

Improving the interplay between genomics and society

With the advent of the genomics era, the life sciences have entered a new stage. New developments in genomics will significantly influence the way in which we perceive and interact with our world, e.g. with regards to health and environmental issues. At the same time, society also influences the way genomics develops. The relationship between genomics and society is complicated and constantly changing, and it is here that the Centre for Society and Genomics (CSG) has its focus.

CSG was founded in 2004 with a mission to study and improve the relationship between genomics and society. CSG engages society by means of social research, interaction, dialogue and education. It strives to develop novel and effective methods of communicating scientific issues to the public as well as improving existing forms of communication and education about life sciences.

Societal interaction is part of and combined with research, meaning that research projects are carried out in close contact with stakeholders, including genomics researchers, NGOs and companies. These projects are multi-disciplinary, with contributions coming from the social studies of science, philosophy, sociology, biology, educational sciences, law studies and social psychology. In the period from 2008 to 2012, CSG will initiate over 50 projects at universities across the country.

CSG provides international courses on genomics & society topics for young scientists as well as social researchers. In addition, the Centre manages the DNA labs on the Road, an initiative of NGI and seven Genomics Centres for high school students (aged 15-18). CSG also takes the lead role in managing the public and educational website www.allesoverdna.nl. For the general public, CSG organises large events, such as DNA festivals, debates and online 'DNA dialogues'.

CSG's projects and activities play an important role in setting the agendas of genomics research and other stakeholders. Additionally, its work is central in initiating dialogue and debate about upcoming concerns and issues.

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Centre for Society and Genomics

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Netherlands Genomics Initiative