XOKOLO TIDAL VOICES

Impact Report

EMBracing the Ocean artist-in-residence project
Reporting period April 2025 - October 2026

> ***"The biggest challenge Mozambique faces today is how to work out durable conservation strategies that are compatible with the traditional ways. The only way to do this is by opening a channel of communication that goes both ways"***
>
> *- Myriam Beck, scientific collaborator of Xokolo Tidal Voices*



Co-design process:

Yara Costa explored how ancestral ecological knowledge and contemporary marine science coexist, converge, and inform through art. Rooted in the coastal communities of the Island of Mozambique, the project focused on the chants and practices of women engaged in Xokolo i.e. intertidal mollusc harvesting practiced by women while chanting. The chanting represents both cultural expression and a means of transmitting ecological knowledge. Yara and scientific collaborator Myriam Beck (Humbolt University, Berlin, Germany) engaged in co-design and relational engagement in Cabaceira village, carrying out Xokolo chant recordings of local women, particularly Rosa Napau, whose long-standing practice and knowledge became central to the project. These moments were not treated as extraction, but as shared time, grounded in trust, repetition, and ongoing presence. They developed a sustained series of conversations around traditional knowledge systems and scientific frameworks, exploring how different ways of knowing the Ocean might meet, overlap, or challenge one another. These dialogues questioned dominant epistemologies and opened space for more situated, embodied, and relational forms of understanding. The project created meaningful encounters between people, ways of knowing and producing knowledge. By prioritising listening, mediation, and relational engagement, the project contributed to a broader shift toward more inclusive, diverse and situated understandings of the Ocean and its future.

Project outputs:

- Sound composition built from field recordings of the women's Xokolo chants, providing inspiration the final exhibition.
- Initial exhibition of the soundpiece on the Island of Mozambique from December 2025. Visitors spend extended time inside the installation, listening and reflecting.
- Co-design of the concept for "Malema Aural Experience" exhibiton featuring an installation based on a traditional fish trap (malema), functioning as an immersive sound capsule within which the recorded voices and seascape of the Xokolo women are hosted. Two pairs of goggles are at the centre of the installation, one made and used in local diving and fishing practices in Cabaceira and the other are scientific laboratory goggles. The goggles "see" differently, operating as a metaphor for distinct epistemological lenses, highlighting how perception and knowledge are shaped by context, tools, and lived experience.
- Interview with Yara Costa on France 24 (June 2025) about her EMBracing the Ocean residency and the development of Xokolo Tidal Voices.
- Interview with Myriam Beck on TVM (Mozambican National Television; March 2026) about the work with Yara Costa.
- EMB Third Thursday Science webinar (18 June 2026).
- 'Behind the scenes' video about the development of the "Tidal Voices" project, available on the EMB YouTube Channel.

Key impact:

- Consolidation of a working methodology grounded in dialogue between traditional ecological knowledge and marine science as a collaborative model that will continue beyond the residency.
- The creation of conditions where tranditional knowledge systems and science can coexist, be heard, and be understood in relation to each other.
- Long-term, non-extractive engagement with coastal communities, especially with the Xokolo women of Cabaceira, to guide the evolution of the work and involving informal sharing of the project through conversations and gatherings.
- Participation in discussions within the SARA (Southern African Resilience Academy) Working Group on Co-imagining African futures through arts-based practices connected to University of Stellenbosch in South Africa.

Project longevity:

- Ongoing engagement with Cabaceira and the integration of new material into existing installations.
- SAVVY Contemporary and the Veterinary Anatomy Theatre at the Humboldt University (Berlin, Germany) tentatively to host "Malema Aural Experience" exhibition in 2027.

IMPACT IN NUMBERS

2021 2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

European MARINE BOARD Advancing Seas & Ocean Science

1 EXHIBITION
Showing the work

150 VISITORS
from the local community at the exhibition

2 EXHIBITIONS
in the making

1 WEBINAR
Presenting the project

1 VIDEO
Featuring the project

>130 VIEWS ON YOUTUBE
Of videos related to the project

418 PAGE VISITS
To project webpage on EMB website

2 INTERVIEWS
In international media outlets

5 INSTAGRAM POSTS
Promoting the project

"Now the world will see and hear us"

- Rosa Napau, Xokolo practicioner from Cabaceira, Mozambique, and cornerstone of the project







https://www.marineboard.eu/yara-costa