



**Global Young Academy**

The voice of young scientists around the world

## **“Shaping the Future of Young Academies”**

**October 31 – November 1, 2012**

**Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

The Dutch Young Academy (De Jonge Akademie DJA) and the Global Young Academy (GYA) co-organized the **Symposium “Shaping the Future of Young Academies”** from 31 October to 1 November 2012 in Amsterdam. The symposium was the first to bring together nearly all existing young academies and similar bodies from Europe, Africa and Asia, as well as representatives from countries seeking to establish National Young Academies (NYA). 57 participants and observers representing 31 NYA, similar bodies or initiatives for the establishment of NYA met in an inspiring setting to exchange ideas and discuss possibilities for collaborations. They agreed on a follow-up meeting in about 2 years with regional meetings and/or exchange in between. An additional 2 NYA, who had to cancel their attendance, and 3 NYA initiatives, who could not make it to Amsterdam, submitted presentations. GYA and DJA have worked on the results of the meeting and made them accessible to the growing international Young Academy Movement.

Participants were welcomed by Prof. Hans Clevers, President of the host academy KNAW, Prof. Peter-Paul Verbeek, chair of the DJA, and co-organizer Prof. Bernard Slippers, co-chair of the GYA from South Africa. Hans Clevers highlighted the success of the Dutch Young Academy in talking for the future and the new generation and said they were fulfilling a fantastic role. KNAW could learn from DJA as an innovative platform which is especially important for science policy. He called upon the already existing NYA to benefit from the meeting by learning from each and offered to help facilitate conversations with senior academies in those regions seeking to establish NYAs. Peter-Paul Verbeek described the goals of DJA as offering a space for meeting and inspiring each other and a platform for three kinds of activity 1) science-society dialogue, 2) science policy 3) interdisciplinarity. Bernard Slippers said that as the first ever world wide meeting of NYA from different continents this symposium is a special moment in history and for science worldwide. He called upon the participants to see this symposium as a workshop aiming at concrete results with a view to find solutions to the challenges faced by young academies. The GYA offered to collect and coordinate information on NYAs to be shared by the young academies around the world.

In the remainder of the morning, 15 established young academies and 13 newly founded NYA and initiatives for NYA presented their goals and structure. Due to perfect preparation and tough time limits, time remained to enter into first discussions on aspects of joint interest such as the relationship between senior and young academies, criteria for accepting members and in-person meetings.

Gregory Weiss, immediate past co-chair of the GYA, visualised the impressive growth of the Young Academy Movement: While there were only 5 NYAs in 2010, when the GYA was founded, the number of established National Young Academies has risen to 20 in 2012 with Israel, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Belgium as the most recent foundations. Many more are about to be established. The German *Junge Akademie*, founded in 2000, was a role model for many followers. In order to support the development of NYAs, the GYA has developed a Blueprint that can be adapted to national conditions when writing a motivation for a NYA, drafting a constitution, designing by-laws and developing principles and ideas for a NYA. In addition, the GYA can support NYA in a number of ways: (1) by using its existing relationships with TWAS and the IAP to facilitate and support contact with senior academies; (2) by speaking directly to senior academies with which the GYA has an existing relationship; (3) by helping to organize and raise funds for regional or global meetings and / or projects; and (4) by acting as the liaison between YA and missions in support of NYA establishment.

In the afternoon and on the second day of the symposium working groups discussed a range of other questions pertinent to young researchers and the YA movement. These topics included: (1) outreach to younger generations, media, and the general public; (2) relationships with senior academies; (3) diversity in career paths between countries; (4) mobilizing membership; (5) the role of young academies regarding science in policy and policy in science; (6) internationalization and networking; (7) women in science and women in academies; (8) progress towards establishing new NYAs; and (9) funding issues.

The Symposium was also used as a space to share successful projects such as the Dutch science education project “DJA on wheels”, various public outreach activities of the National Academy of Young Scientists in Pakistan, the Canadian parliamentary breakfast series “Bacon and Eggheads”, the German creativity contest “Uni gestalten” and a science game organized by the Junge Akademie. The GYA presented ongoing and planned projects that will involve other young academies, namely a project on the Perceptions of Research Excellence that has started with a pilot study in Thailand and The Global State of Young Scientists (GloSYS) projects with a precursor study in 2013. Finally the participants met in three regional groups (Africa, Asia and Europe) in order to discuss regional cooperation.

In the final discussion the participants agreed that this was a very useful symposium and a wonderful opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other. From now on, global meetings of Young Academies should be convened every second year, very likely with regional meetings in between. The GYA was asked, and agreed, to coordinate the next global meeting, including finding a host and helping with fundraising.