



How to make climate communication more accessible to more communities? Results from a case study featuring KNMI

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Imagine that you a (semi-governmental) scientific institute, conducting important and state-of-the-art research that you want to share with society. In addition to the science enthusiast that follows your every move and reads the news outlets that regularly cover your stories, you want to include groups of people that do not automatically come in contact with your communication efforts. How do you improve the accessibility of your science communication, specifically towards groups of people that are not automatically included? I will share valuable insights from my empirical social study on climate communication accessibility at the KNMI, the Dutch research and information center for meteorology, climate, air quality, and seismology.

In my presentation at EGU 2024, I will describe several factors that play a role on the perceived accessibility of climate change communication. These insights are based on interviews and focus groups held with respondents living in low socio-economic status neighborhoods and rural areas. In addition, focus groups and interviews with KNMI-employees involved in climate communication took place.

[[8] blog-like articles written by KNMI-employees were presented to respondents to read and evaluate. These articles aim to create understanding and awareness of climate phenomena and concepts and have been a vital part of KNMI's communication efforts for 10 years. I have analyzed this data through the lens of a conceptual model containing theories on accessibility and equity, models of communication, and framing and narratives.

My research confirms well-known factors which influence accessibility to broader audiences. For example, the excessive use of scientific jargon has a negative impact on the understanding and accessibility of communication. In addition, my research probes deeper to identify aspects that explain why these well-known factors cannot easily be overcome and to uncover which other, less obvious factors, play a role. Aspects like cultural identity, social acceptance and peer pressure, literacies and capital, recognition, and equity all play a part in the machine of social inclusion and accessibility of climate communication. Challenges and opportunities arise both within the institution and in relation to the social groups included in this research.

Based on the results and conclusions of this study, I will provide recommendations on how to improve the accessibility of climate communication to communities that are typically reached to a lesser extent. While they are based on communication practices of the KNMI, they are generally

applicable to other scientific institutions and/or governmental institutions. On the EGU 2024, I will present my recommendations to improve climate communication accessibility, as well as the results that these recommendations are based on.