




MODULE 2

Training Package 2.3

Climate Change Communication

	Lesson's development	The lesson provides guidance on conveying coherent and effective messages about climate change. It offers simple tips and steps that can be followed in order for climate change communication to be achieved
	Goal	The aim of this lesson is to inform and encourage you to communicate effectively about climate change
	Learning outcomes	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify practical ways to raise awareness of climate change through communication • Understand how you can get the audience's attention <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to create clear and loud messages • Use the information provided to make behaviour change easier <p>Attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate yourself to communicate climate change

1. Achieving climate change communication

The arts and creative industries can raise awareness among people and motivate them to get involved and support the fight against climate change. However, for many artists, the topic of climate change might be challenging to communicate. Climate change communication could be achieved in different ways. One way is by introducing the general public to a main climate-related topic, such as the causes and consequences of climate change (e.g., natural and social). A second way involves proposing solutions to the problem or discussing what both individuals and organisations could do about climate change (e.g., follow the principles of the circular economy, integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into their businesses, etc.). A third way is a call to action, which



actually encourages audiences to be agents of change and accept their responsibility (Armstrong et al., 2018).

The communication should create a position on the topic of climate change, stressing clearly and loudly that it exists and is a very serious threat. Providing messages that include concrete, explicit information and instructions rather than merely scientific concepts appears to be the best way to encourage action (Leal Filho et al., 2018). For this reason, emphasis should be given to the tone of communication, which should be educational and informative. Furthermore, communication can be proactive and help the targeted audience understand that although the problem is global, the effects are present locally and affect each individual. Nevertheless, even if an artist knows what he/she wants to achieve, in order to craft effective messages and find the most appropriate channels to engage the audience, he/she should be able to identify and understand it.

2. Getting the audience's attention

Climate change is an urgent issue for the world, but the audience's needs should be considered before plunging into climate change communication efforts. Artists cannot communicate everything to everyone all the time; therefore, it is important to understand the preferences and priorities of different audiences, given their unique contexts. Some Audience Segmentation categories include people who a) understand the topic of climate change and/or advocate to fight against it, b) ignore the dramatic climate changes and remain inactive, c) do not have any or enough knowledge about climate change, and d) are young enough and the format of communication must be significantly adapted to their ability to perceive (Merloni et al., 2020). Thus, a purely scientific communication style might not be suitable when the recipient of the message is the general public.

Some simple tips for conveying an effective message on climate change are:

- Use vivid imagery in the form of metaphors, personal accounts, and real-world analogies
- Prefer messages designed to create, recall, and highlight relevant personal experiences and elicit an emotional response
- Avoid using jargon, complicated scientific terms, and acronyms when talking to the general public
- Define terms that are difficult to be conceived by the audience

3. Making behaviour change easier

Visual arts can be an important element when communicating climate change. Within the mass media, the images and narratives of climate change frequently focus on extremes such as collapsing ice sheets, wildfires, storms and floods. While these stories attempt to communicate information on the topic, they do not enhance the sense of engagement in



fighting climate change (O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009). However, when the communication also emphasises visually how people's day-to-day activities and lifestyle choices (e.g., energy consumption, transport choices, recycling, etc.) can affect - positively or negatively - the climate, this can have a more significant impact on their attitudes and motivational state. Additionally, many people feel that their actions will decrease climate change impacts when receiving messages that frame climate change in terms of what they can gain from action and not what they can lose from inaction (Armstrong et al., 2018).

It is remarkable that even an exhibition's narrative could be categorised into different sections in order for effective communication about climate change to be established (Leal Filho et al., 2018). For example, the first section could be about the basics of climate change (e.g., greenhouse gases, global warming, etc.). The second could explore the factors responsible for causing climate change, focusing primarily on human activities (e.g., burning oils, cutting down forests, etc.). The third could showcase how individual choices mitigate or worsen climate change (e.g., the use of renewable energy, low-energy light bulbs, etc.). The fourth could address the harmful impacts of climate change that can already be observed at the local level (e.g., floods, fires, etc.). The final section could motivate the audience to take action and become agents of change (e.g., by letting them reflect on what they personally do and commit to doing more).

The following list presents ten steps that can be easily followed when communicating climate change (Leal Filho et al., 2018):

1. Consider your audience's expectation
2. Talk only about what you know
3. Take caution with the scientific consensus
4. Be clear about the type of risk or threat you are referring to
5. Capitalise on the power of visual arts
6. Focus on 'when' instead of 'if'
7. Try to communicate through stories
8. Aim neither to overwhelm nor to depress the audience
9. Understand the drivers of people's views
10. Have a conversation, not an argument