



Community Engagement and Stakeholder Collaboration: Local Experiences and Evaluation of an Irish National Initiative for Promotion of Science

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Science Week is an annual week-long event in Ireland organized for the second week in November, planned to encourage a public appreciation of the role of science in society. It is the largest science festival in the country, involving tens of thousands of members of the public in workshops, talks, laboratory demonstrations, quizzes, science walks and other science-related events. It is promoted as an opportunity for people of all age groups to get hands-on with science, and to explore its relationships with technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM). The Limerick Festival of Science has been developed as a collaboration between three third level colleges in the region, as well as research units and other education providers, and with funding and other supports provided by Science Foundation Ireland. This has resulted in a programme of events across various locations and targeting specific stakeholder audiences. The collaborating groups have commissioned a researcher to collect and collate feedback about the Festival to measure the success of the diverse and varied events in engaging the target audiences. This paper will summarize the Festival programme and the research which identified the target audiences. It will also report the results of the evaluation and compare the scores over two years of data collection. It will conclude with recommendations for future Festival programmes.

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