

Synopsis of the workshop
organized by ICM-CSIC and BAU
to increase engagement and collaboration
for Our Ocean and Waters

27th October 2022

Context

How and why we are creating a network

On October 27th, 2022, the Institut de Ciències del Mar (ICM-CSIC), a marine research institution located in Barcelona, and the College of Arts & Design of Barcelona (BAU), a higher-education centre specialized in arts and design, co-organized the first Blue Genes meeting.

This meeting took place virtually in a 3-hour workshop format. Its main goal was to explore in a co-creative way how to reinforce and empower the engagement of people, particularly teenagers and young adults, with our Ocean and Waters and increase networking and collaboration.

This initiative grows from the belief that the necessary societal changes have to be bottom-up, through a true collaborative revolution with and for people and nature. Coupled with the deep

perception that this can only be possible through raised awareness based on scientific knowledge and sensorial perception of nature, with the ocean as a central and essential participant.

Based on the above premises and being aware of the international responsibilities – such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and the EU Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030 – this first exploratory workshop was meant to be one first bottom-up step to share ideas about how to increase the people's connection with the ocean. If you need more information contact: lchaparro@icm.csic.es

The Ocean Mission

The European Commission has recognised the urgency to protect marine and freshwater ecosystems. In order to broad mobilisation initiatives in this matter, the Commission has launched in early 2022 the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030.

This Mission aims to restore the health of our ocean and waters by three specific objectives:

- Protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity
- Prevent and eliminate pollution
- Make the blue economy carbon-neutral and circular

And two enablers to support the objectives:

- Digital ocean and waters knowledge system
- Public mobilisation and engagement

Workshop Participants

Ana Otero (BAU); Angèlica Busquets (ICM-CSIC); Anja Wegner (University of Hamburg - researcher); Begoña Vendrell (Ocean Literacy); Caecilia Manago (ERINN Innovation); Camila René (BAU); Carine Simon (ICM-CSIC); Carlos de Juan (ICM-CSIC Young Researchers); Celia Murcia (Blue jobs platform); Clémence Baudu-Descamps (Surfrider Foundation); Cristina Noguera (BAU); David Whyte (MaREI); Diana Lorena Rico-Velez (Youmares); Diana Zúñiga (North Wind Sailing for Science); Edoardo Brodasca (Posidonia Green Festival); Emily Tewes (Sustainable Ocean Alliance); Ester M. López García (ICM Youth); Eugènia Barroca (Marine Biologist from SOA); Inés Mas de la Peña (ICM-CSIC); Jaron Rowan (BAU); Josep Lluís Pelegrí (ICM-CSIC); Justine Brossard (CPMR); Laia Romero (Lobelia Earth); Lucie Greyl (A Sud - Italy); Lydia Chaparro (ICM-CSIC); Magda Vila (ICM-CSIC); María Auxiliadora Cabrera Campano (Marinera de puente); María de la Fuente (ULB - Brussels); Maria Elena Carbajal (Journalist & sociologist); María Laín (Activist, member of Christian Youth for Climate); Marina Martínez (BAU); Neus Figueras Balaña (ICM-CSIC); Nil Rodes (Eurocean's Youth); Noemí Fuster (ICM-CSIC); Núria Ferré (individual); Oriol Carrasco Serra (ICM-CSIC Young Researchers); Shalenys Bedoya (CIDE-CSIC); Silja Teege (Sea Teach/Blue Generation Project); Tània López Pérez (Graduate student UB).

The Workshop

MAJOR CHALLENGES *

Protecting and restoring marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity, fighting against pollution, or eliminating greenhouse emissions are huge challenges that need to be urgently addressed.

WHY IS NOT HAPPENING? *

Regarding science, one of the major challenges is that scientific information is not always well communicated or understood by citizens.

ENABLING THE CHALLENGE *

Societal engagement in ocean conservation has been generally very low. But there is plenty of room for changing the course and increase public engagement in ocean conservation, particularly through the joining of scientific and artistic knowledge.

WHAT DO WE WANT *

We have the aim to bring Science & Arts closer to society, in order to change the perception and relation of people with our rivers and seas, and to bring broad public mobilization and engagement.

FUTURE PLAN *

Create a European network that could act as a “Community of Practice” (CoP).

ACTIONS AND GOALS *

During the workshop many topics arose such as advocacy, blue economy, ocean literacy, new imaginaries...

However, considering that the uniqueness of this network is to bring deep awareness through the expanded cognition of arts and sciences – with the active support of an art & design centre (BAU) with a marine research centre (ICM-CSIC) – the selected actions are mostly related to this unique union.

Some of the selected actions are to embrace collaborative activities and increase networking; to share knowledge and methods to engage and mobilize through sensorial experiences; or to flourish different forms of knowledge.

With respect to major goals, the selection has been chosen based on the group discussions, followed by a final choice according to our own limitations and expertise.

Main Goals

*1
FIND NEW COLLECTIVE
RITUALS TO CONNECT
WITH THE OCEAN

Example of a possible action: The CoP will generate knowledge, support projects and initiatives, and share results on sensorial practices of knowledge to increase the people's connection with the Ocean.

*2
APPLY INNOVATIVE WAYS
TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE
AND RAISE AWARENESS

Example of a possible action: The CoP will become a space to share innovative ideas, projects or initiatives that make a difference, and at the same time a platform that helps to bring science and marine conservation to a broader public.

*3
SHARE PRACTICAL SKILLS,
TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Example of a possible action: The CoP will be a source of methodologies, tools and strategies, and will identify innovative case studies and successful initiatives. Design, for example, can be used as a discipline that questions ways of learning and increases the scope of ways of knowing.

*4
FIND NEW WAYS TO LEARN
TOGETHER IN A STRONG
INTERDISCIPLINARY
NETOWRK OF SCIENCE
AND ARTS

Example of a possible action: The CoP will become a community of people working in different disciplines (from design to marine sciences) who wishes to collaborate and share its learnings and passion for nature.

Insights of the Workshop

'What are the main goals of your entity or initiative?'

- Transfer scientific knowledge on the Ocean and Waters to the society
- Raise awareness of the Ocean and Waters issues
- Create networks
- Promote citizen action & engagement
- Education & social transformation
- Blue research
- Advocacy and local support

'What are the main challenges and worries that prevent you from meeting your goals?'

- Lack of time and long-term engagement
- Lack of funding and resources
- Lack of visibility and communication of scientific outputs
- Lack of transversal collaboration
- Lack of citizen engagement
- Lack of connection with nature and the ocean
- Huge challenges versus slow change

'What would you like to learn and share from other similar projects or initiatives?'

- Share knowledge and intelligence between organizations
- How to reach out to a wider audience
- Collaborate and create successful connections
- Join efforts to do successful advocacy campaigns
- Share ideas and innovative experiences

'What are the main challenges and worries that prevent you from meeting your goals?'

- Transdisciplinary and collaborative work
- New ways to communicate to reach a wider audience
- Assistance and support (ideas, workshops, guidance, etc)
- Visibility and networking opportunities

'Ways in which, on a personal level, you are linked to the Ocean & Waters:'

- Rituals: relaxing, meditation, observing and smelling the sea, enjoying the biodiversity...
- Conservation: the need to preserve biodiversity and natural resources, raising

consciousness on the value of the ocean, sense of responsibility and love for nature.

- Arts: the ocean as a source of inspiration, as seen in painting, poems, sounds, materials, photography, films, etc.
- Sport/Leisure: swimming, scuba diving, surfing, sailing, etc.
- Other: data, technology and research.

Do you think there is concern about the state of the Ocean (Seas or Waters) among young people communities?'

- Some participants consider that the level of consciousness is surprisingly low among youth, on the contrary others state that young communities are indeed concerned.
- There is not enough information, often it is confusing or not understandable. More knowledge would probably bring more engagement.
- Citizens do not connect enough with the Ocean and Waters, although those living in coastal communities are overall more engaged.
- There is a growing concern about the state of the Ocean and some relevant ongoing initiatives, but generally speaking, it does not translate into significant and visible action.
- In general, people are more aware of climate change, disregarding the role of the Ocean on climate.

'How to engage youth groups in Ocean and Waters Conservation:'

- Developing a sense of community and increasing people's connection with the Ocean.
- Inspiring youth and creating new discourses and imaginaries.
- Through formal and non-formal education and ocean literacy.
- Engagement through creative initiatives and activities, such as sports or cultural events, job opportunities, policy action, etc.
- Increasing and widening communication and awareness.
- Listening to the claims and needs of young people, allowing and endorsing their leadership.

'How to benefit from collaborating with artists and designers:'

- New ways to communicate can increase awareness.
- Sharing practical skills and new tools.
- Helping to connect people with the Ocean and Waters.
- Bridging knowledge and creating transversal new perspectives.
- Inspiring people and fostering cultural change.

'How can activism and arts cooperate:'

- Broadcasting the message behind actions, increasing impact and visibility through visual arts, theatre, photography, upcycling, among others.
- Making science more approachable and comprehensible to the general public.
- Building new narratives and new ways to connect people with the ocean.

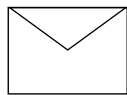
'Priority goals that can be achieved through this network:'

1. Find new collective rituals to connect with the Ocean.
2. Apply innovative ways to share knowledge and raise awareness.
3. Develop and share new practical skills, methodologies, tools and strategies.
4. Find new ways to learn together, in particular through strong interdisciplinary networks of science and arts.

'Priority areas of action:'

1. Embrace collaborative activities and increase networking.
2. Share knowledge and methods: ideas, sensorial experiences, rituals, best practices, new ways to communicate.
3. Raise awareness on Ocean, Seas and Waters' conservation.
4. Increase societal implication and engagement.

The Miro board with all the original notes from the workshop is available [here](#).



We will reach you soon.
Thanks for your collaboration! :)