

Participatory Research Fund Project Exploring Eco-anxiety Through Performance



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Overview:

This project seeks to understand more about the feelings evoked by climate change, particularly eco-anxiety. The research will investigate how these feelings influence engagement with climate action, and what social functions are in place to support one another with such feelings.

The aim is for the data collected through this research to be used to inform a piece of musical theatre that conveys and explores the themes of eco-anxiety and society's response to it, as a valuable way to articulate this rising outcome of the climate crisis, and in particular the impact on young people.

Aim and objectives:

Research aims:

- To understand how mental health outcomes, such as eco-anxiety, help or hinder engagement with climate actions
- To explore what socially organised strategies are in place to deal with eco-anxiety, including who we turn to for emotional support.

Project objectives:

To inform the future development of a resonant and relevant piece of musical theatre to convey the prevalent themes uncovered through this research (subject to future funding).

Funding of £7,615 is being used for:

- Series of five, paired interviews (involving 10 participants)
- 3-day performance workshop for 8-12 participants
- Research assistant supporting the above

Of the funding, £5,615 was awarded from the PPIE fund, with an additional £2,000 from the Faculty of Science and Engineering



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Do you want to know more or be involved?

Stakeholders involved:

- Global Sustainability Institute, ARU
- 'The Common Lot' Theatre Production
- Norwich Eco Hub
- Norfolk and Waveney Mind
- Climate Museum UK
- *In addition, a venue is being provided free of charge by Norwich Theatre Royal*

Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement elements:

Paired interviews:

Conversational interviews will take place with participants in pairs. One participant in each pair will be aged 18-30, with the other a friend and/or family member, identified as being a source of emotional support to one another. They will be asked to talk candidly about their emotional responses and related experiences towards climate change or 'the state of the world' more generally.

Performance workshop:

The data collected through these interviews will inform the activities of a 3-day performing arts workshop at the end of July 2023, in Norwich. Excerpts of audio and/or text gathered through the interviews will be used as prompts for exercises throughout the workshop.

Future Musical Theatre piece:

The data collected through the interviews and workshop is planned to be used by theatre-makers 'The Common Lot', to develop a piece of musical theatre on the topic of eco-anxiety.

Research outcomes:

As well as the engagement outcomes discussed above, the work will be analysed for write up as an academic publication, building on previous work of the team, e.g. Robison, R., Van Bommel, M. and Rohse, M., 2022. **Relationships between climate mitigation actions and mental health: a systematic review of the research landscape.** *Frontiers in Climate*, 4.



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