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Citizen Voice and the Arts: Opportunities and Challenges for Citizen– Policy Engagement on Environmental Issues in Sahelian West Africa

Avec sommaires en français sur page 8

**Imogen Bellwood-Howard, Peter Taylor, Julie Doyle,
Aminata Niang, Haoussa Ndiaye, Fatoumata Sow and
Lansine Sountoura**

December 2022

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Summary

Citizen and policy groups address environmental challenges in the Sahel, but rarely together. In Sahelian West Africa, including in Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali, artists and citizens have used protest art to make their voices heard, in contexts where this can carry risks of conflict with authorities. Artists sometimes act as engaged citizens, who can draw on their artistic talents to communicate a message. This paper explores how far art may be used as a tool for dialogue between different groups on environmental concerns in the Western Sahel. We review how art has been used in communication and dialogue globally and in the region, where activism and communication are more common than arts-led dialogue and deliberation. Field activities included an actor mapping exercise, interviews and experimental workshops, and an online platform. We found that hierarchies and sectoral silos contribute to a lack of dialogue. Communication of protest messages, although easier, runs the risk of confrontation with authorities. There is a degree of compromise between amplifying an undiluted ‘citizen voice’ and trying to find some degree of resonance within the dominant policy context. A focus on the skill of the artist helps understand which aesthetic qualities promote the affective reactions that make arts-led activism powerful. To understand the situations where arts-led dialogue between multiple groups may be possible, it may be instructive to focus on commonalities that disparate groups can emphasise. Simultaneously, there are some situations where unidirectional communication can be as effective as intentional dialogue in effecting change. Such communication can sometimes eventually lead to dialogue between parties, including the viewers of artworks and participants in them.

Keywords

Arts-led dialogue; citizen participation; environmental activism; West Africa.

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Executive Summary

Citizen and policy groups address environmental challenges in the Sahel, but rarely together. In Sahelian West Africa, including in Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali, citizens have used protest art to make their voices heard, in contexts where this can carry risks of imprisonment.

In this context, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded Citizen Voice project sought to understand how the arts may further contribute to the expression of citizens' concerns about the environment, and the creation of dialogue between policy actors and citizens in these Sahelian countries.

We acknowledged traditions of cultural activism in the study contexts, largely characterised by citizens and artists expressing messages through artistic endeavours. We explored how this had sometimes led to arts-led dialogue, representing intentional attempts to generate dialogue between different groups, either prompted by artistic appreciation, or by co-creation of artistic artefacts. We acknowledge a blurred area between these activities, as one-way communication of a single message into the public domain can lead to dialogue between different groups, and forms of dialogue are diverse; for example, between different citizen groups, or citizens and policy actors who themselves are heterogeneous groups. Recently, social media has become much more widespread, used by many members of society, and creating new forms of influence that citizens and governments may use to exercise power. Its value may be viewed positively or negatively, depending on whose agenda is being promoted.

Our activities were to map key actors; to interview three artists, four citizen representatives, and three policy actors across countries; to arrange an experimental workshop in each country; and to establish an online platform for international communication. The latter was a necessary adaptation to the original concept of convening an inter-country group of participants, which proved impossible due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the workshops, artists presented their work and diverse groups discussed the potential for arts to play a role in activism about the environment, but also about linked livelihood issues. In Mali, the participants also co-constructed lyrics to a song.

We found, through interactions with participants and learning from their experience, that the arts were widely and successfully used for communication and activism, and in many examples this succeeded in opening dialogue. Use of the arts to intentionally instigate dialogue, however, was rare, and use of co-creative artistic activities unheard of. We ascribed this to the strong hierarchies and sectoral silos in these contexts, which made it sensitive to open up dialogue

between different groups, particularly on contentious issues. We also noted that the power relations and political situations in these countries meant that even communication through the arts to the public or to policy actors carried risks for artists and citizen groups. We noted that art forms used in communication and to prompt dialogue tended to carry direct rather than abstract messages, and are not necessarily aiming for an emotional or affective response, although many art works, especially music, are effective because of their affective qualities.

The project revealed that communication around environmental issues is therefore more successful when carried out by artists who already have a relationship with powerful groups, and may have worked with them to promote top-down government messaging. However, this did mean those powerful actors could, potentially, try to quieten artists' activist voices. Social media is increasingly important in reaching a wider section of the population, and this means those without digital skills increasingly struggle to make their voices heard. We confirmed that the skill of the artist is critical to creating work with the aesthetic qualities that can communicate a message or invoke an affective response.

Directly instigated dialogue, including through co-creation of artistic works, can also be enhanced by the factors that enhance art-led communication. Instigators of dialogue must be realistic about the resource needs, and to plan for a longer-term engagement than might initially be anticipated. There is a need to understand whether emphasising commonalities between groups, such as a common religion, will facilitate dialogue.

However, arts-led dialogue may not be appropriate in all contexts, due to established hierarchies and the risks it can pose to artists and citizens: it may be more effective or appropriate in such contexts to keep to the one-way 'communication' mode where citizens or artists present their opinions to policy actors or the public – for example, as some form of representation by citizens on a critical issue, or as an artistic performance by an artist – as a potential precursor to more conventional forms of deliberation. These findings imply that there is a degree of compromise between amplifying an undiluted 'citizen voice' and trying to find some degree of resonance within the dominant policy context.

Further research work is needed to understand the situations where direct arts-led dialogue may work most effectively as part of wider social change, in contrast to general communication; where either may be appropriate; and how far these different forms overlap. A way to learn more about this is to continue to build networks of artists, citizens, and policy actors who have worked with the arts across contexts, and to promote further exchange of knowledge and learning based on their experiences.

La Voix des Citoyens et les Arts : Opportunités et Défis pour l'Engagement Politique des Citoyens sur les Questions Environnementales En Afrique Sahélienne

**Imogen Bellwood-Howard, Peter Taylor, Julie Doyle, Aminata Niang,
Haoussa Ndiaye, Fatoumata Sow et Lansine Sountoura
December 2022**

Résumé

Les associations de citoyens et les décideurs politiques abordent les défis environnementaux dans le Sahel, mais rarement ensemble. En Afrique de l'ouest sahélienne, incluant en Mauritanie, au Sénégal, et au Mali, des artistes et des citoyens ont utilisé l'art protestataire pour faire entendre leur voix, dans des contextes où cela peut comporter des risques de conflit avec les autorités. Les artistes agissent parfois comme des citoyens engagés qui peuvent s'appuyer sur leurs talents artistiques pour communiquer un message. Ce document de travail explore dans quelle mesure l'art peut être utilisé comme outil de dialogue entre différents groupes sur les préoccupations environnementales dans le Sahel occidental. Nous examinons comment l'art a été utilisé dans la communication et le dialogue au niveau mondial ainsi que dans la région, où l'activisme et la communication sont plus courants que le dialogue et la délibération basés sur les arts. Les activités sur le terrain comprenaient un exercice de cartographie des acteurs, des entretiens et des ateliers expérimentaux et la création d'une plateforme en ligne. Nous avons constaté que les hiérarchies et les silos sectoriels entre les acteurs contribuent à l'absence de dialogue. La communication des messages de protestation, bien que plus facile, court le risque d'une confrontation avec les autorités. Il existe un certain degré de compromis entre l'amplification d'une « voix citoyenne » non diluée et la recherche d'un certain degré de résonance dans le contexte politique dominant. L'accent mis sur les compétences de l'artiste permet de comprendre quelles qualités esthétiques favorisent les réactions émotionnelles et affectives qui rendent l'activisme artistique puissant. Pour comprendre les situations où un dialogue mené par les arts entre plusieurs groupes est possible, il peut être instructif de se concentrer sur les points communs que des groupes disparates peuvent mettre en évidence. Parallèlement, il existe certaines situations où la communication unidirectionnelle peut être aussi efficace que le dialogue

intentionnel pour provoquer un changement. Une telle communication peut parfois aboutir à un dialogue entre les parties, y compris les spectateurs des œuvres d’art et les participants à celles-ci.

Mots Clés

Dialogue mené par les arts ; participation des citoyens ; activisme environnemental.

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Résumé

Les associations de citoyens et les décideurs politiques abordent les défis environnementaux dans le Sahel, mais rarement ensemble. En Afrique de l'ouest sahélienne, incluant en Mauritanie, au Sénégal et au Mali, les citoyens ont utilisé l'art protestataire pour faire entendre leur voix, dans des contextes où cela peut comporter des risques d'emprisonnement.

Dans ce contexte, le projet « Citizen Voice » (« La voix des citoyens »), financé par le Conseil de recherche sur les arts et les sciences humaines du Royaume-Uni, a cherché à comprendre comment les arts peuvent contribuer davantage à l'expression des préoccupations des citoyens en matière d'environnement et à la création d'un dialogue entre les acteurs politiques et les citoyens dans ces pays sahéliens.

Notre question de recherche principale est la suivante :

Comment les citoyens et les décideurs politiques peuvent-ils créer ensemble une compréhension des enjeux environnementales à travers les arts et les récits?

Nous avons exploré cette question à travers quatre sous-questions :

1. Quels groupes politiques et citoyens sont les acteurs pertinents dans les contextes étudiés?
2. Quels sont les défis environnementaux et les enjeux associés auxquels sont confrontées les sociétés du Sahel occidental et qui peuvent être analysés par les citoyens et les acteurs politiques à travers les médiums artistiques?
3. En quoi les relations citoyens-politiques et les concepts de citoyenneté diffèrent-ils selon les contextes étudiés?
4. (a) Quelles formes d'expressions, de forums et d'espaces artistiques et culturels peuvent libérer un pouvoir de transformation pour le changement social dans chaque contexte?
4. (b) Qu'est-ce qui empêche ou facilite l'expression artistique ou la narration des récits agissant comme un moyen crédible d'engagement entre les politiques et les groupes de citoyens?

Nous avons revu différentes sphères dans lesquelles les médiums de l'art ont été utilisés dans des dialogues ou des communications sur l'environnement. La contribution unique des arts inclut leur potentiel à initier une communication de nature profonde et nuancée, qui peut se connecter aux émotions et à l'expérience de vie pour créer une résonance profonde avec les individus et les

communautés. Cela peut conduire aux dialogues qui reconnaissent et prennent en compte diverses motivations et visions du monde, au-delà de la logique ou du rationnel. Dans le domaine de l'activisme culturel, ou de l'art socialement engagé, l'art porteur d'un message activiste spécifique est depuis longtemps créé par des artistes et/ou des acteurs communautaires dans le but d'encourager le changement social ou politique. Le terme esthétique relationnelle fait référence à les beaux-arts qui sont fondé sur le développement de relations entre l'artiste et les spectateurs, ou qui traitent simplement des relations dans la société. Cela peut inclure l'art participatif, qui peut également être utilisé comme méthode de recherche telles que la photovoix (photovoice) et la vidéo participative.

En Afrique de l'Ouest, ces relations art-activisme-politique sont largement caractérisées par des artistes et des groupes de citoyens utilisant les arts pour une communication par la base, visant à générer un dialogue et une réflexion. Parmi les exemples marquants, citons le mouvement burkinabé « Balai citoyen », qui a utilisé la musique pour animer le soulèvement politique populaire de 2015, et le groupe « Connected advocacy » (« Plaidoyer connecté ») au Nigeria, qui a commandé des peintures sur les défis environnementaux et utilisé des expositions d'art pour générer des discussions avec les jeunes. Des artistes ont également fait participer le public à la co-création de l'art. Au Burkina Faso, Adjairatou Ouedraogo a créé "Ma ville en peinture" en installant des tableaux vierges dans les rues de Ouagadougou et en invitant le public à peindre, générant ainsi des possibilités de dialogue sur les thèmes soulevés par les artistes citoyens. Dans le projet « Blazing century » (« Un siècle flamboyant »), l'artiste nigérian Wilfred Upkong a fait participer les habitants du delta du Niger à la création d'œuvres d'art visuel et de performances sur les conflits liés à la destruction de l'environnement et aux bouleversements sociopolitiques, en suscitant l'interaction, la réflexion et le dialogue. Ces exemples montrent que peu importe si une activité est conçue comme de l'activisme culturel, de la recherche artistique participative ou de l'art relationnel/socialement engagé, des éléments de communication, de dialogue et de délibération peuvent avoir lieu entre les créateurs ou les spectateurs. Il est également important de noter que la communication d'un message unique dans le domaine public par le biais de l'art peut parfois conduire à un dialogue entre différents groupes.

Dans le cadre de notre projet, nous avons conduit des activités de terrain pour répondre à nos questions de recherche. Nos activités consistaient à cartographier les acteurs clés, à interviewer trois artistes, quatre représentants des citoyens et trois acteurs politiques à travers les pays cibles et à organiser un atelier expérimental dans chaque pays auquel ont participé des acteurs artistiques, politiques et de la société civile. En outre, nous avons établi une plateforme en ligne pour la communication internationale. Cette dernière était

une adaptation nécessaire au concept initial qui consistait à réunir un groupe de participants de plusieurs pays, ce qui s'est avéré impossible en raison de la pandémie de Covid-19. Au cours des ateliers, les artistes ont présenté leur travail et divers groupes ont discuté du potentiel des arts à jouer un rôle dans l'activisme en matière de l'environnement, mais aussi des problèmes liés aux moyens de subsistance. Au Mali, les participants ont également coconstruit les paroles d'une chanson.

Nous avons constaté, grâce aux interactions avec les participants et à l'apprentissage de leur expérience, que les arts étaient largement utilisés avec succès pour la communication et l'activisme sur des nombreuses questions environnementales et des enjeux associés. Différents groupes de la société civile et d'artistes ont collaboré avec les autorités au niveau local et étatique et avec des organisations semi-étatiques telles que des instituts artistiques et culturels. En travaillant sur des questions environnementales, les groupes ont également abordé des questions liées aux aspects politiques et sociaux tels que la santé, la migration et les moyens de subsistance. Dans de nombreux exemples, la communication et l'activisme sur ces thèmes ont réussi à ouvrir le dialogue. Les exemples comprenaient des activités de nettoyage urbain et côtier en installant des œuvres d'art dans les espaces publiques, créant ainsi des conversations parmi le public. La musique était également utilisée dans les chants de protestation.

Cependant, l'utilisation d'activités artistiques co-créatives étant inconnue pour beaucoup de participants, il a été difficile de les mettre en œuvre dans les différents ateliers. Nous avons attribué cela aux fortes hiérarchies et silos sectoriels dans ces contextes, qui rendaient délicate l'ouverture d'un dialogue entre différents groupes, en particulier sur des questions difficiles ou litigieuses. Nous avons également noté que les relations de pouvoir et les situations politiques dans ces pays signifiaient que la communication par les arts au public ou aux acteurs politiques comportait des risques pour les artistes et les groupes de citoyens. Certaines associations citoyennes ont parfois été découragées ou bloquées dans leur activisme par des forces gouvernementales puissantes.

Bien que les conceptions de la citoyenneté diffèrent d'un contexte à l'autre, les participants partagent l'idée qu'il est de leur responsabilité de dénoncer les injustices par le biais de l'art, même si cette communication au public ou aux acteurs politiques comporte des risques pour les artistes et les groupes de citoyens d'être refusés tous les droits en tant que citoyens dans certains contextes. Nous avons constaté que les formes d'art utilisées dans la communication et pour susciter le dialogue avaient tendance à véhiculer des messages directs plutôt qu'abstraits, et ne visaient pas spécifiquement une réponse émotionnelle ou affective.

Le projet a démontré que la communication autour des questions environnementales est donc plus efficace lorsqu'elle est réalisée par des artistes qui ont déjà une relation avec des groupes puissants et qui ont peut-être travaillé avec eux pour promouvoir des messages gouvernementaux mais de manière verticale. Cependant, cela signifiait que ces acteurs puissants pouvaient essayer de faire taire les voix activistes des artistes. Les médias sociaux sont de plus en plus importants pour atteindre une plus large partie de la population. Cependant, ceux qui n'ont pas de connaissance dans le domaine numérique ont du mal à faire entendre leur voix. La valeur des médias sociaux peut être considérée positivement ou négativement, selon l'agenda qui est promu. Notre étude démonte que ce soit dans la vie réelle ou par le biais des médias sociaux la compétence de l'artiste est essentielle à la création d'œuvres dotées de qualités esthétiques pouvant communiquer un message ou susciter une réponse émotionnelle, et que ces caractéristiques esthétiques peuvent être culturellement spécifiques.

Le dialogue directement initié, y compris par la co-crédation d'œuvres artistiques, peut également être renforcé par les mêmes facteurs qui améliorent la communication axée sur l'art. Les instigateurs du dialogue doivent être réalistes quant aux besoins en ressources et planifier un engagement à plus long terme. Il est nécessaire de comprendre si l'accent mis sur les points communs entre les groupes, comme une religion commune, facilitera le dialogue. Il y a eu des suggestions de cette nature surtout en République Islamique de Mauritanie.

Cependant, le dialogue mené par les arts n'est peut-être pas recommandé dans tous les contextes, en raison des hiérarchies établies et des risques qu'il peut poser aux artistes et aux citoyens. Il pourrait être plus efficace ou plus approprié dans de tels contextes de s'en tenir au mode de communication à sens unique, dans lequel lorsque les citoyens ou les artistes présentent leurs opinions aux acteurs politiques ou au public – par exemple sous la forme d'une représentation par les citoyens sur une question critique, ou d'une performance artistique par un artiste – comme précurseur potentiel de formes plus conventionnelles de délibération. Ces résultats impliquent qu'il existe un certain compromis entre l'amplification d'une « voix citoyenne » non diluée et la tentative de trouver un certain degré de résonance dans le contexte politique dominant.

Des recherches supplémentaires sont nécessaires pour comprendre les situations dans lesquelles le dialogue par les arts peut fonctionner le plus efficacement dans le cadre d'un changement social plus large, contrairement à la communication générale, les situations dans lesquelles l'un ou l'autre peut être approprié, et dans quelle mesure ces différentes formes peuvent se chevaucher. Enfin, il est recommandé de continuer à créer des réseaux d'artistes, de citoyens et d'acteurs politiques qui ont travaillé avec les arts dans différents contextes, et de promouvoir l'échange de connaissances et l'apprentissage sur la base de leurs expériences.

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Acronyms

AEDD	Agence de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable
AGD	Association des Gestionnaires pour le Développement
GREAT	Groupe de Recherche en Économie Appliquée et Théorique
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IPAR	Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale
NGO	non-governmental organisation
REPES	Réseau des Parlementaires pour la Protection de l'Environnement au Sénégal
UGB	Université Gaston Berger

1. Introduction

Citizen and policy groups address environmental challenges in the West African Sahel, but rarely together. Although power dynamics, social structures, and political contexts in Sahelian countries have sometimes made it difficult for citizens to publicly expose their concerns on the environment, and on other pertinent issues, the arts have often played a role in successful activism on the environment, and in other areas of public concern. However, this has rarely been done in a way that promotes dialogue between citizens, policy actors, and decision makers.

The two-year-long Citizen Voice project took place in Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania. The objective of the project, and of this paper, was to understand how far art may be a relevant mode of citizen–policy engagement in the Western Sahel, for helping co-construct understanding of environmental challenges and to address them in practice. The project also aimed to initiate a network of people who are concerned with using arts to develop pro-environmental initiatives across the Sahel and may be interested in collaborating further on joint initiatives.

Our main question is:

How can citizens and policymakers co-create understanding about environmental issues through arts and storytelling?

We explored this through four sub-questions:

1. Which policy and citizen groups are the relevant actors in the study contexts?
2. Which environmental challenges, and linked issues, facing societies in the Western Sahel are amenable to analysis by citizens and policy actors through artistic mediums?
3. How do citizen–policy relations and concepts of citizenship differ across our study contexts?
4. (a) Which forms of artistic and cultural expression, forums, and spaces can release transformative power for social change in each context?
4. (b) What prevents or facilitates artistic expression or storytelling acting as a credible means of engagement between policy and citizen groups?

This project brought together different bodies of literature and histories of activist scholarship, including work on the role of arts in communication and dialogue for environmental change. This paper will present the study contexts, and key ideas from the literature, before outlining project activities and findings, structured in response to the preceding questions. We will summarise by

suggesting pre-conditions and methods for co-creating understanding about the environment through the arts in the Western Sahel. We will then give the outlook for next steps in this programme of work.

1.1 The project context

Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali were chosen as study contexts due to their commonalities. These include a similar Sahelian climate and ecology, some common ethnic groups (e.g. the Peulh/Fulani), and over 90 per cent adherence to Islam (Clark 2022; Toupet 2022; Hargreaves 2022). The following sections give brief entries to the study contexts in terms of civic participation, and then arts, at the time of writing (July 2022). Acknowledging the impossibility of doing justice to these areas in a few paragraphs, this section summarises trends in civic participation and contemporary arts which are less well represented in the academic literature, but have relevance to the expression of citizen voice, and connects them to key historical movements and influences.

1.1.1 Contemporary status of citizen participation in the study contexts

This project situates citizen participation against a backdrop of a long history of debate and discussion about its meaning, and practice, in a range of different contexts. As Arnstein's seminal work on citizen participation noted, 'The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you' (Arnstein 1969: 216), but what it really involves is often unclear and contested. Recent work by Anderson *et al.* (2022) highlights lessons learned about how citizen-led social and political action contributes to empowerment and accountability, especially in settings which are democratically weak, politically fragile and affected by legacies of violence and conflict, demonstrating the complexities involved in any specific context, as observed also in the study projects for this project.

Senegal has had multiparty democracy since 1981. Some commentators perceive erosion of democracy since 2012, with controversy and speculation over term limits (Freedom House 2021). In the 2019 elections, protests were held after opposition figures were imprisoned (Amnesty International 2021a). In 2021, citizens protested against counterterrorism laws perceived to silence dissent. Internet services were disrupted while the protests were orchestrated (Human Rights Watch 2022).

Mali's democratic elections began in 1991. Since 2012, insecurity has caused public dissatisfaction, and was one reason cited for the 2020 and 2022 military coups (Human Rights Watch 2021a; Africanews 2022a). Journalists and rights organisations have since reported human rights abuses and extra judicial killings, possibly targeting Peulh/Fulani people, but many formal citizens groups

support the junta, including trades unions (Amnesty International 2021b; Human Rights Watch 2021a). This may be partly because the military regime is seen as releasing the country from the influence of the former colonial power, France.

Mauritania's first nominally multiparty elections were in 1991. The population is stratified into a small ethnic and political elite of White Beydane Moors, and a larger black African population, including Haratin Moor people, traditionally of a slave caste. Decision-making and government positions in Mauritania remain dominated by Beydane men, and human rights organisations report continued silencing of political dissent, discrimination, and slavery (Amnesty International 2019). Internet services have been disrupted around election times, and campaigners who have criticised the government online have been imprisoned (Human Rights Watch 2021b). A 2021 law made it an offence to use social media to undermine the state (MENA Rights Group 2021).

1.1.2 The arts in the study contexts

Senegalese artists have made prominent contributions to contemporary mainstream fine art, and many incorporate activism into formal as well as popular art. Senegal's independence President, poet-philosopher Leopold Senghor, established the École de Dakar as part of his nation-building exercise. Artists were encouraged to work with the concept of Negritude, a philosophy of proclaiming and celebrating African blackness, and explore themes of African identity and culture (Cohen 2018). Negritude was later challenged, prominently by the Laboratoire Agit'Art collective, based in Dakar, which emphasised bottom-up, socially engaged actions and performances; for example, through its workshop Tenq and rurally-based project Huit Facettes, which valourised grass-roots participation in art forms such as glass making and pottery (Deliss 2014).¹ This heritage, along with the griot tradition of West Africa, has continued to influence those musicians who bring political themes into music. These include world famous artists Youssou N'Dour and Baaba Maal (Topouzis 1990), who draw on specific ethnic musical traditions, yet hybridise them with modern forms such as rock, and activist hiphop group Y'en a Marre which campaigned against President Wade's attempt to run for a third term (Binet 2011; Sajnani 2017).²

Mauritania's cultural and arts scene is less globally focused than that of Senegal, some suggest because Mauritania was indirectly ruled by the French in colonial times, through Islamic leaders (iExplore 2022). Arabic and Hassaniya language poetry has been, and is still, revered as a specifically Saharan art form (Deubel 2012). Popular music in Mauritania remains strongly rooted in traditional forms, which, like society as a whole, are divided along ethnic lines (All Good Tales 2018; thefreegeography 2020; Lavoie 2008; FolkCloud 2022). Internationally

¹ See more information on the [Laboratoire Agit'Art collective](#).

² See more information on [Y'en a Marre](#), a [PowerPoint presentation](#) and [YouTube video](#).

famous artists from the white Moorish tradition have fused traditional Moorish music with modern forms such as jazz. A notable artist in this style is Malouma, who has sung about the environment and women's rights and also the taboo subject of discrimination against black Mauritians, and who was later elected to the Mauritanian senate (Jagoe 2017; Lemancel 2014). Non-traditional music, including hip-hop, has grown since the 1990s, as has a small visual fine art scene. Artists in both these areas have tackled controversial topics including slavery (Conway-Smith 2015; Abd 2015).³

Mali is particularly famed for diverse musical traditions, many of which were celebrated at the Festival in the Desert, which took place between 2001 and 2012 near the ancient cultural site of Timbuktu and represented both Tuareg and Southern Malian performers, until terrorism made it impossible to sustain the festival.⁴ Oumou Sangare and Salif Keita are among the world famous Malian recording artists who have used their musical platform to advocate for social minorities (Keychange 2021; Mdoda 2018; OHCHR 2022). Visual arts are increasingly active in advocacy; for example, great Malian artist Abdoulaye Konaté uses textiles to refer to issues of concern including contemporary terrorism (Africanews 2022b).⁵ Artists have commented on the crises that have occurred since 2012; for example, the Sofas de la Republique rap group and the visual art collective Collectif Action Vérité (Whitehouse 2012; RFI 2012; World OOH 2012; Makadji 2016).

1.2 Background concepts: arts in communication, dialogue, and deliberation

The interest and activity area of this project sits at an intersection between literatures on civic, participatory, and environmental dialogue, deliberation, communication, and activism. Below, we explore different forms of communication, dialogue, and deliberation about the environment and then examine the ways the arts have been mobilised in such initiatives, focusing as far as possible on examples and ideas connected to our project.

1.2.1 Role of arts in environmental communication, dialogue, and deliberation

Multiple interest groups are simultaneously implicated in managing, governing, and making decisions about the environment, particularly in the common situation where groups' interests diverge. Sometimes one (usually powerful)

³ See information on [painter Amy Sow](#), [artist Saleh Lo](#), the exhibition *Memories in Motion: Contemporary art from Mauritania* in Casa Árabe.

⁴ See more information on the Festival in the Desert in [English](#) and [French](#).

⁵ See information on [Mali's Contemporary Artists](#).

group instigates some type of dialogue process or even decision-making process, which may involve other groups to a greater or lesser extent. In formal contexts, such questions of environmental importance, where environmental, social, and economic interests meet each other, are often addressed by referring to ‘instrumental’ methods such as cost-benefit analysis (Edwards, Collins and Goto 2016). Yet, such approaches are less likely to recognise plural or shared values or priorities. More deliberative methods, including visioning and participatory techniques, aim to provide more space for group discussion and shared opinion-making (Tyszczuk and Smith 2018; Doyle 2020; Burns, Howard and Ospina 2021), aiming to recognise divergent values and priorities. Multicriteria analysis aims to combine the two (Ross and Stirling 2004).

Edwards *et al.* (2016) describe the potential for moving from these conventional deliberation or decision-making modes towards arts-based dialogue. This term is loosely defined. It can refer to dialogue between groups facilitated by an artist or prompted by an artwork, or a process where the dialogue itself is considered a work of art. It is therefore conceptualised as an imaginative space where non-rational, potentially bizarre or apparently outlandish ideas may safely be proposed.

The unique contributions of the arts include their potential to instigate communication of a deep and nuanced nature, that other forms, such as statistical evidence, may be less able to achieve. Arts often connect with emotions and life experience that can create a deep resonance with individuals and communities, and may induce affective, emotional responses (Corbett and Clark 2017). This can lead from communication towards a dialogue that acknowledges and considers diverse motivations and worldviews, beyond the logical or rational (Lee and Taylor 2011). In particular, the arts may provide opportunities to create spaces of joint enquiry and meaning making (Galafassi *et al.* 2018; Light *et al.* 2018) where people may be able to explore multiple meanings and rationales rather than necessarily being obliged to immediately seek solutions constrained by a specific worldview. Arts-led dialogue is intended to elicit values that matter to people and to groups (Kenter and Reed 2014). Idealised policy responses to environmental problems, e.g. climate change, are popularly characterised as responding to scientific evidence using rational logics (Hulme 2011) rather than alternative, value-laden or caring imperatives. But increasingly, the suggestion has emerged that the arts may have a role to play in those policy domains hitherto dominated by the rationales of quantification, valuation, and evidence-based deliberation. There have therefore been calls for the arts to become more integrated into deliberation and science–policy interfaces and processes such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Galafassi *et al.* 2018).

There may be subtle differences between more general arts-led **dialogue** and more purposive **deliberation**, valuation, and decision-making: dialogue may accept the impossibility of finding a single outcome, solution, or resolution to a problem. Arts-based dialogue may also be used alongside more conventional decision-making and deliberation methods such as futuring and scenario-building (Tyszczuk and Smith 2018; Doyle 2020). It may come close to the aims of techniques such as multicriteria mapping in ‘opening up’ possible futures, yet pay more attention to the emotions, feelings, and non-rational imperatives of participants (Ross and Stirling 2004).

This tradition of using artistic and affective methods in environmental deliberation should be contextualised in relation to other ways of conceptualising interactions between the arts and society. The labels applied to such activity have varied, depending on how far the actors involved are embedded in the domains of art, activism, or research.

Bourriaud (2002) used the term ‘relational aesthetics’ for fine art that deals with relations between people rather than visuality, and often involves the development of relations between viewers, or artist and viewers. This can include participatory art (Flinders and Cunningham 2014), or socially engaged art (Helguera 2011), which generally tend to involve the viewer in some type of interaction with an artist or each other, sometimes with an intended positive outcome. However, relational art does not have to be participatory (Bishop 2005) and can include visual art that provokes thought and reflection in the viewer.

Participatory art has been used as a research method, with varying degrees of participation and control by participants, artists and researcher, in well-known methods such as participatory video (Cunsolo Willox *et al.* 2013), photovoice (Sutton-Brown 2015), drawing, poetry, theatre (O’Neill 2011), and more niche activities such as quilting, weaving (Pappne Demecs and Miller 2014), and puppetry (Smith 2015). Artistic activities are posed as a way participants may express themselves or take control of the research or Action Research project.

Art with a specific activist message, sometimes called ‘artivism’ or ‘cultural activism’ (Firat and Kuryel 2011; Buser *et al.* 2013) has long been created by artists and/or community actors in attempts to encourage social or policy change. The potential of the arts as a change agent is increasingly recognised, to the extent that government agencies now sometimes employ this approach in statutory institutions (Cleveland 2011). Recognising the increasing diversity of arenas in which the arts are used for activism, communication, dialogue, and deliberation, and of the actors involved, Borstel and Korza (2017) use the umbrella term ‘arts for change’.

We have necessarily mentioned a wide range of artistic applications rather superficially, to contextualise, theoretically, the very broad variety of experiences

and understandings that participants brought to our project activities. The wider body of theoretical literature cited draws on European and American experiences. The next section will turn to applications within West Africa, less widely reported in academic literature.

1.2.2 Using the arts for communication, dialogue, and deliberation in West Africa

The arts have been extensively used in communication in the study contexts, and in many cases this leads to dialogue and to some extent, deliberation. In the following, we acknowledge the inter-relations between these three key functions, and the different roles artists and citizens play in them. We then situate our work in relation to this field. We refer as far as possible to examples focused on the environment and West Africa. However, as this is a nascent area, we occasionally draw on work from a broader domain in order to be able to illustrate the full range of possibilities.

The arts have sometimes been used as a communication tool to raise awareness about environmental practices or even nudge the public toward more desirable behaviour (Burke, Ockwell and Whitmarsh 2018), without prompting dialogue or deliberation. This mode of generally one-way, top-down communication contrasts with cultural activism, but is found in the study context; for example, when mobilised by political actors in nation-building exercises, behaviour change campaigns, and propaganda. Sawo (2020), for example, describes how Gambia's President Jammeh enrolled popular musicians to sing praise songs for him.

Individuals, artists, and citizen groups use the arts for bottom-up communication, in cultural activism which usually aims to prompt varying degrees of dialogue, consideration or discussion. Kester (1985) points to the distinction between dialogue and 'communication', presenting the latter as a component of advertising, but also mentions the opinion of Lyotard (1984) that the two are intertwined to some degree. Music has played an important role in this task in West Africa. In addition to those mentioned above, Mariam Kone, Maman Guereti, and Abdullahi Diop of Group Laye Bi, all involved in the Citizen Voice project, are examples of musicians who have produced music with clear messages that prompt contemplation and discussion. The artist may have little control over the nature of the dialogue or deliberation engendered by their work. Kester (1985) gives an example where Nigerian artist Mama Toro created a mural in a Lancashire barn as part of the ArtBarns project. African women living in Manchester visited the artwork and met the owners of the barn, resulting in a food-sharing partnership between these groups.

Other cases show more pointed effort by artists to use communication to generate action. The 'Citizen broom' movement of Burkina Faso was started by

musicians SamsK Le Jah and Smockey Bambara. They had previously raised political themes in their music, and used this to animate sections of the public, in a movement that played a role in the revolution of 2015 which ousted Blaise Compaore from 27 years of presidency (Corey-Boulet 2016; Sawadogo 2018; Saddier 2014). They cite the Senegalese Y'en a Marre collective as inspiration. Though these arts-led processes deliberately move beyond communication to action, they do not seek to bring together opposing views or groups who do not know each other in dialogue or deliberation; they seek co-construction between relatively homogenous groups of citizens towards civic actions for democracy.

Art is, however, sometimes intentionally positioned next to spaces for inter-group deliberation. A small Nigerian advocacy group, Connected Advocacy, commissioned paintings on the environmental challenges, and presented these at an exhibition event where they also provided interactive sessions with youth (Connected Advocacy 2021a, 2021b). It is notable that their description of the event states that policy actors were present. This is relatively rare, as Stern (2005) shows in an account of the 2003 Gene(sis) exhibition, which created multiple deliberative and dialogue spaces for discussion of the human genome, only one of which involved policy actors. One role of cultural activism can be to draw attention to issues in a way that leads to citizens being invited to policy spaces, particularly in the instance that no participatory spaces already exist (Delicath 2004).

An approach where the co-constructive element is more prominent involves asking citizens to participate in the creation of the artwork, or for them to instigate this. Adjairatou Ouedrago's project *My Town in Painting* installs blank canvases on multiple roundabouts in Ouagadougou to allow citizens to paint. Although Ouedrago's objective is to bring art to the public, some of the citizen artists raise themes that concern them and may animate the viewer, such as poverty. This does not undermine Ouedrago's intention but shows again that co-creative art – like participatory arts-based research – can allow the agency and creativity of citizen artists to direct the conversation (Teller Report 2021).⁶ Dancer and choreographer Aguibou Bougobali Sanou's project *Why Not?* involves creating dance pieces and performances with prison inmates. Sanou believes that co-creating the dance will effect transformation within the inmates, rehabilitating them as they dialogue with him and each other. Simultaneously, the performance of the dance prompts reflection among the audience (Al Jazeera 2019; Bonkian Londry 2019; Fulbrighter 2021; Dogbey 2022).

Activities framed as participatory art research may link more explicitly to deliberation spaces than these arts-framed events do. Mkwanzzi, Cin and Marovah (2021) report the experience of a group of Zimbabwean youths who were prompted by researchers to make graffiti art about their aspirations. They

⁶ See video on [Y'en a Marre: Youth and Social Engagement in Senegal](#).

exhibited the art works in spaces where opportunities were created for civic dialogue between youths, activists, and researchers about youth issues. Another example is the graffiti workshops organised by Senegalese Zeinixx Entertainment, where participants precede artistic activity with discussion about social issues (Crowe 2022). This work is framed more as an advocacy than a research activity.

Wilfred Upkong's work *Blazing Century*, while framed as socially engaged or relational art, achieves similar objectives as that Mkwanzani *et al.* (2021) report, comprising a suite of video, photographic, sculpture, and performance pieces relating to the interaction of environmental destruction and socio-political turmoil in the Niger Delta. *Blazing Century* employs a specific striking visual aesthetic which captures and communicates to viewers, prompting reflection and dialogue. Further, Upkong intentionally creates spaces where people embroiled in the conflicts co-create, discuss and deliberate, and he involves these people to an extent in the creation of the performances and films. Upkong states that this type of 'social sculpture' (after Joseph Beuys) is rarer in West Africa (Banks 2022; *Blazing Century Studios* 2022; Aikulola 2020; Autograph 2021; Braide 2018).

In these latter examples there are multiple levels of co-creation – dialogue between viewers, but also among a group of artistic creators, or between creators and viewers, who are sometimes policy actors (Flinders and Cunningham 2014), and sometimes actual deliberation on a concrete problem to be solved (Pässilä, Oikarinen and Kallio 2013). Therefore, the form of the final artwork matters to varying degrees, depending on how far the aim is to use it to communicate to the outside world or to provoke reflection among viewers. If the process of artistic creation by citizens is of more importance, the qualities of the final product may be less important.

Upkong's work references cultural heritage, place attachment, and human connection to the natural environment, themes which have been proposed as helpful to enrol the general population in environmental struggles (Golonu 2013). Referring to the work of Ken Saro-Wiwa, also in the Niger Delta, Nnamdi, Gomba and Ugiomoh (2013) suggest aesthetic education creates the landscape in which dialogue about a given issue can be instigated, by enabling people to see beauty in nature.

The preceding examples of art-led dialogue involve varying degrees of co-creation, but examples of **different** groups working together in the conscious creation of an art piece are rare, especially across hierarchical levels. It is possible that co-constructive activities are easier when activities take place in systems which are already less hierarchical (Pässilä *et al.* 2013).

Dialogical art more usually involves such cross-hierarchical engagement. It involves posing the act of creating a dialogue as the artwork (Kester 1985).

For example, artist Suzanne Lacy facilitated a live, public ‘conversation’ between young black and Latinx citizens and members of the police force in Oakland, which the public could observe. Dialogical art often interacts with social praxis, as in Theaster Gates’ conversation pieces, complex conceptual artworks where one component involves individuals dialoguing whilst participating in a meal (Pickens 2019), or the work of the Atelier Theatre Burkinabe. This group moved around rural Burkinabe communities, presenting plays Morrison (1993) described as comprising of three facilitated sections: firstly, a play presenting a social problem; secondly, an opportunity for the audience to rewrite, redirect, and re-enact the play as they wished; and thirdly, a dialogue between actor, citizen, and policy participants. Dialogical art may overlap more closely with more deliberative modes of problem solving such as futuring. This depends on the degree to which the outcomes of a dialogue or deliberation refer to tangible solutions or address specific problems. Many dialogical and deliberative processes take place over a longer period and there is an assumption in the literature that longer term engagement produces more meaningful dialogue.

The preceding examples have shown that, whether an activity is conceived of as cultural activism, as participatory art research, or as relational/socially engaged art, elements of communication, dialogue, and deliberation can take place between the creators or the viewers, who may be artists, citizens, or policy actors arranged in any constellation. Table 1.1 summarises types of activity in relation to these axes of differentiation. The red shape in the table is situated in the space where the research team initially conceived the scope of the Citizen Voice project to lie. We intended to explore co-creation between a diverse group of citizen and policy actors as they collaborated to create an artwork.

Table 1.1 Planned activity area of the project, indicated by red shape in table

	A message is communicated	Different groups dialogue with each other	Different groups deliberate and reach a conclusion
An artist produces the work on their own	Viewers regard the art and receive a message conceived by the artist	The art prompts dialogue among viewers	The art is used as a prompt for deliberation
An artist or artist and research team invite citizens to participate in the creation of an artwork	Viewers regard the art and receive a message conceived by the citizens	Citizens dialogue while or after creating or designing the art	Citizen creators deliberate while or after creating or designing the art
Citizens commission an artist to create an artwork			
Citizens conceptualise and create art		The art prompts dialogue among viewers	The art is used as a prompt for deliberation among viewers
An artist or researcher invites people to dialogue/ deliberate and this comprises the artwork	Communication is not a major aim		

Source: Authors' own.

Visual description: The red area covers the area of the table where the row labelled 'An artist or artist and research team invite citizens to participate in the creation of an artwork' intersects with the columns labelled 'A message is communicated' and 'Different groups dialogue with each other'. This means that it covers the cells labelled 'Viewers regard the art and receive a message conceived by the citizens' and 'Citizens dialogue while or after creating or designing the art/ The art prompts dialogue among viewers'.

This was intended to help answer the main research question: ‘**How can citizens and policymakers co-create understanding about environmental issues through arts and storytelling?**’ and the four sub-questions:

1. Which policy and citizen groups are the relevant actors in the study contexts?
2. Which environmental challenges, and linked issues, facing societies in the Western Sahel are amenable to analysis by citizens and policy actors through artistic mediums?
3. How do citizen–policy relations and concepts of citizenship differ across our study contexts?
4. (a) Which forms of artistic and cultural expression, forums, and spaces can release transformative power for social change in each context?
4. (b) What prevents or facilitates artistic expression or storytelling acting as a credible means of engagement between policy and citizen groups?

The next section will describe the methods we used to answer these questions.

2. Methods and activities

The research team comprised of three researchers from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and University of Brighton in the UK, one of whom was project lead and coordinator; two from Groupe de Recherche en Économie Appliquée et Théorique (GREAT) in Mali; one from l'Association des Gestionnaires pour le Développement (AGD) in Mauritania; and one each from Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR) and Université Gaston Berger (UGB) in Senegal. Those based in West Africa carried out the field-based activities. IDS staff collaborated in the analysis of the data collected by field-based team members. To answer the research questions, the research team undertook four activities.

1. The first activity was to map relevant actors. In each country, local researchers listed artists and arts groups, civil society and advocacy organisations, and policy actors concerned with environmental and/or citizenship issues. The purpose was to gain an idea of the range of organisations concerned with these issues, and their reach and interrelations, and to provide a sampling frame for the interviews that would take place in a following stage. A snowballing approach was taken because the mapping began from the most well-known organisations and individuals. This meant that each country map prioritised the capital cities but also included some actors based elsewhere. Researchers started with key contacts and used telephone calls, meetings, the internet, and word of mouth to contact stakeholders, and thereby build up a list of key actors at the time of the exercise. Basic information was collected about each organisation. The lists for the three countries were combined and are presented in Annexe 1. We carried out a *post hoc* inductive categorisation of the actors, using the information gathered about them to group them. The groups were elicited after all researchers, including from the UK, reviewed the list and discussed the types of organisations present. This categorisation of groups aimed to capture the main types of groups, each of which had slightly different functions in terms of environmental activism.
2. Local researchers performed interviews with the ten actors listed in Table 2.1, aiming for a balance of policy, citizen, and artist respondents across the three study countries. Interview schedules were similar across countries. The schedules covered understanding of citizenship, relations and communication between citizens and policy actors, potential roles for the arts in these dialogues, and the perceived aids and hindrances to such roles. Interviews were carried out by phone or face-to-face dependent on national Covid-19 protocols at the time, recorded, and transcribed in French. The lead

researcher at IDS then carried out content analysis on the whole interview transcript set.

Table 2.1 Interviewees

Country	Interviewee description	Category
Mali	Worker of the Agency for the Environment and Development (l'Agence de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable) (AEDD)	Government/ policy actor
	Worker of the NGO Folkecenter-Nyeta	Civil society/ citizen representative
	A singer who has been singing about desertification	Artist
Mauritania	Worker of a culture museum, part of the Institute of Research and Training in Heritage, Arts and Culture (Institut Mauritanien de Recherche et de Formation en Matière du Patrimoine et de l'Art et la Culture)	Government/ policy actor
	Worker at the NGO 'ONG JAHE-ELMINA' for protecting the environment and social development (association pour la protection de l'environnement et le développement social)	Civil society/ citizen representative
	Singer of a group that has sung about flooding	Artist
Senegal	Representative of the Network of Parliamentarians for Environmental Protection (Réseau des Parlementaires pour la Protection de l'Environnement au Sénégal) (REPES)	Government/ policy actor
	Chief of a village that has been flooded and has mobilised the community to react to this	Civil society/ citizen representative
	Worker of the NGO Young Volunteers for the Environment (Jeunes volontaires pour l'environnement)	Civil society/ citizen representative
	Singer who has sung about deforestation	Artist

Source: Authors' own.

3. The interviewees and a select few others from the actor map (as listed in Table 2.2) were invited to a national-level workshop in each country. We aimed for a mixture of citizen/civil society, policy, and artist invitees to each workshop.

Table 2.2 Additional workshop participants

Country	Participant list	Summary of the workshop
Mali	Six social science researchers	Actors presented themselves and their work, there was a discussion about the role of arts in environmental dialogue, participants drew pictures and co-wrote a song.
	Photographer	
	Art studio representative	
	Two visual artists	
	Technical counsellor	
Mauritania	Agroeconomist	Actors presented themselves and their work, there was a discussion about the role of arts in environmental dialogue, participants worked together in a ranking exercise on environmental challenges and solutions. Artist produced a painting.
	Visual artist	
	Representative of Ministry of Culture	
	Representative of Ministry of Environment	
	Aspirant politician	
Senegal	One additional civil society activist	Actors presented themselves and their work, the mapping work was presented, there was a discussion about the role of arts in environmental dialogue, participants proposed solutions to contemporary environmental problems.
	Four social scientists	
	Two visual artists	
	Three representatives from art associations	
	Three environmental or other civil society actors	
	Two representatives from Ministry of Environment	
	Representative from Ministry of Culture	
	One more representative from REPES	

Source: Authors' own.

One aim of these workshops was to ask participants to reflect on the study questions in the light of the interview data. The research team members in each country presented this data, and there was a remote presentation in each case from the IDS study lead, referring to the project's overall goals, and the content analysis of interview data. Participants had a general discussion on how the arts may facilitate citizen–policy dialogue on the environment, and what may impede this. Another aim was to practically observe how different types of dialogue and deliberation may be possible following displays of the artworks as a prompt. We invited policy and activist actors to present their work, and artists to perform or display their oeuvres, and asked participants to react to these interventions in their debate. We also planned for the workshops to host an experimental co-creative activity. This proved too uncomfortable for the artists in Mauritania and Senegal to facilitate, so in the Mauritanian workshops the artist created an image themselves. However, in Mali, artists, researchers, citizens, and policy actors drew pictures and participated in writing the lyrics of a song. Each participant was invited to contribute a phrase to the song. The artist combined these French words and put the composition to guitar music, which participants sang together. Visual artworks presented in and produced in the workshops can be seen in Annexe 2 of this paper.

The song produced in the Mali workshop was professionally produced by the singer who had facilitated this section of the workshop. She added verses and an additional refrain in Bambara language, bass, keyboard, and drums. A simple, low-cost music video was produced to accompany the song.⁷

4. The final task involved production, dissemination, and network-building. We originally intended to hold an international workshop, but decided not to do this in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and instead to create an online group to bring participants together internationally. The lead researcher at IDS therefore created a Facebook group and email list for the workshop participants. In the Facebook group, we shared all outputs from the workshops, and invited participants to react to these and share their own news. Low internet connectivity and digital literacy meant that it was also necessary for local project researchers to personally feed these results back to some participants, either through phone calls, personal visits, or interlocutors who could use social media. Thus, we gained some idea of the reactions of group members to the work. We also shared the project experience more widely, by participating in a podcast and publicising our outputs on YouTube.

⁷ See [Activists and Policy-Makers Explore the Role of Art in Development](#).

The core team members from IDS, including the lead researcher, and counterparts from Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal, reflected on the results and outcomes of the initial project, and based on this decided to continue collaborating, and to expand on the project by seeking further funding (successfully) to include research partners also in East Africa. Several of the workshop participants in each country are now members of the new project team.

3. Results

This section will address the four project sub-questions using data from the mapping, interviews and workshop, and from participants' messages and posts on our Facebook group, before a summary section addresses the overall project question. The three first questions are relatively brief questions that must be addressed in order to understand the background to sub-question 4.

1. Which policy and citizen groups are the relevant actors in the study contexts?

The actor mapping shows that the main categories of people and organisation relevant to the subject area are:

- Individual artists;
- Artists' collectives, which are not necessarily grouped around social and environmental issues;
- Civil society organisations, often conceptualised as youth organisations, which treat environmental issues alongside a range of other concerns;
- Civil society organisations with a specific environmental objective;
- Groups of politicians convening around environmental concerns; and
- Government structures and departments that are mandated to deal with the environment.

There are connections between some groups, particularly enhanced recently by online activity e.g. the dissemination of art and social mobilisation through the internet. The capacity of almost all is limited by lack of funds and time and resources.

2. Which challenges facing societies in the West African Sahel are amenable to analysis by citizens and policy actors through artistic mediums?

The project intended to focus on environmental challenges from its inception but found in interview and workshop data that people saw these issues as intertwined with socioeconomic issues; for example, pointing to how environmental change threatens means of livelihood such as farming and fishing, and how poor waste management affected human health. Such themes were meaningful to people when they were locally pertinent, for example in cases of sea-level rise around specific islands, and in that they represent matters of justice for all citizens, e.g. in the case of land as a resource. Many non-environmental issues were considered of equal importance, and discussion acknowledged the interconnection of these with each other, and with environmental concerns. Security concerns and peacekeeping were commonly

mentioned, along with the social cohesion, human rights, citizenship, racism, education, and health issues which, as the introduction showed, West African artists have historically referred to. Based on the examples presented in the workshops and that they had experience of (e.g. flooding), respondents claimed that the arts could be used to promote discussion on all these issues, even though the arts had less commonly been used with reference to contemporary environmental challenges. Bearing this in mind, we will continue to use the term ‘environmental issues’ in this paper, but acknowledge that, in this context, it encompasses environmental and linked social and political issues.

3. How do concepts of citizenship and citizen–policy relations differ across our study contexts?

3.1 Citizenship

Notions of citizenship itself differed within as well as between contexts, and participants raised ideas of rights but also responsibilities, including the responsibility to speak the truth about injustices. Ties to the land, through blood or inheritance, were frequently mentioned as important for citizenship. The place someone is born in and a connection to the land mattered, as, to some, did possession of the national documents of the country.

As expected, controversies over race and inequality arose in Mauritania – opinions were expressed that all races should be treated as equal citizens, but that this was not the case in practice. Furthermore, those who speak no French, certain ethnicities, those who have not had access to formal education, and the youth were mentioned as disempowered groups across contexts. ‘Youth’ were often mentioned as excluded but also responding to and using art, and important to connect to. It was recognised that there will therefore be different ways to communicate with different sociocultural groups in a population. One interviewee said that notions of citizenship and cohesion can be strengthened through historical storytelling across such social groups.

It was also pointed out that artists often strive to represent other citizens, or a group of citizens, but are also citizens themselves, and have their own voice as individuals or group members.

3.2 Citizen–policy relations

Occasions were recounted where citizens and policy actors dialogued with each other, e.g. in workshops organised by NGOs to consider specific issues such as sea incursion around St. Louis, Senegal. Artist and citizen respondents recounted examples of actions they had taken to attract policymakers’ attention when it seemed their concerns about specific issues had not been considered, for example mentioning problems on Twitter, organising clean-up campaigns, or producing a song about an issue of concern. Our data mainly showed isolated

efforts of this type, but there were hints of more structural opportunities to support citizen–policy dialogue, or even to include artists in this dialogue. These include the annual prize offered by the Senegalese Network of Parliamentarians for Environmental Protection (REPES) to individuals who had done something meaningful for the environment, and the assurance of the Malian Agency for the Environment and Development (AEDD) that they were ready to support artists who were working towards environmental protection.

Relations and lines of communication between citizens and policy actors were often characterised as fraught. In some contexts, there is distrust between citizens or artists who are concerned about specific issues, and policymakers – a Mauritanian interviewee candidly described youth groups being blocked by government from making their views heard. Overall, citizen–policy relations are not assured to be respectful and may even be perceived as patronising or resentful.

Despite the low level of mutual engagement between citizens and policy actors, there was a resounding opinion from study participants across the different contexts that citizens should be involved in governance and policy decisions for these to be meaningful. Participants in the Senegal workshop proposed that a statutory framework for supporting the voices of artists could help towards this end. However, this opinion largely represented the perspective of policy actors, and it was hard for workshop participants to imagine a system where uninvited voices, which arose outside of a statutory consultation framework, could be heard. Although discussion in this workshop centred on raising citizens' awareness, from 'above', about environmental issues, one opinion was exposed in the discussion section that community actors may also require formal support, even if they are autonomously performing activities at the grass roots. This built on the experience of a traditional leader who had been mobilising their community as they were affected by sea-level rise.

4. Which forms of artistic and cultural expression, forums, and spaces can release transformative power for social change in each context? What prevents or facilitates artistic expression or storytelling, and communication and knowledge co-creation acting as a credible means of engagement between policy and citizen groups?

Our data showed that traditional and modern arts and cultural modes were regularly used for communication, and to effect changes, though these were better described as 'incremental' than 'transformative'. In this section we will consider what the data show about the use of arts for communication, dialogue, deliberation, and co-construction, and two major implications of our data, relating to audience reach and power relations.

4.1 ‘Top-down’ communication

The data showed some examples of top-down communications from government or policy actors towards citizens and the general population. The major examples here involved policy and government agencies using sketches and traditional cultural communication forms like Malian Nyogolon (puppet) theatre to communicate to citizens about environmental protection. Examples covered issues such as rural water management and dune management, and could be presented to the population through radio and TV as well as live. In line with this, some interviewees and workshop participants had a perception of the arts as being appropriate for one-way top-down communication with those citizens with less education/‘understanding’, which showed the patronising nature of the relationship between some policy actors and citizens.

4.2 Cultural activism leading to ‘bottom-up’ communication and social awareness-raising

There were several concrete examples of ‘bottom up’ forms of cultural activism, in the form of artists using cultural expression to attempt to communicate their views. Most did not have a specific policy or public audience in mind, and were in the public domain, thereby more commonly gaining the attention of the public, with the conceivable effect that this may ultimately place public pressure upon policy actors. A strong example was the pop song written in Mauritania to gain policymaker attention about urban flooding. The artist concerned was proud that this had resulted in rapid policy attention to this issue. Artists from Senegal and Mali had also used song to refer to environmental issues in a more general way. Songs were disseminated by radio, TV, live formal and informal concerts and gatherings, CDs and, especially, YouTube.

There are associated examples of NGOs and civil society groups carrying out bottom-up actions, e.g. the Senegalese branch of a youth group organising activities that raise awareness about pollution and have a positive material effect. Litter picking and neighbourhood cleaning happened in Dakar and Bamako, and dune replanting in St. Louis. These activities were framed as social activism, but some were also interpreted as public art, e.g. the creation of street art and beautiful spaces and the repurposing of waste into designed dustbins. These actions do not necessarily involve policy actors, but have come to their attention, including through social media. However, art was generally a novel method for citizen groups and activists, who were more accustomed to advocating for their concerns in traditional forums using verbal debate.

Though these activities were primarily intended as communication or action pieces, their visibility resulted in a degree of dialogue, usually within the public domain between citizens. Some of them opened space for civic dialogue and deliberation by placing issues of concern onto the public agenda. Degrees of

incremental change were sometimes achieved at the level of individuals or communities; for example, in the raised awareness of sustainable farming techniques or the alteration of public spaces into more attractive environments.

4.3 Intentional deliberation and co-creation of art

The data did not describe any instances where artworks had formally been used to prompt dialogue in a dedicated deliberative space. Yet, in our workshops, participants were amenable to participating in conventional verbal dialogue and deliberation, having been prompted by the display of artworks. In Mauritania, the activity was of a very deliberative nature. It covered the design of interventions for environmental protection and flooding in particular, and the role of the arts and culture in this task. Discussion in the workshops, preceded by the artistic interventions, was of a fairly directive nature, often focusing on practical solutions and rules for what people should do to protect the environment and each other, rather than on feelings and values. However, some imaginative, creative, and maybe impossible but idealistic solutions were proposed in the Mauritania workshop, which may not have been suggested in other more formal spaces. In this sense, a degree of co-creation of understanding was achieved by having used artwork as a prompt for deliberation.

Participants in the study contexts had not previously experienced co-creation of artwork as a form of dialogue, and it was challenging to implement in our workshops. Participants preferred to stay within their roles of policymaker, advocate, and artist, so it was too challenging for artists to facilitate the engagement of policy actors and advocates in artistic activities. However, in the Mali workshop, participants co-created song lyrics. This experience, and the fact it was not possible in Mauritania and Senegal, showed scepticism had to be overcome, including on the part of facilitators. Sectoral silos and hierarchies also had to be tackled. It is likely that the experience, credibility, and status of the artist mattered, as demonstrated in the Mali workshop by the facilitating musician performing early in the workshop, alongside displays by visual artists. It is also likely that the artist's facilitation skills were important: the facilitating artist in the Malian workshop had teaching experience. Indeed, a workshop participant in Mali stated that artists need to be credible and have made a name for themselves before being able to successfully and convincingly convey messages about the environment. Other factors that may have contributed to the success of the song-writing activity in the Mali workshop were humour, evident in the video of the workshop, and the use of a 'warmup' activity which in Mali consisted of individuals drawing simple pen drawings. The importance of all these aspects needs testing.

4.4 The importance and challenges of using social media to reach a wide audience

It was considered important for cultural activism to reach a large audience in order to have impact, and social media was important in this. There was evidence that use of social media (e.g. Twitter) to communicate with the populace and raise awareness and support, was more effective than prolonged one-on-one communication with policy actors and public servants.

Some interviewees claimed that the mode of communication, and possibly the art form itself, mattered in this regard. In Mauritania, interviewees mentioned actual retelling of ancient and traditional stories and some people claimed that such historical forms of arts and culture maintained relevance. In contrast, other interviewees thought that modern ways of storytelling, for example TV plays and pop songs, are now more widespread and relevant than traditional modes such as fables and face-to-face storytelling, especially for communicating to youths. One Malian interviewee claimed that the oral tradition is now losing its meaning. Other interviewees said that live performance, social media, and mass media platforms (e.g. radio and TV) should be considered complementary tools for communicating with specific groups, each having a different type of reach.

As social media is increasingly important, those who lack capabilities in its use claimed they struggled in the modern world to exert influence. Our experience of managing our Facebook platform showed that successful digital communication requires professional expertise, dedicated attention, a time allocation, regular content input, and a leader. We could not sustain sufficient attention to the platform organically, and members were not proactive in posting or commenting.

The formality of a given space was also a factor in its reach and effectiveness. Formal spaces such as workshops may have limited ability to reach people, but should not be entirely discounted, as open days and youth forums were mentioned as useful for contacting specific demographics. Posting on online platforms like YouTube and Twitter has more reach into the general population and can attract informal comments from a range of uninvited audiences.

4.5 Power relations, hierarchies, and silos

Although one-way ‘communication’, where citizen groups speak ‘up’ to policy actors or policy actors speak ‘down’ to citizen groups, does not guarantee dialogue and deliberation, it can help promote it, thereby potentially co-creating understanding. It may be easier to instigate multi-way dialogue when some form of directive communicative art has been shared in advance, as in our Senegal and Mauritania workshops. But, it is clear that power relations, hierarchies, and entrenched interests influence how viable this is.

In interviews, we heard of instances where citizen organisations were blocked from pursuing their activities by the state. This sometimes resulted from competition for resources such as funds from international donors. Interviewees suggested that in such a situation, state-backed groups would be supported and others excluded or impeded. As these excluded groups developed antagonistic relations with policy actors, their lines of communication toward decision makers and possibly even the public are closed, effectively ending their activity. There was no data on artists and citizens succeeding in communication campaigns against the will of powerful domestic interests. Artists, citizens, and advocates are therefore most able to put their points across and have social impact when they are supported by governments and policy figures, or at least have some type of prior relationship with them, even if their messages are not aligned. These relationships may entail an element of mutual need or benefit: situations were described where governments and artists entered liaisons because the artists were helping convey policy messages in a top-down way. These artists were therefore given some opportunity to also promulgate their own messages, e.g. through TV shows or songs. One of our artist interviewees had such cordial relationships with policy figures, and therefore felt confident to release a song and video critical of the government. Thus, critiques of policy figures, and attempts to open a dialogue with them, are not entirely off limits for everybody – but arguably subject to prior good relations with government institutions. Lesser-known artists who lacked government affiliations are less able to question policy figures in this way. Indeed, such actions may be risky for these artists.

The aforementioned musician described mixed emotions about the compromises they had made with policy figures, suggesting they were being used for political ends when they formed alliances with the government. They hinted that if artists or advocacy groups seek support or permission from the government to do their work, critical messages can be co-opted. Other interviewees considered that citizens had a responsibility to speak the ‘truth’ and convey messages to policymakers that they may not want to hear. This poses a quandary to artists who collaborate or compromise to promulgate their message.

Hierarchies and sectoral distinctions continue to discourage dialogues, deliberation, and co-creation of understanding. It is likely that hierarchies of power, as well as people adhering rigidly to professional categories, contributed to the difficulty of performing co-creative activities in Senegal and Mauritania workshops. Interviewees occasionally expressed frustration with the perceived entrenched positions of others, with citizens claiming policy actors were often unwilling to consider the indigenous knowledge of people who live on the land. Meanwhile, some policy actors mentioned the need to educate what they saw as ignorant people about how to improve their environmentally unsustainable livelihood practices. Such perceptions are likely to reinforce unwillingness to understand others’ perceptions. This data implies that context-specific power

relations are just as important as technical considerations, such as the art form and the possibility of dissemination, in influencing how effectively art can instigate change through communication and dialogue.

Data emerged in Mauritania suggesting that common characteristics could help people bridge these silos. The Muslim religion was mentioned as ‘the only thing’ Mauritanian participants from different ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds had in common. This was perceived as a positive force for social cohesion in this Islamic Republic.

4.6 Resource and time constraints

Artists emphasised that they required resources to sustain an artistic career or endeavour; for example, to produce an attractive music video or a mural which could succeed as a communication piece. The engagement process itself is also resource-intensive. The one-off nature of our project workshops precluded long-term engagement with the source material, or between participants. A certain time commitment is also required to engage with online groups or with networks over a longer period, and policy actors in particular lack time to engage for long in a structured setting like a workshop – or even in deliberative processes in general.

4. Discussion – the potential of the arts for facilitating citizen–policy environmental communication

We turn now to discussing how the arts may co-create understanding among artists, citizens, and policy actors in such a way as to facilitate positive change in terms of environmental and linked issues, and what may facilitate or hinder such engagement. Communication through cultural activism has had some success at generating dialogue about environmental concerns, as well as linked social issues, in the West African Sahel. Social media helps expose a wide section of the population to such art, but intentional arts-led dialogue is rare, because of rigid hierarchies and power relations which limit the extent to which art can even be used as a communication tool in this Sahelian context. So, to understand the potential of arts in co-creative dialogue, we discuss both how our findings relate to established traditions in this field and specific implications of the strongly hierarchical Sahelian context.

Our data described communicative protest artworks, which aimed to convince politicians or the public to change policy or practice, or to encourage general reflection on a theme. They fell into the realms of relational aesthetics and cultural activism, as they deal with relations between humans and aim to intervene in the shape of those relations by invoking emotions. Social actions such as urban beautification tangentially fitted into these categories. Taking these activities and oeuvres as stimuli, our workshops instigated arts-led dialogue, which we framed as participatory arts research rather than dialogical art. The co-creative songwriting performed in Mali comprises two dimensions. The first is the artwork itself, which is a relational artwork used in cultural activism. The second is the act of creating it, which, again, we framed as participatory arts research or arts-led dialogue, rather than a piece of dialogical art. Using these insights and referring back to Table 1.1 (see p.27), we note that the participants in the project activities therefore extended the scope of the project beyond that initially envisaged, into the space marked blue in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Ultimate activity area of the project, indicated by blue shape in table

	A message is communicated	Different groups dialogue with each other	Different groups deliberate and reach a conclusion
An artist produces the work on their own	Viewers regard the art and receive a message conceived by the artist	The art prompts dialogue among viewers	The art is used as a prompt for deliberation
An artist or artist and research team invite citizens to participate in the creation of an artwork	Viewers regard the art and receive a message conceived by the citizens	Citizens dialogue while or after creating or designing the art	Citizen creators deliberate while or after creating or designing the art
Citizens commission an artist to create an artwork			
Citizens conceptualise and create art			
An artist or researcher invites people to dialogue/ deliberate and this comprises the artwork	Communication is not a major aim		

Source: Authors' own.

Visual description: The blue area covers the area of the table where the rows labelled 'An artist produces the work on their own' and 'An artist or artist and research team invite citizens to participate in the creation of an artwork' intersect with the columns labelled 'Different groups dialogue with each other' and 'Different groups deliberate and reach a conclusion'. This means it covers the cells labelled 'Viewers regard the art and receive a message conceived by the citizens', 'The art prompts dialogue among viewers', 'The art is used as a prompt for deliberation', 'Viewers regard the art and receive a message conceived by the citizens', and 'Citizens dialogue while or after creating or designing the art/ The art prompts dialogue among viewers'.

Emotion can play an important role in environmental deliberation and in arts-based activities aiming to promote environmental awareness and care. Physical presence in a landscape and closeness to nature is ascribed with the ability to help engender such emotions (Raatikainen *et al.* 2020; Ives *et al.* 2018). In our work we had little chance to explore the physical and affective effects of being in a given environment, although we examined the music videos of Maman Guereti which aim to bring the viewer into the Casamance landscape. Yet, some of the communicative art works we encountered have effected change or opened dialogue through emotion. For example, in processing the song devised in the Mali workshop, the musician added words of sorrow and a wistful tune to the words of pride that the participants had written. Emotions of anger and sorrow were evident in the Mauritanian music video shared. Simultaneously, some of the artworks shown were less aiming to evoke affect, but rather to encourage cogitation and/or simply perform a function, such as acting as a fish-shaped dustbin on the beach.

It was clear that, alongside considering the power of affect or cogitation, it is equally important in the Sahelian context to consider the political context in which artistic efforts for change take place. Firstly, the twenty-first century Sahel is a more dangerous context for artists and activists than the late-twentieth century European and American contexts that much key literature on arts-led dialogue emerges from. Artists risk losing their platform or ability to work, exile (e.g. Tiken Jah), or even death (e.g. Saro Wiwa). In this context, it is interesting that direct messages, rather than abstract musings or veiled opinions, remain prominent in the art works we reviewed, including direct accusations of corruption and specific directives on environmentally harmful activities. Secondly, hierarchies and silos remain deeply entrenched. This obfuscates citizens' and artists' efforts to present their perspectives to policy actors or to engage political actors in activities which stray from their conventional roles towards a more reflective or creative mode. Furthermore, it remains challenging to capture the attention of policy actors for sufficient time to engage seriously in intentional dialogue processes. If intentional dialogue is to be attempted, its success depends on how far the artistic activity and its facilitator can create a space where actors become strongly engaged. These are all reasons artists have focused less on organising deliberative spaces with policy actors than provoking change through emotive communication to the citizenry.

Those emotive effects rely on the aesthetics of a work (Bourriaud 2002; Bishop 2005). If the purpose of a work is to convey experience and emotion, the skill of a professional artist or talented individual is necessary to make the piece a convincing communication tool that will prompt dialogue. Pickens (2019) invokes Beuys, whose social sculpture is in turn invoked by Upkong, in reflecting on the role of the artist as shaman. Pickens claims the similarity between the African role of shaman and that of the artist is to provide to the viewer a way to approach

the metaphysical through an internal dialogue, which is prompted by the aesthetic nature of an artwork such as the songs released by Maman Guereti and Group Laye Bi. Simultaneously, in processes framed as dialogical or socially engaged artworks, the artwork can be facilitated by an expert researcher, and the sensory experience may be less important than the cogitation provoked. Because of this, some attempts framed as dialogical or socially engaged art, e.g. Project Row Houses in Houston, are criticised as not actually being art but social activism (Bishop 2005). Our work moved between the art and activism spaces. It was less important to participants to label the activities, and the artist, activist, and researcher seemed equally important in this transdisciplinary space.

However, it did become clear in the Malian exercise that the skill of the musician in producing a piece that could be perceived, comprehended, and aesthetically appreciated by a given audience was integral to how far it could communicate and provoke dialogue. The work requires a particular, possibly culturally specific, aesthetic in order to have credibility as a tool of communication to the public, and is then more likely to garner debate. This in turn lent confidence to the co-creators of the song and promoted dialogue between them. Thus, the aesthetics of the piece, and therefore the skill of the artist, remain important in its ability to communicate and to instigate dialogue, and especially so in the rigidly hierarchical Sahelian context, where impact would otherwise be hard to achieve.

The film *Burkinabè Rising: The Art of Resistance in Burkina Faso* (Lee 2018) points to the interactions between emotion and citizenship in promoting change through the arts. The film covers the role of the arts in the 2015 Burkinabe revolution, and suggests that the arts may have been powerful in eliciting action from the citizens because they have awakened emotive ideas of Burkinabe identity and possibly citizenship in a more general way. In our data, ideas of citizenship and local, national ethnic or other forms of identity were sometimes connected to notions of responsibility to effect change. Place attachment and place-based identities can be motivators of ideas of environmental responsibility, hence why Golonu (2013) suggests invoking cultural identity through art as part of the effort to promote environmental consciousness. The work of African agroecologists such as Burkinabe Blandine Sankara speak to this, directly relating the practice of environmentally protective agriculture to revalorisation of African local identity, products and knowledges, and a decolonisation agenda (Douce 2018; Imagine Demain le monde 2021; Zongo 2016).

Despite the challenges and risks, our data shows that communication can be achieved if attention is paid to aesthetics and artist skill, and this can sometimes open space for dialogue, deliberation and co-creation, if a degree of scepticism, and various combinations of power imbalances, can be overcome. There are indications that this can be achieved by taking conscious, concrete efforts to overcome hierarchies and silos. In the case of arts-led dialogue, using known,

respected artists and paying attention to the aesthetics of the work continues to be important.

Overall, we argue that, even in the hierarchical context of the Western Sahel, arts-based communication and arts-led dialogue are relevant tools for prompting change in terms of environmental and other linked concerns. Our findings suggest that this may be the case for direct, creative forms of communication more than for intentional dialogue. It is worth understanding more about the relative appropriateness of communication and dialogue in different settings, and also how to work in this hierarchical context. This may involve considering the role and nature of the facilitator, and the role of potentially common characteristics between actors in contexts where nationality is not necessarily a unifying factor. This does not imply forcing agreement on a group, as there is also a need to understand how to create dialogue between groups with entirely divergent characteristics.

5. Conclusion

This paper found that citizens and policy actors communicate with each other, and can sometimes co-create understanding about environmental issues, through arts and storytelling. In the study contexts, the arts have been mobilised by artists and occasionally citizens to communicate concerns about the environment, and linked social issues, to the general population and policy actors. Although risky, this has sometimes propelled the views or interests of marginalised people into the public domain, to the degree that they generate civic dialogue, or cannot be ignored by policy actors.

Popular music has been particularly prominent, but the visual arts have also played a role. Long-standing cultural forms such as plays, theatre, and traditional storytelling have remained relevant in many places, though contemporary artforms are more prominent. The emotional power of art is often usually important in generating change, and messages are often conveyed by artists in a fairly directive manner. Artists sometimes need a degree of official authority to avoid censure, which is sometimes gained by collaborating with those in power, though this risks co-option. Social media helps expose a wider section of the population to such art, increasing chances of effecting a degree of change. The increasing importance of social media means those who lack such digital communications skills are marginalised.

Direct attempts at conscious and intentional arts-led discussion, deliberation, and co-creation of meaning, or co-creation of art, are rare. Such activities are hard to perform in the study contexts due to entrenched power relations and hierarchies. In arts-led dialogue, participants need to be at least minimally amenable to traversing or questioning hierarchical levels and disciplinary and sectoral silos. More research attention is needed to confirm how hierarchies may be navigated in such situations. Emphasising mutual commonalities (e.g. religion) may be helpful in generating dialogue.

The characteristics of the facilitating artist in dialogue activities are also very important. In a co-creative event or process, the lead artist must be respected by the parties concerned, including policy actors, and possess the facilitation capabilities to put the parties at ease. It is more likely success will be achieved if they are cognisant of hierarchies but also confident about acting across them. They must also be highly skilled in their artistic domain, and there is a need for a strong focus on the aesthetics of the art works created.

Time and financial resources are also needed for artistic production and communication activities that promote dialogue. A formal, institutionalised space for these activities to take place in is useful, but not essential – what is more important is a space where normal silos can be set aside, however briefly.

By paying attention to the aspects that seem to facilitate arts-led activities, it may be possible for them to help to break down the hierarchies that are occluding dialogue and communication, as people from different silos work together on issues of mutual concern.

5.1 Future work

We will continue research work to understand the contexts in which arts-based dialogue may be successful. Experimental workshops where artists and policy actors convene to co-create artworks will help us discover more about the conditions that allow hierarchies to be successfully navigated. We will learn through these experiences about the relative effects and expectations of co-construction through responding to and creating artworks.

We will also continue to develop a network of peers who are working on these issues and in these ways. We will dedicate resources to mobilising and maintaining our serendipitously emergent international online network. This will include sharing information between the various workshop participants to consolidate the network, and to understand the best ways to do this internationally and online.

Annexe 1

Cartographie Des Parties Prenantes/ Stakeholder Map, Projet ‘Citizen Voice’

The Annexe can be accessed at the following link:

<https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/17816>

Annexe 2

Painting produced in Mauritania during the workshop



Source: Painting by Moctar Sidi Mohammed Alias Mokhis, photo taken by Haoussa Ndiaye, reproduced with permission.

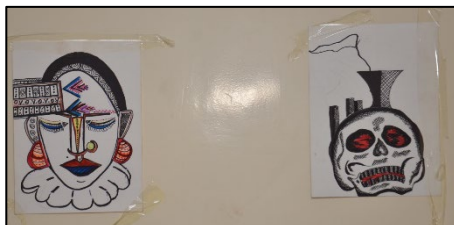
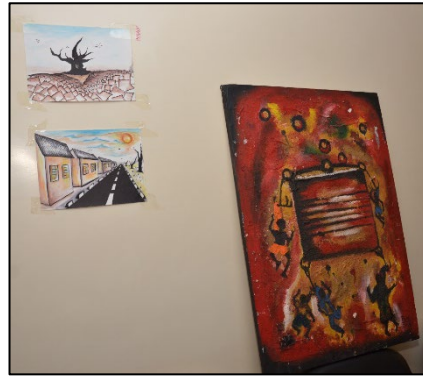
Discussion during the Mauritania workshop



Source: Photo taken by Haoussa Ndiaye, reproduced with permission.

See also a [video describing the Mauritania workshop](#) and the [song referenced on flooding in Nouakchott](#).

The paintings of Ferimata Diakit  displayed in the workshop in Mali

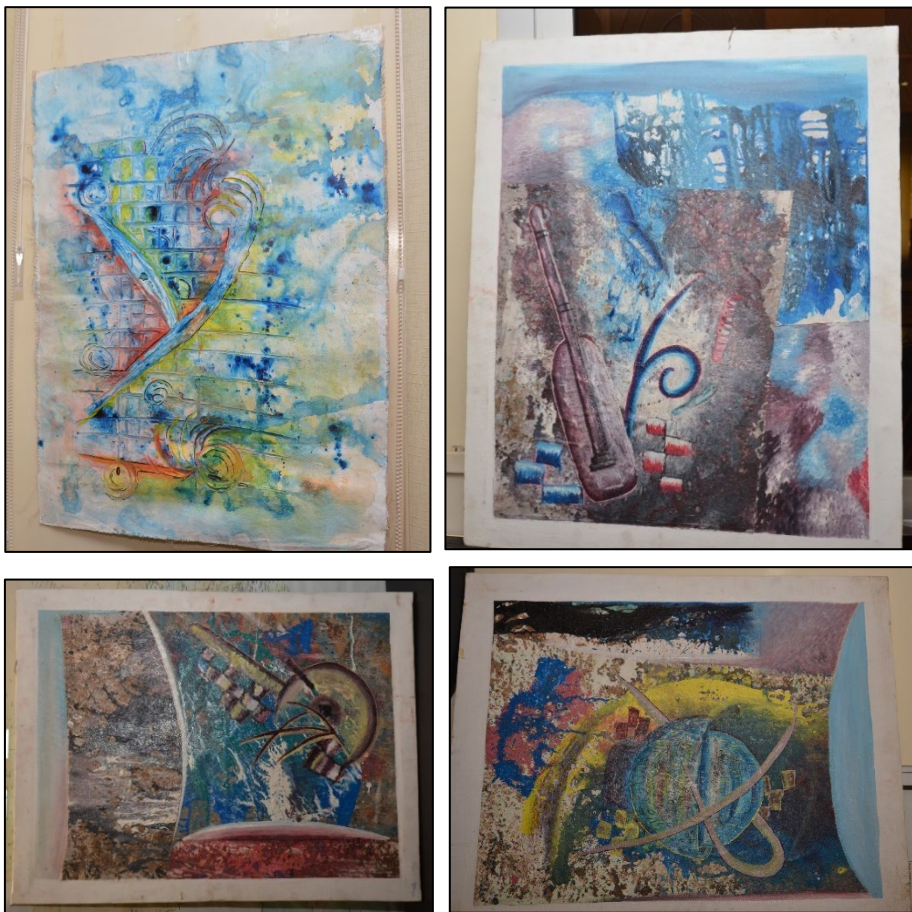


Source: Paintings by Ferimata Diakit , photos property of GREAT, reproduced with permission.

‘The inspiration came to him from the Talib  children who roam the streets of Bamako in search of something to survive or more exactly to feed their Koranic teacher. Hence his first two paintings which tell a little about the ordeal that these children experience on a daily basis

under heat which can exceed 47 degrees Celsius in the shade. At the same time on the French TV channel TV5, Europeans cry because of the heat wave with temperatures barely 40 degrees in the sun. Some of these paintings tell of the destruction of flora and fauna to build beautiful houses and cities and then try to restore them. Another tableau speaks of factories which are more and more numerous with their corollary of atmospheric pollution which in the long run will be built on our heads if we are not careful according to her. A final painting shows a thirsty bird seeking to drink through the notch of a tap.'

The paintings of Mariam Diarra produced for the workshop in Mali



Source: Paintings by Mariam Diarra, photos property of GREAT, reproduced with permission.

'Her inspiration came to her when she wanted to visually see certain traditional instruments that she had heard about or just saw the photos in museums. To his surprise, many of these instruments no longer exist and the main cause is the disappearance of the trees that were used to make them. This is how much of the sociocultural heritage of the country and many other Sahelian countries is endangered due to advanced deforestation. These paintings represent these different instruments almost lost for the young generation.'

The participants of the Mali workshop producing their drawings



Source: Photos property of GREAT, reproduced with permission.

Full set of drawings produced in Mali workshop



Source: Property of GREAT, reproduced with permission.

Workshop participants in Mali singing the song they produced together. Each has contributed two lines.



Source: Photo property of GREAT, reproduced with permission.

The words are:

My forest, my life,
My country, my environment,
My city, my culture,
My canvas, my passion,
My landscape, my hope,
My nature, my success,
My health, my environment,
The earth, my planet.

Source: Property of GREAT, reproduced with permission.

Visual Artist Samba Sarr presenting his 'Goulbi' dustbin sculpture at the Senegal workshop



Source: Photo taken by Joseph Diop, reproduced with permission.

Musician Maman Guereti after performing songs in the Senegal workshop



Source: Photo taken by Joseph Diop, reproduced with permission.

A slide presented by the NGO Young Volunteers for the Environment describing some of their activities in Dakar



Source: Slide created by Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement, reproduced with permission.

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