

Using theatre forum as a tool in the dialogue between scientists, people and policy makers in AMMA-2050

2019

Project:
AMMA-2050

Authors:
Camilla Audia, Emma Visman,
Adeline Barnaud, and
Dominic Kniveton

IMPACT

Theatre forum, a participatory approach that supports public analysis and collective experimentation, was a powerful tool in the dialogue between scientists, people and policy makers as well as its ability to bring up cultural and socio-political issues which would otherwise stay on the sidelines.

In an interdisciplinary and international project such as AMMA 2050, forum theatre proved to be a useful methodology to create common ground to communicate climate information in a meaningful way with a diverse range of actors, in a more equal setting.

Moreover, it offered the opportunity to discuss decision-making impact and current or future policy options in counteracting climate change. In doing so, it was integral to the co-production approach overarching the project.



THE CHANGE STORY

Climate information production is often presented as purely scientific and based on scientific knowledge systems. However, for it to be effectively used by a range of people, it needs to be understandable by users with diverse backgrounds and knowledge systems. Forum theatre is a type of theatre which turns the audience into active “spect-actors”, becoming a tool to involve a large part of the climate information users in reflecting on climate change issues and adaptation options. In this context, it became a useful tool to address communication across knowledge systems as well as a methodology for understanding co-production of new knowledge.

As AMMA 2050 aimed to co-produce climate information to support climate-resilient agriculture in Senegal, Theatre Forum was employed to support dialogue amongst the different stakeholders whose engagement is vital to enabling climate adaptation. For this project, a team of climate scientists, crop geneticists, social scientists and anthropologists worked together with a Senegalese theatre company based in the Dakar neighbourhood of Yarrax. The Kaddu Yaraax are experts in forum theatre, a way to start meaningful conversations between and across a range of actors, using fictional characters to address power relationships, cultural hierarchies and barriers.

FCFA area of change 6:

Approaches to climate science research and climate-sensitive risks within medium-term decision making, which enable active participation and address the specific concerns of women and marginalised groups.

LEARNING

FURTHER RESOURCES

[Full case study: Using theatre forum as a tool in the dialogue between scientists, people and policy makers in AMMA-2050](#)

[Video: I acclimatise therefore I am / J'acclimatise donc je suis \(short version\)](#)

This case-study shows how using arts for research can be a powerful method to engage with different stakeholders and support a science-policy-society dialogue on key issues.

Forum theatre was particularly useful in changing dynamics of a conversation, as people were feeling free to address issues with actors rather than directly talking about institutions, organisations or colleagues. When policy makers were present, it enabled them and the scientists to have a levelled discussion.

Forum theatre was also important in conveying complex messages, while linking the specific situation portrayed in the play to broader issues of communicating information, taking action based on research, aligning researchers' and donors' priorities and exploring new ways of dialoguing across the society-policy-science interface.

Future Climate for Africa's Areas of Change are:

1. Enhancing scientific knowledge and prediction of African climate and new understanding of the resulting impact on the robustness of future climate change scenarios.
2. Strengthening scientists' capacities to develop decision-relevant climate information.
3. Increasing the capacities of users/decision making bodies/institutions to appropriately integrate climate information within medium-term decision-making.
4. Approaches that support co-production of decision-relevant climate information and enable channels for on-going dialogue between the providers and users of climate information.
5. Identifying social, political, behavioural and economic barriers to the use of climate information in long-term decision-making, working to elicit solutions which support effective integration of climate risks within decision making across scales, sectors and social groups.
6. Approaches to climate science research and climate-sensitive risks within medium-term decision making which enable active participation and address the specific concerns of women and marginalised groups.

Funded by:



**Natural
Environment
Research Council**

Disclaimer

This document is an output from a project funded by the UK Government's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) for the benefit of developing countries and the advance of scientific research. However, the views expressed and information contained in it are not necessarily those of, or endorsed by FCDO or NERC, which can accept no responsibility for such views or information or for any reliance placed on them. This publication has been prepared for general guidance on matters of interest only, and does not constitute professional advice. You should not act upon the information contained in this publication without obtaining specific professional advice. No representation or warranty (express or implied) is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and, to the extent permitted by law, the Future Climate for Africa's members, UK Government's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), their advisors and the authors and distributors of this publication do not accept or assume any liability, responsibility or duty of care for any consequences of you or anyone else acting, or refraining to act, in reliance on the information contained in this publication or for any decision based on it. Copyright © 2021, Future Climate for Africa. All rights reserved.