„People like us“

A Science Poetry Slam for Young Muslims
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Status Quo

- Audiences for science communication in the West often predominantly
  - male
  - older
  - highly educated
  - socio-economically better off
  - white ethnic background
Project „Science for all“ [„Wissenschaft für alle“]

- Participatory development, implementation and evaluation of science communication formats with 3 underrepresented audiences in Germany
- One of them: Young Muslims with a migration background
  - Cooperation with two associations (i.slam and HEROES) as access points
Needs and Barriers

They…

… had an interest in science and technology,

… did not participate in science communication activities (e.g. museums, public lectures, science slams, …),

… experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity and religion during their education (school or university),

… were not seen, and did not see themselves, as a “science person”, partly because they did not know of any scientists with the same background as them
The Format
Science-Poetry-Slam

- Place: Youth club in Berlin
- Time: 8-10 pm
- 4 poets and 3 scientists (alternating on stage)
  - They had a migration background or identified themselves as Muslims.
- One moderator from the community
- Goals:
  - Scientific role models
  - Entertaining evening in a welcoming and familiar atmosphere
Science-Poetry-Slam

Poets

- 2 female, 2 male
- Topics: Education, belonging, international and national politics

Scientists

- Early career researchers
- All female
- Topics: Medicine, mathematics and physics
Evaluation: Socio-Demographics

- **Attendees:** around 70 people
- **Gender:** 60% female, 20% male, 20% didn’t say
- **Age:** average 21 years (youngest: 11 years; oldest: 40 years)
- **Education:** 24% university, 40% high school
- **Migration Background:** 56%
- **Religion:** 48% identified as Muslims
Evaluation: The Good…

- Audience was very satisfied with event (80% stated it was very good)
- 64% said they learned something new
- Majority identified with the scientists on stage (“somebody like me”)
- Combination of something familiar (poetry slam) and something new (science slam) was appreciated
...and the not so good

- Difficult to find scientists
- Time slot was too late
- One-time activity
5 Learnings

1. Collaboration and listening is key
2. Creating space for role models and people with whom the audience can identify
3. Activities need to be sustainable (i.e. not one-time)
4. Community has to benefit (i.e. their engagement is not free)
5. Know your limits (i.e. science communication won’t solve structural problems)
Trying to make it useful: A Hidden object picture

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