

472 - Wānanga/Talanoa/Dialogue or Workshop

The Art of Change Making: Experimenting With Art-Based and Creative Methods to Imagine Climate Change Adaptation in Cities

Abstract:

Accelerated adaptation requires spaces for reflexivity and creativity through novel approaches that disrupt our traditional biased ways of thinking and connect us with other forms of knowledge and other knowledge holders (André et al. 2023, Nalau, 2024, Olazabal, Amorim-Maia, et al., 2024, Olazabal, Loroño-Leturiondo, et al., 2024). This co-creation session will employ art and participatory exercises combined with a world café approach. The objective is to co-explore the use of different art-based methods and approaches to discuss, expand and disrupt the ways we imagine and envision what adaptation is - or is not - in cities worldwide (Englund et al. 2022, Loroño et al. 2025). Participants will learn and experience how to engage in meaningful adaptation conversations through art. The outcome and impact of this session are experiential: we intend to ignite an awareness-raising and learning process by opening the doors to alternative ways of doing, knowing and being related to, beyond adaptation to all participants in the session. We also intend to spread the benefits and usefulness of using creative and alternative methods in science and practice to generate or unveil relevant knowledge. Art is a powerful tool for: (1) Knowledge enhancement by enabling dialogue/communication on complex climate science and adaptation pathways in a comprehensible, accessible and creative way; (2) Allowing stakeholders, or participants in the process, to co-explore visions and novel ideas as well as share and open up to different perspectives and experiences that normally go beyond the confines of the traditional understanding of adaptation; and, (3) Building trust and confidence in the collective process of Adaptation by Visualising positive futures and shared adaptation pathways while working with complexity and uncertainty.

We intend to centre the conversation on what adaptation looks like in cities worldwide, for whom and how. The different experiences will help participants connect with other perceptions and perspectives, as well as reflect on their inner understandings and biases on adaptation pathways and outcomes.

Structure of the session and method:

We will structure the session (45 min) to allow participants the freedom to experience different art-based approaches based on their preferences and openness to alternative and creative approaches to knowledge generation. We will organise the space to create a safe and welcoming environment, engaging participants in one round of art-based experiences. A short introduction by the Chairs/Presenters of the session (7 minutes including buffer time) will describe each table and the projects behind this initiative, and after this, participants will have the opportunity to visit at least one table (28). A Discussion session (10 min) facilitated by the Chairs will offer space for participants to share their personal and collective experiences through a Mentimeter exercise. We will also hand out sign-up forms to gather contact details of participants interested in staying in touch.

1. Introduction (7 min): Marta Olazabal & Karin André (Chairs)

2. Free tour - (28 min)

- [Table 1: Participatory collaging](#)
- [Table 2 Dys/utopian writing \(postcards from the future\)](#)
- [Table 3: Crafting vulnerabilities with Lego](#)

3. Discussion and Closure (10 min)

- [Menti exercise](#)

Description of art-based methods:

- [Table 1: Participatory collaging](#)

Facilitators: Karin André + Åsa G. Swartling

Materials: Newspaper clippings and images, paper, crayons, pencils, glue, and scissors

Objective: Capturing ideas and expressing them through images to envision life in our future cities and communities, and by relating these to what a business-as-usual scenario would look like.

Method: Participants will use newspaper clippings and images to create their own collage visualising two imaginary futures where adaptation has succeeded or failed. Participants will interpret and tell each other about their piece with the rest of the group to encourage reflection and dialogue. The collages will be put up on the wall for others to see.



(Photo Credit: Mathilda Englund)

- [Table 2: Dys/utopian writing \(postcards from the future\)](#)

Facilitators: Ana Terra Amorim-Maia + Marta Olazabal

Materials: Postcard-sized versions of the 31 IMAGINE Adaptation illustrations ([IMAGINE Adaptation project](#), see Olazabal et al 2024, Loroño et al. 2025). Pencils, rubber.

Objective: Through words and visuals, participants capture emotions, struggles, and triumphs, offering a deeply personal and place-based reflection on adaptation pathways.

Method: Postcards from the Future is an interactive and imaginative storytelling method that invites participants to step into the future and write back to the present. Using creativity and speculative thinking, individuals craft postcards from a future where climate adaptation has (or hasn't) succeeded, describing the landscapes, communities, and daily realities they envision. By weaving these narratives together, *Postcards from the Future* inspires reflection, dialogue, and action in the present. Participants will be asked to choose one illustration and write the postcard on the back. After this, participants will be asked to share, not the content but their choices and their feelings.



(Photo Credit: Basque Centre for Climate Change, Imagine Adaptation)

- **Table 3: Crafting vulnerabilities with Lego**

Facilitators: Mathilda Englund + Sean Goodwin

Materials: LEGO ®

Objective: Stimulate discussions on what vulnerabilities should be reduced with adaptation to climate change in cities and how to prioritise them.

Method: In this table, participants will use LEGO to explore what vulnerability looks like in a city. The activity will take two short phases, followed by a brief reflection:

Part 1 (10 mins):

Participants will be prompted to first build together a neighbourhood that is especially vulnerable to a climate change hazard of their choice. As part of this, they will be invited to discuss together:

1. Who lives here?
2. What happens during the selected climate hazard?
3. Why is this neighbourhood vulnerable?

Part 2 (10 mins):

Participants will then be asked to add 2-3 features to their city to make it more resilient to their hazard. They will be asked to reflect on:

1. Whose needs are accounted for now that were not before?
2. What makes this neighbourhood more resilient to climate change?
3. What trade-offs or tensions emerged?

Participants will then share back how this process went to the whole group.



Outputs:

1. Adaptation AGORA project feature
2. IMAGINE Adaptation blog post <http://imagineadapt.bc3research.org>

Outcomes and Impact:

- Inspiration for how to engage with multiple knowledges for co-production with alternative art-based approaches beyond science.
- Allows participants to experience reflexivity and inclusivity so they can use these methods in their daily research, practice or decision-making work.
- Promotes moving beyond problem-focused thinking to solutions in an inclusive and creative manner.
- Promotes reflection on adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development as all key indivisible parts of climate-resilient urban development pathways.

- Promotes experimentation, innovation and creativity in adaptation work for accelerated climate-resilient futures.

References

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PARTICIPANTS

Participant 1

Full Name: Marta Olazabal

Organisation: Basque Centre for Climate Change, BC3, Spain.

Bio: Dr Marta Olazabal is an interdisciplinary scientist exploring pathways of progress on climate action in cities worldwide. She is an Ikerbasque Research Associate and Ramon y Cajal Fellow at BC3, where she leads the Adaptation Research Group. She is the Principal Investigator of the European Research Council project [IMAGINE Adaptation](#).

Participant 1 Contribution: Co-chair. Moderation of the session. General introduction. Facilitation of World Café Table 2.

Participant 2

Full Name: Karin André

Organisation: Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Sweden.

Bio: Karin André is a Senior Research Fellow and Team Lead for the Cities, Communities and Consumption Team at SEI Headquarters in Stockholm. Areas of expertise include participatory research methods and the role of science-based

stakeholder dialogues on issues related to climate adaptation and other complex sustainability issues.

Participant 2 Contribution: Co-chair. Moderation of the session. General introduction. Facilitation of World Café Table 1.

Participant 3

Full Name: Ana Terra Amorim Maia

Organisation: Basque Centre for Climate Change, BC3

Bio Dr. Amorim-Maia is an interdisciplinary socio-environmental scientist exploring the intersections of climate change adaptation, urban governance, and social justice. She is a Juan de la Cierva Fellow and postdoctoral researcher at BC3, where she contributes to IMAGINE Adaptation, supporting cities in envisioning resilient futures and assessing progress toward achieving them.

Participant 3 Contribution: Facilitation of World Café Table 1.

Participant 4

Full Name: Åsa Gerger Swartling

Organisation: Stockholm Environment Institute

Bio Åsa Gerger Swartling (Senior Research Fellow; Head of Division – Societies, Climate and Policy Support) has extensive professional experience that integrates social science research and scientific leadership within the sustainability sphere. Her interests encompass sustainability governance at subnational levels, with an emphasis on participatory methods; collaborative processes; co-design of climate services; adaptation; and disaster risk reduction.

Participant 4 Contribution: Facilitation of World Café Table 3.

Participant 5

Full Name: Sean Goodwin

Organisation: Basque Centre for Climate Change, BC3

Bio: Sean Goodwin is a multidisciplinary researcher with a focus on urban climate adaptation, nature-based solutions, and monitoring, evaluation and learning. His research addresses pressing questions facing communities of research and practice at the intersection of climate change, biodiversity conservation, urban planning and social justice.

Participant 5 Contribution: Facilitation of World Café Table 3.

Participant 6

Full Name: Mathilda Englund

Organisation: Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and Linköping University

Bio: Mathilda Englund is a transdisciplinary researcher exploring the intersection of climate change adaptation, knowledge co-production, and epistemic injustice. She is a PhD student at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and Linköping University, where she is exploring power and politics in knowledge co-production for climate change adaptation.

Participant 6 Contribution: Facilitation of World Café Table 3.