

Workshop: The Pandemic Academic
Event date: 26 September 2022
Hosted by: KNAW, Amsterdam office

The 3-hour event consisted of a panel discussion with OCW Minister Robber Dijkgraaf, a round of pitches and in-depth group discussions on 6 key impacts of the pandemic on academics.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Panel discussion

- per *Dijkgraaf* we should not waste the data we have collected during the pandemic but study it and learn from it!
- Advice was given to ask why a researcher has fewer publications and explore their research story
- Wetenschapsveiligheid- researchers on the frontlines experiences risks of research with impact for society.
- (advice for) 10 million EUR to be invested by OCW to set up a Knowledge Center to:
 1. Increase dialogue with society
 2. Provide time and training to young researchers
 3. Invest in science communication
- Positive side of the pandemic:
 1. Increased international collaboration which we can draw on to tackle other pressing societal challenges
 2. Embracing digitalization
 3. Reducing flex contracts and extending postdoc contracts due to disruptions like pandemic

2. Pitches

- Arfan Ikran of ZonMW/NWO- Experimenting with faster and more flexible procedures but funding agencies need to learn and improve, e.g. the first come, first serve grants disadvantages parents with children at home during first lockdown.
- M.H.van Tol, Chairwoman of Young Academy- how to prevent a lost generation- accepting pre-prints and studies with lower N values due to pandemic disruptions. And, providing security to PhD candidates and postdocs especially international students and colleagues and including interests of those who still have not returned to the office in decision making.
- President of Universities of the NL- We need new ways of working and responsible use of big tech. The key is OPEN- open science, open education and open impact (scientific advice for society).
 1. The transition to open requires greater contribution from support staff, namely, data managers
 2. R&R recognition of contributions to team science
 3. safeguarding of public values against big tech and other corporate interests. This in part entails new EU and NL laws
- Rector Magnificus from VU-
 1. Pandemic students are missing the skill of finding each other for student-student work

2. Scientific communication- it's essential scientists communicate their doubts and engage in dialogue not just reporting scientific findings
3. Get out of the back-to-back meeting routine

3. Group discussions

Table 1- Technology

- Review procurement agreements in the best interest of the university
- Whether to build or buy tech
- Further integration of digitalization in academy

Table 2- Academics on Fire

- We have proven ourselves highly adaptive but the pace is not sustainable
- Pandemic has exacerbated inequalities among researchers.
- We need a more flexible system and more local resilience, e.g. buffers within organizations and departments, and individuals.

Table 3- Rethinking established practices (my group)

- Authorities within academic institutions should empower more bottom-up OPEN initiatives
- Academic support market- institutions should take stock of changing support needs of academics (especially in the transitions to open data, big data, digitalization and research with societal impact) and support services that are available. This support supply-demand relationship should be in part a standardized offering and in part flexible and adaptable to the circumstances of the individual researcher
- The acceleration of science during the pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities (e.g. increased threats and dangers for scientists, inadequate training of scientists in scientific communication and use of big data, etc.). It may be time to valorize slowing down to ensure sustainable research quality.
- Continue more inclusive practices such as hybrid conferences.

Table 4- Inequalities

- Monitoring of long-term effects of Covid-19 on researchers is not being done sufficiently
- It's easy to overlook groups still at home and international colleagues
- Be more flexible, but mean it by ensuring security and certainty for employees

Table 5- Scientific Communication

- Science is becoming increasingly intertwined with politics- this requires more dialogue
- Encourage the art of listening
- Be less competitive and more collaborative

Table 6- Resilient Organizations

- Teamwork during pandemic has been wonderful- let's keep this
- Flexibility cannot be a one-size-fits-all
- Hold on to the global perspective we gained-we need this to tackle other grand challenges together