

## Poster presentations

### Field work to motivate students into marine sciences

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Marine science communication can be more effective among school students when they learn contents in a non-formal way, outside of the school formal educational context. In particular, field work that includes sampling methodologies and procedures commonly used by marine researchers, can be very effective to motivate students into marine science topics.

Taking advantage of the proximity to the Ocean and to the Ria Formosa coastal lagoon (a protected area located in the Algarve region, South of Portugal), a project involving the collaboration between a Science Centre (Centro Ciência Viva de Tavira), a local school (EB 2 3 D. Manuel I, Tavira), its Parents' Association and a Research Centre (Instituto do Mar e da Atmosfera, IPMA, Tavira), promoted a science club at the school. This science club implemented several hands-on activities that included field trips where students (between 10 and 15 years old) could contact with sampling methods commonly used in marine sciences, complemented with laboratorial analysis of samples. The laboratorial part took place both in the science club at school labs, and the IPMA research laboratory, where students could also directly contact with researchers and observe distinct types of experiments in marine sciences. We present the set of activities that were conducted in this project, related with marine sciences. By combining field work activities, laboratorial analyses and other outside activities in which scientific contents were also explored in a non-formal context, the strategy employed was very effective to engage students into science topics.

### 'Young Marine Scientists' Day', the annual hot spot for up-and-coming researchers

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Started in 2001 the VLIZ Young Marine Scientists' Day has grown to be the largest multi-disciplinary marine research day for young scientists in Flanders/Belgium and its neighbouring regions. Over 300 young (mainly master students, Phd students and young postdocs) marine and coastal experts from all disciplines come to this event to share knowledge from lectures, pitching presentations, a keynote address, elevator speeches, posters, demonstrations and interactive sessions. This annual symposium highlights the diversity, quality and relevance of marine and coastal sciences in Flanders/Belgium and it is the opportunity for young researchers to network and forge interdisciplinary relationships.

The main highlights of the day are the platform presentations and the poster presentations by the students and post-doctoral scholars. The young marine and coastal scientists are challenged to present their research in an attractive way, to think outside the box and to stupefy the audience with a fascinating talk on their research topic which takes in account the importance of their research to society. A contest is coupled to the presentations and the posters in order to encourage the presenters to use innovative communication techniques that overwhelm the audience. The winners of the best pitching presentation and the best poster are selected by the audience and are awarded with a voucher. The overall idea is that the young scientists get the opportunity to hone their presentation skills.

The Young Marine Scientists' Day is always kicked-off by an experienced scientist who gives a lecture in which he/she looks back upon his/her lifetime inspired by the ocean. It is a teaser for the young scientists to build their career in marine research.

This annual gathering is an inspiring, stimulating day for young marine scientists. They are challenged to present their work in an attractive way. By doing so they profile themselves in the broad network of marine scientists and experts who are professionally involved with the coast and the sea. The VLIZ Young Marine Scientists' Day is an excellent opportunity to network with not only colleagues, but also people from other institutions who might one day be collaborators on any number of projects. It is the place where the following generation of marine scientists is founded.