



## Climate Stories: Evaluating our journey:

---

Evaluating where we have been and where we should go is a critical part of the Climate Stories project. And evaluation to us is much more than quantifying our outputs or impacts; it is about understanding the journey for all of our participants – artistic leads as well as climate scientists.

### What we've been doing:

Stewart Barr and Ewan Woodley, both geographers based in the College of Life and Environmental Sciences, have been leading the evaluative work, which is ongoing as we understand the longer term impacts of the project.

Our work has involved several key phases and methods:

- Pre-Dartington one-to-one interviews to understand the 'back story' for our climate science participants and their expectations / anxieties about engaging in the creative arts;
- In-workshop evaluations of activities using established techniques such as 'evaluation bingo' to obtain spontaneous responses about what works and what doesn't;
- In-workshop in-depth narrative interviews, to explore the lived experience of creating together and exploring one's own climate story;
- In-workshop in-depth interviews with creative arts leads;
- Observation of the Dartington process and its outcomes through audio and visual recording;
- Personal narrative reflections through the use of reflective notebooks from each participant at Dartington;
- A series of post-Dartington one-to-one interviews to enable climate scientists to share their experiences and future plans.

## What we've found so far:

Our work has revealed several key processes arising from the Dartington workshop experience:

- **Creative life histories** and familiarity matter. Participants intimately connected their previous, and frequently childhood, experience of creativity to help them bring their science to life through creative practice;
- **Connections to nature** through upbringing and research: participants often cited their upbringing and the way in which they learn about nature and the environment as being a motivator to help others appreciate and engage in the science of climate change. Having this 'nature legacy' in learning enabled participants to centre their approach to creative practice;
- **Observational practices**: participants were keen to link their own science, in a range of fields, to what they could observe and highlight to others in accessible and familiar ways. This was key to scientific participants being able to connect their research with publics;
- **Vocational 'calling'**: participants expressed a deeply personal desire to bring 'wonder' to others and to help them engage in this emotion as a way of connecting them with climate science and the impact of climate change;
- An unproblematic **'researcher-artist' identity**: participants were highly capable of negotiating their identity as both a natural scientist and a creative practitioner. The comfortable and inclusive setting of Dartington certainly supported this;
- A concern about **the artistic 'echo chamber'**: alongside feeling confident as scientists and creators, participants did feel challenged by only being surrounded by those with similar backgrounds and experiences, leading them to question how others could be engaged in these processes in the future;
- An anxiety about **'being received'**: Dartington provided a very 'safe' and inclusive space, but participants did discuss how they would cope once their work was 'put' into different contexts, amongst various publics.
- An anxiety about **'having answers'**: participants were aware and somewhat anxious about their perceived role as 'experts' in community settings, where they would potentially be questioned about climate science and be expected to 'have answers'.

Crucially, the Dartington process revealed that in a safe, inclusive and conformable environment, creativity can be used to liberate personal and professional stories, to do so with confidence, and in ways that can be engaging and enlightening.

© 2018 Climate Stories

[www.climatestories.org](http://www.climatestories.org)