



Universiteit Antwerpen
| Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen

Testimony Marie-Curie Innovative Training Network

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SOLiD*i*

- Solidarity in Diversity
- Submitted to Social Sciences and Humanities Panel
- 10 academic partners
- 23 non-academic partners, for training and secondment
- 15 PhD positions
- First time application (96,6%)
- Supported by Antwerp Urban Studies Institute

Building coherent and innovative framework

- **Collaborative applications require coherent *and* innovative framework**
 - strength of proposal depends on integration of contributions of various partners and disciplines to create innovative perspective on research problem
 - one partner needs to take the lead, but all partners need to actively seek connections and aim for integration (create broad 'ownership' over application)
- **Requires time and commitment to develop jointly**
 - challenge: hard to sustain attention and commitment of range of partners
 - often requires ongoing (research) funding and collaboration

Building coherent and innovative framework

- **Building framework and consortium from project to project**
 - started with SBO project ‘Diversiteit en Gemeenschapsvorming’ (DieGem, 2013-2016), with one year pre-trajectory (see www.solidariteitdiversiteit.be)
 - only Flemish academic partners
 - resulted in new, interdisciplinary perspective on solidarity in diversity, built through years of joint discussions, empirical research and publishing
 - established WOG (FWO, Scientific Research Community) to build an international research community on solidarity in diversity
 - three lead partners mobilized own academic (disciplinary) networks
 - confront framework and findings with colleagues from abroad, resulting in enriching and adapted framework (e.g. intersectional perspective on solidarity)

Coherent and innovative framework

- WOG as platform for new organisation
 - WOG provided time to build commitment to new joint research project
 - time to discuss most appropriate funding channel: societal challenges or Marie Curie?
 - connect research problem with pressing societal challenge – create urgency
 - used WOG resources to organise consortium meeting to discuss proposal and working schedule

Grant writing support

- **Research managers of Antwerp Urban Studies Institute** (decentralized, closer to content of research process)
- specificity of funding channel (e.g. training session for consortium partners)
- ‘critical’ reader of drafts (e.g. start with pressing societal challenge, pay attention to keep transferable skills)
- collecting administrative data, also from non-academic partners
- time-keeping for consortium partner and lead partner

Invest in long term relationships with societal partners

- **Invest in relation with non-academic partners**
 - requires long term investment, with often no immediate benefit
 - contribute new research ideas (e.g. transferable skills – session with PhD researchers active outside academia – resulted in idea to include training on organisational change and organisation building)
 - relationships of trust important for commitment of non-academic partners (e.g. secondments)