



THE UNESCO CHAIR IN SCIENCE COMMUNICATION FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Science today offers us two radically different visions of the future.



The crisis narrative signifies an impending or already unfolding planetary upheaval with a future marked by social dislocation and environmental breakdown.



The breakthrough narrative promises a future in which technological innovation will have averted planetary collapse and secured human dominion over nature.



This UNESCO Chair responds to the urgent need for dialogue on these imagined futures being communicated by science, the different visions of societal transformation they have sparked, and the meanings they engender.

We contend that culturally embedded concepts of public or common good offer a productive starting point to convene these conversations in the face of diverse forms of knowledge, experience and value judgments.

Our aim is to enable science communication research to create and communicate cultural meanings for transforming the world.

Narratives of planetary crisis — e.g., in earth systems science — and of breakthrough science — e.g., in technological visions for agriculture, conservation and medicine including synthetic biology and carbon removal — speak in very different ways to the transformative futures invoked by numerous actors including the United Nations.

The crisis narrative has stimulated hopes for transforming social and economic systems in order to accommodate planetary limits. Whereas the breakthrough narrative signals hopes for transforming nature to serve human needs and restore the planet.

Our work tackles critical questions posed by these narratives and investigates how concepts of science communication for public good might answer them.

How do different stakeholders (researchers, communities, publics, learned academies, government advisors, policymakers, journalists, businesses) make sense of the hopes, fears and transformative prospects associated with these contrasting scientific narratives? How do they assess the diverse, often conflicting, forms of knowledge intended to bring about change? Can we engage constructively across these differences and develop meaningful narratives in common?

Housed within the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science (CPAS), the Chair builds on CPAS' strengths in science and technology studies, sustainability sciences, science policy, inclusive science engagement, responsible innovation, informal science learning, and science and popular culture.



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VISION

UNESCO Chairs serve as prime vehicles for building higher institutions' capacity in specific areas of scholarship through exchange, collaboration, knowledge transfer and sharing in the spirit of international solidarity.

Working in the Asia-Pacific region and connecting with partners elsewhere in the world, this Chair contributes to UNESCO's work in fostering inclusive ways of bringing science, engineering, technology and innovation to bear on the Sustainable Development Goals.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

OBJECTIVES OF THIS CHAIR

Co-develop a platform for research, knowledge exchange and collaboration in science communication for public good in the Asia-Pacific and beyond.

Convene conversations and frameworks for engaging diverse scientific narratives about imagined planetary futures and cultural meanings that transformative agendas evoke.

Explore ways to build shared meanings from diverse research, policy, civil society and community perspectives on transformative change in the common good.



WORK WITH US...

Build a global community, connecting universities, public and private organisations and individuals.

Share, produce and communicate knowledge to support understandings, practices and policies about planetary futures.

Develop competencies of researchers and other stakeholders to approach transformative change in inclusive and meaningful ways.



CONTACT

Chair-Holder

Sujatha Raman, Ph.D., sujatha.raman@anu.edu.au

Senior Administrative Officer

Abigail Hils, Abigail.hils@anu.edu.au



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