

Using stakeholder engagement, art theory and new technologies to build innovative communication techniques to communicate climate change-related public health risk in the European Region

AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

There is now wide acceptance that Climate Change is anthropogenic. The challenges now lie in mobilising society to face the challenge of Climate Change mitigation and adaption, however, the full scope of these challenges, particularly in public health, remains widely unknown. While areas such as infectious disease are widely known, areas such as mental health and non-communicable disease remain under-developed. At the same time, large amounts of information about climate change are being delivered in scientific circles and in the media. Communicating public health risks and continuing to engage diverse audiences in the face of fatigue and mass information is needed.

The European Public Health Alliance is one of the leading public health organisations in the EU, representing 70 member organisations focused on a number of disease, country, topic and population-specific scopes within public health.

OBJECTIVE

There is an imperative for public health to take a lead in raising awareness and advocating for climate action due to public health risks. However, creating innovative, engaging communication and narratives can be difficult, including for people from a scientific or non-creative background.

To illustrate that public health have the tools to create engaging narratives to communicate these threats and to build new narratives, a Creative Communication Capacity Building workshop was hosted by EPHA with its members in June 2023 with a focus on creating innovative communication methods. A focus on clean transport was used during the workshop, as many members work on clean transport, and it is readily understandable.

METHODOLOGY

A workshop was held, facilitated by EPHA's Global Public Health staff (where Clime Change work falls under), and a Creative Communication consultant. The workshop comprised three sections; climate change science, climate change and public health, and then a large communication section. This included teaching on specific policies and initiatives, including relating to clean transport goals.

The communication section firstly focused on art theory and the creative process, mixing theory and activity progressively. Attendees firstly had to brainstorm as many ideas as possible, and then go through a process of refining and re-defining. They were given a number of practical tools and physical objects to inspire creativity and out-of-the-box thinking (such as a ball of cotton)

RESULTS

From the workshop exercise, attendees in 5 groups developed 5 separate innovative narratives with which to communicate climate change-related public health risks:

- **TV Cooking Show:** to help older adults reduce meat consumption, a TV show was devised which would bring together a diverse panel of chefs, scientists and health experts to show meat alternatives, and would feature a section where a ball of cotton is thrown between participants, creating a web representing climate and health interlinkages
- **Build Your City:** to illustrate how environmental footprint can be reduced in cities, one team devised a game where players build their own city and have to take into account a number of interdependencies and their impact on the environment and public health
- **Railway Station installations:** to capture the attention of people while commuting, participants devised that an installation in a train station could produce visual displays to show pollution and air pollution in real time, including transparent rooms with smoke, lighting effects and data displays
- **Medical Waste display:** to engage people, a mixed-media public display was devised where people could take a photo of medical waste, and either pin it in real-life to a large display board, or upload a digital picture to raise awareness around medical waste, environmental pollution, and the impact of health on the environment
- **Children's book:** to talk to children in a way tailored to them, one group devised a children's book which would explain climate change and how to mitigate and adapt

INNOVATIVE NARRATIVES THROUGH USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI).



"Climate Conscious Children presenting the news" in Dalle-E and Midjourney



The area around the European Parliament is turned into Green Streets in Dall-E and Midjourney



Climate Change brings altered environments to Brussels, in Dalle-E and Midjourney

CONCLUSION

Innovative communication methods are needed to continue to engage audiences and motivate climate action. Public health has the skills and creative power to motivate by raising awareness and advocating for action to protect public health. By using innovative tools, public health can create engaging content to capture attention and inspire climate action

