

## WG 4 Workshop: "People-Places-Stories"

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**Date:** June, 6<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Location:** University of Geneva, COST Citizen Science Workshopday

**Organizing Team:**

Anett Richter (Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ), Germany)

Didone Frigerio (University of Vienna, Austria),

Andrea Sieber (Alpen Adria University Klagenfurt, Austria)

### Introduction

Relationships play a key role in the context of the "Grand Challenges" (Future Earth, H2020) - both in the context of sustainable development and the exchange of knowledge. Citizen Science depends on the engagement of citizens and builds upon trustful relationships between all people involved in the processes of knowledge generation. Dialogues exchange knowledge, ideas or opinions. Dialogues also trigger discourses and are essential to reach amicable agreements. The facets of the goals and impacts of dialogues are prominent in many citizen science projects. As a matter of facts, without dialogues citizen science would not be successful. We hosted a workshop to shed light on **the scientific and societal values of dialogues in citizen science** and expand this understanding towards additional narratives.

### Aims and objectives of Workshop "People-Places-Stories"

Within our session we fostered the exchange of experiences with dialogues in the form of a "narrative cafe" on content orientations, methodological questions, concrete requirements and impacts of narrative approaches in dialogues. As a joint work, small sculptures of clay were created in addition to the words to visualize the participant's experiences with storytelling in citizen science.

The workshop objectives were:

- To develop confidences to apply storytelling in citizen sciences build upon shared experiences from storytelling in citizen science presented by the panelists and participants
- To investigate the diversity of structures in storytelling in citizen science with the participants
- To evaluate the manifold potentials of storytelling in citizen science and the impacts of storytelling together as a group

### Procedure of the workshop

We started the workshop with some welcoming word by Anett Richter (UFZ) who moderated the workshop and provided a small introduction about the genesis of the meeting. The workshop was built upon a research visit by Didone Frigerio (University Vienna) and Andrea Sieber (Alps-Adria-University Klagenfurt) to the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research- UFZ in February 2018. The visit was funded by the COST ACTION 151212 as a STSM and successfully supported a scientific investigation about (i) the meaning of storytelling in Citizen Science in different disciplines, (ii) the current typologies of storytelling in Citizen Science and (iii) the conceptual framework for the effectiveness of storytelling in Citizen Science. The findings of the research visits were shortly presented to the participants after a short introduction. Following up the research visit in Leipzig, a characterization of storytelling in citizen science happens along two gradients. The first gradient is defined by the quantity of participants in storytelling in citizen science, either as a storyteller or as a story listener. The gradient "quantity of participants in storytelling" ranges from individuals to community. The second gradient refers to the functionality of storytelling in citizen science. Storytelling in citizen science can fulfil the function as a method or tool or as an object. In order to seek typologies, we intersected the two gradients and started the assignments of projects along these two gradients.

## COST Action CA15212

Citizen Science to promote creativity,  
scientific literacy, and innovation throughout Europe

### Workshop Report



The participants of the workshop were then invited a) to develop an association with storytelling in citizen science using the provided clay and tools to model objects (spatula, tray, colours) and b) to speak about their own experiences of storytelling with the aid of the created objects. During the explanations the workshop organizers took notes to analyse the stories being shared following the workshop (Fig. 1). The workshop ended with a final feedback round and a farewell to all participants.



Figure 1 Visualizing the experience told by the participants.

## Workshop results

We expressed the core idea of a storytelling application in a Citizen Science project by means of clay sculpture and then shared and located it with all participants. Nine sculptures were created and presented. The majority of objects was constructed in a three-dimensional way and contained concrete objects that were associated to a situation, a project and observation or feeling experienced during or after storytelling in citizen science.

The analysis revealed a diverse pattern about the functionality of storytelling in citizen science. Many stories are addressed for and with communities along the gradient of storytelling as a method and storytelling as an object. A large majority of the approaches presented by the participants apply storytelling as a method to transport messages, to educate and to engage in science (Fig. 2).

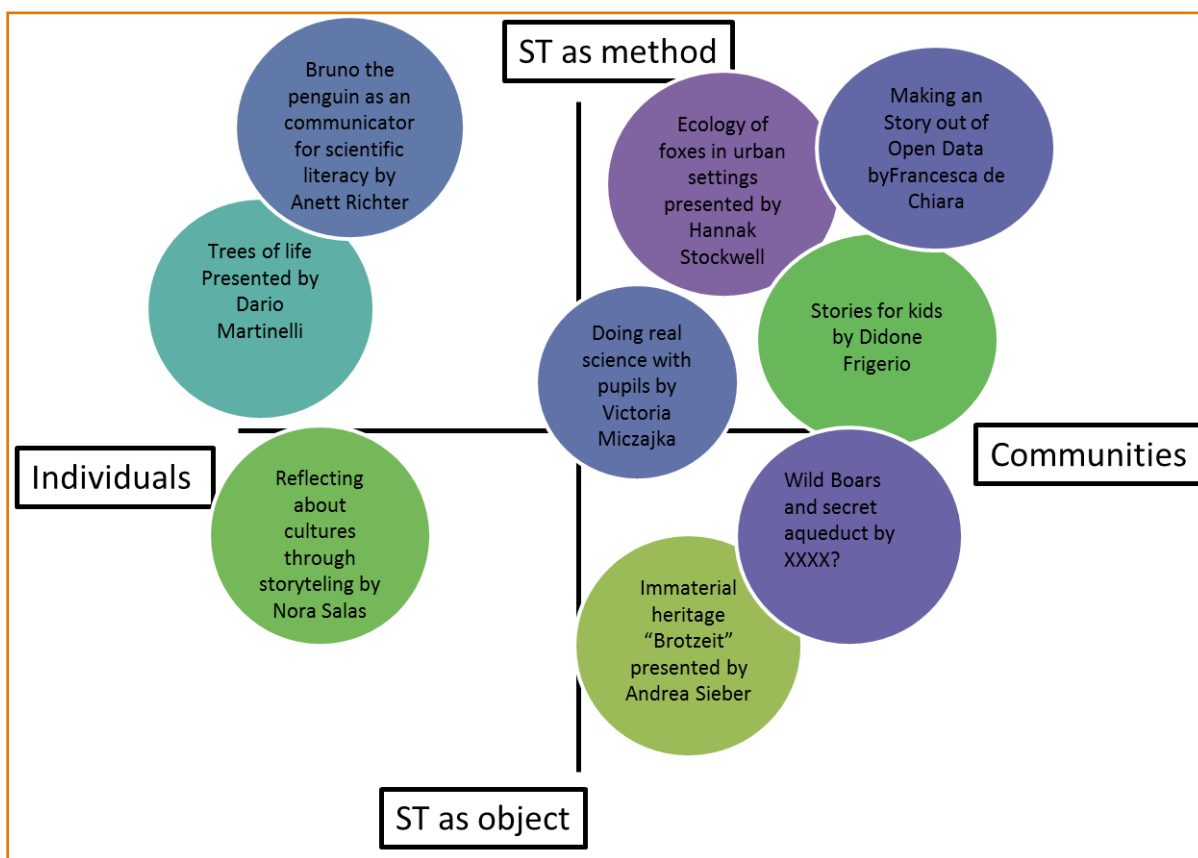


Figure 2 Distribution of self-described experiences with storytelling in citizen science by the workshop participants.

We conclude that a) working with the clay stimulated the creativity to think about storytelling and the produced pieces of art acted as an opener to talk about the experiences. Further the results of the workshop confirm the manifold application of storytelling in citizen science with an overrepresentation of using storytelling as a method.

The workshop was very well perceived by the participants and findings will be included in the ongoing investigation of storytelling in citizen science.

## Participants (Fig. 3)

- Dario Martinelli, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania, [dario.martinelli@ktu.lt](mailto:dario.martinelli@ktu.lt)
- Victoria Miczajka, University of Leipzig, Germany, [miczajka@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:miczajka@uni-leipzig.de)
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Figure 3 The participants and their sculptures (Foto V. Miczajka)