

CAPS 2025 Symposium Abstract

Upscaling citizen science to increase impact, through addressing global concerns

Lead: James Sprinks

Presenters: Dilek Fraisl; Muki Haklay, Heidi Ballard, Austin Mast, Marius Oosterheld, Giovanni Maccani

Summary

Through upscaling citizen science, we explore the potential of actions to address global issues, involving fields such as biodiversity, public health, and environmental monitoring. We will discuss topics including funding, data, social innovation, and transformative change that can be both a barrier and enabler of CS upscaling.

Description

Citizen science is a proven methodology across a wide range of scientific disciplines, able to collect new and complementary data which enhances and adds context to existing data collection methods. By upscaling to a global level, citizen science could collect, analyse and exploit a vast amount of data, achieving a higher impact through creating a multinational community of citizen scientists. However, many citizen science actions start at a small-scale, facing technical, practical and conceptual changes when attempting to upscale, with current funding mechanisms and networks not providing the support, coordination or resources required to assist their effort. To address this, networks like the Citizen Science Global Partnership (CSGP) and projects including CROPS are attempting to join-up the efforts of citizen science, creating shared objectives, practices and resources to address issues on a global scale.

However, knowledge is needed regarding the barriers and enablers of upscaling citizen science efforts, their potential in contributing to global issues, and the role of society, through community-based initiatives and collaborations, in achieving transformative action. This symposium will bring together a panel of experts to discuss some of these issues through discussion with participants, using this feedback as knowledge to evolve future support actions. For the first time, experts with backgrounds in interoperability, policy, education, social innovation, ethics and inclusivity will be brought together to discuss scalability, providing in-depth knowledge regarding the current state of citizen science, and the direction needed to upscale actions to the global level.

The symposium will start with an introduction to CSGP, CROPS, their goals and objectives, followed by the panel presenting their thoughts on the scalability of citizen science. A question-and-answer session will follow, where participants can challenge and contribute to the assertions raised by the panel. Finally, there will be a discussion session, where attendees will share their ideas, experiences and opinions regarding the upscaling of citizen science. Through interactive discussion, and idea creation, attendees will contribute towards the design of future upscaling practices.

The outcome of the symposium will be a better-informed community about the issues surrounding the upscaling of citizen science actions, and a better-informed community support structure, taking a user-centred approach towards its design and implementation. Cross-

cutting themes regarding research design and management, communication, engagement and societal change will be addressed to inform an upscaling field of practice. On a practical level, attendees will be given guidance on how to be part of the CSGP, CROPS networks and communities, and further contribute to evolve citizen science towards global concerns.