

CHARM-EU WINTER SCHOOL 2026

Citizen Science in Action: Skills, Tools, and Community Engagement for Early-Career Researchers

DATES, FORMAT, VENUE

- Dates: 4-6 February 2026.
- Format: In person.
- Language: English.
- Webpage: <https://charm-eu.eu/learning/educational-offer/charm-eu-winter-school-2026/>.
- Location & Venue: University of Barcelona. Faculty of Economics and Business. [Diagonal, 690-696, 08034 Barcelona](#). Room 2019 (Building 696).
- Pre-training Information Session: 24 November 2025 (online, 13:00-14:00h CET). Open to anyone interested. More information at: <https://charm-eu.eu/event/charm-on-3-citizen-science-in-action/>.
- Pre-training Orientation Session: 23 January 2026 (online, date/time tbc). Preparatory session for enrolled participants prior to the training.

TARGET AUDIENCE

PhD Students, from any discipline or research field, enrolled in a doctoral programme at the CHARM-EU universities: University of Barcelona, Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest, University of Montpellier, Åbo Akademi University, Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg, Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences, University of Bergen.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This hands-on training program organized with the active involvement of trainers from seven CHARM-EU universities equips early career researchers with skills, tools, and mindset needed to ideate, design, contribute to, or lead Citizen Science (CS) projects, with a special emphasis on their social dimensions. Through guided discussions, interactive workshops, real-world case studies, and collaborative project development, participants will explore how to best engage citizens, communities and societal stakeholders in the research process, apply participatory methods, and navigate the ethical, practical, and scientific aspects of CS. By the end of the program, participants will have an initial plan in hand and will be equipped to co-create impactful, inclusive, and socially relevant science within and beyond their disciplines, integrating the multi or transdisciplinary dimensions of CS.

Students will have the opportunity to present their ongoing CS projects and to collaboratively design new CS strategies in groups. Each group will focus on one or more of the following driving ideas, which are instrumental in the development of a CS project: co-creation, communities, tools, data, ethics and inclusion, and action. For a detailed description of these ideas, visit: <https://web.ub.edu/en/web/ciencia-ciudadana>.

OBJECTIVES

The main goals to be achieved are:

- Reflect on the principles, affordances, and values of CS, with emphasis on its social dimensions: social commitment, collaboration with communities, communication, formal and informal learning, and evidence-based action.

- Explore ethical, methodological, and practical challenges of participatory research.
- Provide hands-on experience in designing and implementing CS projects.
- Foster interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration and societal engagement.
- Equip early-career researchers with tools for responsible, open, inclusive, and participatory research practices.
- Deliver a CS project prototype developed in small teams composed of participants from CHARM-EU universities, with mentorship support.
- Provide the participants with an international network of CS peers and practitioners.

TRAINERS

The course is provided by the following experts:

- Dr. Mia Åkerfelt (Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, Åbo Akademi University).
- Dr. Isabelle Bonhoure (Faculty of Information and Audiovisual Media, University of Barcelona).
- Dr. Thierry Brassac (Science Dissemination Department, University of Montpellier).
- Dr. Mireia Grau (Faculty of Medicine, University of Barcelona).
- Prof. Josep Perelló (Faculty of Physics, University of Barcelona).
- Prof. Joseph Roche (School of Education, Trinity College Dublin).
- Dr. Anna Sànchez (Faculty of Earth Sciences, University of Barcelona).
- Dr. Saskia Stevens (Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University).
- Prof. Roger Strand (Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities, University of Bergen).
- Dr. László Róbert Zsiros (Faculty of Science, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest).

APPLICATION & FEES

This is a certified training programme, via a [CHARM-EU Edubadge](#), for PhD students.

The course allows for the participation of up to 27 students. Each of the participating institutions will select up to three students. Each institution will handle the selection process according to their own internal rules and regulations. Therefore, applications must be submitted following the applicant's home institution procedure. Please check your university's dissemination channels for detailed information. A preview version of the application form is available [here](#).

Any queries regarding the application process should be addressed to each institution's CHARM-EU Manager:

- University of Barcelona: Jaime Llorca, jaimellorca@ub.edu.
- Trinity College Dublin: Conor Spillane, CSPILLAN@tcd.ie.
- Utrecht University: Rianne Giethoorn, r.i.giethoorn@uu.nl.
- Eötvös Loránd University Budapest: Anikó Gál Bélteki, aniko.gal.belteki@rk.elte.hu.
- University of Montpellier: Julien Lorentz, julien.lorentz@umontpellier.fr.
- Åbo Akademi University: Pia Le Grand, pia.legrand@abo.fi. Harriet Klåvus, harriet.klavus@abo.fi.
- Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg: Martin Kufferath-Sieberin, martin.kufferath-sieberin@uni-wuerzburg.de.
- Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences: Ines Müller-Vogt, ines.mueller-vogt@hs-ruhrwest.de.
- University of Bergen: Rosa Nogueira, rosa.nogueira@uib.no.

No charges or fees apply for selected PhD students. Tuition fees, accommodation and travel expenses, as well as meals (breakfast, lunch) are covered by CHARM-EU.

PROGRAMME

The agenda, as well as the seminars/workshops descriptions, are preliminary and might be subject to change.

	Feb 4	Feb 5	Feb 6
09:00 - 10:15	Seminar 1 and World Café	Seminar 3	Work in groups with mentoring
10:15 - 11:30		Seminar 4	Work in groups with mentoring
	Coffee Break		
11:45 - 13:00	Seminar 2	Workshop 3	Students' demos
	Lunch Break		
14:00 - 15:15	Workshop 1	Seminar 5	Students' demos
15:15 - 16:30	Workshop 2	Seminar 6	Farewell
16:30 - 18:00	Work in groups with mentoring	Work in groups with mentoring	

Seminars & Workshops:

- **Seminar 1. Citizen Science introduction and world café with students (Josep Perelló, UB).** CS offers a way to make research more inclusive, responsive, and socially committed. By collaborating with communities, researchers can co-create knowledge that addresses real-world challenges while fostering a stronger sense of responsibility and civic engagement. Embracing CS transforms research into a participatory process that advances knowledge and contributes to collective empowerment and positive social change. The session will introduce key perspectives on CS practices and present the structure of the school. In the final part, participants will share their own PhD projects involving CS and form working groups to plan collaborative tasks during the school
- **Seminar 2. Epistemological and normative foundations and considerations for Citizen Science (Roger Strand, UiB).** While term “citizen science” came into mainstream use only in the latter decades, its underlying ideas and justifications have at least a century-long history. In this seminar, we will map the different ways of understanding the practices and purposes of CS, and argue that the question “how to do CS?” should always be accompanied by the question “why do CS?”. The seminar will also outline the similarities and connections to related concepts, such as ORRI (open and responsible research and innovation).
- **Workshop 1. Making your Citizen Science project visible to the public (László Róbert Zsiros, ELTE).** Visibility matters! Even the best-designed CS project is like a tree falling in an empty forest... minus the philosophical debate. This hands-on session builds intuition for “journalistic thinking,” a useful skill that helps researchers shape and share stories more effectively. At this workshop we’ll shift our academic mindset toward the perspectives of the public and the bridges to them: journalists, influencers, and curators of social networks. After all, it’s their engagement that makes CS possible.
- **Workshop 2. Peluchologie: making science with teddy bears (Thierry Brassac, UM).** We generated the first scientific online and collaborative teddy bear collection (<https://nounours.umontpellier.fr/>). This science dissemination project, initiated in 2010 has generated and analyzed data published in three research papers. The participant’s beloved teddy bear will be described, carefully measured, photographed and uploaded in the collection.

- **Seminar 3. Citizen Science in international projects (Mia Åkerfelt, ÅAU).** In this session, I will share experiences from working with humanities-based CS in multiple countries simultaneously, discussing how to take local culture as well as EU-regulations into consideration when setting up your project.
- **Seminar 4. Citizen Science thrives in informal learning settings (Joseph Roche, TCD).** CS thrives in informal learning settings—museums, libraries, community spaces, and online platforms—where people engage with research beyond traditional classrooms. These environments offer opportunities to collaborate with diverse publics, experiment with new ways of sharing knowledge, and reflect on the social purpose of science. By integrating CS into informal learning contexts, researchers can foster curiosity, inclusivity, and mutual learning, transforming scientific practice into a participatory and socially committed endeavour that connects academic research with everyday life. Several cases will be presented to dissect the positive potential for CS as well as causes for concern.
- **Workshop 3. Citizen Science in climate-vulnerable neighborhoods (Isabelle Bonhoure, UB).** The workshop offers a hands-on, participatory experience that focuses on innovative, collaborative approaches to addressing local climate-change related challenges, such as the perception of urban heat by the most affected neighbors. The workshop includes a simulated collective thermal walk in the vicinity of the training venue.
- **Seminar 5. Shared Pasts: Participatory practices in archaeological heritage (Saskia Stevens, UU).** In this contribution, I will share experiences with participatory heritage practices within academic research on the Roman past of the Netherlands and evaluate the (added) value of participatory practices and CS in archaeological research.
- **Seminar 6. Surfing for Science (Anna Sánchez, UB).** Since 2019 we've used a net trawl to collect scientific samples from SUPs and kayaks. Our findings have revealed the magnitude of plastic pollution in the nearshore and have provided evidence for policy makers for management and mitigation. The project marks a paradigm shift in microplastic research, demonstrating that CS can yield robust scientific data while fostering public engagement. We will present evidence of CS efforts resulting in the collection of > 100,000 microplastic particles, and describe how the resulting dataset has leveraged plastic pollution research in the ocean.

Work in groups:

- During the pre-training orientation session, we will suggest group compositions based on the applicants' responses in the application form. Groups will be formed according to principles of cultural diversity, while primarily reflecting the participants' selected driving ideas behind a CS project. This approach is designed to foster collaboration that transcends specific research themes and disciplinary boundaries.
- On the final day of the training programme, each group will present their reflections on the driving idea(s) they selected, acknowledging that these are often closely interconnected. Presentations should highlight potential activities and actions that can be implemented within the participants' respective local contexts. Ideally, all proposed actions should align with a shared rationale linked to the chosen driving idea, while taking into account the specific characteristics and needs of each context.
- The group of mentors will guide participants throughout the process, and each group session will be specifically designed to facilitate teamwork and support the preparation of a final presentation and accompanying document.