

Diving under the scientific iceberg

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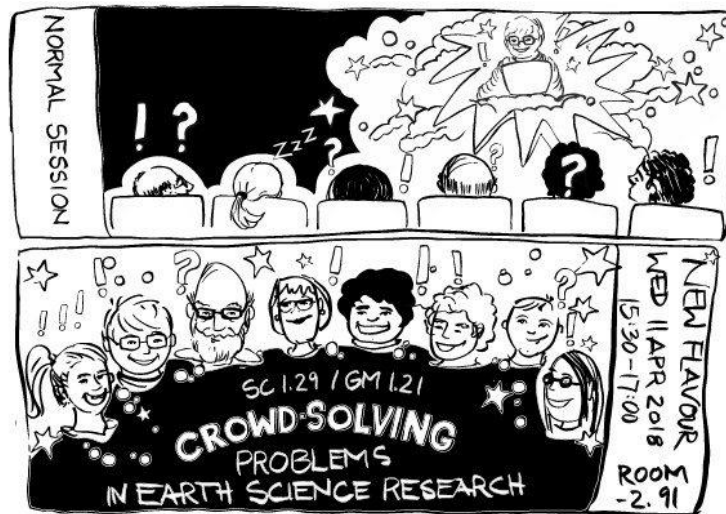


Figure 1: Flyer and poster of the “new” session.

Attending an international conference as an early career scientist (ECS) is inspiring, sometimes overwhelming, and can be frustrating. Frustration can be due to the lack of knowing other scientists, discrimination or compliant behaviour as a non-established scientist, or the feeling that you need to prove yourself and your science without any doubt or mentioning any possible challenges you have faced. To avoid these frustrations, I designed a new type of session for the EGU. I gathered other Young Geomorphologists from across Europe to structure and organize a session which focusses on interaction, discussion of ECSs and challenges we face in research. At the EGU General Assembly 2018, the short course SC1.29/GM12.1 “Crowd-solving problems in earth science research” launched.

In the short course, we addressed challenges in our research and scientific life, ranging from inaccessible data and methods, unknown initial conditions, up and downscaling in space and time, to unknown processes and landforms.

In discussions of conference talks, only the tip of the iceberg of Earth science research can be exploited. The rest of the iceberg, resembling all challenges, ideas and minds (of the audience) usually remains in the shaded, unspoken depth. We explicitly wanted to cater to these challenges or ideas and use the crowd of participants to approach or solve them. We flipped the tables and had problem-stating talks for 2 minutes, which is the usual discussion time. Five Early Career Scientists came forward with their challenges and ideas they face in their research and asked the audience for solutions in 40-minute discussion rounds. All convener of the session chaired one of the discussion groups. All five groups with roughly ten participants came into conversation, exchanged experiences, analysed new aspects and developed ideas.

A synthesis statement to the overall outcome of the short course would be: We need to talk! Allowing time and space for discussion, enabling open and non-hierarchical communication are pivotal for international conferences, which could improve attendance and experiences of ECS at these meetings.

The grant was spent on printing posters, markers and glue to track the discussed aspects, and to attend the conference, organize and convene the session in the first place.

The outcome of the session was summarized in a blog entry (<https://blogs.egu.eu/divisions/gm/2018/04/25/diving-under-the-scientific-iceberg/>) which was posted on the EGU Geomorphology blog. Due to a lot of positive response and attendance from all Earth sciences, the outcome of the second edition of the short course, held in 2019, was posted on the general EGU blog (<https://blogs.egu.eu/geolog/2019/06/05/challenging-challenges-in-earth-science-research-at-the-egu-general-assembly/>).