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“Express rather than impress” - discussing individual research challenges among a group of junior research peers

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Rationale:

Scientific conferences focus on presenting research *results*. However, junior researchers can benefit from discussing research ideas and challenges at an early stage. In addition to guidance from senior mentors, peer-to-peer support can help overcome theoretical, methodological or practical challenges by creating an environment where junior researchers can share doubts and problems and learn from each other. Furthermore, discussion with other peers not involved in the research project can allow for open communication and constructive feedback.

Objectives:

- 1) To learn how to discuss and constructively critique research in progress among a group of junior research peers.
- 2) To participate in small group peer-to-peer discussions of research challenges and solutions of ongoing research projects from selected junior researchers.

Session Format/Activities:

Prior to the workshop, organisers will advertise the workshop to all junior EACH members. Participants will submit a one-page description of their research in progress and current challenges for the workshop organisers to review. We will notify the two participants selected to present and receive feedback on their research during the workshop. (Additional details on selection criteria can be provided upon request)

We will begin by presenting a didactic session on how to discuss and constructively critique a peer's research in progress (20 minutes). Organisers will supplement with personal experiences from the lessons learned during the 2011 Young EACH Junior Investigators' Workshop. During the second part of the workshop (50 minutes), participants will be divided into two small groups. In each group, one junior researcher will present her/his research in progress and share her/his problems and challenges. Then, each group will discuss the research problems and help develop solutions. The workshop organisers will facilitate this peer-to-peer support discussion. In the final portion (20 minutes), the two groups will merge again and discuss the lessons learned from the small group work.

Number of participants: 14-16

Keywords: junior researchers, Y-EACH, peer-to-peer support, research in progress