

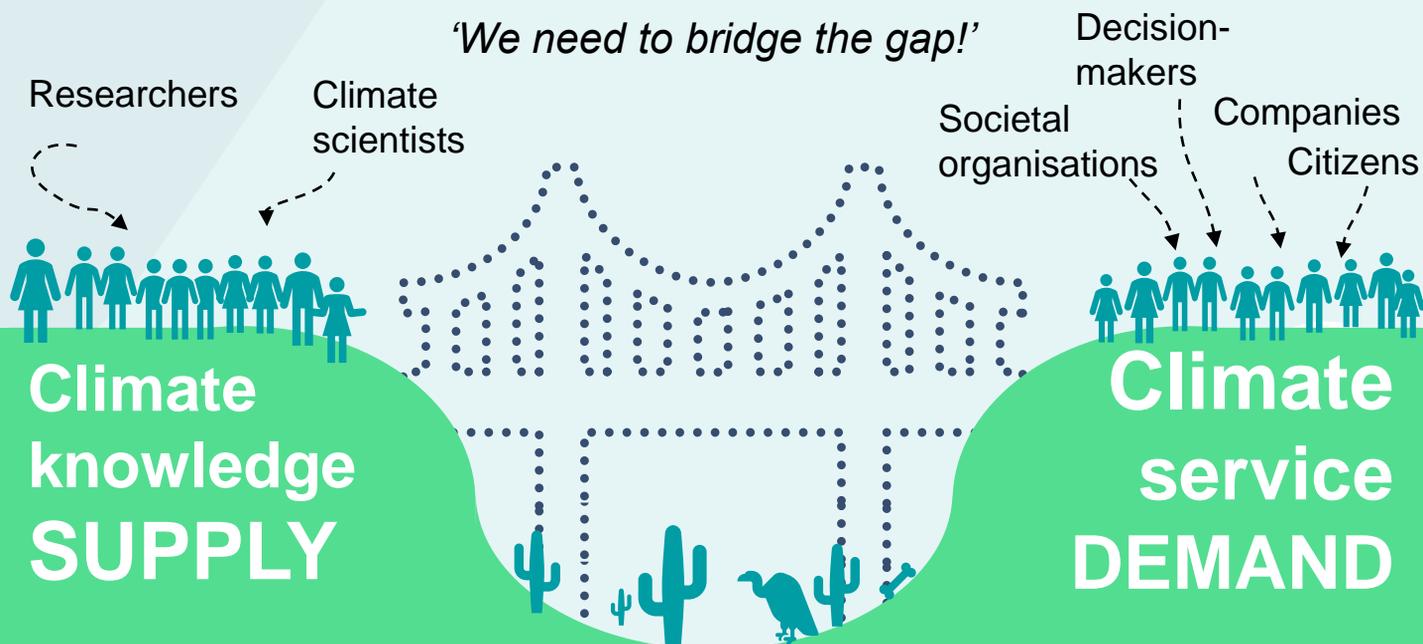
Climate stories

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Why?

Much of the scientific insights and information on climate change and adaptation do not reach decision-makers, companies, and citizens. In literature, this gap between science and society is referred to as a 'valley of death' (e.g. see Hermansen et al., 2021). One of the main reasons for the gap is that scientists and societal actors have different understandings and perceptions of which knowledge is usable (Lemos et al., 2012). As a result, many data sets and reports remain unread or unused.

The REACHOUT project aims to bridge the gap between scientists and society with climate stories. Climate stories combine a narrative structure with visualizations to communicate scientific knowledge to an audience to get a message across. We translate the scientific outcomes of the REACHOUT project to the needs of cities and integrate them in the stories, using the innovative communication method of storytelling.



Storytelling

Storytelling is about telling stories. Climate adaptation is often perceived as 'abstract' and 'far away'. People lose attention and forget easily. If you want to reach your audience, you need to integrate the message with more human and relatable information, which can be achieved with storytelling. Empathy and sympathy help to find a common ground between the narrator and the listener. This common ground helps to get your message across.

Many well-known stories, such as fairytales and Hollywood movies, use the hero's journey (Barel, 2020). Here we show Little Red Riding Hood as an example. Her hero's journey contains the following components:

- Setting the scene: the start of the story
- The *trigger*: her grandmother becomes sick, and her mother sends her to visit her grandmother with fruit. Her mother tells her not to leave the path.
- The *hurdle/threat*: she sees beautiful flowers and leaves the path, where she gets eaten by a wolf.
- The *helper*: the hunter frees her.
- The *take-away message*: always listen to the advice of your parents.

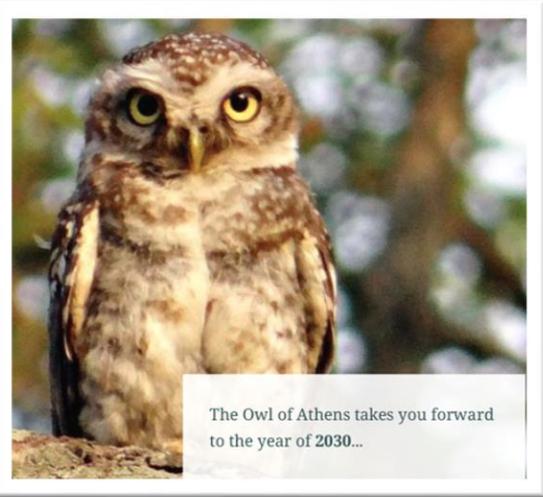
In the climate stories, we use these components tailored to the specific story of climate change of the city. We aim to use imaginative story telling with sufficient details in order for the reader to envision the story as a possible climate-proof future. We use visualizations in the form of figures and maps as a powerful tool to convey the message.



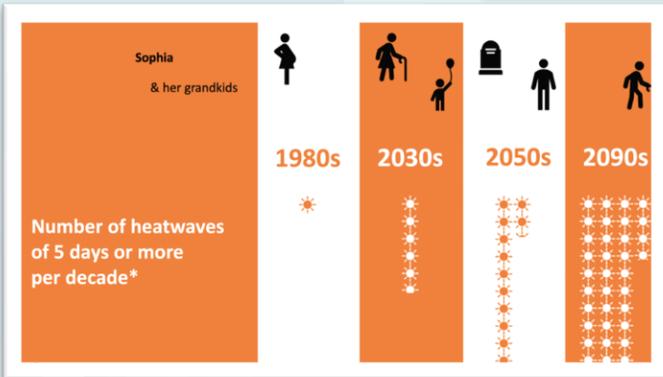
In practice



The wise owl of Athens looks forward to times with extreme heat



A local cartoon artist drew the kids in class learning about climate change



Data from the heat tool is translated to an easy-to-understand infographic

Graphics to explain importance of trees & shade

