



When implementing an Ocean Literacy initiative, we all hope that it will be successful. We might have however very different ideas of what we mean by that. *Better understanding how important the sea is for each of us and for society as a whole? Ensuring everyone captures how she/he is connected to the sea? Contributing to changes in perceptions and attitude? Hoping that target groups will understand how they can act better? Imagining that practices and behaviour will change as a result of our initiative?*

What can “better knowledge” (or different knowledge) deliver has been at the heart of ResponSEable’s debates and activities. Indeed, becoming ocean literate implies that you understand the ocean’s influence on us and how we influence the ocean. It also puts you in a position to act responsibly. However, we all know the dilemma ‘I know, still I don’t act’ that we all experience in our daily life. Social and behavioural sciences offer us insight on factors (such as emotional, economic drivers, or social pressure) that contribute to change of behaviour, especially when dealing with environmental challenges and issues. Thus, we put specific efforts in framing and measuring the impacts and effectiveness of ocean literacy initiatives.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN AIMING AT BEHAVIOUR CHANGE WITH OCEAN LITERACY?

The **level of ocean literacy** depends on an **individual understanding the system**—so that they can reflect on how their decisions and actions affect marine environment. Ocean literacy should focus on training for ‘systems thinking’. **We need to bring people closer to the ocean, and establish personal connections. If there is**

something fashionable and trendy, seize the opportunity to connect it to the ocean!

The **type of knowledge** that is shared in Ocean Literacy initiatives is key to the type of change one might expect. If you aim at putting your target group in a position to act, you will need to provide **knowledge on actions** that can be taken (or avoided) to aid behaviour change. You will also need to **make expected (individual and collective) benefits explicit**, providing knowledge on benefits that go beyond the improvement of the health of the ocean. Often, such knowledge is missing in Ocean Literacy initiatives. We do not need to focus on problems, but on solutions, on their expected benefits, on expected direct visible impacts...

Messages should be tailored and very specific, and not ‘general’ (as illustrated by the Marlisco project marlisco.eu and the SeaChange project seachangeproject.eu). ‘What will be in this for me’ or ‘How my life will improve?’ were pointed out to be one of the top drivers of behaviour change. Jon Par (SeaChange project). The “right information” depends on the target group and on what you expect as a change: **changes in knowledge & understanding, attitude or behaviour**. This impacts on what should be done, and how to assess impacts and effectiveness.

Ocean Literacy is a collective process that changes social norms! Behaviour change is driven by many factors—attitude e.g. emotion and environmental connectedness were recognised to be important driving factors. In real life situations, these many factors are interacting. Assessing the effectiveness of ocean literacy initiatives benefits from collecting perceptions and frequency of self-reported behaviours. This can (should) be done before and after the Ocean Literacy initiative, or



based on the comparison with a “control group” that has not been involved in such initiative. Following up with a group that has been involved in an Ocean Literacy Initiative is often overlooked beyond an immediate ‘after’ survey. It is important to think of mechanisms that can help assessing if changes have taken place—or have been made sustainable.

From a policy perspective, ocean literacy should be part of all components of marine and maritime policies. Facilitating the access to knowledge provided by different groups (scientists, professionals, civil society...) require the **establishment of common platforms. Supporting strategic partnerships around innovations**, with actors with resources driving innovation and contributing to its dissemination, are mechanisms that can contribute to enhanced Ocean Literacy.

Engage the private sector in Ocean Literacy initiatives is challenging. Governance and eco-

nomic incentives exist and need to help building capacity to support change of behaviour and practices. Interest and trust are essential when working with the private sector, so as to deliver a shared ocean optimism! One example of capacity building that DG MARE is supporting are ‘Blue schools’ and Blue Skills initiative that contribute to make the ocean trendy. More efforts are required for supporting Youth and Young professionals Ocean Literacy initiatives.

To support good practices at the global scale, we need the global **mapping of successful stories and capacity building are components of success.**

Conditions for performing better: tailoring Ocean Literacy initiatives; adapting them to the local context and the specific target group; giving space for (and resources to) the assessment of effectiveness and the continuous evaluation of changes - so we understand what works and delivers long term benefits...



The challenges and opportunities of how to do ocean literacy with this group were at the heart of a focused ResponSEable webinar discussions and reflect the opinions of the following speakers:



Matthew Ashley
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Jon Parr
MBA



Fiona Crouch
EMSEA



Louise Ras
Oceanopolis



Alessia Clocchiatti
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Steve Fletcher
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