, for example, even though the key word is missing, and show people entering from a different angle the right path, that won't change.

Krischan Ostenrath, Andreas Pallenberg (Editorial Board "arbeitsmarkt") ■

Bühler: Yes, of course he or she can. We are certainly still following our original approach: if individuals or groups of people want to know something about electromagnetic radiation, nourishment, healthy textiles, ecological construction, training people about the environment or ecological professions we are still happy to help. But the decisive difference to earlier on is that, in addition, we also actively deal with issues via projects – issues that are ecologically or socially important and ones where we think citizens have too little say as regards action or decision-making. The keyword is "citizen participation".

? *Are you forcing the public to become active?*

Bühler: It's not the case that citizens, and especially young people, are not willing to tackle problems. But disenchantment with politics often comes about when citizens feel that they don't know where and how to make a contribution. Most feel completely smitten by the overabundance of information. Where our work is concerned: the resonance we receive to our offers is distinctly good.

? *So the Bonn Science Shop sees itself as a mediator creating orientation.*

Bühler: A typical example of this mediator position is our nationwide job and education fair "Renewable energies" which first took place in 2004. It was clear to us at the time that if one hoped to have well-trained workers in this growth sector in the future then training institutions, business men and women and also potential employees had to get together and agree on future qualification requirements and the necessary training offers. We were first to bring these issues onto centre stage nationally by way of an expert conference, branch workshops and a trade

fair, and continue to do so today. Since then we have been analysing the job offers of the various branches to see how demands on employees change. At the same time we regularly identify courses of study that really do deserve the epithet "renewable energies".

By the way, we also closed a particular gap in information fifteen years ago: since then, we have been analysing the professional field of the environmental and natural sciences on the one hand and education, culture and the social sciences on the other in our two weekly information pamphlets "*arbeitsmarkt*". There one can find between 600 and 800 current job offers weekly, along with background information on the labour market. We often receive feedback telling us that our info services help people to think outside the box, and that, for example, they get an idea for a completely new beginning.

? *Don't universities, that likewise wish to practice "knowledge transfer", compete with the Science Shops?*

Bühler: Universities have definitely opened up in the course of the years. Research findings are communicated today in a more attractive and comprehensible way. But knowledge transfer still remains a one-way street: from the researchers to the public. We on the other hand want what is important to the public to be included in the research. We don't only want citizens to be better informed, we want them to actively participate in social processes.

? *The Bonn Science Shop has changed the way its works. Wouldn't it be sensible to change to a more up-to-date name?*

Bühler: The name shows where we come from: from the 80s, a time when Läden (centres or shops) were being set up everywhere and citizens

were coming together to make a small mark politically in order to get something moving.

The name only sounds old-fashioned in Germany. In the Netherlands every child knows what a Science Shop is and they are also held in high regard by the EU. Over the last few years, Brussels has spent hundreds of thousands of euros in promoting the projects of the European Science Shops. The reason is simple: today's scientific community can only function properly if, along with good scientists, there are also people who are good at conveying scientific ideas. ■

A diversity of concepts

The strategies and structures of the Science Shops have developed differently. In Germany most of the only seven shops are registered associations. Although through their independence of the universities they enjoy greater freedom in the choice of main fields of work, they at the same time always have to make sure that funding is ensured. Only a few Science Shops have managed to establish themselves as part of a university.

In the Netherlands the close association to the universities has remained. Here there are even partially specialized Winkel (shops) active in various disciplines such as biology, chemistry and the social sciences and these are coordinated via a common office. In such cases the coordination centres take on the administration and PR work and are at the same time a point of contact for the public. The research activity is mainly carried out by students – often as a part of their studies.

The staff



The staff of the Bonn Science Shop (Wissenschaftsladen Bonn e.V.) (front, left to right:) Rainer Vogelsang, Daniel Hilbring, Gabi Fremuth, Brigitte Peter, Olaf Greisler, Thorsten Roeser, Karin Stein, Andreas Pallenberg, Ruth Bozek, (center, left to right:) Anke Valentin, Tuba Amirian, Karin Chlupaty, Dr. Cornelia Voß, Kristin Auer, Antje Lembach, Nicole Hildebrandt, Tatjana Oelmeier, Birgit Netz-Gerten, Brigitte Eckert, Margret von der Forst-Bauer, (back, left to right:) Melanie Weißenberg, Krischan Ostenrath, Anne Brown, Martin Caspersen, Norbert Steinhaus, Dietrich Kolk, Mareike Buck, Sabine Kaufmann, Theo Bühler, Eva Schäfers, Frank Teller, Caroline Roelvink, Dr. Klaus Trost, Udo Herberz, Bernd Assenmacher; not depicted: Jürgen Gauert, Edith Klingsporn, Andre Schmidt, Thomas Klein, Katinka Lutze, Johannes Gühlcke.

Self-image versus incomprehension

The experience of the Canadian Science Shop employee David Yetman

I'm a knowledge mobilization manager. Not your everyday run-of-the-mill job. My mother never understands what I do. It's not like she can tell her friends I paint, build houses, or pave highways. "So what does your son do?" (Cough). "Well ... he mobilizes knowledge ... (cough)" (Pause.) (Awkward moment of silence.) "He does *what* to knowledge!"

What does it say about our society when no one understands what you do?

Its kind-of a funny job title but I get it. I finally get what it means. After four years mobilizing knowledge I finally understand what it means to share academic knowledge for the betterment of society. It really has a beautiful underpinning doesn't it? To share knowledge for the betterment of society. For a better society. To better society. God knows, there are enough problems out there to fix! Poverty, clean drinking water, contaminated air ... I believe academia is aptly placed to fix those problems ... I believe we need knowledge mobilization managers to take that knowledge and put it to work.

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The Bonn Science Shop (Wissenschaftsladen Bonn) – with 30 members of staff the largest of the 60 European Science Shops – promotes knowledge transfer and citizen participation.

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