



Season 2, Episode 1: Climate distillation and the narrative approach to climate information

Episode one of the second series of the STARTcast is a discussion between START's program specialist Dr. Mzime Ndebele-Murisa and three prominent climate scientists from the FRACTAL project:



- Dr. Chris Jack, Deputy Director at the Climate System Analysis Group (CSAG), at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. His background is in fundamental climate science and modelling, but more recently he has gained considerable experience in science-society engagement and communications.



- Dr. Richard Jones, Science Fellow at the UK Met Office and a visiting professor at Oxford University. He works on regional climate information and modelling systems, balancing that technical expertise with a focus on international development.



- Dr. Tamara Janes is a Researcher who holds an MSc. in Atmospheric Sciences from the University of Alberta, Canada. She has worked at the UK Met Office as a monsoon scientist and on projects to help countries develop their capacity to adapt to regional climate change.

The FRACTAL project wanted to ensure climate information was both relevant and usable. Trust and understanding are the basis for uptake of climate information, and Climate Risk Narratives (CRN) proved to be useful for starting conversations on this and around uncertainty in the climate data. It was not always a 'comfortable' space for climate scientists to explore and it resonated differently in different cities - with some positive responses, but also some criticism, particularly for their perceived simplicity.

Highlights:

- Distillation is a process of extracting meaning from a particular information source. Trans-disciplinary distillation includes a process of understanding issues by contextualizing relevant information with with stakeholders.
- Learning labs fostered an environment for a transdisciplinary approach, where no knowledge form was privileged over others.
- 'Single expertise on its own is singly unimportant; it's only when you integrate it with others that you can make progress in understanding issues and context and finding out what (climate) information is required with the help of others.'
- 'If you are bringing a series of expertise together in a co-production environment like FRACTAL did, you need all of the expertise to be heard, understood by people from other disciplines.' In FRACTAL we did not allow climate science to dominate.
- Climate narratives were a successful knowledge integration process which helped build networks which encompassed knowledge, values and expertise of stakeholders to solve climate information gaps through understanding context, decision-making and plausible futures for the cities. They broke barriers between departments, tensions by fostering dialogue on climate via transdisciplinary co-production and co-exploration.

Links:

[Chapter 2, Climate Risk in Africa](#)- Expands on the concept of climate information distillation and explores two case studies where the concept has been applied.

[CRN paper](#)- Explains the development of Climate Risk Narratives and the transdisciplinary processes involved.

[Co-production of CRNs in Windhoek paper](#)- A paper specifically on the development of CRNs in Windhoek, Namibia.

[Impact Stories 2,3,4](#)- Research briefs that summarise the climate focused work done during FRACTAL. These three Impact Stories form part of a series of ten briefs developed around different elements of FRACTAL's work.

[3 papers on climate processes](#)- Three of the more technical climate papers that have been produced by climate scientists over the course of the project. The full list of FRACTAL publications, including many other publications that explore different elements of the regional, southern African climate is available [here](#) on the FRACTAL website.

1. [Fractal Learning Lab Overview](#)

- [CSAG](#)
- [UK Met office Hadley center](#)
- [FRACTAL](#)
- [FCFA](#)

