

RELATE BRIEFING -- ROUND ONE

A number of students are sent for one week to a research laboratory involved in European research. Their objective is to deliver, as a result of their mission, an in-depth article and/or an audiovisual production project. To meet these goals, the students will have to acquire as much information as possible during their stay in the laboratories and try to create a mutual understanding dynamic between themselves and the research teams they will interact with. The articles produced will have to address the general public, and therefore try to make science and research understandable to non specialists while sticking to principles of good information... (Extract from project proposal).

PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

1. Before you leave: Read the latest reports and analysis on your given topic
 - *What is the state-of-the-art? Find a range of respected authors*
2. Once you arrive: Shadow and carry out interviews with researchers
 - *Be curious but courteous*
3. Respect the lab rules (these will be clarified in writing)
 - *Ask permission before taking photos, audio or video*
4. Identify key points, trends and findings
 - *Find your angle; adapt your style to your audience*
 - *Aim for a balanced, accurate account*
5. Also look for subtle but essential aspects
 - *Explore the human angle (researcher, beneficiary or other key individual)*
 - *Give your own interpretation for an original, engaging story.*

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Make sure you understand the topic inside out
 - *Read the background, create a work plan, then interview researchers*
 - *Check the [programme](#) and [work plan](#) updates*
2. Write a daily blog on the RELATE project website
 - *Treat this as your diary and research. Feel free to share insights with other participants*
3. Produce an article or audiovisual production based on your experiences in the lab
 - *To be submitted within 15 days after the end of your trip.*

PROJECT GOALS (SHORT-TERM)

1. To introduce young journalists to EU 7th Framework Programme research in a direct and personal way: to 'discover science inside out'
2. To bring reporters and scientists together by focusing on research themes
3. To promote accurate and engaging journalism into cutting-edge EU research
4. To explain science, making it less abstract and more relevant to the general public
5. To reach as wide an audience as possible via mainstream and/or specialist media
6. To help researchers to explain their work and learn how to deal with journalists.

PROJECT GOALS (LONG-TERM)

1. To launch science writing careers for students, postgrads or alumni of European journalism schools
2. To build lasting relationships and networks among young journalists and scientists
3. To increase the number of journalists reporting on science, research and technology
4. To raise the profile of RELATE, FP7 and innovative approaches to science journalism
5. To develop long-term projects with similar methodology and objectives
6. To roll out more study programmes, adding to the curricula of EU journalism schools.

RELATE'S UNIQUE ADDED VALUE

1. Young journalists get to know the inside story about ongoing research
2. They gain privileged access to researchers and work done behind the scenes
3. They are able to focus on a single theme, full-time, for a week
4. They are given professional advice on how to pitch their work to the media.

- *This is the pilot phase. It's now up to you to launch RELATE!*
- *The best piece of work will win a handheld high definition video camera.*

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

GENERAL

- What are the common misconceptions about this research?
- What are the main social impacts of technological innovation? Do different countries perceive these effects in similar ways?
- What are the pros and cons of this specific research for society? How is it likely to affect future generations?
- Do different social groups perceive science in different ways (ie, older vs younger generation), or is this a false dichotomy?

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- How much of the energy demand of your country is satisfied by renewable energy? And in other EU countries? Is it a technology gap or a combination of other factors (economical, political, or social)?
- Renewable energy is a comprehensive label for several different technologies at various levels of development. Consider the one your lab is working on: is it an advanced implementation of an already existing technology, is it a prototype, is it ready for industrial production, should it be regarded as a short/medium/long term solution? Where is it to be placed in the EU energy mix?
- Will the technology your lab is working require a change in the distribution network and in the way energy is consumed? (Large scale central production vs. small scale energy).
- Are there any risks?

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Usually research on climate change is aimed at monitoring the phenomenon, mitigating it or supporting adaptation policies. What is your lab doing?
- Climate science is a new branch and involves an interdisciplinary methodology. Ask the researchers about their backgrounds: are they physicians, chemists, or engineers? Does it make a difference to the way they approach the problem?
- Science reveals a world that our senses cannot perceive directly (and is never common sense information). The difference between weather and climate is an instance of this. The detecting of global climate change has long been a matter of discussion, yet there are still people who deny the phenomenon. Should we deal with the issue or not? If yes, how?
- Is climate change research seen as more urgent in the Mediterranean than in northern Europe? Does the research activity reflect that?

NANOTECHNOLOGY

- Which research fields are usually classified under the term nanotechnology?
- What are the potential risks of nanotechnology? Can you explain the apathy or lack of understanding shown by the general public?
- Which pictures may illustrate nanotechnology for the public apart from photos of a lab and researchers in action?"

HEALTH RESEARCH

- Find an interesting angle for a report without focusing on potential cures.
- What is a stereotypical health report? What are its main features?

JOURNALISM ETHICS

Members of the British National Union of Journalists are expected to abide by the following professional principles:

A journalist

1. At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed
2. Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair
3. Does her/his utmost to correct harmful inaccuracies
4. Differentiates between fact and opinion
5. Obtains material by honest, straightforward and open means, with the exception of investigations that are both overwhelmingly in the public interest and which involve evidence that cannot be obtained by straightforward means
6. Does nothing to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of the public interest
7. Protects the identity of sources who supply information in confidence and material gathered in the course of her/his work
8. Resists threats or any other inducements to influence, distort or suppress information
9. Takes no unfair personal advantage of information gained in the course of her/his duties before the information is public knowledge
10. Produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation
11. Does not by way of statement, voice or appearance endorse by advertisement any commercial product or service save for the promotion of her/his own work or of the medium by which she/he is employed
12. Avoids plagiarism.

More details available here: http://ethicnet.uta.fi/united_kingdom/code_of_conduct
International codes of ethics here: http://ethicnet.uta.fi/codes_by_country