In October, the Adaptation Network once again provided members with the opportunity to develop their capacities by hosting a "Practical Adaptation for Vulnerable Communities" training workshop at the Botanical Gardens in Pretoria. In addition to local network members, the training drew participants from beyond the borders from Zambia, Zimbabwe and eSwatini, which made for a diverse and interactive group.

Participants shared experiences through interactive activities (Picture: Elin Lorimer)
One of the highlights of the training was the interspersion of hands-on facilitation skills used not only by the facilitators, Noel Oettlé (Secretariat of the Adaptation Network) and Shannon Parring, but also by the participants themselves, who were encouraged to practice some of these skills in the group. The training covered introductory information on climate science, including climate projections for the areas where the participants were from and current seasonal forecasts. I joined the training both as a participant, and to give a brief input on the topic of climate finance, ranging from the global to the national level. Noel also touched on methodologies to use for adaptation practice and sustainable development and some of the theories behind this. Another highlight was the “radio show” inputs from some of the participants themselves, who gave us a picture of their own local work relating to climate change adaptation.

There is clearly a great need for adaptation practitioners to develop their skills and to share their inspirations and challenges, and I hope that the Network will be able to continue to offer this type of dynamic training going forward, beyond the current round of funding from the Government of Flanders.

“All the topics presented spoke to me in one way or the other as my area of research interest is adaptation to the impacts of climate change among small scale farmers; who fall in the category of vulnerable communities. Nevertheless, the session that stood out for me was the one on sharing adaptation knowledge and experiences by the workshop participants. This session was a highlight for me because it brought out adaptation strategies that work in practice and not in theory. This is what we should endeavour to achieve as we come up with adaptation strategies for vulnerable communities."

I would like to make mention that I enjoyed the interactive learning approach that was taken by the workshop facilitators - I must start by commending them. The whole workshop was lively and informative. This approach ensured that every workshop attendee was engaged, focused and participated actively. Additionally, the games (activities) played during the workshop kept the participants energised and were all related to the theme of the workshop and I found that to be so amazing.”

Chibuye Florence Kunda, Lecturer and Researcher, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Zambia, Zambia
Reflections on the Practical Adaptation for Vulnerable Communities Training Workshop

By Ndivile Mokoena

What stood out for me, personally, at the recent Practical Adaptation for Vulnerable Communities Training Workshop hosted by the Adaptation Network was the variety of stakeholders from different sectors and backgrounds, and how as a diverse group we managed to work well together with harmony and respect. The workshop was attended by academics, researchers, policy makers, scientists, government officials, community organizations, FBOs, NGOs and civil society. The highlight for me here was everyone’s skill of listening to each other, and sharing different views in an accommodative and all-inclusive manner.

I learned much about climate science, and understood the scientific perspective maintained by many of the participants; however, I also shared how the high-level decisions made based only on science affect local communities who are faced with climate change impacts both directly and indirectly. This is because the outcomes of research influence policy making, which often ignores and undermines and does not account for local and vulnerable communities’ knowledge and experience - hence there is no effective change at a local level and policies often remain un-implementable. Hearing of the scientific perspective in that relaxed and open spirited environment instantly transformed how I used to perceive climate change scientists as being insensitive to human nature. I also enjoyed the fact that the researchers and scientists alluded the reality that in their work they tend not to take the perspectives, knowledge and experiences of affected communities into sufficient consideration, particularly in policy making.

The activities that took place during the workshop were another highlight as they brought about innovative and creative ways of working with vulnerable communities, and even the importance of general communication in everyday life. I took some tips from these activities to share with my family in this age of technology, where we have become anti-social even at home, as we no longer seem to have time to share our experiences of the day - as everyone is forever on their tablets, computers and smart phones!

The exchange of knowledge and experience was extremely invaluable, and I have no doubt that each participant took something away from the workshop to use and apply in our everyday work of striving to bring about a sustainable change and development in our varied scope of work. Hopefully, this training workshop signifies that change starts from one small area of cross-learning between practitioners, and spreads out – even to the point of influencing government.

The training has empowered me as someone working with communities on climate change adaptation and mitigation, particularly with women and to take note of gender differentiation in working at a community level. I hope to be able to bring about transformative adaptation to local situations through the training offered at this workshop and the activities we engaged in.

Insights From the Climate Change and Vulnerable Community Workshop

By Jack Dyer

Sixteen stakeholders rekindled their passion for climate-affected communities, among the daisies and succulents at SANBI’s Auditorium within the Pretoria National Botanical Gardens on the 16 to 17 October 2018, when the Adaptation Network hosted its Practical Adaptation for Vulnerable Communities Training Workshop. The workshop started with each participant symbolically choosing an animal and what it meant to us. For some it was a gecko, peacock, cockerel, horse or cow. For me it was a goose: evoking the perils of species migration and response. Whilst some of us may temporarily escape it and migrate like geese, to some extent we are all eventually vulnerable and must adapt or perish!

For five of us, our experiences bonded us from the initial meet at our guesthouse as we worked to master logistics and other challenges of being placed in a foreign location. From Kwa-Zulu Natal to Limpopo Province, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Flanders, we became committed to sharing our insights, experiences, successes and failures. As part of the greater group of participants, we recommitted ourselves to the ideals of a team contract and collective mutual understanding. We shaped our aspirations through posting notes as to what we desired from the workshop. Popular concerns included agreeing on common definitions of terms
such as vulnerability, adaptation, resilience and mitigation. Others wished to learn successes and failures of other adaptation projects; share knowledge and experiences; ways of adaptation, broadening aspirations and innovation.

As a Durban of University of Technology recently appointed lecturer in Climate Change, Environmental Sustainability and Food Security, what I found most valuable were the series of adaptation tools and case studies with which to apply sustainability principles and theoretical training. In addition, networking with others locally and regionally, and understanding locally-specific experiences, facilitates good networking opportunities. Both of these enrich the curriculum and experiences that I can offer, i.e. in learning about organic rooibos farming that can be distributed to students as examples of best practice. Of greatest benefit to me regarding the training is with respect to the application of work, particularly the high emphasis on effective communication and inclusive participation. Locally focused case studies are needed, as well as psychologically conditioning people to value the need to act. Psychological reluctance to prioritise climate change represents the foremost constraint and the need to focus on indigenous knowledge and facilitation was especially noteworthy. One participant devised the concept and warning of “facipulation” - aiming for facilitation but achieving manipulation rather than effective listening, mediation and research, particularly pertinent for those of us working with vulnerable communities. The Farmer Juggle highlighted this plight when many of us were faced with having multiple balls tossed about, whilst others were side-lined; portraying challenges faced when presented with multiple pressures. Suid-Bokkeveld principles emphasised common sense to ensure effective facilitation mutually works for researchers and communities that they aim to assist.

The “adaptation labyrinth” engaged participants in finding their way through complex challenges in a cooperative and coordinated way. (Source: Shannon Parring)

Participants do the “gender walk”, illustrating how assignation and embodiment of socially constructed gender roles inhibits or enables people. (Source: Shannon Parring)

The topics of climate vulnerability tools/case studies and climate finance stood out for me most -speaking to me of the core barriers to effective adaptation and being able to apply it pragmatically to the concept of investigating climate change impacts on vulnerable maritime communities/ecosystem resources. Several of these concepts will be beneficial in developing research investigating the potential impact of climate change on Southern African ports, logistics supply chains, vulnerable communities and ecosystem resources. This aims to overcome an existing Department of Environmental Affairs LTAS research gap as previous research focused on agriculture, fisheries, biodiversity and health. A presentation on access to climate finance and one on climate science pinpointed two of the most significant barriers to future-proofing and ensuring climate resilience against potential disruption risks.

The workshop’s innovative approach focused on team exercises: facilitating effective forms of popular communication and understanding relating to climate change and vulnerable communities. Its side effects, however, included revealing our innate competitiveness as humans, and also our ability to form partnerships and work effectively in teams. In the Gender Walk exercise we swapped roles and genders and had to respond to a series of questions, determining our fate and inclusivity. For example, I recalled the importance of overcoming stereotypes and to gain personal empathy; casting myself in the persona of the housewife married to a teacher. We shared experiences through simulating politicians and personally through an interactive Community Radio exercise, reminding us all too starkly of the gap between political statements and those actually pursuing climate change, as concerned individuals and communities. One challenge included taking several circles ringed with grooves
and seeking to build towers of height, beauty and functionality. This symbolised the necessity of planning ahead and aiming for a firm foundation. Otherwise, they provided an amusingly diverting means to grasp fundamental and crucial concepts.

**Group photo of the participants in the Pretoria National Botanical Garden (Source: Elin Lorimer)**

Climate change is not always a barrier but a prospective opportunity. Climate-proofing South African and African communities, their economies and livelihoods through these climate change opportunities presents numerous co-benefits. Benefits include business continuity, resource security and sustainable development. Such benefits lower vulnerability, enhancing resilience through greater experience and awareness. This training workshop will have multiplier effects when promoting opportunities and encouraging students and communities through interactive scenarios, such as the exercises learnt.

**Promoting Marine and Coastal Ecosystem-Based Adaptation**

*By Romy Chevallier*

_The advancement of national climate adaptation strategies and revision of countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions in 2020 is an important opportunity to include coastal ecosystems in official climate change response policies._

Despite the climate change commitments made under the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, the world will continue to experience negative climate impacts. As such, pre-emptive adaptation planning is necessary to build and sustain countries’ social, economic and environmental resilience. For vulnerable coastal and island states, this can be done through the enhanced sustainable management, restoration and conservation of their marine and coastal ecosystems. Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), when used with other regulatory and legislative instruments, can harness ecosystems and ecosystem management to reduce countries’ vulnerability to climate change and secure a continued supply of ecosystem services to support broader sustainable development goals.

However, despite the recognition of their value, the modification and degradation of these crucial habitats has continued unabated, and marine and coastal ecosystems are still largely absent in climate change response measures. It is crucial that EbA be more fully integrated into national and sectoral policies, as well as budgetary and regulatory frameworks, particularly in small island states and developing countries with vulnerable coastal areas. The advancement of national climate adaptation strategies and the revision of countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2020 is an important opportunity to include marine and coastal ecosystems in official climate change response policies.

EbA recognises that well-managed, diverse and healthy ecosystems provide multiple benefits to society, including important climate adaptation enhancement benefits. For example, the conservation or restoration of mangrove and wetland habitats can
provide effective measures against storm surge, saline intrusion and coastal erosion. They also offer other wide-ranging, non-market ecosystem services that support social-economic development, such as food supply, carbon storage, livelihood diversification and water filtration. EbA approaches complement older, more established community-based natural resource and biodiversity management practices. The distinction, however, is that EbA focuses on climate change adaptation needs and benefits, and places these in the context of an overall resilience-building strategy. Yet despite the strong link between climate change and ecosystem management, the conservation and restoration of mangroves, seagrass beds, tidal marshes, dune systems, coral reefs, kelp and wetland areas is inadequately represented in national and regional climate change strategies worldwide. In fact, many national climate adaptation strategies make no explicit mention of these vital ecosystems.

A healthy mangrove system in Mozambique. Mangroves are vitally important ecosystems which protect shorelines from extreme events such as hurricanes, prevent erosion, stabilize coastlines and provide nurseries and fisheries for a variety of marine species, amongst other benefits - in essence, mangroves are an extremely productive ecosystem that provides invaluable goods and services both to the natural environment and people (Source: Romy Chevallier)

Current status of marine and coastal ecosystems

In recent decades there has been a sharp increase in pressure on coastal and marine ecosystems, owing to a combination of anthropogenic and climatic threats. As such, these ecosystems – some of the most biologically diverse and productive natural systems globally – face unprecedented threats to their integrity and productivity (Agardy & Alder, 2005). Recent studies indicate that, globally, 50% of reef-building corals have disappeared over the past 30 years (Bruno & Selig, 2007). In addition, studies show that more than one-fifth of the world’s mangroves have been lost over the past 30 years, and many of the remaining mangrove forests are degraded. There are several reasons for this.

From a governance perspective, these include the insufficient resources awarded to coastal and marine conservation (such resources are traditionally focused on terrestrial ecosystem governance), resulting in a lack of data and research to support its uptake. Various departments also have inconsistent mandates, and there are competing trade-offs with other large-scale energy and infrastructural developments in the coastal zone.
Vulnerable Coastal and Island Countries

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – the UN body responsible for assessing the science on climate change – low-lying areas, including coastal and small island states, will be most susceptible to future climate impacts, because of their geographical positioning and direct exposure to extreme weather events, as well as the high population densities in coastal areas and on floodplains (Nurse LA et al., 2014).

Warming ocean temperatures, sea level rise and ocean acidification are responsible for the increased frequency and severity of tropical storms, shifts in the range of economically important fish stocks, and threats to coastal infrastructure – the implications of which are far-reaching for communities reliant on employment in artisanal fisheries, transport and coastal tourism. This, coupled with other socioeconomic challenges and the poor adaptive capacity of local populations, makes adaptation a key concern for developing countries. Valuable ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves thus must remain the focus of biodiversity conservation prioritisation schemes and a central component of marine protected areas (MPAs) globally. MPAs should also be aligned and designated in strategic areas to optimise their value for EbA.

The uptake of global EBA in climate policies

In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in Asia, mangroves’ dense root and branch networks helped to dissipate the wave action, lessening the exposure of adjacent communities and acting as bio-shields (Danielsen F et al., 2005). As a result, mangrove restoration has been incorporated into various disaster risk reduction and adaptation measures globally, with many vulnerable countries embarking on ambitious national replanting programmes (Barbier E, 2006). This and other global weather events have encouraged the uptake of ecosystem-centred approaches to adaptation. In 2015 the UN’s Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and its associated Sustainable Development Goal 14 ‘Life Below Water’ made the case for an enhanced focus on oceans and marine resources, highlighting the linkages between marine ecosystem health and human prosperity. The objectives of EbA are also echoed in other international frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020.

Although the importance of ecosystems broadly is mentioned in the text of the Paris Agreement, explicit mention of EbA or nature-based adaptation is made only in the NDCs of individual parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2017 at the 23rd meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP23) to the UNFCCC various stakeholders made a concerted effort to place more focus on oceans and climate change. In fact, the Fijian prime minister, the COP president at the
time, called on the global community to bring the issue of ocean health more formally into the UNFCCC process by 2020 through the Oceans Pathway Partnership and other initiatives.

**Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to climate change**

The Paris Agreement sets out the overarching goals of and framework for international climate action in the post-2020 period. Having ratified the agreement in 2016, countries committed to specific actions through their own national climate strategies, including their NDCs. To date, 169 parties have submitted their first NDCs. These NDCs include not only countries’ plans to reduce emissions but also their strategies to achieve adaptation enhancement. As such, NDCs provide an opportunity to strengthen the inclusion of nature-based solutions in national adaptation actions, with a view to specifically increase the uptake of marine and coastal EbA projects. Countries are committed to submit revised NDCs every five years, with a review process that is intended to continually raise ambitions.

Countries are currently preparing and updating their NDCs for submission in 2020. Of the NDCs submitted to the UNFCCC to date, few refer explicitly to marine and coastal EbA. While many do refer to ecosystem-orientated visions for adaptation, these have rarely translated into robust targets that involve local communities. To determine the extent to which countries have committed to using EbA, the UK-based International Institute for Environment and Development reviewed the adaptation component of all NDCs submitted to the UNFCCC (162 countries were analysed) (IIED & IUCN, 2016).

Many countries proposed a range of conservation, restoration, agroforestry and community-led approaches to achieve their adaptation targets. However, only 23 of these NDCs explicitly mention EbA. A few African countries described current marine and coastal EbA activities but many presented EbA as a future priority. For example, Madagascar’s NDC aims to restore 35 000ha of primary and mangrove forests by 2020.

Levels of integration and awareness of marine and coastal EbA differ substantially among countries. Other policy platforms can also be used for the inclusion of EbA, such as national adaptation programmes of action, disaster risk and resilience strategies and associated sectoral policies.

Common on-the-ground EbA approaches used in coastal areas include realignment or coastal retreat to manage sea level rise; designation of MPAs, conservancies and fisheries management areas to protect reproduction and important pockets of biodiversity; promotion of other sustainable livelihood options to remove pressure on ecosystems; and restoration initiatives related to coral, seagrass and mangrove habitats. Hybrid solutions such as offshore living breakwater structures and artificial reefs can also function as a barrier between the sea and land, providing habitats for species and aiding the restoration of coral reefs.

EbA options are not mutually exclusive, and a combination of approaches is the most effective. These EbA activities need to take place alongside wider management efforts that address coastal land use patterns, water quality issues and fishing activities to improve ecosystem conditions. This includes the adoption of tools such as integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning. The need for broader governance approaches to the health of coastal and marine ecosystems is underscored by the fact that approximately 80% of global marine plastic pollution originates from land-based sources (Sherrington, 2016). Also, given that many ecosystems are transboundary, EbA planning and implementation work best at landscape level. As a result, the Large Marine Ecosystems framework has become an established framework through which to address cross-border marine governance issues.

To continue reading, find the full brief [here](#).

*Romy Chevallier is a Senior Researcher with the Governance of Africa’s Resources Programme at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). She holds an MA in International Relations from the University of the Witwatersrand.*

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**EMG hosts the Water and Climate Change School**

*By Taryn Pereira*

The Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) hosted the 5th annual Western Cape Water Caucus Water and Climate Change School for Activists in September 2018. The school is a stimulating and creative space for exploring water and climate change from a range of perspectives, in order to support community based activists in their on-the-ground work. Water Caucus members motivate for their participation in the school by identifying a project they are already working on, that they would like
to deepen or expand. These projects include things like: a drought awareness raising programme in Kraaifontein; securing access to land and water for food growing in Site C; installing and maintaining rain water tanks in Makhaza; understanding water bills, restrictions and water management devices in Dunoon.

In the lead up to the school, we collect all of the questions, concerns and areas of interest being raised by the participants, and design the week long school in response. This year, we covered themes like ‘Making friends with water’; ‘Understanding municipal water’; ‘Stories about the drought’; ‘What does climate change mean to / for me?’; ‘Exploring gender, water & climate change'; and ‘How do we organise in response to all that we have learnt?’.

The water and climate change school is always a highlight of the year for EMG and the Western Cape Water Caucus. It is an opportunity for reconnection, reflection, deeper engagement with the complex issues that we don’t have time to dive into during ordinary meetings, sharing of rich knowledge and experience, and important conversations about the politics of building a movement for environmental justice. And it is always a lot of fun, too!
Adaptation Network Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Each year, the venue for the Network’s AGM rotates between South African cities, and this year’s AGM will be hosted by the Climate System Analysis Group (CSAG) at the University of Cape Town in Rondebosch on Wednesday, 14th November 2018. The meeting will take place between 10:00 – 13:00.

As usual, the AGM will be an opportunity for members to meet and exchange experiences and views, whilst also shaping the strategic direction of the Network and attending to its governance. The Steering Committee and Secretariat will report on the activities undertaken in the past year and will the membership will be able to engage in discussions about plans for the year ahead.

One of the key elements of this year’s meeting will be consideration of proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Network intended to create a democratic space for Individual Members of the Network to participate in its governance as electors and office bearers of the organisation.

After 4 years as host to the Secretariat of the Network, EMG is stepping down from this role and the appointment of an incoming Network Secretariat will be a crucial decision to be made by the membership. We would like to encourage all member organisations to consider whether they would like to step up to the task, and to discuss this internally prior to the meeting.

A new Network Steering Committee will be elected to serve for the coming year. The final agenda for the meeting will be circulated in advance and we would appreciate it if you would submit any proposals for items for the agenda to the Secretariat at dania@emg.org.za.

Venue: Climate System Analysis Group (CSAG), University of Cape Town Main Campus, Rondebosch

Date: 14 November 2018

Time: 10am – 1pm

Please indicate your interest in attending by sending an RSVP to Dania Petrik at dania@emg.org.za.

NPC Pathways for Just Transitions

Northern Cape Stakeholder Workshop Invite

The National Planning Commission (NPC) invites you to participate in a dialogue process on developing pathways for the just transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient society. As articulated in South Africa’s National Development Plan (NDP), specifically Chapter Five, the NDP envisages that by 2030, the country will have made headway in transitioning to a society that is just, inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

The intention of the process is to convene stakeholder workshops around the country, to engage with the key local constituencies such as government, civil society, business and labour, on seeking an agreed vision and identified pathway for a just transition which addresses poverty, inequality, and unemployment.
Commissioner Tasneem Essop, National Planning Commission invites you to attend the

Pathways to a Just Transition
Northern Cape Stakeholder Engagement

This dialogue process seeks to tackle the country’s triple challenges of poverty, inequality and
unemployment in an environmentally sustainable and just manner.

This event builds on recent and current discussions that have taken place around the country on the Just
Transition to a low carbon future.

You are being invited to contribute your expertise and experience to advance the debate by drawing on the
current socio-economic scenarios to develop pathways that ensure a just and sustainable future for South
Africa.

Date: 6 December 2018
Time: 08h30 – 15h30
Venue: Kimberley TBC

Kindly click on the link provided to RSVP
https://goo.gl/forms/MZJ6j2v3DJlwXsqxD2
Please feel free to circulate.

For more information, please contact Megan Hendrickse at Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA):

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t:+27 217023622
Sustainable Energy Africa NPC
www.sustainable.org.za

Join the Adaptation Network on social media!

The Network has been increasingly active on social media. Join us, like us, follow us, and share your news and project updates!
Send pictures and updates to dania@emg.org.za for posting across the AN platforms.

@TheAdaptationNetwork

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Credits

This newsletter is produced by the Adaptation Network Secretariat, which is hosted by Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG)

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Articles do not necessarily represent the views of all Adaptation Network members.

To contribute please email Dania Petrik: dania@emg.org.za

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