Report UDW workshop

On 6 July 2021, about 15 researchers affiliated to the Urbanising Deltas of the World research programme participated in an online workshop about communicating delta research. In a hands-on fashion, two tracks provided the participants with background, inspiration, skills and guidance about how to develop either a storyline or design an infographic about their research work.

Do you like to revisit the sessions, attend the one you might have missed, or in general learn about the relevance of science communication? Are you in need of additional sources of inspiration? Then take a look at this short report, watch the recordings, or go through the background information provided by the organisers.

Organisation

The workshop was funded by UDW (https://www.nwo.nl/en/researchprogrammes/urbanising-deltas-world-udw) and organized by Martijn van Staveren, Joep Janssen, Abraham Abhishek and Anastasia Deglianni. The workshop prepared some of the presenters of a series of Masterclasses on delta challenges, scheduled in September and October 2021, coordinated by Jaap Evers.

For contact details, see the end of this report.

Recordings

The recordings are split up in four clips: the opening and closing plenary sessions, and the two tracks which took place in parallel break out rooms. You can access the recordings via the following links:

1. Plenary introduction on communicating delta research and workshop programme
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCAVv6Bb7zA&list=PLmINNv7DrtXnGYBeDTIHihrhGDgpxdzsKrT&index=1
2. Track 1: storyline development
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hs_cDZ0vj7k&list=PLmINNv7DrtXnGYBeDTIHihrhGDgpxdzsKrT&index=2
3. Track 2: infographic design
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2luzW1xPZg&list=PLmINNv7DrtXnGYBeDTIHihrhGDgpxdzsKrT&index=3
4. Plenary wrap-up and follow-up
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FECOJb-NsR8&list=PLmINNv7DrtXnGYBeDTIHihrhGDgpxdzsKrT&index=4
TRACK 1: STORYLINE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction
Telling stories, we have been doing it for as long as we have been human. Around a campfire with friends. At the table with family. While drinking coffee with colleagues in the office. They are an essential part of our day-to-day communications. But as well as that, a story is a powerful tool. Good stories don’t just grab your listeners’ attention — they grab their emotions. Stories that linger in the mind can offer a clear action perspective and make your message unforgettable.

Forms of storytelling
There are many ways in which stories are told and shared. Common forms of storytelling include photographs, videos, blog posts, podcasts, and role play. Storytelling is very effective when working in an intercultural setting – role play is particularly handy to engage with partners whose language you don’t speak.

Objectives of storytelling
- Share knowledge to learn from others and to connect the worlds of local people & experts
- Explain complex ideas and solutions in an understandable way
- Inspire people, give meaning and call for action
- Help to co-create a joint vision to work toward
- Increase impact, visibility and audience

How to tell a strong story?
- Know your audience and use their language
- Make sure you have a clear message or vision: what goal do you want to reach and why?
- Enrich your story with passion, anecdotes, metaphors, concrete examples, and facts
- Describe current state, proposed future and justify actions needed to get there
- Use a three-act narrative structure: introduction, core message, end with a bang

Websites suggestions to learn more
- https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action
- Pixar’s Secret Formula For Making Perfect Films
- Book: "Corporate Storytelling: Tell Them Your Story" by Ade Asefeso, 2014

The storyline structure
Our structure contains five different parts: set-up, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. These five different parts can also be plotted onto an image of a roller coaster:
Set-up
The set-up gives background information. Here the characters and setting are introduced. We are also introduced to the main conflict or problem – the inciting incident. The inciting incident stimulates the character to take action.

Rising action
Characters are faced with problems and must overcome obstacles – events that test the character. That’s part of the journey. He or she gains experience, knowledge, skills or self-awareness needed to achieve a resolution.

Climax
The top of the big hill on the roller coaster may be compared to the story’s climax. The climax reaches a critical turning point – the most exciting part of the story. The character comes face to face with a problem or conflict and the character realizes he or she needs to change something.

Falling action
All loose ends of the plot are tied up. All of the events that happen after the climax. Tension eases, because the problem or conflict has been resolved in a good or bad way.

Resolution
The resolution is the end of the story or how everything winds up. The character has gained a new insight and turns back to the ordinary work, but he or she changed. The story ends with a character reflection or a core message.
TRACK 2: INFOGRAPHIC DESIGN

Human beings are visually wired, i.e. visual information makes the deepest impression upon us. Infographics present qualitative/quantitative data or information in a visual format. They help throw new light/ provide new perspective on your research story, and help make complex information easy to digest. The good news is that you don’t have to be a specialist data visualiser or graphic designer to create infographics. There are a number of freely available tools available to create your own.

Here are some examples and background information on programmes and graphics:

- Additional tool to create presentations, infographics, Design and Video: https://www.visme.co/
- Learn to create impactful infographics and data visuals (examples and online trainings): https://informationisbeautiful.net/
- 90 best infographics: http://www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design-tips/information-graphics-1232836
- 10 ways to use infographics: http://thenextweb.com/dd/2013/10/16/10-ways-use-infographics/#gref
- The free program we are going to use during the workshop: piktochart: https://piktochart.com/
- Inspiration on which color palettes to use: http://www.colourlovers.com/
- Great sites with many icons (you need to register but it is free) https://thenounproject.com/ https://www.flaticon.com/ https://www.iconfinder.com/free_icons
- Many free graphics (you need to properly cite them) http://www.freepik.com/ https://www.vecteezy.com/
Here are some infographics that came out of past workshops, for inspiration!
Background information organisers and contact details

**Nextblue**
Nextblue is a storytelling platform about water and climate change. We use stories to empower the voices of communities in the heart of delta regions around the world.

Website: [https://next.blue](https://next.blue)
Youtube: Nextblue YouTube
Email: joep@next.blue

**MetaMeta**
MetaMeta is a social enterprise, deeply engaged in water and natural resources management. Our mission is to contribute with practical solutions for a better world and to introduce these at scale. One communication project is the Water Channel: [https://thewaterchannel.tv/](https://thewaterchannel.tv/).

Website: [https://metameta.nl/](https://metameta.nl/)
Email: aabhishekk@metameta.nl / aadegliannih@metameta.nl

**Water Matters**
Water Matters is a consultancy company at the interface of international water science and policy. Assignments include strategic programme advise, knowledge facilitation, research project coordination and communications activities.

Website: [https://www.watermatters.nl/](https://www.watermatters.nl/) (under construction)
Email: martijn@watermatters.nl

**IHE Delft**
IHE Delft Institute for Water Education is the largest international graduate water education facility in the world. It is involved in various UDW research projects.

Website: [https://www.un-ihe.org/](https://www.un-ihe.org/)
Email: j.evers@un-ihe.org

Participants list

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