



Sandscape

Felicity Liggins (1), Ellen Dowell (2), Jamie Wardley (3), and Claire Jamieson (3)

(1) Met Office, Exeter, United Kingdom (felicity.liggins@metoffice.gov.uk), (2) Einstein's Garden, Green Man Festival, United Kingdom (ellen@greenman.net), (3) Sand in Your Eye, Bradford, United Kingdom (jamie@sandinyoureye.co.uk)

In 2015, the Met Office's award-winning outreach programme, designed to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers, delivered one of its most ambitious and creative activities to date. It explored how scientists and artists can come together to create an engaging experience for young people and families. This activity was called Sandscape.

Sandscape was an interactive sand sculpture workshop exploring how weather and climate affect our health. Budding sand sculptors were shown how to fashion elaborate structures from sand and water – creating a landscape with bridges, skyscrapers, forests and factories.

As they worked, participants were encouraged by the scientists delivering the activity to reflect on what makes a healthy city, considering how the natural and built environments influence air quality and circulation and how this impacts our health. Topics discussed included urban heat islands, air pollution and dispersion modelling, pollen forecasting and predicting the wind-borne spread of animal diseases. Each hour long workshop culminated in a dramatic demonstration that used dry ice to represent clean air circulating from mountains, along rivers and into cities.

Here we present an overview of Sandscape, identify the strengths and challenges of such a collaborative, innovative and playful approach to public engagement and share the results of our evaluation.

Sandscape was originally supported by the Met Office and the Wellcome Trust, and produced by Einstein's Garden in collaboration with the Met Office, scientists from the University of Exeter and sand sculptors from Sand in Your Eye. It was first presented in Einstein's Garden at Green Man festival 2015, an independent music and arts festival held annually in the Brecon Beacons, Wales, and then at Bournemouth Arts By the Sea Festival in October 2015. Further opportunities for redelivery in venues not traditionally associated with science communication are currently being explored.