EMSEA Conference 2023
Batumi, Georgia

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IN PRACTICE: SHOWCASING THE PATHWAYS FOR BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN SCIENCE AND SOCIETY WITHIN THE EU H2020 BRIDGE-BS PROJECT

SAYILKAN Ö. E.[1*], YÜCEL M.[1], ŞAHİN YÜCEL E.[1], UYGURER. Z. P.[1], SALİHOĞLU B.[1]
[1]MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCES (METU IMS), TÜRKİYE
*Correspondence: ozgun@ims.metu.edu.tr

Science communication aims to convey science to a broader audience that may not have a background in the specific scientific field. For that purpose, it utilizes visual, auditory, and literary domains of communication practices. It entails not solely the dissemination of generated knowledge, science, or research, but also encompasses the instruments, approaches, and methods to make complex scientific topics more accessible, understandable, and engaging. At this juncture, science communication is woven into the overarching professional norms of the scientific field, emerging as a pivotal competency. Recognizing the obligation of science communication, the European Commission has dedicated notable focus to this matter, initially organizing the "Communicating European Research" event in November 2005, and more recently, establishing substantial initiatives aimed at comprehensively exploring and enhancing the interaction between science and society at large. As an R&I project funded by the European Union's H2020 programme, BRIDGE-BS aims to advance knowledge, deliver research, and empower citizens for a sustainable and climate-neutral Black Sea. This contribution delves into the practical aspects of science communication within the framework of the EU H2020 BRIDGE-BS, focusing on the strategies, challenges, and outcomes of the practices applied to enhance the understanding of scientific concepts among diverse societal groups along with raising awareness specifically regarding the Black Sea research conducted as part of the project. In this presentation, first, we present the broad target audience of the project, ranging from the scientific community, policy-makers, entrepreneurs, industry, and youth to society. Then we outline our science communication strategy under four tenets: 1) clarity, relevance, and accuracy of the information, 2) consistency in messaging and branding across different communication channels, 2) adapting emerging technologies, trends, and platforms, 3) collaboration with scientists, communicators, educators, and stakeholders 4) creating deeper engagement with the content by facilitating opportunities for

interaction, discussion, and feedback. These pillars are nourished with praxis mainly centered around leveraging digital and traditional media platforms for a greater impact, building two-way communication, assembling a storytelling method, and utilizing a diverse range of mediums spanning from scientific video blogs, infographics, short animated clips, and appealing visuals and diagrams. Hereby, in line with the dynamic and continually evolving landscape of science communication, the current framework of BRIDGE-BS has the potential to be enhanced for greater recognition of the project's contributions to ocean literacy, marine science, and research, while also setting a precedent for future endeavors in this field.

Keywords: Science Communication, Black Sea Research, Storytelling, Engagement, Ocean Literacy