Summary of FCFA work in Malawi: Exploring Decision-Making in Blantyre

Future Climate for Africa (FCFA) aims to generate fundamentally new climate science focused on Africa, and to ensure that this science has an impact on human development across the continent. FCFA’s research in Malawi was carried out by the FRACTAL and UMFULA consortia.

Important note: Important note: this brief only covers FRACTAL’s work in Malawi and there is a separate brief that details UMFULA’s research in Malawi and how we can improve the use of information for climate-resilient planning.

Highlights from Blantyre

- FRACTAL’s research in Blantyre (led by the Polytechnic University of Malawi) had fewer engagements and activities than other FRACTAL cities, instead it focused on the transferability of relevant climate knowledge and lessons.

- Climate Risk Narratives were developed through initial socio-economic narratives which were co-produced with stakeholders living and working in Blantyre to describe three possible futures for the city. Climate science was woven into these narratives to surface possible climate risks for the city.

- The process brought together many different stakeholders, sparking conversations about climate change in the city.

- A think tank workshop, supported through the FCFA Innovation Fund, provided useful initial insight into the values guiding decision-making in the city, which are largely driven by the mandates of different government sectors.

- The Blantyre City Council’s decision to research turning waste to energy in order to increase energy supply for the city was used as an exemplar to explore the different values that guide decision-making.

- Over a period of two days, the think tank held loosely guided conversations with the various relevant stakeholders, which surfaced several drivers of decisions taken in the city.

- Representatives from Blantyre and Harare also teamed up to explore decision-making around water and climate change in the city.
About FRACTAL

**FRACTAL** (Future Resilience for African Cities and Lands) aimed to understand the decision context and the climate science required to contribute to climate-resilient development in nine southern African cities (Blantyre, Durban, Cape Town, Gaborone, Harare, Johannesburg, Lusaka, Maputo, Windhoek). The FRACTAL team aimed to contribute to an advanced understanding of scientific knowledge about climate processes, regional and local climate trends to improve understanding of southern Africa's climate and work with decision-makers to integrate this scientific knowledge into climate-sensitive decisions at the city-regional scale (particularly decisions relating to water, energy and food with a lifetime of 5 to 40 years).

The project engaged with scientists, engineers, government representatives and other stakeholders. Working together, the researchers and stakeholders are co-producing relevant knowledge that will support resilient development pathways and enable decision-makers to better integrate pertinent climate knowledge into their resource management decisions and urban development planning.

Selected Additional Resources

Bowden, R. 2019. Balancing inclusivity and progress, the challenge for Blantyre City development. FCFA News Article.


McClure, A. 2018. Climate narratives What have we tried? what have we learned? What does this mean for us going forward? FRACTAL Briefing note. University of Cape Town, South Africa.


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