

Communicating climate science – an Early Career Scientists Dialogue

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Text by Gaby Langendijk

'We are all climate communication heroes!', with this statement Asher Minns started the Early Career Scientists side-event (*website link: <http://www.icrc-cordex2016.org/index.php/programme/ecs-event>*) about science communication during the ICRC-CORDEX conference from 17th-20th of May 2016 in Stockholm, Sweden (*website link: <http://www.icrc-cordex2016.org>*).

Asher Minns, specialized in science communication and working at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East-Anglia, gave an interactive presentation outlining important principles for communicating climate science. Through active participation of the audience he explained that effective communication is about 'understanding how you are heard instead of what you are saying'. Asher directly engaged the audience by asking them to explain their research to their neighbor as it was someone they were randomly chatting with in a public bus. It turned out to be a challenge for the audience to translate their complicated research in simplified, non-technical explanations.

After Asher's presentation four early career scientists described communication examples coming from their research and explained their vision on how to improve science communication. Alejandro di Luca, pointed out you should highlight a few key take-home messages while explaining your research. An elephant was used as a metaphor by Puspsh Raj Tiwari, to illustrate an important obstacle in communication. If we take a narrow focus, like on just the ears or trunk of the elephant, then the audience cannot grasp the bigger picture - the entire elephant. Nana Klutse writes for every scientific publication a short policy paper on the side. Co-working and listening to others are the key elements for improving science communication according to Shazwin Taib. The ideas from the early career scientists gave interesting insights and showed the communication style also depends on the audience you are dealing with, e.g. your colleagues, friends, social-media, journalists etc.

After the presentations a discussion followed with all the presenters and the audience touching upon a diverse set of topics, ranging from miscommunication to the opportunities early career scientists for improving the communications compared to the established generation of climate scientists. The ECS event facilitated an interesting and lively dialogue about science communication among early career scientists and it sparked some good ideas for improving climate science communication in the future. After the event drinks and bites were served enabling direct interaction between the early career scientists as well as between the more senior scientists present.

Presentations were given by:

Asher Minns, science communication expert. Tyndall Center for Climate Change Research at the University of East-Anglia, U.K.

Alejandro di Luca, University of New South-Wales, Australia

Nana Klutse, Climate Center of Ghana Space Science and Technology Institute, Ghana

Puspsh Raj Tiwari, Center for Atmospheric Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, India

Shazwin Taib, Department of Environmental Engineering at the Technological University, Malaysia

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