

Mistra Environmental Communication Principals

The following principles guide all parts of our research programme and are evaluated and revised through in-depth research, active use and discussion.

Principle 1. Environmental communication is an instrumental practice and a constitutive process. Environmental communication can be seen as a set of purposeful activities, which are intended to impact people's understanding of and relationship to the environment through e.g., mobilization, deliberation, persuasion, and learning for (collective) action and change. At the same time, environmental communication is a much broader, constantly ongoing, constitutive meaning-making process that shapes people's understanding of socio-environmental reality.

Principle 2. Environmental communication is multimodal and multilateral. Environmental communication is performed in different ways and by a variety of actors. Environmental communication happens between individuals and groups and is also part of individual meaning-making processes. More than sharing information or knowledge, communication includes the sharing and social negotiation of values, emotions, embodied experiences and practices.

Principle 3. Socio-environmental change is the result of agency-structure interplay. Socio-environmental change and continuity result from the interplay between people's actions and socio-material structure. To understand environmental communication's role in change processes therefore requires approaches focusing on the individual, on groups, on social-material structures, and combined approaches across the structure-agency spectrum.

Principle 4. Environmental communication is a field of discursive struggle. Environmental communication is a field of discursive struggle, in which sustainability is a central, yet contested concept. Ideas about the environment and human-environment relations provide "structures of understanding". These ideas are multiple, conflicting, and engage with one another in discursive struggles.

Principle 5. Power and conflict are inherent to environmental communication. Power, disagreement, conflict and resistance are inherent to environmental communication processes. This includes deliberative, learning and participatory approaches. Environmental communication research and practice needs to take power and conflict explicitly into account.