

Report containing learning, reflection and evaluation based on social learning

Report to the
WATER RESEARCH COMMISSION

By

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“Social learning is like a mountain pass through all these very difficult obstacles. On every level the challenge of trying to understand what social learning is, the challenge of trying to make a difference when we feel so tiny compared to the hugeness of the problem. We are forging this even though we can’t see where we’re going. It feels like we are in quite a narrow space together we are forging this path.” Quote from a participant of the Changing practice course, reflection session, Module 4

“Feeling we have achieved something – being reminded of how far we have come.” Quote from Participant of the Changing Practice course, reflection session, Module 4

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Acronyms

Del	Deliverable
DWS	Department of water and sanitation
ELRC	Environmental Learning Research Centre (Rhodes University)
EMG	Environmental Monitoring Group
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NWRS2	National Water Resource Strategy two
SAWC	South African Water Caucus
VEJA	Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance
WRC	Water Research Commission

Introduction

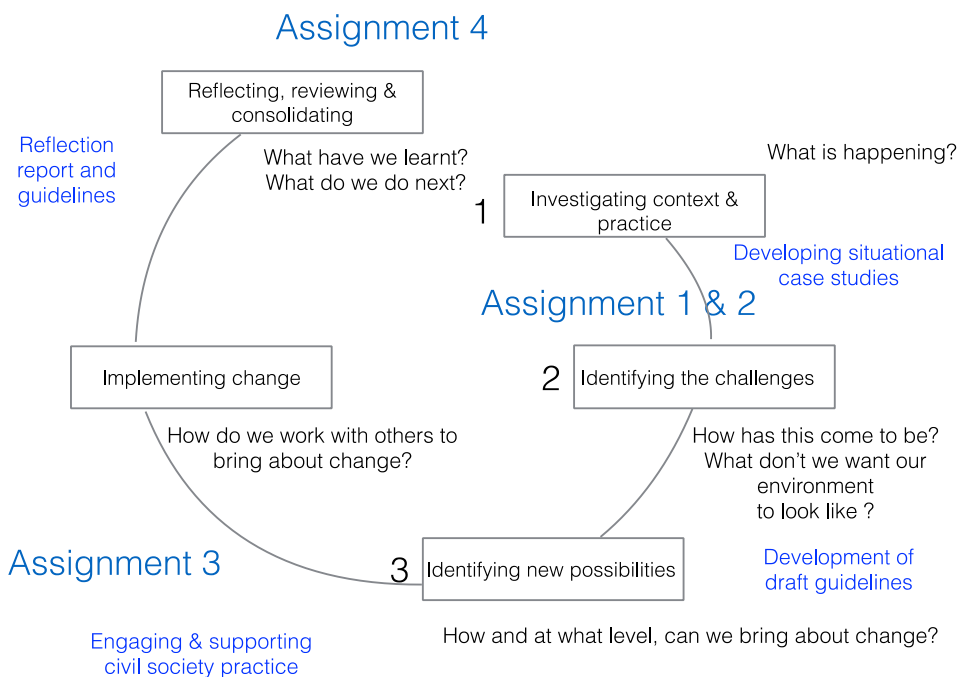
This report forms the seventh deliverable in the NWRS2 citizen monitoring project and builds on the previous 6 deliverables, which include methodology for the project (Del 1), an assessment of civil society involvement in water policy (Del 2), an overview of the social learning approach and introduction to the case studies (Del 3), draft citizen monitoring guidelines (Del 4), an update on social learning to-date, including action plans (Del 5) and a report on a description and assessment of the case studies (Del 6).

This report describes the last social learning module of the 'Changing Practice' course and highlights preliminary reflections on the learning that has taken place during this course.

The report also describes the plans that were taken at the follow up research meeting. Finally we present the approach towards evaluating the role of social learning in the project as a whole.

Recap on the 'Changing Practice' course and where we are in the process.

The course consists of four contact sessions of three days each and four 'work away' assignments that feed into an overall 'Change Project' that links to monitoring the NWRS2. The 'work away' sessions also consist of mentoring meetings which are led by one of the participants from each case study area and attended, when possible, by one of the researchers or the course coordinator and facilitator. The course model and how it fits into the overall research project is outlined in the diagram below.



Module one, 'investigating context and practice' is guided by the question 'What is happening?' and introduces the importance of understanding context before planning action. The focus in module one is on understanding and analysing the local context and how the issue or tension is experienced and expressed by local people. This is done through learning to observe and gathering narratives of practice which are then analysed.

Module two, 'identifying challenges and building knowledge networks', is guided by the question 'how has this come to be?' and introduces the importance of how broader issues and tensions affect a local context. This is done by encouraging participants to build a knowledge network which means extending their understanding of the problem or issue they are dealing with by engaging with different stakeholders, reading documents and reports, using the internet, talking to professionals and experts and networking with other organisations. A knowledge network is built up around a key question or questions that the participants have identified from their exploration of the local context.

Module three, 'identifying new possibilities and implementing change' is guided by the question 'what don't we want our environment to look like?' and 'how do we work with others to bring about change'. It focuses on how to build a case study based on evidence and argument and to use the evidence from this case study to start planning and implementing action.

Module four, 'reflecting, reviewing and consolidating', is guided by the question 'what have we learnt and what do we do next? It focuses on the importance of reflection both on what we have learnt from the case study, what we have learnt through the course, and what we have learnt about supporting the civil society movement in the water sector.

This report describes this final session and then highlights the participants and researchers learning reflections that are emerging. These preliminary reflections are based on the reflection session that was held during *Module 4* as well as mid-course interviews that were held with most 'Changing Practice' participants.

Module 4: Reflecting, Reviewing, Consolidating

The focus of this final module is twofold:

1. To pull together all the learning that has happened during the course to produce a final Change Project case that can be used by the South African Water Caucus and the social learning groups to take their campaigns forward.
2. To consider what this work means for our work on the ground, the South African Water Caucus and for policy.
3. To reflect on what we have learnt during the eighteen months that we have spent together.

This is a lot to achieve in three days. The most important aspect of this final course is that participants leave with a sense of pride in what they have achieved and a vision of how their very important work can continue to contribute to the broader movement of environmental justice.

It is important to highlight that this course does not exist in isolation to the rest of the WRC project on citizen monitoring. This course has been developed to support the action research of all those involved in the project. The research ethic of this team is that all people have the ability to know and research their world. The course provides a space where these skills can be enhanced and provides a platform for dialogue and learning between community-based activists, NGO's and researchers from academic institutions. The course process and design is flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of all those involved (this includes the need to deliver good quality research to the WRC) but at the same time provides the structure to move participants forward on a learning pathway. Finally the course also provides an opportunity for participants to gain an accreditation for the work that they are doing through Rhodes University.

The importance of accreditation cannot be over-emphasised and will be reflected on in the final evaluation chapter in the final research report.

This means that in the design of the final module we needed to take into consideration both the needs of the overall project and the needs of the participants on the course.

It also meant that the design of this final module responded to the activities that had been done in between the previous course and this one. These activities included:

- SAWC biennial general meeting where participants presented their cases and these cases were used in discussions around the future focus of the SAWC.
- DWS/SAWC meeting about the 'NWRS2 watch' projects (the Change Projects of this course as well as one other campaign on mining) where the cases were presented as evidence of key concerns of civil society around the implementation of the NWRS2 in South Africa.
- A consolidation of the Change Projects into cases for the broader project. This is where researchers took the work of the participants and reflected on what lessons can be learnt from these case studies in relation to policy and institutional context (Del 6). This meant that researchers could guide participants to reflect on the broader implications of their cases.

Description of Module 4

(See Appendix A for Module 4 minutes)

The course was designed to allow as much time as possible for participants to work on completing their cases and at the same time consider the broader implications of their case studies for the social movement and policy. It began with each group presenting their case to date. A lot of time was given for comment and feedback from other participants as well as the facilitators and researchers.

Participants then went on a fieldtrip to Grahamstown East where a local community-based organisation called 'Water for Dignity' is working in partnership with Rhodes University to deal with the lack of water security in the area. As with previous fieldtrips this contact with the struggles of fellow comrades touched the participants deeply. The 'Water for Dignity' group have also managed to develop resource materials to share their work which gave the participants ideas of how to finalise their case studies.

We had originally decided to set up knowledge booths where participants could move from one booth to another to work through different aspects of their Change Projects. These booths would be facilitated by researchers involved in the overall project. The booths were:

1. *Finishing our case studies and action plans:* Some participants were almost finished their case studies while others still needed to do a lot of work. We designed this booth to help those who still needed to do a lot of work to complete their case studies
2. *Linking our case studies to policy:* This was an opportunity for participants to discuss the broader implications of their 'Change Projects' with each other and with the broader research team.
3. *Creating final products from our case studies:* This was an opportunity for participants to think about how they would share their work with others.

As it turned out participants decided to remain in one group with researchers as facilitators moving from group to group to guide them depending on where they were and what issues they were dealing with.

The final day of the course was dedicated to reflecting on our learning journey. This was done by an external facilitator who used an interactive dance movement therapy approach. Using an external facilitator meant that the facilitators and researchers could also be part of the reflection process (although not all researchers chose to attend the reflection session). The full report of this reflection session can be found in the appendix B of this report. Key reflections are drawn out of this report and presented below.

The participants were also given their final assignment for the course, a portfolio of evidence of learning. This assignment also includes reflecting on their own personal learning as well as how this learning may or may not have led to change in their work place or within the social movement. These portfolios are still being completed and final reflections gained from this work will be included in the final report of this project.

Preliminary reflections on social learning as a supportive mechanism for community-based action research

Human beings research their world all the time. We are constantly evaluating evidence and making judgements of how to act based on this evidence. The skills of research however should not be taken for granted and can be developed to enhance civil society monitoring. This is why this project has experimented by including in the action research process a social learning course that supports the development of research-based skills by starting with the skills that participants already have and scaling these up through the development of a 'Change Project'. This approach allows each participant to work at their level within the supportive network of the course, the broader research team, their anchor organisations and the social movement to which they all belong. This is the first time this particular course has been run and designed to be specifically integrated into broader research and social movement activities and networks. It is for this reason that we will not only be evaluating the learning that each individual has gained but also the learning that has happened at multiple scales throughout this broader network of research and action.

What we present here are not refined evaluations but reflexive sparks that will be investigated through a more rigorous process of evaluation that is described below and that forms part of Jane Burt's doctoral research project investigating trans-disciplinary learning and knowledge generation for emancipation in the earth sciences.

1. Reflecting on some mechanisms within the course that enable learning

The assignment

The assignments are set to give participants a structure for 'learning away' where they practice skills learnt during the 'learning together' sessions. They are also developed to feed into the overall research project which is to strengthen cases of civil society monitoring of the NWRS2. This means that the assignments are not only for the course but they also provide evidence for the broader research project.

The assignments are described by participants as 'difficult' and 'time consuming' and most participants described feeling 'a nervousness' about the assignments as they were afraid of getting them wrong. As the course progressed participants became more comfortable with the assignments and began to see them as more than tasks that needed to be completed in order to pass the course. They began to be seen as a part of their day-to-day work. Participants were also able to reflect on the skills they were learning from doing the assignments and how the more they understood about the practices they were exploring the more meaningful the work became for them.

"What helps is the manner of the approach where one has to do the research. The focus on developing questions helped. I think it is a skill again to develop the question and go to talk to somebody about it. Getting to understand the practice itself and how it interacts. I know how important water is for them. So it becomes more meaningful what we are doing. It is something that is worth it."

Assignment two, 'building knowledge networks' was a particular favourite. Participants had already practiced interviewing people in Assignment one and now broadened these interactions to include government officials, academics and other practitioners who could help them further their understanding of their 'Change Project'. The assignment helped them broaden their perspective of their work as well as build on their networks.

These engagements also began to help them view other stakeholders differently and with more compassion (See below). Participants also began to view assignments as a record of their progress. One participant commented:

"The pre-course assignment was very useful as you can go back to it and see how far you have come."

Researchers on the project have also been able to draw on the assignments as evidence for building the cases of civil society monitoring and to build guidelines for civil society based on the experiences (including struggles) of the participants.

Mentorship

The first 'Changing Practice' course was developed through a WRC project (Burt et al., 2014). In the evaluation of this project mentorship was highlighted as an indispensable supportive mechanism for learning in the course. As described by the evaluator:

"The course is designed in a way that clarifies a particular learning approach, namely practice-centred learning. It seeks to understand the complexities of knowledge-use-in-practice. Participants attend modules and then engage in an activity that gives them the opportunity to apply what they have learnt during the module in practice in their work environment... All participants felt that they benefitted from having a mentor. Some participants used their mentor more than others. Participants who worked for CBOs relied heavily on their mentor. Fortunately the mentor involved with those from CBOs was doing field work in the vicinity where the participants lived and was therefore able to have a few one-on-one discussions with them. The mentor commented: "I think mentorship or coaching is key in this course, and from my experience, this mentorship is more effective as a personal interaction rather than over the phone." (Burt et al., 2014)

The mentors on the previous course were contracted to play this role. They were either post-graduate students, researchers or skilled communicators. In the case of people who struggled

with English we contracted isiXhosa speaking mentors. Unfortunately for the course run through this project we did not have the funds to employ mentors to assist the course participants. For each region the most experienced participant was tasked with being the mentor of the group. During the work away session this initially did not work very well as the mentors were struggling to find their feet as much as the other participants were. For the second work away session (Assignment two) we tried to help the mentors by providing a structured mentorship program for them to follow. We also assigned particular researchers to each group which the mentor could call on for help and support. This was only partially successful as some researchers were too busy to do regular 'check ins' with the mentors although they did provide ad hoc support when the mentor's called for it.

One participant was a particularly strong mentor and this may be one of the reasons why this group were the first to complete a very strong, group compiled case whereas in other areas participants tended to work alone and struggled to integrate the different aspects of their work into one case. What this highlights again is the importance of having a strong mentorship component to the course and/or strong support for participants that act as mentors.

"And then I think Assignment 2 was getting more interesting because we were having to start with the mentorship meetings. They helped shape the focus of the assignment and also the resource networks and getting more, finding more books to refer to."

The strong mentor reflected on his role which he both enjoyed and found difficult. It is important to note how he found a way of integrating his mentorship role into his day-to-day work which eased the time pressure of having to support the less experienced members of his team. He now holds mentorship meetings at the same time as planning meetings and this helps. What he enjoyed about the meetings was seeing how the less experienced and younger participants grew as they progressed.

"What excited me the most about this course was seeing the change in Participant T. I can see how she has changed from the pre-assignment until now. It gives me hope. I am not academic. I am a normal person but seeing the young people grow and helping them makes me feel that they can go somewhere."

It seems that in this case having older, more experienced participants as mentors working with younger, less experienced participants works very well. In other groups this relationship did not work so well. We need to further explore this to understand how better to support and choose mentors.

Learning in a group

One of the core principles of social learning is that it happens between people. In other words learning is something that is a social activity that occurs when a group of people get together with a common sense of urgency to bring about some change in the world. It was apparent that all participants valued the time they got to spend together to listen to each other's work and then learn from each other. For some participants it was important for them to learn that the issues that they were dealing with were the same in other parts of the country, for example one participant commented that all the cases have relevance for all the different cases in the country. Another participant asked whether they could reference another group's case.

They also felt that they learnt from each other's cases. For example, two groups were exploring traditional spiritual practice. A participant from one group commented that he had not thought of the problems around access to traditional plants that a participant from another group raised.

The interactions between these two groups was seen as so valuable that they have decided to organise a field trip to visit each other and explore each other's cases as part of their 'Change project'.

For others the value was in learning about what others found significant. The group was also seen as a value in and of itself. Athina Copteros, the facilitator of the final group session reflects in her report that the significance of the group coming together for the participants is that the group itself has become a knowledge network. She quotes a participant reflecting on this:

"This is when I've met the group, we did not realise that a knowledge network was built...As we are growing, the knowledge network is starting to be broad."

The participants also valued the different experiences of the participants in the group and that all the different experiences build the relevance of their work. Some commented that by working with others they realised they don't have to do this work alone and can draw on other people to help them. Another participant commented that it felt like they were building a big picture together. This suggests that the social learning group developed a comradery that built solidarity. As one participant described it:

"It is not just a problem here. So we are one. We all fall into the same bowl."

The younger participants in the group were also proud to be working with and learning from more seasoned activists. One participant commented that they couldn't believe they were working with Comrade S because he is so well known and in the beginning he was a bit intimidated but "we are buddies now." They also realised that in the "Change Practice" course they were all learning and the more seasoned activists struggled with the same challenges as the new, younger participants. In some cases the younger participants were able to help the older ones with social media and computer based skills.

The importance of the anchor organisation and the water caucus network

What is different about this version of the course to the previous version is that it was designed to sit within a broader network of:

- a) the WRC research project
- b) anchor organisations
- c) the South African Water Caucus

This is the key strength of the social learning approach adopted in this course. All the work that the participants were doing was feeding into broader processes and broader networks.

Anchor organisations were to provide support to the participants on the course and at the same time benefit from the work that the participants did which they could scale up within their organisation. This design had varied degrees of success. The Vaal case was the most successful with VEJA (the Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance) as an organisation providing the most support to the social learners. This could be because of three factors:

1. A senior member of VEJA staff was a participant and mentor on the course and could work on integrating the Change Project work into the everyday running of the organisation and by being a participant he understood the struggles of his fellow participants.
2. VEJA's own network may be the kind of network that most benefits from this kind of social learning process.

3. The timing worked for VEJA, which was emerging from a difficult period in their organisation. New leadership were able to draw on the skills and research from this project to rebuild the organisation.

The above points are views from the project and VEJA participants and we need to evaluate the role of the anchor organisations more carefully before we can make more substantial claims. What is clear however is where participants did not get anchor organisation support their ability to complete their Change Projects suffered. This may not be the only reason for the struggles of these particular participants but it is a contributing factor. This is reflected in the following quotation by one participant who has attended all the 'work together' modules but has been unable to fulfil the requirements of the 'work away' assignments.

"Comrade T's journey has not been smooth...some of the bumps are caused in terms of mind shift because for him when we started talking about the social learning, for him that was for academics. When he went through the first Module ...it was something serious when he went there. What he heard there started to open him up but when he went back to his anchor organisation...there was not really an uptake or support, he felt demotivated...The support is coming from outside[the course and the water caucus network]. That outside support caused pressure for him."

As can be seen from the above approach different provincial water caucus branches were more interested and motivated to hear and learn from the social learning 'Change Projects' than others and this added a pressure on this particular social learner to deliver and yet his own anchor organisation to which he belonged did not provide the support he needed.

The level of engagement of the different provincial caucuses in the social learning process has also differed and needs more research and possible support. In the case of the Western Cape the final action plan that made up assignment three and was to be developed based on the findings of the 'Change Project case' was developed by the whole Western Cape caucus. One of the reasons for this is that the Western Cape caucus coordinator is a social learner on the course. In the Mpumalanga water caucus the social learners are asked to give an informal report back on their progress. At this caucus there is a keen interest in the social learning process because members can see how the participants of the course have developed due to their participation in the course. At a recent AGM of the caucus members made a decision that they want the social learning to continue in some form and to include other members of the caucus.

At a national level the Change Project case studies have been presented at the South African Water Caucus' biennial general meeting and provided a basis for dialogue and debate about some of the future focus areas of the South African Water Caucus (SAWC, 2015). The cases were also presented at the meeting between the Department of Water and Sanitation and the SAWC as evidence of issues relating to the NWRS2. These presentations were developed in collaboration with the participants and researchers who are part of the WRC project and also members of the SAWC. This again shows how situating the course and the social learning process within an established network that consists of community based activists as well as activist-researchers and established NGO's allows for greater support for participants of the course as well as other members of the network being able to take the work done by the participants to a broader policy level to support the work of the network as a whole.

It was hoped that the course would be able to build capacity within the anchor organisations but our first initial reflections seem to indicate that unless the anchor organisation has a certain level of capacity the organisation is unable to integrate and support the work of the social learners. An initial reflection on the role of anchor organisations reveals the following. Please note that these

are initial reflections and further research needs to be done to understand this process more fully:

VEJA as an anchor organisation: A senior member is on the course. The issue of the 'Change Practice case' is central to the organisation. All social learners work for the anchor organisation. The anchor organisation is a strong member of the SAWC and coordinates two regional branches of the water caucus.

Initial reflections: strong integration of social learning into the organisation. The organisation benefits from the social learning process and at the same time is highly supportive of the social learning process.

EMG as an anchor organisation: EMG is the leading coordinator of the SAWC. One of the social learning participants from the Western Cape is a staff member of EMG and the coordinator of the Western Cape water caucus. The other social learner is not a staff member and is new to the water caucus however he is a resident in the community in which the 'Change Project case' is taking place. There was one other social learner on this case who dropped out after the first module. The case fits both into the current work focus of EMG and the Western Cape water caucus.

Initial reflections: EMG's strong position in the SAWC and Western Cape water caucus results in the social learning work being integrated into both organisations although it seems there are difficulties with supporting social learners who are not part of EMG. This may be because the role places too much of a burden on the EMG staff member or there may be other contextual reasons. EMG is also the lead organisation on the WRC civil society monitoring research project which makes them responsible for research delivery. This may enable the social learning process to become integrated into the organisation as well as into the SAWC but results in making EMG more responsible for the success and integration of the social learning process than other anchor organisations or members of the SAWC.

Geosphere as anchor organisation: Geosphere has recently gone through some upheavals as an organisation. One of the social learners used to work for Geosphere but now works for EMG. Geosphere is a long standing member of the SAWC and has been involved in the issues around plantations for many years. The organisation, although diminished, is a strong knowledge resource for the participants. No other social learners have affiliations with Geosphere or with the water caucus but became members due to their participation in the Changing Practice course.

Initial reflections: Geosphere in the form of Philip Owen provides support to the participants in terms of knowledge as well as inviting them to be part of other activities relating to the issue of plantations. He particularly draws on participants of the course to validate other work that is happening under Geosphere. He is a support for the mentor of the group who reports that he relies on him heavily and often phones him after hours to discuss his difficulties. However the organisation is currently not secure enough to absorb the work of the social learners and upscale it. The social learners have started interacting with another NGO, AWARD due to the relationship that the facilitator of the course has with the organisation and there is a possibility that the 'Change Project case' may be supported within the broader scope of this organisation's mandate.

Zingisa as an anchor organisation: Zingisa is a new member of the Eastern Cape water caucus. However it has been active and well-networked on issues relating to food-growing and water for many years. One of the social learner works for Zingisa; the other coordinates a network of small-scale farmers that Zingisa supports.

Initial reflections: It is difficult to know why Zingisa did not work well as an anchor organisation. It could be because the research approach was very different to the organisations current practice. Report back from EMG staff that visited Zingisa is that while there seems to be a good understanding of the work needed at senior level, there are some communication difficulties within the organisation, and very little is followed through. During the last Module of the Changing Practice course one of the social learners reflected that they did not receive support from their organisation for their work on the course. There was also a lack of communication between the two participants. One participant dropped out of the course after module two and although the other participant attended all the modules he has only completed one assignment and is unlikely to complete the course. The social learners have been pressurised by the Eastern Cape water caucus to report back on their work. It seems, from the reflections from one social learner, that this has been an additional stress.

2. Valuable skills

During the mid-course interviews participants began identifying skills that they had gained from the course that they considered valuable.

The value of understanding context and practice

The first assignment that participants were asked to do was to really get to know the context that they are working with and identify and understand the practice that they wished to support or change. For example, in the Vaal the social learners identified the absence of traditional healers in water forums and yet they knew that traditional healers were using the water directly from polluted parts of the Vaal River. They chose, as their task for assignment one, to get to know how exactly traditional healers interact with the river and what their problems were around using water from the river and accessing the river for their practice. Like other participants they did this through following a guided process of documenting 'stories of practice' and observation.

This process of getting to know the context and practice led to developing communication skills. Some participants found this hard to begin with but through practice and learning to refine their questions, they became more confident.

They reflected on how, getting to know the practice better through talking to people also made their work more meaningful to them as can be seen in the quotation above where a participant comments, "I know how important water is for them now it becomes more meaningful what we are doing."

One participant in particular found great personal benefit from investigating the context (which includes an investigation of the history of the practice/issue). His family had been removed from an area during apartheid. Now he was older he had returned to the area and chose to investigate the history of the landscape as part of his assignment one. He expressed how he felt this process reconnected him back with his past. He was also a new member to the water caucus and the investigation of the context of plantations in the area opened his eyes to 'environmental issues' which he felt, up until now, he had not considered.

"It opened a vista or a horizon of experience. I had to read about a place that appeared new to me now".

He also comments on how people from his tribe appreciate the historical work he is doing and he is hoping it will have an effect on the youth in the area. There is a strong sense from him that he is reclaiming something that has been lost or taken away. He writes:

“What excites me is going back into the history of Mariepskop. That excites me and finding out what it really means because it got lost somewhere.”

The value of knowledge networks

Module 2 and Assignment 2 are about how to engage with new knowledge by building a knowledge network. This means that the participants are asked to show evidence of having attempted to access new knowledge via organisations, people, books or articles and the internet. Most participants found it challenging to access new information through written material. What they found exciting was that they began to broaden their network and they began to see the value of reading written material that told them more about their context. Some participants have continued to work on the assignment long after it was submitted. The Vaal social learning group want to visit the archives at the North West University to further understand traditional healing practices. The social learning group in the Western Cape wants to develop a ‘Yellow Pages’ for Dunoon which will contain a list of contact details of active people in the area.

Some participants also found out about new projects in their area which gave them ideas of how their ‘Change Project’ could engage with these already established projects. For example, in the Vaal one of the participants was asked to participate on the Adopt a River Campaign. He has now started thinking about how traditional healers could be involved in this program.

The assignment also continued to build participant’s network building skills and skills of engagement.

“The assignment on knowledge networks gave me the tools to know how to talk to people, what questions to ask them. It showed me the importance of having a knowledge network and how to build it. I now approach people very differently after doing this assignment.”

Before going to talk to people participants worked hard at formulating the broader “Change Project case” questions and then developing interview questions that would help them answer the questions of their case study. One participant also learnt, as she put it, ‘how to be with people’. She learnt that by talking to people she learnt a lot more and as she put it, ‘it led me to want to know more’.

Although most participants felt that the experience of speaking to people and engaging with different organisations was valuable they did find it challenging. One participant who is unemployed commented that it was expensive to have to phone people all the time and transport was even more expensive. The Change Project participants did have a small budget but in some cases this was not enough or more important needs ate up the money that was to be used for their ‘Change Project’. Some of their difficult experiences led to valuable insights. For example, speaking to individuals around sensitive issues was sometimes difficult and people distrusted them but if they went to the organisation where different groups were affiliated to people tended to be more open and engaging. This taught the participants and the course coordinators that it is better to engage with issues through organisational structures first before speaking to individuals.

Some participants really struggled to engage with government whereas others made small breakthroughs by finding at least one person within a municipality to talk to. One group spoke

about how they couldn't get the municipal person to agree to a meeting so they asked another municipal person if they could interview him in his role as a Catchment management forum chair and then asked him questions about the municipality's issues and position at the same time.

The value of being able to build an evidence-based case

Participants feel that their Change Project cases are strong and evidence based. One participant reports that by going through this process their understanding is much more in-depth. He says:

"This has led to a change in how we present at the forums (catchment management forums). We have already done the research; we already know what we are talking about. We have evidence that the practice exists and how it works. We are more resourceful."

This quotation also highlights that the process of developing a strong case has led to participants, particularly young participants, feeling more confident in their work.

It has also helped participants see connections that they have not seen before and in some cases change their minds about people, issues and organisations.

For example one participant started making links between the problem with the plantations and the way land is used. He started understanding how land use has a direct impact on people. This made him think about the land under claim and what should happen to it. He realised that one of his roles is to help people see this link that he has come to realise. He has identified a tension in the community that are claiming land. He says, 'the people that are doing the claims are not interested in the pollution and water.' This is something he did not understand when he started the course. He describes his new understanding as follows:

"It is always an afterthought. After going through it is as if I have left my jacket there and I think how am I going to get my jacket back? I left my jacket in the other room so I must negotiate to go and get my jacket but the person who I go to get my jacket from may not be interested in my jacket. So those are the two things I am grappling with. I want to marry them...they must marry... as one is depending on the other. I must feel after completing I must see it as one."

3. Difficulties of context

Educational interventions do not exist in a vacuum but need to take into consideration the context of the society we live in. This is hard because there is always a struggle for resources to fill the gap of the educational crisis that South African society is living through and yet we need to tackle these issues head on and make our participants aware of them.

Gender issues

It was shocking for the group to find out that one of the young women on the course was sexually harassed when she started out interviewing people in her community. The young woman was very brave to talk about her experience to all the participants of the group which led to a discussion about gender violence and gender inequality in South Africa. She spoke about it in her interview too and expressed the all too familiar feelings of guilt that come with experiences like this.

"...there was one member I experienced emotionally...That is where I talked about that guy that we agreed that we are going to do the interview and when we get to the place where we are supposed

to do the interview he said to me he would bring the pastor but when we get there it is just him and his stories. So that was difficult for me and it made me want to maybe feel guilty or ask myself that I shouldn't have been involved in this course because now these things are happening and I started to feel that this is not where I belong. But then after that I realised this is just only one person and I'll just move from this and not all people will be like him. And other people were cooperative. The assignment that I enjoyed more than the others was the one where I interviewed the official from government (Assignment 2)"

This highlights the responsibility of educators to have to consider societal issues and contexts that may seem to lie outside the mandate of what we are trying to achieve. This project is funded by the WRC to strengthen civil society's role in monitoring the NWRS2 but unless we deal head on with the gender inequalities and gender-based violence rampant in our society we won't be able to strengthen ALL of civil society. Women's ability to be change-agents in the world will be limited by the very fact that they are continually under threat and in danger simply because they are women.

It is also quite apparent that the women of the group speak less and in some cases are silenced by their male comrades. It is also quite telling that only one woman on the course completed all the modules. This does not necessarily mean that they were unable to attend because of gender exclusion but it does say something about the lives that women live in South Africa and the everyday pressures that sometimes make it difficult for them to engage in activities that develop their own learning or give them an opportunity to engage on a more public platform. Building mechanisms to help them navigate the pressures of their own lives in relation to participating in the course needs to be explored and considered.

What we learnt from this experience is to, in the interim, make sure that women participants do not interview or talk to strangers alone. Dealing with the issues of gender inequality more broadly is more of a challenge but it does mean that we need to integrate into our courses a stronger awareness and focus on gender issues. One of the activities still to come on this project is the final presentation of the case studies. This will probably include presentations from a partner University who has been doing participatory research into gender dynamics of participatory water governance in Cape Town and Accra.

Poverty

Some of the participants on the course were volunteers, others were unemployed. Only five were employed in stable jobs. This also has an impact on the way in which people can participate fully in the course and the constraints that they need to work within. When the facilitator visited one participant she was ill and unable to afford medication. A few participants struggled to get access to a computer which made finalising their assignments very challenging. It often meant finding transport money to get to a nearby internet café and money for the internet café. All anchor organisations were given money to run their "Change Project" and could decide how this was used to support learners. Poorer, less resourced participants were at an obvious disadvantage in terms of what they could do with the money available and what they needed to spend it on.

Health

Life in South Africa is not easy. Life as an activist is not easy. Participants spoke of very difficult, very challenging situations that they needed to negotiate on a daily basis. Many of the participants on the course experienced traumatic life events in the eighteen months that we worked together. These challenges are not so prevalent if you were to run a course of this nature in Sweden or America. Often participants needed emotional and psychological support. Two

participants became very sick while doing the course and this meant considering how to keep them updated, involved and informed with limited resources.

When we did the final reflection it was apparent that the role of civil society change-agents in South Africa is a rewarding, challenging and exhausting one. Participants commented after the reflection session that they felt lighter but also quite saddened. When running courses like this it is worth considering how to provide spaces where people can let go of the role of being an activist for the world and be given the freedom to be themselves with their own struggles and challenges, their own painful experiences and wounds and to acknowledge their own joys, strengths and achievements.

4. Valuable qualities

Passion

Some participants felt that the course helped them find their passion. One participant discovered his love for history and how important his own personal history was both to him and his community members. Another participant described how she is new in the sector and she was not sure what she wanted to focus on but through the course she has discovered that she loves working with people and that her real passion is to help ensure good quality water for everyone. As she learnt more about water quality the more she wanted to know and the more she wanted to work in this field.

Compassion

By speaking to people in their local community and then in local and regional government participants began to feel empathy and compassion for people that they often saw as their adversaries. One participant described how hearing people's stories made her want to feel what they feel. She writes:

"I want to be with people and feel how they are feeling and this is what drives me to do this work now".

At modules participants also described how speaking to municipal officials made them realise how tough their jobs are.

In the course we encouraged participants to think about the different relationships they had with different organisations and consider whether they were good or difficult and why. This also helped participants think about why a relationship was not necessarily working rather than just focusing on the fact that they were not getting the support they needed. Some participants were surprised by the response they got from the people they spoke to. One participant described how a government official coached her in how to ask questions during her interview which she found very encouraging.

Respecting the different knowledge spaces we inhabit

By speaking to and engaging with different people from academics, government officials to traditional healers and spiritual practitioners participants began to see the value in the different knowledge that different people hold and how this deepens their understanding of their 'Change Project cases' It also helped them see different people's perspectives. Athina Copteros, the facilitator who ran the reflection session, comments on how participants spoke about this when

describing the course by using a piece of cloth to demonstrate what they found meaningful or valuable about their experience on the course.

“The Learners were very aware of the complexity of the situations they work in and that there is never only one side to an issue or problem. When reflecting on the cloth, a few people commented on it having more than one side. Flipping the cloth this way and that, they demonstrated how there are different ways of seeing and there is an element of the unpredictable:

“I think I also believe what D said to say that it has got two sides. It might not be that visible for me with naked eyes but maybe if I can use some scientific looking eyes I can tell also this is the front, this is the back...So for me this represents problems of what has happened according to the initial planning. So the back part of it has not really happened according to the way it was thought about.”

Building or re-building relationships of learning

This interaction with different knowledge systems also seemed to initiate a different attitude or interest in organisations or groups that are sometimes not seen as part of the activists’ world. The fact that the course was accredited by Rhodes University made the group consider the role that Universities could play in bringing about change *and* the value of their work for Universities. This was one of many relationships that they found themselves questioning and re-evaluating as they proceeded through the course. One of the aims of the WRC project on strengthening citizen monitoring was to also explore and encourage the partnerships between activists’ on-the-ground research and researchers who come from more formal institutions. We need to explore more deeply how this played out through the course in the next few months and also consider ways in which this relationship can be deepened. There are obvious challenges. Most community researcher-activists have very few resources and rely on strong NGO’s or Universities to make their work possible. They are often paid far less for the work that they do and are often excluded from more powerful platforms that academics can access where work is shared, evaluated and critiqued. One course participant did decide to present their work as a poster at an international conference that the facilitator of the ‘Changing Practice’ course was attending but said that the experience made him ‘feel lonely’. What is hopeful though is that this research project and Change Practice course may be the entry point into further exploring how to develop meaningful change-oriented partnerships with intellectuals and activists.

Athina Copteros highlights the particular change in participants’ attitudes to academia that arose during the reflection sessions:

“I appreciated the group’s opinions about academia and that they expressed this openly and saw that they have something to offer through the course and through their own lived experience:

‘Society we now tend to judge, as this is academic, this university does not represent us you know. But the journey has taken us to say there is a space of learning from both sides.’

For me this is the key of the experience. How does an academic institution interact meaningfully and effectively with civil society, especially when it is working to effect change? I think the answer is in how lived experience is integrated meaningfully in processes of learning. Social learning has a lot to offer in this regard but it feels like academic institutions themselves are slow to embrace this as a credible, valid and meaningful way forward.”

5. The value of Social learning

What was surprising is that the experience of being involved in a social learning process also helped the participants develop an understanding of what social learning means and how it is a valid process for their work as activists. They were able to identify that the process they were going through was different to any other learning experience they had been through before, that it was a collaborative effort and that they were going into the unknown together, that they were learning new things that they didn't know before without having to be told what these things were. Below are a few quotations that represent the groups understanding of the social learning process that they were contributing to:

"I loved what Jane said on the first day [of this course] that the case study should be so familiar and so comfortable that we wear it like a comfortable t-shirt, something about a shawl or something around the shoulders. That the work we've done actually makes us kind of stronger going forward, protected from the elements. I think this is sometimes what people wear in ritual. And that the work we've done and it's a case study now but it also has the power of everything that has been put into it to kind of carry forward."

"Social learning is like a mountain pass through all these very difficult obstacles. On every level the challenge of trying to understand what social learning is, the challenge of trying to make a difference when we feel so tiny compared to the hugeness of the problem. We are forging this even though we can't see where we're going. It feels like we are in quite a narrow space together we are forging this path."

"This course is not like other courses, like the B courses. There people come to the front. They bring in one person, for example, on how to use the internet and they stand in front of the room and tell you. This course is different. Jane doesn't run the courses like this, the participants are asked to pull something out and pull it up. They are not told what to do. This is very different and also very challenging. Like today being asked to think about the first steps of action. This is very different and we have to pull something up out of our context and understanding."

Athina Copteros, the facilitator of the reflection session, reflects on the role and benefits of the "Changing Practice course" for the participants both in terms of their own learning and the value that their work brought to their communities and to the other knowledge spaces. She writes:

"The Changing Practice group is an inspiring group of learners. They come from a very rooted space within their own communities. Their context presents them with enormous challenges and yet as learners it makes their contribution and learning incredibly relevant and valuable. Their embracing of social learning and acknowledgement of different knowledge systems has offered them ways of negotiating potentially unshiftable situations. Being offered a wider variety of tools and the language with which to research and negotiate their case studies seems to have contributed greatly to their ability to effect change. For me this complex space and the commitment of the learners is captured in the following quotation taken from a learner sharing his partner's learning journey as represented in the sand tray images:

"The municipality was very anti-working with him. They were preparing the community not to like him...he had to fight to get through that. Fortunately that he's working now through social learning, there is light in the tunnel...the municipality has started understanding what is happening and the community although still not very clear about what is happening...The only thing that helped was social learning because he had to start talking and explaining what is happening...The social learning has really contributed a lot."

The social learning for him has kind of empowered him to find ways by which he could unlock, like the stuff that is happening her;, so that this can stop...He is keen to continue looking for the right key. He is not just going to be doing that alone, he will be doing that together with his colleagues and comrades...until the river becomes blue again and the life returns."

Research team meeting and final steps towards completion

Update on project activities and deliverables that still need to be completed

The team discussed the research deliverables that were still due for the project and the final activities which would conclude both the project and the "Changing Practice" course. Jessica Wilson reported that we have made very good progress to date and have met all the requirements of our contract with the WRC on time. The contracts with the anchor organisations have mostly worked except for Zingisa in the Eastern Cape. It is very difficult to know why this contract has not worked.

Below is a table summarising this discussion:

Activity/Deliverables/products	Discussion	Dates
Deliverable 6	This deliverable describes the case studies to date and what we have learnt from them. The team decided that it would be ideal to do a more detailed 'ibook' of each case with the participants of the course which could be used to share with officials and researchers and be hyperlinked to the final reports of the project. It was decided that the 'ibooks' should only be developed after the participants on the course have finished their portfolios and reflections on their learning so that these reflections can also be included in the 'ibooks'. The Deliverable itself will be a summary of the case studies as well as some of the obstacles that participants experienced.	15 February
Deliverable 7	Preliminary reflections of learning based on the report on the reflection session and mid-course interviews with participants.	30 April
DWS/SAWC follow up meeting	We are still waiting for confirmation and a date from DWS, as well as whether they will be able to pay for the meeting and for some SAWC members to get to the meeting.	4 or 5 May
Next research team meeting	This will be held after the DWS/SAWC meeting. At this meeting the team will discuss a follow up proposal for the WRC.	6 May
Product: 'ibooks'	Prof Lotz-Sisitka will be able to fund the development of these booklets. Jane and Taryn will work with participants of the course to develop them.	July

Deliverable 8	<i>Reflection report on citizen engagement and democracy in water governance</i> – this will be a revisiting of Deliverable 2. There are many lessons already in the case studies and in our meeting notes, so the first steps will be to pull those out from our existing material, and then discuss as the broader research team. Victor will think about which of the social theories most apply to the water caucus.	30 June
Product: Changing Practice course website	All the materials and instructions are well documented on the website and are available to the public. This website was funded by Rhodes University ELRC.	Complete except for uploading final reports and minutes
Guidelines for Civil society	The draft Guidelines need to be reworked. The suggestion is that CER look at the mandates and duties and obligations of government in terms of relating to civil society and include this in the guidelines.	31 August
Water Wheel article on citizen engagement	Dr Munnik will write this article for the Water Wheel.	No date was mentioned
Academic article on social learning process	Jane Burt and Prof Lotz-Sisitka will be writing this article and will possibly be presented at the EEASA conference by Prof Lotz-Sisitka	The draft will be completed at the end of July
Academic article looking at the SAWC through the lens of classic social movement theory	Dr Munnik would like to write this article	The draft of this article will be completed between June-August
Deliverable 9: Draft final report.	The main body of the final report will include the following chapters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DWS and civil society relationships and water governance 2. SAWC as an entity 3. Content and issues raised through the case studies 4. How does learning happen in action and in a social movement The research team discussed the separate chapters and how they would approach writing them. See minutes in Appendix C.	31 August
Multi-stakeholder seminar	The aim is to hold a seminar in October where the participants of the course can present their case studies as well as get input from other civil society groups. The draft final report will also be presented at this meeting. Participants will be and include all the Changing practice participants, people from the WRC Amanzi for Food project, representatives from the SAWC	To be held around the 8 th of October

	and traditional healers. The options of holding it as a WRC 'water dialogue' and in partnership with Univ. of British Columbia will be explored.	
WRC reference group meeting	The team would like this to take place the day after the multi-stakeholder seminar to minimise costs	
Deliverable 10	This is due at the end of November and will be a rewrite of the draft final report to include comments from the MSH workshop participants and reference group	30 November 2016
Phd thesis	Jane Burt is using this research project as a case study in her Phd	April 2017

Finances – the importance of co-funding

The project has been co-funded through contributions from EMG's water and climate change programme, primarily funded by SIDA through the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, and the ELRC at Rhodes University.

Not all the anchor organisations have spent their full budget to develop the case studies. This means that money can be reallocated to the broader research team to assist with the case studies and to support social learners through the final stages of their project. Money has been earmarked for CER to support the guidelines through legal analysis.

Jane Burt and Prof Lotz-Sisitka will draw up a small budget to show how the Environmental Learning Research Centre will contribute to the e-books and any other contributions the Centre has made such as providing venues and catering for the last Module of the Changing Practice course.

It was noted that it is important to show the WRC that the budgets from the WRC do not cover the time needed to engage in projects that have a strong learning and social change component as well as important to acknowledge that projects of this nature would not be possible without partnerships with other organisations and funding streams. Almost all of the action learners participated in a voluntary capacity and were not paid for their time as 'researchers'.

Prof Lotz-Sisitka said that the centre had a small budget to fund participants of the Changing Practice course to attend the EEASA conference. The budget should also be able to fund people's travel.

There is also an opportunity of collaborating with University of British Columbia on the multi-stakeholder workshop to boost funding and also to engage beyond our own network.

VEJA also has a small grant to run a national SAWC meeting which could also contribute to the multi-stakeholder meeting with the SAWC meeting happening before this meeting.

Documented knowledge

The project has already documented a lot of knowledge and research through the duration of the project. These include:

- The assignments of the social learners doing the Changing Practice course

- Minutes of the Changing Practice modules
- The modules for the social learning course and guidelines for mentorship sessions
- Interviews with key people in the sector which include DWS
- Minutes from the SAWC BGM and SAWC-DWS meetings
- Minutes from the WRC reference group meetings
- Deliverables 1-6 to the WRC
- Mid-term interview with participants of the Changing Practice course
- Presentations to ALARA conference (poster and written)

At the end of the project, documentation will also include the remaining reports to WRC, academic articles, a Doctoral thesis that uses this project as a case study, and a Masters thesis.

Design for final evaluation of the role of social learning

Evaluating a change process like a social learning intervention or a research intervention is extremely challenging and more traditional forms of evaluation that measure against pre-determined objectives become limiting.

In the case of this research project there is the added challenge of not only evaluating an educational intervention but also an educational intervention that has been situated within broader networks: the network of the research project which exists within a broader research program in an NGO; the network of the anchor organisations supporting the participants on the course and the broader civil society network in the form of the South African Water Caucus.

What we want to understand is what was it about this particular configuration of partners, learners and activities that lead to change or inhibited. How was civil society strengthened, and what led to this strengthening? It is for this reason that we have chosen to adopt a realist approach to evaluation which assumes that programs are micro-scales of society and in order to understand how a social intervention has transformed or brought about change in society there is a need to understand the pre-existing contexts and mechanisms that were in operation before the social intervention was introduced (Souza, 2013). This is followed by understanding how the current context inhibits or enhances change and understanding the mechanisms within the social intervention that either lead to a transformative outcome or not. The goal of a realist evaluation is not to come up with a judgement on whether the program achieved its aims or not rather the goal is explanatory in that the evaluation process seeks to unearth the workings of the social intervention and the level of success (transformed society) or failure (reproduced society) in different contexts. This means that the focus of a realist evaluation is on context (C), mechanisms (M) which are at play or may be introduced and the outcomes (O) of these mechanisms on social life where social life is seen to be made up of structure, culture, agency and relations (Souza, 2013).

This will be done by drawing on the whole body of research and data that this research project has produced. This includes historical reviews into the role of civil society movements (Deliverable two) in order to understand the context into which this particular research project is being enacted and wishes to transform. A thorough investigation of the emerging mechanisms that are present in the current context and could have been influenced by the social intervention and the outcomes, if any, in relation to what it means to transform society. This includes whether structures have been altered, culture has changed, agency towards transformative action has been enhanced and relations, which include power dynamics and rights, have been to some extent changed or realised. This will be done by analysing the emergence of the Changing

Practice course over time in relation to the other networks that it is embedded in by drawing on course materials, assignments, interviews with participants, minutes of meetings and reflections.

The results of this evaluation will be reported in the academic paper on learning and in the final research report of this project.

References

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Appendix A: Minutes from the social learning course

Social Learning Module 4 Minutes, 1-4 February 2016, ELRC, Rhodes University, Grahamstown
Participants: Samson, Alex, James, Thabo, Thabang, December, Patricia, Taryn, Mdu, Jessica, Jane, Heila (part-time), Victor (part-time)

Attachments: Jane's power point presentation, module 4 handout

Day 1: Monday 1 February 2016

Introduction and welcome

Jane presented the module outline (*Jane ppt*).

Thandi sends apologies. She has a clash with a course she is doing, that she needs for her new role at VEJA. Tempi & Soso are not here, although they confirmed that they would be. [Tempi joined us at the end of the day, but Soso did not come.]

Everyone introduced themselves. Each person described themselves with an adjective starting with the same letter as their name and did a movement. Everyone mirrored back the name and movement with a greeting. Then: what you want by end of this course; something exciting that happened since last course.

WRC2313 project overview

Jessica reminded people of the context of the bigger WRC project. It is a citizen *monitoring* project. By which we mean seeing what is, or is not, working in our areas and doing something about it. Hopefully we are seeing more clearly, and with greater precision, and acting more effectively. We are learning as individuals, but the project is *designed for this capacity to spread* to our anchor organisations, provincial water caucuses, and SAWC. We aim to have a stronger civil society voice in the water sector. And actually we're already seeing this. For example for the norms & standards, and pricing strategy, DWS is paying transport for 2 SAWC members from each province. This has not happened in a long time, and could be a result of our SAWC-DWS meeting in October, where the DWS officials were very impressed with the level of knowledge of SAWC members.

We are also looking to see whether *social learning*, as a methodology can build capacity in the sector. Is this a good form of teaching / learning for us? Are there more of us who can monitor policy? Can we do it better than we could?

Then we're looking at the actual impact on our 4 issues. Has there been an improvement? These issues have developed since we began – stream flow reduction (also now spiritual practices), water quality (also now inclusion of spiritual water users), water for food, water demand management that is fair. As a result of our research, can we say something at i) case study level, ii) policy level and iii) i.t.o. social movement building? Listen to each other's presentations and when we speak – can you hear people talking about these?

Updates

BGM & DWS meeting

Samson – overview of what happened at DWS – even COGTA was there. And they took up seriously issues of e.g. cut-offs in Northwest (raised at BGM); and other issues from SL case studies. SAWC was invited to present on water stewardship panel. I think we've made some progress since BGM, including integrating other provinces

Thabang – great to have all provinces at BGM and we had good discussions on a number of things (reports from provinces). On Sat I'm having a meeting in KWT with traditional healers (with Aaron). We hope to bring experiences from other provinces to this, esp. wrt water, herbs, etc. – because it's also an area where we're doing ecovillage design education.

Thabang - having a meeting with the churches in CT with people using Kuilsriver for baptising. So we're being encouraged by this case study to do other things.

December – DWS meeting: things are working out; they're serious – inviting us to meetings and paying for us to go. Invited to participate in pricing meeting by IUCMA (and they'd pay for transport).

Samson – starting to discuss with THOSA – meeting with head/chair to understand why they’re pushing regulation – this is dividing traditional healers. We’re trying to push for a proper meeting with TH Council of SA. We see the division on the ground. (Spiritual groups vs traditional healers – spiritual groups use water for healing). Be good to get clarity on this and the regulation at local and national level. We will add this Chapter into our case study – this Act is affecting the practice itself.

Alex – we seem to be doing the same thing wearing different caps! We have community conservation resilience initiative. Be good to bring them into our group to compare effectiveness.

Jane – I encourage you to talk about each other’s case studies in your case study – you can reference each other’s work.

Samson – DWS meeting, something came out around education – they would have to educate us – not totally clear on this. Jess? Needs further elaboration...some were wary of this because of it being so formalised.

Samson – linked to issue Thabang raised wrt water & sanitation forums. See CMF processes, but now establishing water forums – why is this happening? We can discuss all these issues at CMF. Why develop another counter structure? This issue came strongly with our SAWC-DWS meeting. Also came up in water stewardship panel/dialogue – why can’t we discuss sanitation issues at a CMF? Setting up new water & sanitation forums is to do with the ruling party panicking.

Thabang – we need the forum of forum minutes for our CMF meeting in CT on 9 Feb (Victor has them). This should be strengthening our CMFs – a leverage to push from a national vantage point. Linking Dunoon with norms & standards draft policy

Thabo – EMG offered to do a workshop for WCWC if they were interested. This was done jointly with OMCJC (one million climate jobs campaign). I read the policy and was happy to see it was only 45 pages (vs IDP, which is hundreds!). This made me want to read it. It seems like you understand it when you read it. But it’s very not English – the devil is in the detail. E.g. talks about “consultation” but doesn’t say what they should do. We presented the n&s at OMCJ meeting – issues raised wrt consultation, WMDs, outsourcing, jobs came up. It’s not clear what all of these mean – leaves it to water services authorities (WSAs) to interpret. We wanted to raise the issues from Dunoon to the policy; but didn’t manage to do this because people wanted to learn more about n&s and raise their own issues.

Thabo – Issues for me: basic water supply services – doesn’t cover multiple use coming out of our case study (don’t want to fall under small/micro business – we’re not there, we’re household).

6(d) – setting tariffs – need a break down on how consultation should happen. We need to be part of tariff setting processes in March. Made links with contracted service and WMD – not installed by city; small business paid per installation – so will push to install more per day. I still need to speak to James to integrate into our case study. It’s easier to link our case study to n&s than to NWRS2 – will discuss with Jessica.

Thabang – in addition, 3 other things came up – 1: right to water or right to access water – can be interpreted in different ways by municipalities. Discussed indigent policy (should FBW be taken away from some)? 2: outsourcing – not possible in some municipalities to provide everything, e.g. engineers, (even if in principle we’re against outsourcing) 3: community water caucuses – starting to see in EC; should be encouraging in all provinces. People can’t be ready to engage if there are no structures at community level. (Jane: it would be nice for you to track how this unfolds in the EC – and share with other provinces – like a case study).

December – municipality is agreeing to meet us wrt Adopt a river at a village level – water monitors (ambassadors?). Bushbuckridge doesn’t have capacity to do this.

Alex – worried if we start debating on right to water & access – is it only us that knows this; or do communities know this? Thabang: unevenness in community understanding on this, e.g. in bill of rights. The role of SAWC is to inform communities.

TEA 3.20 – 3.35

Learners set their own goals for the remainder of the course.

Setting our goals (Jane's slide) – in the module, exercise 1, p 4

Free writing exercises x 3

Jane showed people the table on p3 – each person should go through the table and see what they need to get done if they are to get a certificate. She reminded people about assignment 3 that has 2 parts plus 2 reflection parts. She invited learners to talk to her directly if they have problems. In your case study groups and looking at what you've written, share answers to free-writing 2; then see if you can find 3 shared goals for your group for module 4. Page 5 has another table – where you write your 3 prioritised goals, the role of each person in the group, anything you need to complete your goal (material and person). How will you know when your goal is complete?

Western Cape goals

1. To share our case study with others through meetings and workshops to motivate them to take up their own issues
2. To use our case study to comment on policy and as a reference when we engage with government and others
3. Generic ppt of our case study by end of module 4

Jane – convert goals 1&2 to ones you can achieve during module 4

Mpumalanga goals

1. Water and medicinal plants shortages because of plantation in Mariepskop mountain
2. We should have completed our case study
3. There is progress about land claims issues

Jane – convert goals 1&3 to ones you can achieve during module 4. Name 3 most important things you have to finish for your case study – tell us on Wednesday.

(These answers for Mpumalanga are pulled from the free writing exercise – i.e. why you exist, what you want by end module 4, by end 2016). Jane clarified what she wanted.

Vaal

1. Local case: Finalise implementation plan, Complete case study methodology
2. Building movement: continuous workshop with THOs and river clean-ups
3. Policy: draft regulations of THB – finish meeting with THOs and on policy issues that affect them
4. Meet weekly and look at available info we already have
5. Finalise interviews with THOs, put in argument of case study

Jane – sorry I wasn't clear with instructions – please just make sure those goals are clear when you come on Wed. We were planning to give you time to work on your presentations now. You all got an email about what questions to present on. You have 45 minutes per case study. 30 minutes to present, 15 minutes for feedback and how you can take it further. This presentation is part of the assessment. I've put the criteria into the module (p5-6).

Day 2: Tuesday 2 February 2016

Warm up and reflection (lead by Vaal group)

Samson asked us to turn to the person next to us, say our name and three things we left at home. Jane introduced Athina who will be facilitating our reflection on Thursday using dance / movement / theatre. Everyone told Athina their name, where they're from and one thing they're passionate about.

Case study presentations

Jane introduced it. We can all comment on anything – including how to expand and take the case study further. But for the assignment, all you need to do is to finish your case study as it is now. The case study will continue to grow, beyond the assignment. Jane gave random numbers to see who would go first.

Vaal – Samson and Mduduzi

Our case study focuses on THs in the Vaal who are excluded from the process of decision-making. We've brought some documents on the research we've done – and what we're arguing in the case

study and the evidence we have. Here's the map of where our project is – Sasolburg, Boiphelong and Boipatong – in the Vaal catchment.

Our case study is about Spiritual Water users excluded within water management platforms

Method:

We have conducted interviews since 2014 – and have spoken to traditional healers in three areas (see map). Most of the conversations have been going on through the CMFs, where VEJA was concerned that spiritual water users have not been included (The Vaal Barrage CMFs particularly).

Argument:

THO and SWUs are absent from CMFs and other forums. Decisions are made on their behalf. The moral value of water to SWUs is not recognised. SWUs and THOs are guardians of our water resources. THOs and SWUs must be recognised by CMFs and the NWRS2 should mention them.

Evidence:

THOs and SWUs are not at the forums (if you look at attendance registers and their websites). Speaking to the SWUs, we realised that they have no idea that the CMFs exist. Traditional healers are not extracting water in bulk, so they are not recognised as water users by the National Water Act. We argue that traditional healers should be part of a broader network of citizen monitoring of water quality. We want to get into our own monitoring of the water quality, so we can test the water quality ourselves (as the water quality team of VEJA). The Water Policy must deal with the inequalities of the past, and there must be redress on the part of the healers, because they were excluded in the past and they are still excluded.

In the course of doing this research, we have discovered that there are tensions within the THP community, and we are concerned that some THPs/ SWUs might still be excluded from participating in water decision making, if they are not formally recognised as THPs. These groups are formalised according to The Traditional Health Practitioners Act of 2008. The Act defines who is a spiritual water user in South Africa, but sections of the act have not been promulgated, that has gone to the Traditional Healers Council, and they can define who is a spiritual water user and it is quite divisive – they can certify some people, but can withhold certificates/ licenses from others. We have to understand the implications of this better, to understand how and why certain THPs might remain marginalised from formal recognition and participation.

What have we DONE?

- VEJA started Adopt a Wetland in Sharpeville at Dhlomo Dam
- Interviews with SWUs
- Workshops with SWUs at VEJA office (we still want to do more workshops, and we still want to do an exchange visit with Mpumalanga)
- Change Project presented to VEJA
- We have introduced the case study to the Gauteng Water Caucus, also to North West and Free State water caucuses.
- We are interested in carrying out a water and sanitation survey in the case study areas

Who have we engaged with?

- Mfuleni Municipality
- THPs at local level
- Bhekabezayo Traditional Health Organisation, based in Strand but they have presence in other places, including the Vaal
- We have been trying to meet with the DWS, challenging to have a meeting but we have had phone discussion (Samson and Thandi had phone conversations)
- Metsi-Maholo Municipality
- It has been difficult to get a meeting with Traditional Healer Council
- Local NGOs

COMMENTS ON VAAL CASE STUDY

Victor: Very happy and impressed with how this case study has grown. You have taken the question and really gone into it.

It sounds to me like you started with “They were excluded”. But it seems to me that the water sector decision makers just never thought of them, they had a sense that water users were a factory, a farm etc. If THPs are to be included by DWS in the forums, they will need to actually re-think the way the forum is and how it works, so that the THOs and SWUs will feel more comfortable.

Samson answers: we don’t think there is any need for the forums to change, because at the moment the CMFs mostly discuss water quality, which is directly relevant to the SWUs. There is a need for capacity building for healers and SWUs, so that they can engage, and monitor water where they are practicing.

In terms of getting involved in the politics of traditional healer council, Victor asks – do you want to get involved in that politics, to say the council must register people as traditional practitioners before they can participate in CMFs?

Samson – the divisiveness is between traditional healer organisations, the council does not have the capacity to go out and register people. They do not want to register diviners. We argue that the national water act needs to define spiritual water users, according to one or another schedule (Victor suggests that they are probably schedule 1 – small scale water users).

Athina asks – does the power lie with CMFs, to change things in terms of water?

Samson: No, more with regional DWS, but the problem is that private property owners restrict access to water on their land, and that is what forces traditional healers to have to go and use unsafe water. We are arguing that natural resources need to become more accessible, to redress the past inequities (still perpetrated through private ownership). It will be up to CMAs to engage with stakeholders to open up that access. The CMFs are an entry point for THOs and SWUs to participate, but it is not enough to just participate there.

Jessica: I love this case study – you presented it really well, it is succinct and clear, and you can see that your argument has changed over the year through doing the research. I have a question about the water and sanitation survey – where did it come from, and do you think you might use some of the methodologies you learnt in this project? Samson: it is a provincial caucus project, and Judith has already started in Gauteng, we are lagging behind. Jessica: it sounds like a new project! But it is great.

December: In terms of the participation of traditional healers in CMFs, we have the same issue in Mpumalanga – their voice is not well represented within the CMFs. It is something that I suggested when I met them last Friday. There are new initiates, who are comfortable with emails etc., they would be great as CMF participants.

#VukaMngoma is the Facebook group dealing with the THO uprising, they marched last year, they are an important constituency in SA.

Samson: yes it is a huge group to engage with, and they are quite well organised and mobilised.

Samson spoke to the Mfuleni Municipal Manager, he is in charge of effluent management and is also the chairperson of the Rietspruit CMF – we discussed what the municipality is doing in terms of communicating with THPs to tell them about the water quality there. I was also speaking to him about chairing the CMF, it is challenging, since he already has a full time job.

Victor: it is very interesting that you spoke about THPs as guardians, it will add an interesting dynamic to the CMFs if THPs join as both guardians and users.

Dr. Mashile: we should use the Vaal case study as a model for all of the caucuses, because we all know about these issues where we live, but we have just kept quiet.

A round of ‘what have we learnt/ or what we were struck by’

- James: learnt from how they presented, how they engage with people in their communities
- Thabo: refreshing to hear about other people’s work
- Mdu: Presenting this project helped me understand more clearly what we have actually done

- Athena: Made me think about the nature of presentation, how we might present in some way to convey the passion of the people involved
- December: I felt quite relieved because we also had problems/ challenges bringing traditional healers together
- Thabang: lots for other provinces to learn from this case study
- Tempi: we can learn so much, this is an important aspect of resource governance, and it is important to go back to history
- Jane: This case study really talks about the relationship people have with water, the spiritual and personal connection people have with water, and you don't hear that at DWS or at CMFs, and it is a really important aspect to celebrate.

Dunoon, Western Cape – Thabo and James

Thabo: To start with, we acknowledge that we have faced great challenges; James got sick, and it was challenging to organise meetings in Dunoon. These challenges helped us learn more about Dunoon. We learnt that it is not easy for the advice office to exist in Dunoon. The advice office has gone against the councillor in terms of getting the old clinic replaced with a new clinic, meaning the councillor sees the advice office as a threat. This means that people will not go to meetings at the advice office; they would prefer to go to meetings at the community centre.

Our four arguments relate to:

1. Inadequate consultation by the City
2. Procurement and proper management of the installation of WMDs
3. Outsourcing of WMD installation
4. Lack of provision for multiple uses/ water for livelihoods.

We found that most people do not understand why the devices are installed in their houses. It does not seem to target people with the highest bills, seems more random. People have come to meetings to show that they have high debt, but it has not disappeared even though they have the devices installed. People are saying it is not happening as it should happen.

We saw that the City doesn't really want to engage with communities. The City does not want to recognise us, as a group of activists, they say they will only engage with councillors (we see that the City sees councillors as civil society, as representing the entire community).

People in communities have ideas about how the situation could be improved. They just want to be told why and what the devices are there for. But clearly the City doesn't want to listen to communities.

We have collected evidence that the city is not really monitoring what is happening on the ground: for example, in one case, the number on the device does not correspond with the erf number; another lady had her device smashed by a truck, she called the City to ask for help with fixing the device, she had no response, then she asked someone to help her bypass the meter - and that was in 2012. To this day, no one has come to inspect her water connection, meaning people have the sense that the City is not keeping track of these things.

We found lots more evidence that people were trying to report faults but no one ever came to fix them. Then people resort to bypassing their device.

Through our knowledge networks we heard that outsourced plumbers are paid per installation, so they are pushing to install as many as possible. They are also paid for maintenance, but we want to find out – maybe payment for maintenance is much less than payment for installation? This would give the installers an incentive to install as many as possible but not to pay a lot of attention to maintenance. The process for reporting faults is long and complicated (goes to city, then the message has to go to the private contractors).

In terms of provision of water for livelihoods, people are worried that if there are devices throughout Dunoon, their businesses/ gardens etc will suffer.

In terms of policy, we are looking at Free Basic Water (how much is enough), indigent policies, the question of the right to water vs the right to access to water.

Where we are right now: we want to finish writing this case study, then go back to Dunoon to hold a mass meeting, and then share the case study, so we can inspire even just three people, that will be great for us.

We also want to bring the water caucus on board, we don't want the water caucus to be in front, but we want the water caucus to support the community activists.

We want to run workshops in Dunoon on water bills/ tariffs/ how to organise.

We have started a 'core group' in Dunoon, they want to accompany us to do interviews, research, etc., we need to work with this group.

We have struggled to get the relevance of the NWRS2 into our case study. But now we have more energy for the Norms and Standards process, we can clearly see the links, and this is what we want to put energy into going forward with this case study.

We have shared this case study widely – at ALARA, at EMG seminar, at AIDC, in Dunoon, in my own area (Thabo – J section), and more.

People in Thabo's area have started to get to know him and what he does for a living. There are people I was advising not to accept the devices, but now as an activist you can't say 'I told you so', so when their devices burst, I was able to give advice (and call Malungisa for contacts for help in December).

Presenting this case study at the EMG seminar was very very nice, because Malungisa Pontia was there to answer questions and give us insight into what challenges are facing the government officials.

James – as part of knowledge network, I went to UWC, and I was referred to the community law centre. I got a book that they published, from which I learnt a lot about the history of water in South Africa, and about the history of Dunoon. I went to a meeting of the Legal Resource Centre, and shared my issue of water and land in Dunoon. I shared that people in my community are using water just to escape from poverty. We give advice to community members about not jumping to illegal actions to deal with their water issues. First they must learn everything they can about their community, then get a mediator, take responsibility for their own knowledge and actions, etc.

James was elected to Blouberg Tourism Board, and he took his case study there, and in that way it was presented to the City of Cape Town.

Thabo: we have to develop a realistic action plan.

COMMENTS ON DUNOON CASE STUDY

Samson: Thanks, we learnt a lot from this case study, when we heard you present in JHB we thought 'oh we must up our game!' For me it would be interesting to find out how much the outsourced plumbers get paid to install the devices. I can see the potential for doing a bigger project around these issues in Mfuleni. There are areas where they say it is too expensive to replace old meters, so then they bypass their own system!

Victor: What is the relationship between the contractors and communities? Sounds like there is a perverse incentive for them to install as many as possible.

James: there is no relationship – they have most success installing the devices in households where the owners were away at work, but if people are at home they say no and stop them from installing.

Thabo: contractors do not install in the same area where they live. The Khayelitsha Development Forum wants to get the business of contracting, so that they can get the jobs for Khayelitsha people.

Athena: What struck me from your presentation was the nature of activism, the emotional, physical, psychological strain – and it makes me think about what support exists for activists.

Mdu: what you said about how councillors are not really in the interests of the people, and they are not present until the elections, it is true where we are too.

December: it is a real challenge and a threat, we are labelled as 'not good', people are told not to mix with us, if we are not with the ANC we are outcast, if we are now not with the Bushbuckridge Ratepayers Association, we are outcast.

Thabang: we saw it in Makhaza, where only the group allied with the councillor got jobs, the councillor mediates who can access the EPWP jobs, etc. It is the same in my village in the Eastern Cape. We are dealing with these forces which are very divisive. Everyone from our water and cc school wanted us to do community workshops, then when we came to do that, we found they all had jobs.

Samson: the issue of 'fatcats': anytime we start to get anywhere, if we start to organise, it gets disrupted. When we were trying to organise the climate camp, within one week, the people who were supposed to be at the climate camp got temporary jobs with EPWP. There were spies at the climate camp – this reveals that we are seen as a threat.

Thabang: In Makhaza they tried to say 'door to door' is banned – because they were worried that we were actually talking to people directly.

Jane: these are important lessons about what it means to be a community activist/ citizen monitor. Maybe these should be included in the guidelines for citizen monitors. Jessica: maybe they can be incorporated into the reflection reports. Victor: these are really important things to discuss, lets find a space to talk about all of this. Jane: maybe we can work it into the agenda.

Athina: What is it that people (in govt.) are lacking in terms of communication skills, in terms of empathy, in terms of courage, in terms of dealing with conflict?

Dr. Mashile: we get strength and solidarity from one another in this space to feel 'we are not alone'.

Victor: what I am hearing is that these powerful people actually also really need the community, and are actually really afraid of the community's own agency, and so actually, although it is really challenging, we see that there is a real balance of power, rather than that we are overpowered.

Mpumalanga – December, Dr. Mashile, Patricia

Our main argument: the impact of large scale plantations on water downstream flow, ecosystem services and land claims (we are especially interested in the impact on medicinal plants that are used by THPs – traditional health practitioners).

Our evidence: Injaka Dam has very low levels – if plantations were cleared from Mariepskop mountain and surrounding catchments, wouldn't this dam be much higher? Klaserie River (?) is much lower than it used to be. (photo evidence and table evidence from Van der Schyff and Schoeman). When you look at the minutes of the Sabie/ Sand CMF you will see that they are most worried about the Sand River.

What are we doing?

We are actually engaging with the communities on a regular basis, we have the community dialogue, whereby we encourage people to think about how they have been working, etc.

We are encouraging the THPs to actually own and run the Adopt a River programme.

We want young people to get more involved.

At one stage the government said they cannot clear the plantations because the land claimants want those plantations – that was before we met Dr. Mashile, who is actually a claimant.

What have we done?

We did a river mapping, which showed us what rivers were flowing and which were not flowing

We met with THPs last week to check whether the social learning project has made any impact on them – it was so great to hear their feedback, they so appreciated being brought together, and raising their awareness about the environment.

Phillip from Geosphere has writted to DWS to ask about the exit strategy, they responded to tell him who he should actually speak to, so that is also progress.

We managed to meet with Bushbuckridge municipality, and Mr. Mokoena about Adopt-a-River and about leaks. We are excited to have a government official as positive as Mr. Mokoena.

We have spoken to the SA Military about the abandoned Mariepskop military base, because we have a vision to use that space as an environmental learning centre.

Managed to initiate dialogue between DWS and ourselves relating to the exit strategy.

The rest of the action plan needs to be completed by the end of the case study.

COMMENTS ON MPUMALANGA CASE STUDY

Jessica: you haven't yet framed a convincing argument – you are muddling up some of your evidence and conclusions. For e.g. your table ends in 1960, it is fifty years ago, and people in the department say there has been plantation clearing in the last few years. The dam is empty – but we are in the middle of a drought. Need updated evidence.

Victor: I am curious to hear more detail about the land claims.

Athena: I was excited to hear your mention of youth, and I thought about the possibility of wilderness experiences for young people, to allow them to deepen their relationships with nature.

Dr. Mashile: we have started the community conservation resilience project, with different villages, where volunteers from each of those villages are getting experience around caring for and protecting the rivers.

Samson: On the issue of Adopt a River, I think we can learn from you, in terms of THPs owning the Adopt a River process.

Dr. Mashile: even where some clearing has started, there is no rehabilitation; even where the plantations are cleared they are just growing back.

Jessica: I think it is really useful to capture those finer levels of detail about the area in your case study, then it is much less possible to pick holes in your argument.

Victor: It would be great to have a map that shows where the plantations are planted, and where the headwaters are for the various rivers.

December: We used that old out-dated table because it refers directly to the Klaserie River, and no clearing has happened since then, so we are confident that the table is still relevant.

Athena: there is this local knowledge about how horrible the plantations are, how do we capture and present this knowledge, other than citing a table?

Jane: the strength of this case study is in using symbols – December uses that graph to show how water levels have dropped, Patricia has photographs of important spiritual places, and Dr. Mashile has an amazing depth of history. Now we can think about how best to present these powerful symbols, and enrich with details.

Eastern Cape - Tempi

Apologies from Soso not being here today, she is at Fort Hare attending training. Work on rainwater harvesting is still going ahead in her village.

Argument for our case study: Peelton has the potential to develop provided that water infrastructure is installed.

A survey was carried out in Majali village, in Peelton (in 2002). Peelton has seven villages and three different traditional leaders! I worked with the Peelton Community Forum, and the Traditional Council. There is a Massive Food Programme in Peelton, but it has no provision for irrigation, they just deliver bags and bags of commercial seed and pesticides to overcome the adverse conditions

I have interviewed:

- Mr. Mlausi of Imingqalasi Traditional Council
- Mr. Kubashe of Imidange Traditional Council
- Agricultural Extension Officer Mr. Makhwelo
- Chairperson of Sigxothindlala farming project (Mr. Mlausi)

Evidence:

200 hectares of land are planted with maize at Majali village at Peelton – no irrigation, depending only on water in the environment. It is GMO seed, and as Zingisa we have a position against GMO

seed because it is destroying the environment. Livestock drink from a dam in Majali (people throw their babies' nappies in this dam)

Activities:

- 4 ECWC meetings
- Intro to NWRS2 workshop
- Invited BCMM to make a presentation of progress so far (e.g. on delivery of rainwater tanks).
- 22nd Jan: meeting between DWS and ECWC to build working relations for future cooperation
- Amathole CMF workshops – we have only recently started attending these meetings, and capacity building is required

Key sections of legislation:

Municipalities all obligations in terms of water provision for livelihoods, so government is not in compliance. We need to take all three spheres of government to court!

COMMENTS ON EASTERN CAPE CASE STUDY

Jessica: Is this agricultural project a good thing or a bad thing? And how would you source the water, what is your proposal?

Tempi: what the community envisions, is that people would like to have water drawn from the river, for the big maize project. For food gardens, people want to use municipal water from the taps – we will never pay for that water. We know the law that says groundwater should be for free for indigent people (what law?). But for the 200ha land, we want water to be drawn from our river. In terms of the maize – Zingisa is anti-GMO. But I, Tempi stand there in Peelson, I see that now the fields are cultivated again and I am very encouraged by that. So I actually critique my colleagues, to say that we have to change our thinking to adapt to climate change. Some people have withdrawn from the project, its not because they are against GMO, its because of internal political conflict about how money from the project is shared.

Jessica: People in Peelson have different perspectives; you won't get those different perspectives by only interviewing the leaders. You need to be open to other opinions and perspectives, so that the case study does not just feel like your own opinion.

Thabo's suggestion: you are passionate about seeing maize grow in your village again, but at the same time is it GMO crops, so if you can bring that tension through, if we can hear those different voices in your case study, it could be a stronger more balanced piece.

LUNCH

Field trip to Grahamstown East

Water for Dignity (WfD) took us on a field trip that highlighted work they've been doing – and water issues – in the poorer areas of Grahamstown. We visited a “hostel bomb”, which is a junction in the sewer system that just pumps raw sewerage water out, in this case into a canalised river that runs through the settlement, with kids and animals jumping over and through it. We went to a site that has “one tank one street” where WfD worked to get jojo tanks installed next to fire hydrants, so they could be filled up by the custodian and accessible to all when water cuts off. We heard from Water for Dignity about the way they work, and the challenges and obstacles they face, particularly in terms of being targeted and criticised by local politicians who see them as a threat.

Reflection – led by Mpumalanga

December – what was interesting was this idea of political interference. E.g. people just by seeing white faces assumed we were DA. This is really problematic. Issue of community water forums is really important, that Thabang was talking about before WfD. This makes our work easier that people are monitoring specific villages. The field trip – yoooh – that river – the Mtyana river, it was just unbelievable, when the comrade took us through what is happening there. It's really sad. The biggest disappointment is the sewer leak. I'd never seen such a constant flow of sewerage

discharge into a river (been continuous for more than 3 years). We had a similar problem in BBR. Some municipalities were taken to court because of non-compliance, but there are still problems with Inyaka dam. I don't really know how this works –if you open a case – they should respond to the allegations, or go to jail. But nobody was arrested. It's also unbelievable how interrelated and interlinked these problems are. We have the same, same problems and I'm from over 1000 km away. It's sad. What does this mean for us and our children if they're exposed to this kind of dirty environment?

Alex – my day has been spoilt. It's been good and good, but now it's spoilt. People want to fly but their wings are tied, until they resort to corruption. It's a painful issue. Take me back, let me be young! Ten years back – how are we really going to make a difference? Let's map out now.

Everyday, seeing this type of thing – staying in such a place... This is just the tip of the ice-berg. If we go from village to village, everywhere in this new South Africa – where do we start?

December – one other thing is the selling of water. Steenbok (the village that slipped my mind) – where people have to buy trucked water – is fully reticulated, but it never flows. It costs R300 to fill up a jojo (not sure how big – maybe 5kl). Fresh effort is needed. We must combine our hands.

Alex – the problem of toilets at schools. Just imagine those children – how many are there to use one toilet the whole day (200 kids).

Samson – working collaboratively with everyone we'll make a difference. But it is also the system. We've seen democracy in our life-time. People have made their own decisions going forward – those protest, withhold votes, going for ballot – all tactics will be used and we'll see change coming. It's a crisis across SA. Small – and big – municipalities are the same.

James – I look at the areas of Grahamstown, and the township and I saw so many problems that are here. I see so many councillors and what they have promised to do, but aren't doing.

Thabang – from the case study presentations, I wondered about how we can work with spiritual water users – and maybe we can bring it to the SAWC. Philip is organising a conference in MP – he's keen to invite SAWC cc to give us opportunity to meet face-to-face – to see how we take forward the lessons from this process into the SAWC. Maybe on Thurs or Fri we could look at these lessons and how the case studies can be shared. What we've seen here is happening in the Vaal and also other places. The WfD women were raising the issue wrt proximity to politicians and access to e.g. food parcels. We must deal with this critically. We want to start reforestation in EC (with ref to Mariepskop case study). Connecting with forum of forums – we'll use these minutes at our local CMF meetings. Local government engagement is challenging – need to think how we'll engage with LG elections. E.g. back in my village people said they won't re-elect until they have a report about what has been done by local government. It would be good to pick up the nappies campaign from MP. Now we have SAWC in 8 provinces, we can establish community forums. We're not yet a grass-roots movement – even 2-3 in each province that we can reflect on from time to time.

Tempi – commonalities should be used as our launching pad to campaign for access to water and against pollution. We are few people dealing with national and global question. We have inyanga – a national movement that will put together activities/campaigns, which include water. We're meeting in PE on 9 Feb. Let's link up. UFH is one of our partners in inyanga – so if we raise our issue it will be taken up in national action. Proposal: PWC look urgently at what needs to be done. We need to collate the issues from our assignments and expose government on their failure to deliver on constitutional obligations. We need to put together a popular education manual on the water situation – this will assist in strengthening community-based water forums.

Jane – we're all educators here, we're learning here to explore our context and be able to share them.

Taryn – I share everyone's despair and feeling down; but also feeling very inspired by energy of Mbulelo and their work. They've thought through so many aspects, e.g. the "wall" in front of the one-tank-one-street. And it adds to the feeling of being inspired by all of your case studies. And to

acknowledge the courage for all of you to work in the areas where you live, and the risks you take. E.g. being a threat to the councillor.

Jessica – noticing absence of women. None of the women learners are sitting with us in the room now. They each have a good reason for not being here, and yet here we are with only male learners. Is it possible to be more sensitive and accommodating of the needs and realities of women to be able to participate fully in this kind of process?

Jane – yes, I’ve also been wondering about this; and also how we can take more “personal” realities into the course. E.g. James was sick – and bringing him back in.

Thabang – what Samson was saying ito closing spaces – it’s really happening. E.g. we are now seeing a document that says #feesmustfall is being run by the CIA or white people. And also people we know are being outed, named and shamed.

Thabo – today...I was saying I’m tired. It’s not that I’m physically tired...today I felt a different energy when I presented - I was given energy (not like at ALARA where I felt lonely). WfD are privileged – they’re doing their own thing, and attracting people who are doing their own thing.

Mdu – I pick up the common issues...we need to take these up.

Jane – it’s hard to see these things...but let’s see so we don’t forget. It’s better to know. There’s still a willingness to keep our eyes open. Let’s end with the following reflection:

I feel.....

I can.....so

We can.....

I can draw on.....when it feels hard

We can we can draw on.....when it feels hard.

Jane collected these and wrote them on newsprints to inform our reflection on Thursday (without people’s names linked to them). Here they are:

I feel:

- Sad one again because of the pollution I have just witnessed in the Matyana river
- Inspired to see the energy and positive attitude from the members of water activism
- That having been part of the change project made me become eye-opened
- Energised
- Saddened by the situation in which our people live
- Tired but hopeful
- So down after the field trip
- Strong from today’s presentations
- Energetic

I can

- Transfer this energy
- Share stories
- Organise my fellow team members
- Touch my tiredness, my hope
- Mobilise community people
- Educate, organise and agitate
- Go back to my community knowing that what is happening in Sebokeng is also happening in Joza
- See that there is nothing that will stand in my way to address these water related issues in my community
- Tell that this is more than we can ignore because this is going to haunt us in the future
- Be involved

So we can

- Motivate others in our community
- Know what is real for people
- Work on an action plan to address the ills of our community

- Make changes to people live with dignity and rivers flow freely and cleanly
- Act collectively
- Mobilise and engage
- Be assured that nothing will really stop us from being active citizens
- Work together as a team and fight the imbalance that we are finding and hold people accountable
- Deal with the challenges if we combine thoughts and partner against this injustice
- Work together

I can draw on

- The success of some other water challenges
- Our challenges as activists to remind me I'm not alone
- Our strategies
- Our case studies that we have similar struggles and also common goals as a way forward
- Sitting back and reflecting
- The past struggle experiences when it feels hard
- The elements – earth, water, air, fire, space
- The experience of our catchment forums
- The commitment of others
- Everyone here

...when it feels hard. We can draw on

- The one action to be posed at the DWS for better services
- Our shared experiences and knowledge
- Other groups experiences and strong points
- Each other, and our motivation that we want to heal the earth and people
- Our previous united front strategies
- Reconnecting and doing permaculture
- Common goals to not get discouraged
- Our strategies and focus
- The successes of some other water challenges
- Community visits

...when it feels hard.

Day 3: Wed 3 February 2016

Agenda for today

- EC warm up (15 min)
- Fulfilling our goals (9-1pm)
- Lunch
- What we'd like to see happen next (2-3pm)
- Fulfilling our goals (3-4pm)
- Planning what we need to do to finish the course (4-5pm)

Fulfilling our Goals

Jane presented the main things that came out of each set of goals:

- What do we need to do to get our certificate (personal and group guidance – Jane)
- Clarifying the argument
- Clarifying the relationship between policy and case study
- Finishing the final case study as a product

What about the action plans? These are part of the case study. You need to have *developed* the action plan and implemented one or two steps, and reflected on them. This is one of the assignments.

Alex – we worked on the table of contents, and the action plan – how will we bring them together as a document? Ans: you don't need to have them as a single document. Or you can include the action plan as an appendix, if you want to.

Samson – in our case what we did was each person wrote one section (evidence, argument, context), and then put them into a single case study. And then we have an action table. (This is NOT sufficient as an action plan!)

Some tips (Jane's slides x2)

Jane gave an example of a SL project on rainwater harvesting where someone didn't have all the answers, and included questions. One question was: how can we involve young people in gardening? This came up as a story / issue, which was then discussed. There was no specific answer, but the case study included some ideas or suggestions.

Some examples from our case studies (see slide). MP could point out how old the data in their table was – and ask the question, I wonder what this is like now? And someone we present to might have an answer.

Victor – these questions can be in-between as we deal with issues, or they can be at the end?

Jane – we found it most useful to link them to the stories.

Alex – problem of language...are we going to write it in the language of the people there?

Jane – you can write it in your own language. I've said this from the start – we will find someone to read it. Think about who you want to read this case study; and write the way you talk. It is absolutely fine to put some questions at the end of your case study: you do not need to have all the answers!

Some tips, slide 3,4&5

This is what we call “cognitive justice” – meaning knowledge belongs to the people and the environment out of which it came. We can be custodians of cognitive justice.

Tempi – as the ECWC, challenged by DWS – they requested a concept note from us on what we're doing. I had to put this together, including what this social learning is all about and what are the relations between it and the caucus. You learn by doing – my colleagues here shouldn't be threatened.

Victor – when we did citizen's monitoring guidelines and had meeting from DWS, we were looking for responses exactly like that...maybe we can follow up individually. We are thinking about how to give this to other people – part of a conversation that goes on after the case study.

Jane – it's extra work – you don't have to translate things now. I'm not marking your assignments differently; these are just points for taking them further.

Tempi – we're trying to create an environment where the citizen monitors NWRS2...I'm thinking of NWRS3 and the contribution of assignments. [This will be picked up after lunch].

Jane – we'll break into our groups and assign someone to each group.

Victor – how do we know when it's good enough? Do we hand in a draft and get comments? Jane: it's good enough when you feel it's good enough (and if you've met all the criteria).

Each group will sit and prioritise – and then the task team will be deployed.

Groups sat and worked together until lunch

LUNCH

Taking forward what we've learnt

Participants divided into three groups, according to their interest in answering a particular group of questions to take forward what we've learnt in relation to i) social learning as an approach ii) how information/knowledge/capacity has flowed from individual learner to anchor org to PWC to SAWC iii) commonalities emerging from case studies.

1. **Social learning** – has this method of learning been useful? If yes...do we want to expand it to other areas/issues/groups in the caucus? How do we do this?

Yes: The method of social learning brings you into the society, it makes you feel you are part of the society, so you feel you belong to and you are part of the society or the community where you stay.

- Social learning makes people in the community feel they own the process. The findings are for the community first. There is lots of research about communities that people in communities are not aware of, but this is different.
- It is useful because it helped us plan activities to go to the people to find out their struggles, but also to get their questions and take them further.
- It is not abstract; it is based on what people know and their own experiences.
- It has given me an opportunity for me to get to know my home place again, and for them to know me.
- Social learning takes it further than just building things on your own experiences, it encourages you to share what you learn, and to learn WITH others, which is hard but it is very important.

Do we want to expand social learning into other areas/issues/groups within the caucus?

- Yes, we do want it to expand, I (Dr. Mashile) have already started with the community conservation resilience initiative (with 3 villages, volunteers, etc.). Using the same method I have learnt in social learning, but partnering with Global Forest Coalition.
- James: I would like to do this more with others in Dunoon.
- Thabo: would like it to happen in the other provincial water caucuses (KZN, North West, Free State, Limpopo). But we cannot be too ambitious to say we could do the whole social learning process with others, but we can draw on some of the tools we have learnt (e.g. knowledge networks, action plans, etc.)
- If we were to do this again, would probably do it first with community activists around particular issues, than to take it to the caucuses.

2. **Learner to anchor org to PWS to SAWC** – how has what we have learned influenced our anchor organisation? (Think about e.g. strategic planning, or how we do our work); has this learning moved into the PWC? If not...why do you think not; if yes...how? What have we observed? Suggestions for other ways or organising relationship between learner, anchor org and PWC? Samson, Thabang, Jessica

VEJA: learning came at the right time (after the internal crisis). People chosen as learners brought energy back to the alliance. Thandi / Mdu had a focus and did a lot of project work – this inspired others when they saw them working who also, e.g. learnt how to do a map. It had a big impact at VEJA, and also for Mdu who was responsible for Gauteng PWC. It had a positive effect on the anchor org. And the learning has been taken back to the PWC. Today all the programmes are meeting. People are taking their own responsibility into campaigning. People see what Thandi & Mdu have done and also want to do it. Came back to the office in early Jan; energy team then did the same. Plan for Mdu and Judith to meet for a full day to put a proper strategy; and do the same in FS and NW. We were hoping that Gubico would lead, but probably won't happen, so will work with Macua as a leading org. What Thandi has learnt is quite huge – built her confidence – and now she is being trained and building her skills as an administrator. She and Mdu have taken it by the horns and can work on their own.

Mpumalanga – hear Geosphere is also coming back; launching a youth programme. Team been meeting with Philip. Have some money from the Germans, and another funder. After the BGM – I (Thabang) told Geosphere they were still part of the SAWC cc. I don't know how this has influenced Geosphere's work or internal organisation. Close working relation with Philip and Dr Mashile. Idea was to see how we could meet with the anchor organisations – e.g. in October. This is not really the same as building the *organisation* – hard to separate Philip from Geosphere. Links to PWC?

Yes in Gauteng (meeting regularly since project started), NW, FS, Western Cape, Eastern Cape (more regular meetings, engagement with Amatole DM, Kat River CMF, Mzimkulu CMF) – meeting with Amatole was on RWH tanks (Aaron following up). Project has been presented to

the Caucus. Role of Aaron (activist who has picked it up). People start to understand and engage with CMF and NWRS2.

ACTION: Be good to write up VEJA's experience as an "inspiration" to others in the Caucus – as how they can take up project work.

Also – use it to kick-start OD work within SAWC; and/or help build organisations within the Caucus.

Should we have a meeting of anchor orgs – maybe orgs within SAWC that can act as anchors in provinces?

3. Monitoring NWRS2: commonalities from case studies:

Identifying commonalities, and how to take them forward – add to Thabang's list; how do we take these up within SAWC?

- How we can work with spiritual water users? Yes, we will work with them. We should not put any restriction on participation; we want people that have passion about what we are doing. It would be wrong to leave people out. Registration or not is their issue, not our issue. They must sort it out themselves. We should encourage the youth: young spiritual water users.
- Adopt-a-river: We should pursue this with various other users and custodians, including spiritual healers, plantation communities, farmers. Should work with CMFs, local municipality and departments: combine with the CMFs, in Bushbuckridge they were disappointed that we did not invite them to the river cleaning. Cities also want communities to come forward. We will still organise our own thing, and invite them. At Sharpeville Dam we did a clean-up Sept last year, VEJA invited Emfuleni, environment unit and dept of waste (we expect a similar response from Bushbuckridge municipality)
- Sewerage pouring untreated into rivers where children play – there are many examples of this. Inyaka dam, Makana, Sebokeng hostel into the Rietspruit, Grahamstown. Bring media attention. IUCMA was taking people to court. Involve the human rights commission. People living downstream from WWTW are in danger (could do research and awareness raising).
- Political interference: the WfD women were raising the issue wrt proximity to politicians and access to e.g. food parcels. We must deal with this critically. This is a serious issue. They will sabotage your activism and stop people from listening to you. "I had to defend myself with the constitution". It is a real red paint that they are putting to you – when a municipal manager says "dont listen to NGOs who are against government"
- We want to start reforestation in EC (with ref to Mariepskop case study).
- Connecting with forum of forums – we'll use these minutes at our local CMF meetings.
- Be good to pick up the nappies campaign from MP.
- We can establish community forums. We're not yet a grass-roots movement – even 2-3 in each province that we can reflect on from time to time.
- industrial effluent makes people sick, e.g. skin rashes, diarrhoea, bilharzia

Report-Back (very challenged for time, every person share one thing from your group discussion):

- Thabo – it is ambitious to share the whole social learning, but each learner can take something they have learned and put it into practice
- Samson – The anchor organisation – caucus relationships: We can see that things have changed at VEJA as a result of SL, and we see in the water caucuses that people are keen to work and to learn more about SL.
- Victor – Most serious issue is political interference and blocking of activism, e.g. people pointed at December and said 'you work for a non governmental organisation, that

means you are anti-government, and you mustn't talk to him' and then he took the constitution to show them that NGOs are legal and an important part of society as a watchdog.

- Jessica: Maybe coming out of this project, the coordinating committee can write a letter stating our cross-cutting learnings that can be shared with the water caucus? Yes, good idea.
- December: so worried about sewerage spills
- Thabo: we compared this kind of learning with formal school education, and what is new and what is most challenging is how we take that learning to share it with others, but it is also rewarding.
- Jessica: we need to find ways of running local courses, less expensive more accessible ways of getting social learning out there. In terms of the sewerage leaks, maybe we can take it up in the caucus, to undertake some change projects/ case studies in different areas, to track these sewerage/ sanitation issues.
- Samson: we should build this campaign in the caucuses, build on existing research
- Victor: we have done quite a lot of research through the Green Drop. The WRC has found that within 6 km downstream from the WWTW people will get sick, we need to work with those constituencies.
- Thabo: I remember on December's FB page long ago he was sharing pictures of leaking taps and dead cows, we should be doing this kind of thing more (we subsequently shared a photo we had taken of the leaking sewerage in Grahamstown East, and posted it to the DWS FB page with a question about what they were going to do about it – but received no response).

Groups went back to work on their case studies until 4.10.

What you need to do to finish

Deadline for assignment 4: **4 March 2016**

Jane: Find your module and go to page 10.

You can do it anyway you want; e.g. Thabo wants to do his as a flip-file. Jane took everyone through each of the steps.

Each group spent time setting the goals, actions and time frame they need to finish the course.

This needs to include:

1. Finishing case study and action plan
2. Finishing outstanding assignments
3. Finishing portfolio

Concentrate on 1 and 3 – these must be done by 4 March. FINAL assignments can be done by end of April... So in your portfolio you can include a draft of each assignment (if not complete).

Day 4: Thurs 4 February 2016

Heila gave a short input on the ELRC.

Athina ran a reflection process for the rest of the morning. She will write a report on this.

Appendix B: Report on reflection session during Module 4 of the Changing Practice course

By Athina Copteros

4 February 2016

The 'Changing Practice' course consists of four modules. The last module is entitled 'Sharing and Learning', and focuses on how participants can share their Change projects with others and gives participants an opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt from the course. The facilitators decided to contract an external facilitator, Athina Copteros¹, to run a creative movement reflection session so that everyone, including the facilitators and organisers could reflect on the learning journey. This report documents Athina Copteros' reflections on the process.

Preparing for the reflection session

While planning for the reflection session I met with one of the organisers, Jessica Wilson and facilitator, Jane Burt, over skype. After listening to their description of the course we agreed that the learners have come a long way on their learning journey and that there is both relief at nearing the completion of the course as well as uncertainty about the future. The reflection session would focus on giving space for everyone to reflect on the learning journey, how it has mobilised action for change as well as offer a process for rounding off the experience for the group.

As part of planning for the reflection session, I attended the case study presentation session of the module. One of the things participants have learnt to do is build up case studies over time that are grounded in their lived experience of the problem they are trying to deal with. At the beginning of each module participants are encouraged to present what they have done during the 'work away' sessions of the course. In this way I met the learners and became familiar with their work and some of their experiences during this course.

Designing the reflection session

It was important to give the group a strong holding space from which to round off their experience. The reflection session was designed as a journey the group could travel on together that had a clear beginning, middle and end. The day before the workshop I prepared the space for this journey.

An Interactive Dance Movement Therapy approach was used. This approach is based on the work of dance movement psychotherapist, Marian Chace. It is an approach used for working with

¹ Athina Copteros is a Health Professions Council registered Dance Movement Therapist and PhD student in Geography through the Institute for Water Research at Rhodes University. Her work currently focuses on the relationality between people and ecology and the role that body, movement and creative expression can play in healing the split within and between ourselves, each other and our environment. Her work supports researchers who engage with communities by offering tools for reflection, healing and agency.

groups with a number of different clients (Karkou & Sanderson 2006). A fundamental aspect of the approach is that the creative movement process (Wengrower 2009); rhythmic symbolic action (Chaiklin & Schmais 1986); use of props and metaphor (Meekums 2002) help free up the expression of feelings. By moving together the group creates a common pool of energy and experiences a sense of strength and security in the group.

A description of the process

Using the circle as a place to enter the space and from which to leave the space

The session started by people sharing a movement in the circle. The circle is an important symbolic space in which everyone is equal and can share openly. Throughout the session we returned to the circle to both share and reflect on their journey and it became the place where the course came to an end. At the end of the session they moved away from the circle symbolically marking the end of their journey with this group of participants.

Body Connection

This exercises followed on from sharing a movement in the circle. We began connecting with different body parts. Participants were encouraged to take their time to connect with themselves deeply through their bodies. This helps to ground the group in the present time and space and allows for an embodied connection with themselves. Burns (2012) writes that Dance Movement Therapy can be a means of connecting to sensory experience, the environment and an embodied sense of belonging within the personal, cultural and/or collective unconscious in order to bring about healing and greater connectivity. There are parallels between inhabiting earth and inhabiting ourselves (Olsen 2002). I also encouraged participants to individually add a rhythm to their movement using either their feet, hands or voices.

Shared Movement

I then asked participants to begin to move with each other in the space. This led to a group rhythm, beat and movement connection. The participants began to laugh and enjoy their interactions with each other. We then moved into dancing in a circle all together. I asked the question "What have we created together?" People then shared words of what was created and the group then moved in response to these words. The words they shouted out were:

Time; Love; Nature; Cultivation; Smearing the Floor; We are making Peace; Unity; Destruction; Chaos; Frustration; Demonstration; Stress.

I then asked what does our body need to cope with the difficulties you have mentioned and how do we look after ourselves. The words then were:

Need Courage; Movement; Building Movements; Feeling the Earth; Walking in Nature; Breathe; Retreat.

This exercise was a spontaneous way for the group to connect with each other and share what had been created through moving and also what had been created during the course. It began the reflection process by a creating a shared meaning and understanding.

Getting to Know our Histories and Sense of Place

During the case study presentations I attended there was a discussion about the need to save our planet for future generations. This felt like a strong underlying intention for the group who work so much within their communities to create a better future both for the planet and the people who share its resources. In response to this I brought my children with the previous day when I set up the space so that something of their presence was in the room in which we worked. After our shared movement experience I asked the participants to sit in the circle again and share where they come from on the planet. I used a blow up ball in the shape of the earth that was thrown from one person to the other. When you got the ball, you shared your connection to the earth.

This was a wonderful way to hear about where people come from and what matters to them. Painful experiences were shared such as:

We found ourselves in Mariepskorp where all the mess started and that mess made me, so I am here to join you.

This brought in the experience of growing up under apartheid and the scars people carry. The group range in age but essentially all deal with a need to reverse the impact of history:

His journey is about learning skills, acquiring knowledge and methods through which he could organise his community to find the right methods to unlock difficult situations like the contamination of the river by industry that exist in those areas.

It was interesting to hear of how nature played a role in how some people connect to their families and sense of place:

We respect the river called Nyibashe, it's just behind where we live, that's the river that we mostly protect. That's also where our great, great grandfather died.

An interesting development in this exercise is the sense that as much as our backgrounds, history and families are not the same, what unites us is the fact that we are so diverse:

When I was listening it felt like no-one comes from one place, everyone has moved, everyone is integrated, it's not possible to say this is this person. It makes such a mockery of us trying to divide everything when everybody is completely mixed up.

The Nature of Reflection

The process of reflecting on the course and reflecting on the work we do began with a piece of cloth. I asked everyone to sit in the circle and speak about their experience while playing with their piece of cloth.

It was interesting how each person interacted with their cloth and what it brought up. Some people laid their cloth on the ground, one person wore it around her shoulders like a shawl, another crunched it up in a ball as she spoke. One participant spoke about how easy it is to rip the cloth apart:

Activists who are against plantations and then tomorrow you see them working for SAPPI. All these processes we've been through changing practice, water caucus many, many years but one thing can change you.

Learners were very aware of the complexity of the situations they work in and that there is never only one side to an issue or problem. When reflecting on the cloth, a few people commented on it having more than one side. Flipping the cloth this way and that they demonstrated how there are different ways of seeing and there is an element of the unpredictable:

I think I also believe what D said to say that it has got two sides. It might not be that visible for me with naked eyes but maybe if I can use some scientific looking eyes I can tell also this is the front, this is the back...So for me this represents problems of what has happened according to the initial planning. So the back part of it has not really happened according to the way it was thought about.

The exercise was also a comforting reminder to everyone of what has been achieved:

I loved what Jane said on the first day [of this course] that the case study should be so familiar and so comfortable that we wear it like a comfortable t-shirt, something about a shawl or something around the shoulders. That the work we've done actually makes us kind of stronger going forward, protected from the elements. I think this is sometimes what people wear in ritual. And that the work we've done and it's a case study now but it also has the power of everything that has been put into it to kind of carry forward.

After the reflections I asked everyone to start moving again with their piece of cloth. I then encouraged them to dance with another person and then another until we ended up with all the bits of cloth tied together to form a circle. Then we played: twirling in and out of the circle, creating knots and tangles and laughing.

The intention behind this exercise was to begin to externalise the experience that united everyone during the training. Right at the end of the session we undid the knots connecting the cloth as each participant walked away from the experience of being part of this group learning process.

Reflecting on personal learning journeys

I wanted to offer the group an experience that honoured and reflected their role as environmental activists. I chose to place soil in a cardboard tray in which found objects could be placed in the soil to reflect each person's journey during the course. These objects ranged from feathers, keys, small ornaments and play dough. This was a fun, creative and symbolic way to share a journey that at times was extremely challenging, frustrating and stressful. I gave the participants time to create their journey and then share this journey with one other person. This was done by the partner only listening to the journey and not interrupting or speaking about their own journey until it was their turn to speak about their sandtray. In this way value was given to each person's experience that was shared openly, with all its ups and downs.



A participant building his sand tray picture of his learning journey.

All the sandtrays were then placed in the circle and I asked each person to present their partners journey and visa versa. This brought up a lot of feelings and revealed the depth and breadth of this experience for participants. One of the learner's journey clearly indicated the difficulty of, on the one hand learning and sharing within the group, and then going back to one's community and there not being any support for the work that they are doing. :

Comrade T's journey has not been smooth...some of the bumps are caused in terms of mindshift because for him when we started talking about the social learning, for him that was for academics. When he went through the first Module ...it was something serious when he went there. What he heard there started to open him up but when he went back to his anchor organisation...there was not really an uptake or support , he felt demotivated...The support is coming from outside. That outside support caused pressure for him.



Comrade T's sand tray

Learners were balancing many different roles:

One of the struggles he spoke about, the fact that he was a learner on the course at the same time an anchor organisation that he had to give support to other learners...and also studying at UWC and working at EMG.



Representing all the many roles I play in my role as an activist and a participant on this course

One learner spoke about the enormity of the challenge in the face of wanting to make a real change in the world:

Social learning is like a mountain pass through all these very difficult obstacles. On every level the challenge of trying to understand what social learning is, the challenge of trying to make a difference when we feel so tiny compared to the hugeness of the problem. We are forging this even though we can't see where we're going. It feels like we are in quite a narrow space together we are forging this path.

Reflecting on Challenges and Strengths

Unfortunately we had to rush through the final sandtrays because time was starting to run out and people needed to leave to make the long journey home. As a way of rounding off the experience each person wrote challenges / obstacles, strengths / insights about themselves in terms of completing the course and moving forward. They also wrote about what support is available to them and reflected on the reflection session itself.

Overall participants appreciated the support of EMG, for some the anchor organisation and generally their colleagues on the course. The significance of the group coming together for the participants is that the group itself has become a knowledge network.

This is when I've met the group, we did not realise that a knowledge network was built...As we are growing, the knowledge network is starting to be broad.

Closing the Session and the Course

The session ended through movement and dance by everyone coming back into the circle and undoing the knots in the cloth that bound everyone to each other and this course. The found objects were returned and the soil from the sandtrays would be returned to the earth. We ended off by each person sharing a word and a movement, ending off the way we began.

Mirroring Back the Learning Journeys

After the module each person was e-mailed a photograph of their sandtray and their reflections. This was done in order to mirror back to participants something of what they created and shared during the reflection session; as a solid reminder of how much they achieved during the course and that it is something they can build on that can never be taken away from them.

My personal reflections

The Changing Practice group is an inspiring group of learners. They come from a very rooted space within their own communities. Their context presents them with enormous challenges and yet as learners it makes their contribution and learning incredibly relevant and valuable. Their embracing of social learning and acknowledgement of different knowledge systems has offered them ways of negotiating potentially unshiftable situations. Being offered a wider variety of tools and the language with which to research and negotiate their case studies seems to have contributed greatly to their ability to effect change. For me this complex space and the commitment of the learners is captured in the following quotation taken from a learner sharing his partner's learning journey as represented in the sand tray images:

The municipality was very anti working with him. They were preparing the community not to like him...he had to fight to get through that. Fortunately that he's working now through social learning, there is light in the tunnel...the municipality has started understanding what is happening and the community although still not very clear about what is happening...The only thing that helped was social learning because he had to start talking and explaining what is happening...The social learning has really contributed a lot.

The social learning for him has kind of empowered him to find ways by which he could unlock, like the stuff that is happening here, so that this can stop...He is keen to continue looking for the right key. He is not just going to be doing that alone, he will be doing that together with his colleagues and comrades...until the river becomes blue again and the life returns.



A sand tray picture representing the complex space that learner's find themselves in

The fact that this group's lived experiences are stressful and incredibly challenging makes it important for this academic course to be run in a way that both acknowledges academic rigour and includes an element of flexibility. I think that this can be very hard to navigate. A retrospective reflection and documentation of learners individual stories will contribute greatly to this course being run again and new learners being inspired by the experiences of the previous group. As with complexity there can never be a manual on how to run a course like this effectively. There can be pointers along the way but the lived experience of participants will always be an essential part of such a course and this needs to be embraced with all its sometimes painful reality.

The organisers and facilitator have learnt an enormous amount from this experience and it is clear that their strong determined leadership and guidance was essential for the success of the course. Greater support for the organisers and facilitator in terms of funding, input into and support of the process, dealing with difficult situations and the complexity of this type of course I feel is essential. Below are two quotes that reflect this role that organisers and facilitators played as told by their partner's who shared their soil tray journeys to the group:

We had a serious problem with our funders...and at the same time we had to start with the social learning process...one had so much to think about because we had lost our sponsor. I couldn't understand how one was going to pull out of that. I thought things were not going to work out but eventually they did.



One of the facilitators/organisers of the research project building her learning journey representing the complexities of holding the bigger picture for the project as a whole.

I will present J's journey. This little mountain here is J and us, for the first time she did this course alone, nobody from the university helping her. She had this fear but at the same time she was confident each of us would bring our own learning to the space.

For her to take this challenge alone was huge.



The learning journey of facilitating the course

The range of learners in age was interesting in terms of the history they have lived through and at the same time they all have a shared hope for the future. The group had lost a gender balance by the final module. There was only one woman in the group left. It would have been interesting

if more women were present. Although this was so there was a great respect for each person's journey and when partner's shared each other's journey they did it with interest and care. This unity is expressed by the quote below as a participant reflects on the symbolism of the circle of cloths tied together:

But all that was significant of the coming together... This is the common similarities, empathy to our communities, that is bringing us together. This rope is pulling all these challenges and all this learning and this is pulled by and motivated by the activism.

Action and transformation is an ever evolving process. The people in this group have acted and transformed so much in themselves and in their communities already and will continue to do so because what motivates them is beyond personal gain. They are driven by the urgent need to give back, provide hope and support each other. For some it may be rewriting the past and dealing with a history that stripped the land and its people of identity and purpose. For others it is a need to be accountable and to see real change, to see the river flow again in all its brilliance. For me this ethos is reflected very strongly in this soil tray learning journey that was shared in the group:

Her journey...she came to this tree and this tree represents her case study and she noticed that this tree is dry and she continued her journey and she came to some grass and this grass is also very dry, this grass should be in a wetland and she is asking this question "where is this water, where is this water?"... She really wants to know so this possibility of the case study comes and she says 'yes', this is my case study, this is my question, I need to find this out, not just for me but for my whole community.



The tree rising out of the sand tray representing this participants case study

It is not easy to be an activist. To be a change agent requires enormous courage and support. If this is truly what the NWR2 is wanting in terms of meaningful participating of civil society then this is the type of course that can contribute meaningfully to such participation.

Free write

"Feeling we have achieved something – being reminded of how far we have come." *Quote from learner of the changing Practice course*

It feels that all too often it is easy to be overwhelmed by the enormity of the struggle for ecological justice: both for the people who inhabit the earth and the earth itself. For myself and in my role as therapist and facilitator I honour the moment, the moment when a group comes together, shares, opens, laughs, cries, hurts, heals etc. It is in the minutest sharing of humanness that creates meaning in an overall context where it is easy to lose meaning and lose shared understanding and empathy.

I felt for the personal journeys of everyone who was part of this group. For one participant it was the loss of identity, the loss of an ancestral base as is captured here by the participant as he shared his lack of belonging when we did the 'Getting to know our histories and sense of place'

There is something that has been bothering me for some time, I know myself I'm D, I know my Dad, I've not been lucky to know my Grandfather, but it would have been nice if I'd known actually how it happened up to where I am...how did it happen, how did it start, the blood that I'm having...To know where did we come from; from water, from wetland?

I was interested in beliefs around traditional healers as they were mentioned a lot during the case study presentation and during the reflection. One group, who were concerned about the water quality of a river, realised through investigating local stories that the traditional healers voices about the river are not heard in policy and their use of the water for spiritual practice largely ignored. One of the learners on the course is a traditional healer and she helped the group deal with their anxieties about how to engage meaningfully and respectfully with traditional healers and feel that their work is authentic. This also shows how the group became a support and knowledge resource for each other:

In my experience sharing the trade it usually done secretly, not openly. We are facing these challenges. She assisted me in terms of dealing with that anxiety. If you [speaking directly to the learner who is a traditional healer] were not here I was going to be sceptical of what VEJA [the group who worked with traditional healers] was doing speaking to traditional healers. I was going to see it for me as exposing our tradition, our culture. But she was kind of saying, no we need to talk about these things because there are real challenges.

I appreciated the group's opinions about academia and that they expressed this openly and saw that they have something to offer through the course and through their own lived experience:

Society we now tend to judge, as this is academic, this university does not represent us you know. But the journey has taken us to say there is a space of learning from both sides

For me this is the key of the experience. How does an academic institution interact meaningfully and effectively with civil society, especially when it is working to effect change? I think the answer is in how lived experience is integrated meaningfully in processes of learning. Social learning has a lot to offer in this regard but it feels like academic institutions themselves are slow to embrace this as a credible, valid and meaningful way forward.

In retrospect I would have liked more time with the group to really unearth some of their experiences and allow the impact of sharing to 'settle' and be more integrated before moving on so quickly to closure and ending.

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Appendix C: Minutes of the research team meeting held 6 Feb 2016

Notes from WRC2313 team meeting 5 Feb 2016

ELRC, Grahamstown

Time: 8am to 3.30pm

Present: Jessica, Heila, Thabang, Victor, Thabo, Samson, Taryn (taking minutes), Jane

Draft agenda:

1. Agreement on agenda, including times and facilitators
2. Update on project (Jessica to present)
 - a. Work to date into deliverables, activities & finances
 - b. 2016 plans – agree on dates!
3. Discussion on 4 areas of contribution outlined in background doc (Jessica to present, Victor to facilitate) – 1 hour
4. Broader stakeholder meeting, proposed for October (Heila to facilitate) – 30 minutes
 - a. Purpose, partners & additional funds
 - b. Venue, participants and date
5. Next draft of citizen monitoring guidelines – how to get comments and redraft (Thabo to propose ideas & facilitate) – 30 minutes
6. Deliverable 6: reflection on case studies (Taryn to present, Victor to facilitate) 1 hour 30 minutes
 - a. General comments
 - b. What have we learnt from the case studies – an appreciative assessment (section 6)
 - c. Do they need more work (discuss each one separately)
 - d. How do we present the case studies in Del 6
7. Deliverable 7: how does learning happen “in action” (Jane to facilitate) – 40 min
 - a. Team reflects on what learners have learnt
8. Deliverable 8: (Jessica to facilitate) - 30 minutes
 - a. Initial ideas only – idea is to try to have one more team meeting and discuss it there
9. Phase 2 proposal (Heila to facilitate) – 40 min
10. Academic articles (Heila, Victor) -
 - a. Update & discussion
11. Thanks and good-bye!

(This agenda morphed and transformed over the course of the day)

1. An update on the project (Jessica):

In brief: Taryn’s back, Treve has left, Londeka is doing her internship mostly looking at the role and practices of the Western Cape Water Caucus.

Soso has missed modules 3 and 4 and her assignment deadlines, she is no longer in the project.

Would be sad to lose her lessons, but they won’t come through in the Eastern Cape case study.

She will get a certificate of attendance.

James is back.

Thandi is very involved in the Vaal case study, she was regretful to miss Module 4, and it would be great to get her reflections. (we must get the VEJA slideshows for the write up of Deliverable 6).

Reminder of the project aims (See Jessica’s powerpoint)

Reminder of the project deliverables. We have passed them all with flying colours, although Iman still doesn’t like our Guidelines – basically we want to write them for activists, and she wants us

to write them for government officials, and we don't think we can. But we do think that we have found a way through – no big discussion on this now.

Deliverable 8: Reflection report on citizen engagement and democracy in water governance – this will be a revisiting of Deliverable 2, and will need a broad discussion with participants somehow. There are many lessons already in the case studies and in our meeting notes, so the first steps will be to pull those out from our existing material, and then possibly do a mirroring back exercise with participants. Victor will think about which of the social theories most apply to the water caucus. He will be talking about the 'social movement' label, with four related questions, today, so we might have a good discussion about this deliverable today.

Deliverable 9: draft final report - most of our work will go into this.

Then Deliverable 10 is the final final report.

It would be great to have a big stakeholder meeting between Deliverable 9 and 10, where we present our final report.

The EEASA (Environmental Education Association of South Africa) conference is from the 3rd to the 7th of October in Johannesburg, we will discuss trying to have a day before or at the end of the conference as a big stakeholder meeting, including the learners, DWS officials, etc.

Deliverable 6

This is really a record/ documentation of *what happened* in the case studies; then Deliverable 8 is more a reflection and analysis of the case studies. But the timing is a bit different to what we imagined; the action plans are still being implemented. So it is all work in progress.

Victor: The picture in my mind for writing the case studies for Del. 6 is: 'we started with an issue; we encountered different people and organisations working on the issue; we discovered these policies that relate to our issue; and then it ends with an action plan'. So it's a story of discovery around each of the issues. Then Del. 8 is more of a description of going behind the issues – why did we come up against those obstacles, etc.

Jessica: yes, maybe, but in Del. 5 we already spoke about the action plans, so we have already touched on them.

Heila: Maybe Jane could develop e-books on each of the case studies – summarising them, finding the best pictures, organising them in a systematic way so that they are more presentable, can email them out to officials, etc. Can include hyperlinks to videos, can hyperlink to the final reports, etc. (Money in SARCHI chair budget). There is an app called i-Books available to download from Apple Store.

Samson: that would be great.

Jessica: in terms of the timing, the learners should try finish their portfolios first, then maybe in March April May they can work on these e-books.

Victor: it would have been ideal in terms of this deliverable to have those e-books, but the timing is wrong; is there a way of formulating this deliverable so that we don't do the same work twice? I have seen more process based deliverables, where the main content sits elsewhere.

Jessica: We can quite easily do a summary of the case studies according to the headings in the project description (history of the issue in the caucus, how has this changed over the years, language used, role of science/law/policy expertise, making actual changes in the material world, e.g. better river quality; taking local to policy level and vice versa) and then add the draft case studies as appendices. All the case studies except for the E. Cape have spoken to all of those headings, but for the E. Cape we can speak to Tempi's attempts, and Soso's attempts, and we can talk about their obstacles. Thabo had a good chat to Tempi and has a better idea of what their obstacles were, why it was difficult, why they were not able to get around their obstacles.

Deliverable 7: This will consist of the proceedings from this week, plus Athena's report.

Project products:

Guidelines for civil society engagement

RU ELRC short course – very well documented on the website (<http://www.changing-practice.sociallearning.development.hupu-labs.biz/>)

Published article on citizen engagement – Victor will try publish something on this, maybe in Water Wheel

Academic journal article – Heila and Jane

Multi stakeholder seminar – possibly at EEISA conference

Progress to date:

We have made very good progress on all requirements.

In terms of contracts with core team and anchor organisations – only VEJA has really worked (and EMG's contract with themselves...). Eastern Cape: it is very hard to understand why it has not worked, still do not have a single financial statement from them.

Timeline and key dates for 2016

4 – 5 May: We spoke about having a follow up meeting with DWS in May. That meeting will only be possible if DWS pays. It could be that each org is able to get participants there, but it would be great if DWS could get one or two participants there and then the provinces could augment that. A WRC2313 project team meeting could be piggy-backed on that meeting.

3 – 4 May would be better for Jane (lets aim for those dates). If meeting with DWS does not go ahead, we will still aim for those dates for our project meeting.

ACTION: Jessica will propose those dates to DWS. She will try speak to Magda to try secure dates, financial commitment, an alternative contact person for when Magda leaves, check on the progress of actions agreed at first meeting.

June: Proposal due to WRC

31 August: Draft final report

3 – 7 October: EEASA (Env Education Association of SA) conference.

Possibly 8 Oct: Broader stakeholder meeting linked to EEASA conference. Ceremony: presentation of certificates to learners at this meeting.

12 Oct? Reference group meeting

30 Nov: Deliverable 10 due (hopefully this is a straightforward reworking of Del 9, with some additions from the ref group and from the stakeholder meeting).

Schedule academic articles:

End of July: Draft of academic article by Jane and Heila, to possibly present at EEASA conference. Final article by end of the year.

Victor: Article looking at the SAWC through the lens of classic social movement theory. Aiming for June-August, so that it can be part of Del. 9.

Finances

The project has essentially had co-funding, mostly through SSNC contribution to EMG staff time. The anchor organisations have all under-spent.

Zingisa has only received R25k, not the full R55k.

Still some money for transport, that Jane could use to go to Mpumalanga for example.

Some money for 'expert input' – possibly to CER for a legal analysis.

This money doesn't have to go to Deliverable 6, it is for the project.

We are essentially on track.

Heila and Jane will draw up a little budget to show the contribution of the ELRC to the project (for the e-books and other contributions)

It is good to show the WRC that our organisations make significant contributions, that their budget doesn't cover our time completely. This is also important to include in next proposal – they love to see that, and also NB to acknowledge that our orgs are contributing.

We have some additional costs (for our next team meeting, and for getting to the EEASA conference, and possibly for Jane and Victor's time), but some of the under-spending from the anchor orgs can go toward those.

Heila has a budget of R60k for an annual social learning meeting, that can go towards bringing participants from this project to the EEASA conference. That budget will also have to cover other people's travel.

Could be great to meet and speak to other groups there. We can look at the EEASA conference agenda to see whether we do our MSH meeting during the conference or just after/ before. Jessica can also speak to Leila Harris, she has R100k to go towards a meeting, so if it makes sense to run a separate meeting (the day following the conference for e.g.)

We must have a good focus to the MSH meeting, e.g. citizen approaches to water governance. Leila brings a good gender perspective, she has implemented participatory video, and can talk about a comparative approach to citizen participation – so it could make sense to have a joint workshop.

VEJA also has a small grant to run a national SAWC meeting – we can look at whether this also makes sense to piggyback on this October week. Could make sense to have that SAWC meeting before the conference, so that people are well versed on who the SAWC is before coming to that meeting.

The information and knowledge we have so far is documented in:

- The social learner's assignments (esp case studies and action plans)
- Minutes from SL modules
- SL modules and guidelines for mentorship meetings
- Interviews with key people in the sector incl. DWS
- Minutes from SAWC BGM and SAWC-DWS meeting
- Minutes from WRC2312 core team meetings
- Reports to WRC (del 1 – 5)
- Alara paper/s
- Jane's evaluation interviews with learners
- Taryn's interview with Patricia
- Londeka's thesis

Final report structure

The meta-learnings in our final report will fall under the following four themes. We will have something new to say about:

1. DWS-civ society relationships and water governance
2. SAWC as an entity
3. Content and issues
4. How does learning happen 'in action' or 'in movement'

2. Discussion on four areas/ themes of contribution (Victor)

Suggesting an approach or structure for the final report, along the following lines:

- Context – opportunities and threats in our contexts; describes the space in which we operate as a social movement
- Resources, networks and institutions –if you're a social movement, you build out of institutions that already exist
- Framing – how are the issues framed, how do we communicate it, how do we make sense out of it, how do we formulate our positions and present these to the outside world
- Repertoire – activities.

The idea is that if you follow this as an organisational structure, you can say all you need to say about social movements. This organisational structure will apply to our write up of Del. 6, and other deliverables going forward, as we try to understand the SAWC.

Heila asks where issues of agency come into that structure – Victor responds that it is threaded through all four questions.

Heila: in this project there has been a very conscious process of growing agency, the agency has not been static, it has been growing as the project unfolds.

Victor: we can first think of the context as existing out there, but then we do something with it, so it is not static. The benefit of using this framework is that it is very well understood and familiar to scholars of social movement theory.

For now, for this discussion, the fourth question (How does learning happen 'in action') is for Jane to think about, and we should focus on 1 and 3 in this meeting. Issue 2 (SAWC as an entity) is more for Del. 8, so we can touch on it but not go too deep.

Issue 1: DWS-civil society relationships and water governance: What is the space that water activists can really work in? There were e.g.s of councillors stopping meetings, spies coming to CC meeting in Parys. There was us talking to the department, and the WRC giving us money to give advice to the department. So there's this contradiction – the freedom to act as civil society on paper, but in practice we don't have it.

Jessica: one thing that has come out of the Dunoon case study is that there's a lack of rootedness in how policy is developed. It is driven by a set of theories to deal with problems the city has (high leaks, high debt), but they cannot actually listen to people's realities on the ground, they don't want to hear that, because it will bring their whole house of cards tumbling down. So the department doesn't have the capacity to reflect, be reflexive, think about things from the position of the other.

Heila: Dylan has been working with ideas of 'Theatre for the Oppressors' – working with police dealing with drug addicts, to help build their empathy.

There is often a response of shock from DWS officials (especially when they hear of problems *outside* their jurisdiction!).

Samson – we experience that officials just want to follow the law or policy that they are supposed to implement. They can't hear the contradictions, they must follow the law.

There's an inability to hear multiple voices, they want a single voice from civil society (Samson's e.g. from CMF meetings, where they cannot understand or hear different perspectives, they want one organisation to speak on behalf of all civil society). It is too complex, too threatening, to hear multiple perspectives.

There is such a thing as 'governmentality', which is that they have particular preconceptions of what 'a citizen' should act like, and what role and position they should fill. It is an old, unresponsive kind of institution.

As an official you become disciplined in that style of management. Samson has experienced that in CMFs, the technocrats present graphs, and if you don't understand it, tough luck. The officials imagine the 'ideal participant' –speaks English, drives themselves to the meeting, doesn't work, doesn't have kids, understands graphs. Also, often gov officials do not understand their own graphs, and there is a real terror of being 'found out', of being asked questions beyond their surface understanding, Jess saw this at the DWS cc meeting. There is an attitude of 'you have brought 50 people here to disturb my meeting!'. Confrontational, conflictual.

It felt like at the SAWC-DWS meeting, some of those conversations went deeper and weren't conflictual. What can we learn from that meeting? It felt quite balanced in terms of numbers, in terms of knowledge, so there wasn't a struggle for power. We (civil society) set the agenda, so we were able to ensure the conversations covered our concerns, we weren't just listening to political speeches or technical powerpoints.

Victor: have experienced some officials, e.g. at Inkomati CMF, who really explain their powerpoints, are professional, understand their jobs, usually young. But their bosses probably don't like that they work that that, in a more open way. We need to build relationships with those officials.

Jess had a great interaction with an Eskom official when she presented on "The role of NGOs", who said she had been scared of NGOs, just saw them as something to get rid of, but now saw that it could be possible that NGOs enrich the discussion, and that it is possible and ok for there to be disagreement.

Victor – lets get back to the aggressive shutting down of spaces for activists. Thabang's e.g. of how, in Makhaza, some members of the community wanted to stop 'door to door' engagements. Thabang explains that door to door helps to have personal, individualised interactions with people, which is not possible in a big meeting. After the door-to-door visit, you say 'we are meeting on a particular date to discuss this issue, will you attend?', and people are more likely to come to the meeting because they have a personal link to the issue and have thought about it more. The reason some people want to stop door to door is because it is easier to manipulate people, or manipulate the agenda or outcomes at a big meeting. Jane mentions two books 'The tyranny of participation' and 'We are the poors', speaking about the manipulation and exclusion that happens in community 'participatory meetings'.

Jess – is this a particular problem at a local level, different to participation at a national level? Yes, definitely, there is more risk at a local level, it is more intimate, they know where you live.

Thabo's e.g. of the man in Dunoon who spoke in personal interview about bypassing his meter, but would not speak about that in public. People *can* be victimised in door to door visits (e.g. by outside consultants).

Jessica – and what about this issue of people being labelled as 'opposition party supporters' if they have white people visiting and involved in their processes (e.g. Mbulelo in Grahamstown East). Also quite toxic.

Sometimes you will be told in a meeting 'this is the wrong meeting to discuss that issue' or 'you are wearing the wrong t-shirt for this meeting'. This is the power of framing. Thabang remembers that one of our most productive meetings with DWS was in Makhaza where the meeting was called especially to discuss the things that the community was frustrated about, and then finally DWS responded (e.g. with delivering rainwater tanks).

So if civil society frames the meeting, we can get somewhere. That is true of the SAWC-DWS meeting in JHB, we framed the meeting, set the agenda, and so we got to speak about what we wanted to speak about. Jess remembers an interview with an official where he said that often the officials do know how to run a meeting that invites real participation with civil society, but often then the Minister will scrap that agenda the day before the meeting, and put in a whole lot of speeches that are more about window dressing.

Samson: it is also a cost issue, in the Vaal, certain CMF meetings rotate only between the industries, people have to get special taxis to get there, they have to get security clearance to get into the meeting, we have asked DWS to look into that.

Victor: so we do have a good understanding of how the space gets closed. Lets look at another framework to organise the writing of all of this:

TEA

Victor: Lets take ten minutes to think about each case study, and see how we get from case studies to policy. When we say policy we mean the policy cycle, which starts with agendas, that then get debated... Agendas become policy, policy becomes law/ legislation, laws are given to institutions, they are then projects with budgets etc, then they are implemented and then they are monitored.

This cycle is messy. Often people say 'we have good policy' and they mean we have good 'policy documents on paper', but we don't have a good policy cycle, there is not enough staff, proper budgets, good monitoring etc.

Lets consider the VAAL case study as an example:

1. Identify the issue – traditional healers – and put it on the agenda
2. Start engaging with actors – the healers, CMFs, DWS
3. Look at policy, say 'we can see that your policy hints at, or includes the possibility for, including traditional healers but it is not implemented in practice, this is how your policy should change'.

When we look at the Water Act, it assumes water is there to be used, if you are not a water user they do not or can not accommodate you in discussions. If you are at a CMF and you just want to

be a custodian, you do not actually use the water, there is no real space for you. DWS sees itself as a custodian, they don't want other custodians. Although, in other policy spaces, there is acknowledgement that citizens/ civil society can help protect water, e.g. Adopt-a-River program. The institutional realignment process becomes important, to try make sure there are no conflicts between different programmes of the same department.

So with policy its important to think about world views, and whose world view or agenda is expressed. The traditional healers are users and custodians, they will bring a whole other perspective to CMFs. A perspective of respecting water; a perspective of the quality of rivers, the spaces in rivers (e.g. waterfalls and pools), not just the functionality of water.

The issue of cognitive justice is very important in incorporating traditional healers, there has to be respect for their whole worldview; not a replacement of their perspective with the scientific perspective. But then we also have to consider the FORM of the meeting, maybe sitting in a room having a meeting is the wrong space for traditional healers to share their perspective.

There are of course also political issues and tensions within the traditional healer community, which we need to be aware of.

The question is how far should we as the SAWC get involved in the political issues – each case study has its political question (the land claim in Mariepskop, the traditional healer council definitions of who is a THP, in Dunoon there's the local politics). These are not water issues, but of course they overlap with our concerns, so to what extent do we get involved?

We have very strong principles as the SAWC in terms of inclusivity, and non-party politics involvement, so if we encounter a block in a particular community, we offer support to those struggles but we don't take a lead on those struggles, we just offer our support.

In the Vaal case study, we want to show non-compliance of DWS in polluting the rivers, there is this group of people using the water on a daily basis, their health is at risk, and you are not talking to them, and you need to include them. Then, because of the traditional healers bill we are concerned again that not all groups using the rivers for spiritual purposes are covered by the label 'Traditional Healers', and so once again they will be excluded, so that is why we have engaged with the issue of this bill.

It is important for us to continuously engage with our assumptions about policy. E.g. in early days of VEJA we used to assume we have good laws, we have a good constitution, we have good departments in place, so if we do A, B, C, this is what we will achieve. But then when we discover we are getting nowhere, we realise that our assumptions about the basic structures/ frameworks that we are working inside of are false, and we have to completely re-think our strategy.

There is a need for a whole new kind of tactics. This is an issue with social movements all over the world. There is a big global discussion about what point we are able to get to, and then what we need to do to get beyond that stuck place we keep getting to.

This discussion all contributes to number 2 (SAWC as an entity).

Heila - Thabang used the phrase 'finding the openings' and this is an excellent idea to look at in terms of all the case studies. And this is very exciting in terms of scaling up and sharing, as we all look for these new tactics.

So we can have a section on all the *spaces closing down*, all the things frustrating us; and then we have a section on *finding the openings*.

3. Discussion of Deliverable 6 (Jessica)

Policy links to case studies: the pricing strategy and norms and standards were released in Nov 2015, and different groups have been working on these. Jessica phoned December to suggest that he looks at the pricing strategy and how it relates to plantations. It hasn't really happened yet, but December and others are going to the norms/standards and pricing strategy meeting in Pretoria next week and maybe we will get a clearer sense of the exact links there. Victor suggests that we go to the agenda-setting phase of the policy cycle, to comment at the level of principles rather than delving into the policies to try comment at the level of the wording in Section 3 paragraph 4 etc.

In terms of the common threads, we can just list them in this deliverable, and discuss them more in Del. 8.

We should discuss in more depth: what can we say about impact on water governance, and impact on addressing the case study problem/ situation. Discussing impact, we should do this according to the less tangible impacts (Lammer scale) – at the personal level, at the organisational level, at the SAWC level etc. It will be hard to say that the problem has been solved, that there has been any biophysical tangible changes, but we can show that many more relationships have been formed, and that the issue is being held by more people, with more capacity. Looking at the different levels of impact, we can also discuss, what enabled that impact to emerge? Thabang suggests that we need to present all the final case studies to all of the provincial water caucuses – and then we develop a systematic approach to taking the case studies forward as the water caucus. In the agenda of all those provincial caucuses, a standing item on the case studies. At this stage people in the water caucus do not have a good understanding of this SL process and how they can take the case studies forward. We can have seminars, ongoing discussions. Jess: It would be really nice to have a single powerpoint that contains two slides on each case study, like an overview presentation (in addition to the longer presentations on each case study). Then at each meeting we have as the caucus, or as CMFs, we take the time to reflect on each case study, and then we can track the impact as they move through the networks.

What have we learnt from the case studies at a content level?

Jess learnt a lot when she and Thabo sat and looked at the norms and standards to try figure out a national regulation for tariffs that works in both Cape Town and in Tsolo, and what she learnt was drawn from her knowledge of the case study. For CT we could think about a tariff structure that makes sense for what is needed for Dunoon, but when we think about applying that to a small town with hardly any ratepayers, we realise that it wouldn't make sense. In CT we want something quite sophisticated, but we want something very simple for smaller towns. So, as the SAWC we have been calling for national regulation of tariffs, for a single tariff structure across the country, but this doesn't necessarily make sense.

The draft pricing strategy allows for two different tariff tiers, one for indigent people and one for non-indigent, which people at our WCWC workshop really did not like. This discussion came to the heart of the principles of the caucus, but people need to understand a lot more language and technical concepts to be able to articulate what they DO want.

Victor reflects: In Tempi's work, he was saying 'we want to use municipal water for food gardens', and my initial response was 'you can't use municipal water for food, that's a good rule' but then I thought actually where else would they get water? Its my sense that people haven't thought about it enough, there' just a reaction – 'this is the rule, so food gardens can't work'.

Similarly, in Dunoon, people have businesses but don't necessarily want to register their businesses for a range of reasons, and so a good policy principle to support small businesses actually doesn't meet local needs/ realities.

Tempi's work also taught us a lot about the difficult positions of activists (in relation to GMOs/ wanting food to grow in communities). Soso's work is important on this issue – they are trying to collect seeds.

Jess: This theme is recurring – policy draws a line e.g. poor /not poor; municipal water is not for food production/ raw water is for food production... and if you fall on the wrong side of the line you lose out.

The learnings from the case studies are also about asking the right questions of policy – giving us the contextual descriptions to be able to interrogate whether the policies are actually responding to people's needs and lives.

The lessons have also helped us question our own beliefs and practices (e.g. Jess is now questioning her long held belief that step tariffs are the best way to price water ; its not price that

is causing people to use water frugally or excessively – there are so many exceptions to the ‘rule’ that it almost crashes the system).

Victor: surely there should be social workers/ LED people to meet each of these small businesses or household gardeners or whoever, to help them secure water? Jess responds: they are at such a small scale (e.g. two guys in Dunoon with a 20 litre bucket washing cars) – they are not going to be supported by any govt. programme. So we need a bigger policy that takes people like that into account, or is the *least punitive possible*, to give space for people to move.

A role of civil society is to do the integration we are talking about, or to imagine the integration (e.g. the integration between different governmental departments) – you can say – if the water dept did this, if social workers did this, if dept of agriculture did this, you could create 400 new livelihoods!

Samson: We should be challenging LED offices more! There was a pilot project on how to take waste-pickers from the landfill sites and give them jobs in recycling plants. LED guys are helping with that project, because it is their responsibility to help those small businesses. It is also their responsibility to ensure that small businesses are sustainable, that they have enough water, enough space to carry out their business, etc.

Thabo: another of the learnings – when we talk about social movement building, we were going to Dunoon to try and build a social movement, and then we realised ‘movement building takes REAL WORK!’ There was the advice office, there was Tex there who always attended water caucus meetings, we just thought we will build on those existing relationships, but that assumption was incorrect. We assumed the advice office is operational, but we were wrong. Organisations also change, they might be functional now but not in 6 months. So how do you keep movements going and growing given the fact that organisations are always changing? You have to work with what is there. In Eastern Cape, Thabang wishes Aaron was there at the beginning of the project, it would have been so different (but now we can say that the case study has helped reveal the right person to work with in the EC).

Victor: we can also say that yes, things and organisations do change, but there is something behind that that is more continuous – the water caucus flows along, the principles and roles exist and have long history, even if people and organisations change. Jane feels that this was the most coherent and cohesive SL course she has run, and she is sure that it is because of the water caucus as a shared organisation in the background.

Do the case studies need more work?

How do we present the case studies in this Deliverable?

Jess proposes we do 2 – 3 page overviews of the case studies, along the lines of how has this case study changed over the course of the project; what is the status of the case study, etc. Maybe include WC and Vaal case studies as examples of works in progress.

The next proposal to the WRC could look at finding the common threads in the case studies, and ‘up-scaling’.

4. Next draft of citizen guidelines (Thabo)

CER could look at what are the mandates and duties and obligations of government in terms of relating to civil society in the water sector. Victor has written something, which we can send to CER as a provocation, and ask them to improve upon it.

ACTION: EMG to brief CER on this piece of work – SOON

(A side conversation: Are there policy analysts we can ask to look at each case study and identify the policy links/ implications? We could ask Mark Botha what he knows about the pricing strategy, and how it links to water for plantations. Barbra Koppen could give us insight into water for productive use in the Dunoon case study.)

Jessica’s question: do we think that anyone in the caucus will comment on our citizen guidelines in their current form? Not likely. But maybe the anchor organisations should commit to presenting the guidelines, and trying to get comments. We can also use the powerpoint to share them.

The next step is for Victor, Jessica and others to think about the FORM – how do we want to hand them to people.

The part that people find useful is ‘what are the different office bearers in an organisation’.

ACTION: we as EMG will present the guidelines at a Homedays.

5. Multi SH meeting (Heila)

In summary, we have said that it would be a good idea to have a MSH meeting; that it could possibly be tagged onto the EEASA meeting. We will need to develop a participants list (SALGA, Forum of forums, Louise Vale and the community newspaper network)...

We are looking at a full day meeting. The EEASA meeting will be at Birchwoods near OR Tambo airport. Imagining +/- 40 people. Can Rhodes organise such a meeting? ELRC can support one person from each case study to go to the EEASA conference (4 people). Maybe there is not enough of a strong link between the conference and our MSH meeting, maybe we should hold them separately.

We could explore the possibility of holding it as a WRC dialogue.

We would like to see it not as just about this project – maybe we make it more broadly about social learning and social movements. We would bring:

- all the SL participants (15 ppl).
- Heila would like to bring some of the people from Amanzi for Food (from near Alice, +/- 6 ppl).
- Representatives from the SAWC
- Traditional healers

If we come back to the aim of the MSH meeting, we want to share the main findings of our project, and exploring the question: What is the role of citizens in water governance? We want it to be civil society in the majority, ‘hosting’ DWS, WRC, SALGA etc.

The benefits of the WRC Dialogue is that you will get WRC people there. We might have to haggle a bit with Eiman because she will say we already have R115k in our budget for it.

Would be great to have someone in JHB organising it, maybe Joan (who works with Victor) could organise for us.

Lets try the Cottages first. We have to get three quotes etc. to the WRC.

ACTION: Ask Joan to give us what was spent on the Forum of Forums (including quote for her time)

ACTION: Jessica write to Eiman to ask what she thinks of running the MSH meeting as a WRC Dialogue

ACTION: Jessica to write a concept note about the MSH meeting, and run that by all of us, Leila Harris, etc.

Set aside 2 days: 10am – 4pm MSH meeting, then the next day the reference group meeting from 10am – 12pm.

Preliminary dates: 19 – 20 October.

Thabang and Samson could think about having a SAWC meeting on Tuesday the 18th of October (VEJA might have some budget for bringing participants there).

Then Wed the 19th of October would be our MSH meeting, and SAWC members would stay to participate in that.

Thursday the 20th October would be the WRC2313 reference group meeting.

6. Phase 2 Proposal (Victor)

We need to be well prepared – we should start working on this in May, so that we are ready to submit a proposal in June.

Lets brainstorm things we haven’t done in this project, or things that are interesting:

- Interested to see how we take SL process into the caucus without it necessarily being a certified Rhodes course
- Interested to also take the SL process into other community groups/ civil society by people who have done the course

- How the lessons and outcomes could be shared in SAWC and broader Civ soc
- If the learners can take it further by using the tools that they have learnt from this process in taking further some of the water issues
- How do we support the learners as trainers/ facilitators
- Another possibility is to run the course again
- VEJA will take process further with traditional healers
- Interested in how different worldviews impact how we understand rivers – so the traditional healer connection
- If I could watch how a new group (traditional healers) gets brought into the forum (CMF), how to support them, how we make them comfortable, how the forum has to change – to observe and analyse that process would be interesting. Its quite huge, maybe a different project. Would a form of social learning be appropriate to hold that process? So that VEJA or SAWC knows how to hold and support the healers entering that new space. (Heila – the course is just one mechanism to bring about changes in practice; there are many different ways to bring to the surface new concepts or ideas to debate, e.g. learning network. You create the forum space for the expansive learning, different possibilities. The principle is that people work together to create opportunities for expanding their existing knowledge and practices). It's a group entering a new space, we don't yet have a clear strong relationship, we offer them support as they enter that new space (but we also want to learn from their different world view, in a way that feels safe for them, but that also influences how water is seen.
- What can we learn from people who have a consciousness that is still very alive and different from 'western'/ 'mainstream' paradigms, about how we try to protect rivers – a dialogue, e.g. visiting Patricia and going to a river with her; going to Kuils River with herbalists or other people...
- A shared learning space where we are all learning from each other
- The notion of ecologies of knowledge – the enrichment of how we know things in the world, the kinds of things we are willing to share and make visible; and it connects to the notion of cognitive justice
- Peter de Souza at a meeting was talking about the idea that we need to develop strong counter-hegemonic ideas if we are to change the world; we need to understand and express these very loudly.
- The issue of productive water, LED, livelihoods in Dunoon, and the policy gaps there – we have the spiritual worldviews/ protector role, then we have basic survival and practical livelihoods, then the new push for climate change responses that govern how we deal with scarce resources (punitive conservation) – these are three streams that we can look at.
- What is the connectivity into the WRCs interests? Does this contribute to the citizen monitoring thrust?
- There is a green villages 'lighthouse' in the WRC, and they have asked Victor to submit proposals; its trans-disciplinary, quite open, and it needs some good proposals
- It's possible we can't just straightjacket everything into one proposal/ or one KSA.
- Lets send out a concept proposal to three people in WRC – to Eiman: traditional healers in CMFs; to Bonani re. Green Villages – LED, livelihoods, productive water, false solutions, punitive conservation; to Inge re. Knowledge – 'Mulit-actor engagement for change' 'Mediating water knowledge' into which we will work our ideas of cognitive justice
- The issue of sanitation – if we did another round of social learning that could be a change project, Victor has assumed that the traditional healers will be looking at sanitation/ sewerage linked to the blue drop and green drop, in the CMFs. It might be that the SAWC takes this up as a campaign, do surveys in municipalities, outside of the WRC project.

- Citizen monitoring under the banner of SAWC capacity building shouldn't be lost, all these other change projects can be addressed under that banner (monitoring mining, monitoring water quality, notions of participation, etc.) The link to WRC and Rhodes gives the SAWC extra boost, more credibility, etc. The idea of networked change projects, and the graduates from this year can hold more change projects where they are.
- Developing the departments empathy – theatre for the oppressor, looking at how they can be involved in these change projects in some way, get the forward thinking officials to do a course with us. Mirror back to them what is happening on the ground. A process of working with contradictions.
- Maybe in round 2 we run regional SL courses in different provinces, with the learners from this project offering support. Then Jane would co-facilitate with learners... this needs more finessing.

Does it make sense that EMG continues to hold the project? Yes. We can make a strong argument for the research methods that EMG does, so that the WRC recognises EMG as a research institution. EMG can coordinate the pulling together of the proposal. At the team meeting in May we should put a draft proposal on the table.

Next steps:

Case study partners think about how they want to take things forward (some of which might be WRC funded, and other bits would go ahead regardless)

Develop a draft proposal (Jess, Jane, Heila, Victor)

Samson reflects – this is the very best way of learning that we have experienced, it has actually changed the way we think and understand.

7. Thanks and Goodbye!

MEETING CLOSED 3.30 pm.