

Question Report

Topic

An Embedded Researcher approach to integrate climate information into decision making in southern African cities: lessons from FRACTAL

#	Questions	Answer(s)
1.	To Anna: How easy was it to broker the buy-in of Government Departments to host an Embedded Researcher? Was this the same across the different cities? Were the government departments initially part of the project or were roped in at the stage of embedding the researchers?	live answered
2.	This is a good initiative piloted with good success in Southern African cities. As a climate change communication researcher located in Nigeria (West Africa), I believe that something like this would be of a great benefit to other parts of Africa. What is SSN and partner agencies or institutions doing to extend this opportunity to other places in Africa?	live answered
3.	What this can contribute to research-policy engagement on climate change cannot be quantified. How do you work to ensure that beyond government agencies which sponsor climate change researchers, findings from such studies turn to policies knowing that lobbying and advocacy might be needed to persuade government at all levels?	live answered
4.	Based on socio-economic and political parameters, South Africa may be an outlier among Southern African countries where ER on climate change has been implemented. How does this understanding affect what is done and implemented?	Most definitely the ER approach was implemented differently in different cities. Each city/country has its own challenges, and the project and stakeholders had to be quite flexible in the implementation. We found that language was quite an unexpected large barrier. Administrative logistics and internet connectivity also constrained the process at times.
5.	If you could change something about the ER approach implemented in FRACTAL to improve the method, what would that be?	live answered
6.	Where government is not ready to provide needed resources (money, laws/policy, etc), what can be done?	Keep engaging them around the issues they are facing, concerned about, investing in and help them think through and explore what linkages these have to the climate and climate change
7.	To Anna: Do you have plans to capture this experience in a publication that could support advocacy for this approach?	Yes, we have already produced a Working Paper (URL: http://www.fractal.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Pretorius-L-et-al-Embedded-Researcher-approach.pdf), a briefing note (URL: http://www.fractal.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Taylor-A-ERs-bridge-research-and-decision-making.pdf) and an extended abstract in a conference proceedings (URL: https://adaptationfutures2018.capetown/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/AF18-Conference-Proceedings.pdf), and we are currently working on a journal paper linking embedded research to transdisciplinarity
8.	To all: What are career prospects for an embedded researcher? would this be a 'risky' move especially for a person early in her/his career?"	live answered
9.	To Lulu: Sad to know we share bureaucratic problems both in the Universities and in the Public administrations while public universities should have a preferential connection with the PA. I wonder how much is your team interdisciplinarily conceived and whether political scientist would facilitate the relations. Thank you	I would say that the core FRACTAL team was interdisciplinary. It consisted of climate modellers, natural scientists, social scientists, engineers, urban geographers governmental officials, students, facilitators, etc. WE even at one stage had an ER with philosophy as a major. Including a political scientist would definitely have contributed to the process as well, I am sure! FRACTAL did not have such a person on the team.
10.	As scholars we rely very much on the RECs, thinking they could have a positive role in matching ER and decision makers: is SADC's Institutions sensitive to this need?	Not yet that I am aware of
11.	I've learned significantly from this webinar and its organisation. I almost wish we can have active ER's in every industry.	That would be great!
12.	Speaking from an architectural industry, how do you encourage professionals in the built environment to implement sustainable design?	Beyond our scope, sorry
13.	It would be very interesting to understand what the future holds for EBs, what do they have planned next and how did being an EB contribute to this. i.e. looking specifically at capacity development and future opportunities for individuals.	Plans for ERs to get back to their positions i.e. City officials, finding new opportunities such as jobs and further studies e.g. PhD. This was answered live too.
14.	To Dr Anna, I am very interested with the ER presentation, my question is, are you going to cover all cities in Africa, or you have chosen a representative one? If so, but as I know all cities differ in geographical settings so how the ER will be representing the African cities.	In FRACTAL we will have had ERs in 6 cities. You are right that context matters greatly. In the FRACTAL extended phase (now until March 2021) we will be exploring and writing about the transferability to other cities and contexts of the embedded research and other approaches to co-producing knowledge, including experimenting with how to 'streamline' these processes to see if they can be made less time and resource intensive while still achieving results / impact. But my hope is that others will try their own version of the approach in their contexts / cities and that slowly we can build up a network of embedded researchers across Africa, and globally, to compare experiences, research findings and learn together. This requires people to leverage funding / resources and set up organizational knowledge partnerships to apply the approach.
15.	What is your experience with integration with city land use/physical plans?	We did not try to do this explicitly. Although in some cases it has led to such opportunities. For example the work in Windhoek is being fed into the development of a water infrastructure master plan. In Durban the presence of the ER also led to a workshop where urban planners looked at various ways in which climate adaptation measures can be better implemented in the City. But it was not specifically a core focus of the project.
16.	In future it would be interesting to integrate urban planners, Urban infrastructure, land use planner to see how climate change affect cities in African countries.	Indeed. Urban planners were involved in the work in Lusaka. There was quite a lot of focus on water infrastructure in many of the cities, especially Harare, Windhoek and Lusaka.
17.	Thanks - very interesting. Will the project(s) progress to supply chain traceability?	Do not understand the question, sorry