

'Changing Practice' short course

SUPPORTING CIVIL SOCIETY ACTION IN THE WATER SECTOR

Module 1: Investigating context and practice

Introduction

Welcome to the first module of the 'Changing Practice' short course. This document is the orientation to Module 1. It will give you a basic overview of what we will cover over the next few days as well as a few exercises and questions for you to do during the course and at home.

This orientation will also point you in the direction of other information that may be useful for you. These are called **support materials**. You will find these support materials in your file after this orientation to module 1.

A research project to empower civil society in local water governance

*Support material: How the NWRS2 can support us as water activists?
The National Water Resource Strategy 2*

This course has been designed to support civil society action and participation in local water governance. The course is part of a bigger research project that is looking at how academics, activists, NGO's and communities can work together to engage with and monitor key issues identified in the National Water Resource Strategy 2 (NWRS2). The research project is run by the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) which most of you will know very well. The social learning course is run by the Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC) at Rhodes University.

Civil Society, particularly through the South African Water Caucus (SAWC), was actively involved in the NWRS2 process. This course and this research project is an opportunity to take this involvement further and breathe life into the NWRS2 by looking at the role that civil society can play in monitoring the NWRS2.

What is the NWRS2? In a booklet, 'How the NWRS2 can support us as water activists,' that you will find in your file, the NWRS2 is described as a kind of 'mega-project plan, where key areas for action and investment are identified and tasks assigned.' This is supposed to be developed every five years by the Department of Water and Sanitation (EMG, 8). EMG say in the booklet that the details of this plan remain vague and it is up to us in partnership with others, to take this vague vision and use it to strengthen our campaigns and programmes for social justice and ecological sustainability.

But what does it mean to engage with and monitor key issues identified in the NWRS2? One of the things we will consider together as a group is how important it is

to involve yourself as a community or civil society group in the development of policy. This does not only mean participating in the formal processes and discussions run by the Department of Water and Sanitation, it also means using the NWRS2 to plan activities in your own communities and to monitor and hold people accountable to the tasks that they have been assigned to do, or for the activities that they do that inhibit the implementation of the NWRS2 (for example polluters such as mines or waste water treatment plants).

Involving yourself in water policy means that you are engaging in local water governance and this involves a lot more than commenting on a document. It could involve the following types of practice:

- **Water activism or advocacy**, which may include mobilisation of communities, legal action and media campaigns.
- **Water stewardship**, which may include monitoring and/ or rehabilitating the resource.
- **Water management**, which may include supporting the work of a catchment management agency (if you have one in your area) or becoming involved in a local catchment forum to ensure the ecological reserve and equitable licensing of water.
- **Water policy engagement**, this may include the kinds of things that the SAWC have done in the past by becoming involved in National policy debates. It also may mean participating in the development and review of policy so that it responds to the actual experiences and lives of communities.
- **Social justice practices**, which may include involvement in forums and supporting community-based practices to address inequalities such as projects that address food and water security and issues of equitable access to water.

It could also include a combination of these practices. For example, you can be involved in a **water management practice** such as participating in a water allocation plan. Through your involvement you realise that certain stakeholders are being excluded from the process or that the participatory process is not actually leading to equitable representivity. You may then turn to **activism and advocacy** in your capacity as a SAWC member to critique the participatory process and call for a review of the water allocation plan (**Water policy engagement**).

The aim of this course is to provide the opportunity for us to better our practices as water activists and support each other to make the NWRS2 more than just a vague vision but to give it muscle (see more discussions on practices below).

How the research project and the course work together?

The research project is hoping to strengthen the ability of civil society organisations to monitor issues from the NWRS2 through developing a series of *action research* case studies and sharing what has been learnt through this on-the-ground process with a broader audience. This will be produced as a set of recommendations that will be generated from your involvement in the project and participation in the course.

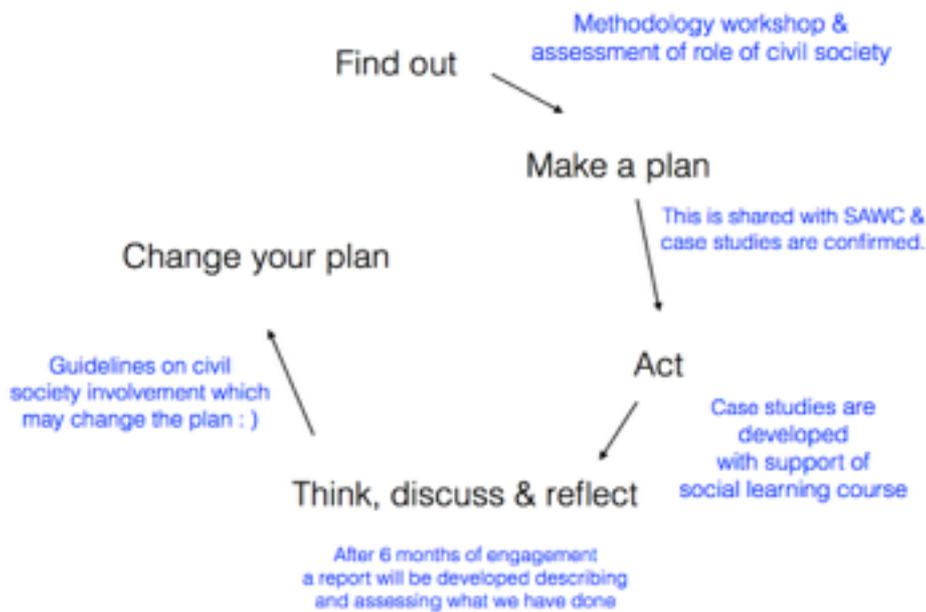
The course is an opportunity for us to collaboratively learn and reflect on current civil society practice through your changing practice projects. The assignments that you will be producing on the course will directly feed into the case studies and provide opportunities for you to reflect on what you are learning. These reflections will feed into the recommendations.

What do we mean when we say monitoring issues from the NWRS2?

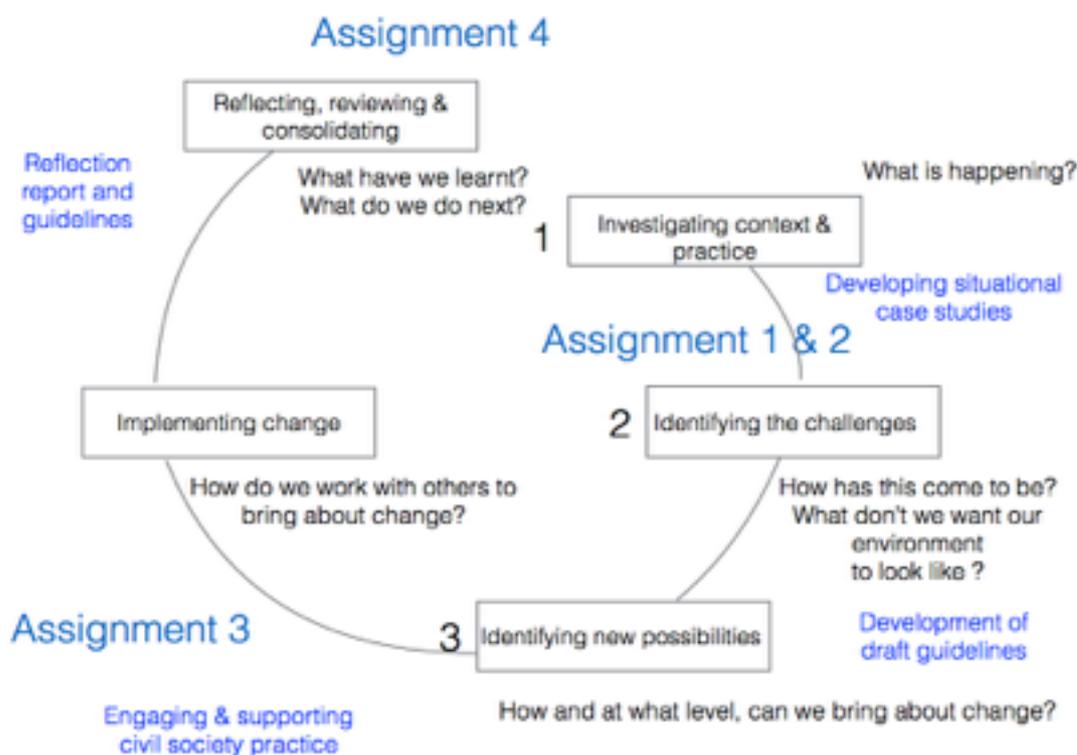
This is more than just checking that people are doing their job, it means proactively engaging with the issues through developing campaigns, running workshops and championing certain practices (such as rainwater harvesting which can be seen as both a social justice and water stewardship practice).

Action research and social learning.

The research project adopts an action research approach. What this means is that we research what we are doing by trying it out and reflecting on how it works. Below is a diagram of the cycle of the project.



Within this bigger cycle we will have our own cycle of social learning which will feed into the research approach. You will recognise this diagram from the course orientation you received. We have added the project research phases so you can see how your changing practice projects will directly contribute to the research.



Introduction to this Module: Investigating context and practice

The diagram above represents the journey you will go on while you are doing this course.

Once you have attended Module 1 and done the assignment you will understand more about how people learn when they engage in water management practices. You will also be more skilled in identifying questions and challenges that people have with water activist practices. We do this by investigating context and practice.

How will this help me in my work?

In your role as a civil society activist this module will help you:

- understand more about how people learn,
- become skilled in a range of water practices and,

- identify the challenges that people face in a variety of contexts with the practices that they are engaging with.

The background knowledge that you get about people’s different water practices and contexts will serve as a foundation for you to understand how people learn new practices in their social contexts, and how you can support this through your own activist and social learning practices. This in turn will make you more skilled in helping people to find out what they want to know and what they need to know so as to change or improve their practice. We call this meeting people’s interest and knowledge needs.

Why do we focus on investigating practice?

All human beings are constantly involved in practices. Practices represent our ability to do things, think about and say things about what we do and why, and they are the ‘cornerstone’ around which we relate to others and our environments. In the section above, we suggested that there are a number of water activist practices that we might be involved in, such as water stewardship practices, in which we harvest rainwater, or save water, or monitor our use of water to reduce water wastage. We might also get involved in more politically ‘charged’ practices when we argue with councillors for the provision of free water for our communities, or if we formulate a petition. Have a look at the list of practices below and see if you can write down some examples of practices that you have been involved in. You can also add to the ‘types of practice’ or change them.

| Types of water activism practices | Some examples of specific practices | Some examples of your own practices |
|--|--|--|
| Stewardship practices | Putting a bucket under a dripping tap to save wastage Replacing the washer on a leaking tap Monitoring a river | |
| Compliance practices | Water licensing | |
| Management practices | Ecological reserve, water allocation plans, risk management plans, dam operation | |
| Activist practices | Lobby, protest action, social and political critique | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Social justice practices | Access to clean water, class action cases | |
|--------------------------|--|--|

Because we are all heavily involved in the practices that we are busy with, it is often difficult to ‘stand back’ and look at these practices and how well we are doing them, or how they can be done better. One way of doing this is to analyse a practice. Academics that have been observing practices suggest that a practice is made up of a combination of **doings**, **sayings** and **relatings**. We will explore this below, as it may give us a way of beginning to investigate our own and others’ water activism practices, and to discuss how we might improve or expand these practices so that they can address the intentions of the NWRs2, and resolve some of the complex water related issues that face our society and our communities.

A PRACTICE is made up of:

- **DOINGS**: The actions that we do to achieve something or to change some aspect of the world we live in. For example, we can install a rainwater tank to collect water or start a campaign against pollution.
- **SAYINGS**: What we think and say about what we do. For example, we can discuss which rainwater tank might be the best one to put in, and explain why this is the case. We can discuss what is the best strategy for campaigning against pollution.
- **RELATINGS**¹: Whenever we are engaged in a practice, there are relationships at play. These are relationship with people and institutions, but also with the environment. For example, it is very difficult to install a rainwater tank on one’s own. One would need to relate to a shopkeeper who sells the tank; one’s family to discuss where to put it; some other people who might be willing to help install the tank. Our relationships with the rain also affect what kind of rainwater tank we might put in. A big one might be needed if there is little rain, or a smaller one if the rain is more regular. When engaged in a campaign we will organise ourselves as a group, decide who to include. Certain policies may provide platforms for us to engage with certain institutions.

Two examples of practices that you may be familiar with are rainwater harvesting – a community based practice towards ensuring water security and food security – and water licensing, which is a practice about regulating water use. As you know, what is said about the practice of water licensing looks good on paper (sayings) but doesn’t work very well when it is meant to be done (doings) in practice for all sorts of reasons, such as a lack of monitoring compliance, poorly run stakeholder engagement processes and the influence of powerful stakeholders (relatings).

¹ Kemmis, Stephen, and Mervyn Wilkinson. "Participatory action research and the study of practice." *Action research in practice: Partnerships for social justice in education* (1998): 21-36.

Exercise 1:

Let us examine this case study to:

- a) identify what water practices are being discussed, and*
- b) what the doings, relatings and sayings are that are relevant to each of the practices,*
- c) what contextual factors are shaping the doings, relatings and sayings of people who are involved in the practices.*

Now, have a discussion to see what can be changed or improved. Can the doings be improved? Can the sayings be improved? Can the relatings be improved? If so, how could this be done?

A story of frustrated stakeholders in a compliance practice: Public participation meeting on the application for a water licence for a mine.

In Mpumalanga, in the Olifants catchment, there is a mine that applied for a water licence for mining. A consultant for the Department of Water and Sanitation services ran a public participation process on water user licences for mines in the area. At the meeting stakeholders, particularly representatives of the rural communities, were frustrated and despondent. The consultant gave a generic presentation that he is obliged to give according to the DWS. This was inaccessible to many people there. The consultant was very aware of the steps required for applying for a licence but was unable to respond to questions about how the issuing of a water licence for mining would impact on the environment and the livelihoods of local people. When he was asked these questions he admitted he could not respond and would need to follow up with the department.

The proposed mining site is on a piece of land that is under land claim by the community that were represented at the meeting. The opinion of the community representatives is that government departments such as DWS and Minerals and Energy do not take them seriously when it comes to so called development issues in their area. Business or the private sector take advantage of this. The community representatives think public participation is just done to fulfil the bare minimum legal requirements and their input is hardly taken into consideration. Three to four years ago the community opposed the mining proposal so they were surprised to hear that the permit had been granted (on a piece of land that they are reclaiming from the current owner). The community feel that the mining activities should only be discussed after the land claim issues have been solved. They asked the question: “How can a mine begin mining on a piece of land that is under land claim and how can a water licence be given to the mine for the same reason?”

The final issue to emerge from this meeting was access to water. The community asked why they could not apply for a licence as water pipes were running through their villages and yet they didn't get even a drop of it.

This example shows that the practice of licensing (a compliance practice) has some problems. One of the aims of module one is to explore the context we are working in and the practices that are in place in some detail to understand exactly what the challenges and questions are that need to be addressed.

As we can see from the above example, some practices are destructive. Another example of a destructive practice is the very high levels of food consumption and other commodities by wealthy countries and wealthy groups and the way this impacts on the environment and society. Often destructive practices go on for a long time because people find it difficult to change their habits. So we can say that people are likely to change a destructive practice only if increased tension or a crisis makes them think about the practice or behaviour in a new way. Many people are now questioning their practice of food consumption because they have become aware of how much damage the practice of food production and distribution is having on the planet. Civil society organisations can help people question their habits and practices and ask questions about whether these are ecologically sustainable and socially just. Civil society organisations can also help people formulate ways of dealing with these issues and put them into action.

Why do we investigate context?

A practice happens within a particular context. It is the context, which often influences the choices we make about a particular practice and which supports and inhibits the practice. For example, our current practice of food consumption would not have become possible without the advances in farming technology.

The circumstances which surround an event or a situation are the context of that event or situation. For example, if you need water, how you get it is influenced by where you live; what kinds of resources you have; the knowledge you have; the knowledge your community has; your own values, and the values of your community.

An example of how context influenced the stewardship practice of installing and using rainwater tanks in Cata, Eastern Cape

In Cata people use rainwater tanks because the tanks were given to them by external funders. They chose to construct them in a particular way because the village is on a slope. There were training programmes that taught people how to build and set up rainwater tanks and linked this with home food gardens. People value the water in these rainwater tanks because they feel it is of a better quality than the water from community taps. The tank water is therefore reserved for household use rather than

used for gardens. Other people in the village who do not have rainwater tanks want them because the younger generation no longer want to fetch water from the river.

All of this forms the context in which a practice happens. This context influences a practice. In a context where rainwater tanks are not paid for by funding agencies, people don't receive the same training and the landscape is different, so the practice of accessing and using water may be different.

As you can see from the above example, what influences a practice is more than just what is happening in an area, for example the fact that Cata village is on a hill and that there are certain generational changes that influence fetching water. There are also things that happen outside the community that effect the context such as international donor organisations who paid for the project that brought the rainwater tanks and that the quality of tap water is bad. You can also see from this example that a context is made up of people, cultures, histories, institutions and environment.

All our actions and everything we think exists in a context, even such a simple thing as drinking water. As a human being we are surrounded by layers of context that we influence and that influence us. One of these layers is national policy and even international policy.

In this course we will be investigating the many different layers of context (individual, community, institutional, cultural, historical) and how these can influence all the different aspects of a practice (We will explore these aspects later). And we will do this with the communities who are effected by the issues and challenges that you have identified in your case studies and the practices that will become the focus of your change projects. The reason we investigate context and practice with people is because it is only through understanding how people perceive their own context and how they have learnt their particular practice that we can start looking for ways to change it together. Another way of saying this is we explore with people what enables and constrains their ability to act against social injustice and live in a sustainable way.



Exercise 2: Leaks, Debts and Devices: A community seeks alternatives.

We will watch a short video on how a group of women in Makhaza in Khayelitsha have taken steps to address environmental injustices in their community. After we have watched the video, consider the following:

- First identify the practices using your table above.
- Then analyse the doings, sayings and relatings that are evident in the practices.
- Then identify what can be improved in the doings, sayings and relatings associated with the practices.
- Then discuss the influence of context and power relations on the doings, sayings and relatings that shape the practices, and how one can 'navigate' these. We can look how the practice is influenced by investigating these different contextual layers
- influences on the women in Makhaza
 - a) other local influences
 - b) national influences
 - c) global influences
 - d) environmental influences

For each of these layers we can think about the doings, the sayings and the relatings. Also consider what has happened in the past, as history also plays a powerful role when it comes to the context of the present. You may want to think about what has been done, what has been said and how relationships have been in the past, and how this influences how they are now.

Now that we have explored the approach we will use to analyse context and practice, let's explore some of the methods and tools we can use to find out about the practices in our case study. This in the first stage of our changing practice projects.

Exercise 3:

You will now present your pre-course assignments. While your colleagues are presenting do the following:

- a) identify types of practices
- b) make a note of any doings, sayings or relatings
- c) note down any contextual influences

Investigating Context and Practice: learning to observe and question doings, sayings and relatings with others.

To help us understand context and practice we need to **observe** and **question**. As we have explored above, if we are observing practices, we need to observe

- 1) what people are DOING,
- 2) what people are SAYING about what they are doing, and
- 3) WHO is involved in what they are doing and how (RELATINGS).
- 4) We also need to observe how the context influences the doings, sayings and relatings, and we need to be able to work out if things can be done differently, and if so, how.

What is meant by *observe* is that we look at and record the context of our case studies in detail as if we are looking at them for the first time. We do this through the eyes of the people that are living there and are affected or involved in the issues we are investigating. The Makhaza video we have just watched is a good example of how EMG have presented a context and a practice from the perspective of the people living there who are affected and involved.

What is meant by *question* is we ask questions about the **doings, sayings and relatings** associated with a practice and the context of the practice. This helps us to see if the practice can be changed in any way, and if so, how. This can help us then to identify gaps in knowledge and possible contradictions in the practices people are engaged in, with a view to working with them to resolve the contradictions or use new knowledge or new strategies to change the practices. It is very important that we find ways of working with others to do this, so that the changes in practice are brought about not by us for others, but by people in their own contexts of practice.

In the Makhaza case study for example, we see how EMG worked hard to work with community representatives as well as the councillors to try and resolve the problem of the water devices. The case study shows too that this is not always an easy process, and that our efforts can become disrupted or frustrated. However, we should remember that there are always possibilities for changing practices. Practices are also collective actions in that they usually involve more than one person, so if you fail with one person, it is possible to try with other people who also have an interest in, or responsibility for, the practice. Thus, to assess the situation in which a practice is taking place, we need to sharpen our own skills of *observing* and *questioning*.

How do we learn to observe and question?

When investigating context and practice we are trying to answer the following questions:

- What kind of water activist practice or practices are people involved in?

- What are the doings, the sayings and the relatings of this practice?
- What contextual factors influence these doings, sayings and relatings? Remember to also consider the historical factors.
- What questions do people have about their practice?
- What gaps in knowledge or struggles can you observe in the practice or practices?

A Step-by-step process

STEP 1: Negotiate access: Whose permission do you need to be in the area?

Support material: Worksheet 1

You may already have access to the area where you want to work because your organisation is already involved in the area or you live in the area. But it is still a good idea to make sure that people know what you are doing and why. If you have never worked in the area before, consider who the leaders are in the area. For example, if you are working with a farmers' group it is a good idea to contact the local farmers co-op and speak to the chairperson about what you are doing. You could also speak to the local municipality if the water practice you are working with is the responsibility of the local municipality. Use your pre-course assignment to help you prepare for these meetings.

STEP 2: Choose your participants:

Support materials: Worksheet 1

Who are the most appropriate people to speak to? The most appropriate people are not necessarily the most important or powerful ones. They are people who are engaged in the water practice you are working with. (For your assignment you will find a worksheet to use to write down the people you are going to talk to.)

STEP 3: Make observations:

Support materials: Worksheet 2

Make notes of things that seem significant to the water practice in question. We have prepared an observation sheet to guide you related to what we have discussed above. We will practice using this observation sheet during our field trip.

Ask permission to take photographs.

STEP 4: Developing stories of people and their practice:

Support material: Worksheet 3

To do this we go and chat to people and find out what they know. This is not an interview because we are not trying to extract information from people. We are trying to understand and learn about the context and what people are doing. We are also

trying to understand whether people feel their influence is inhibited or constrained. We call this ‘understanding agency’. For example, in the water license for mines story, community members felt that the public participation workshops were not providing a platform for their concerns. They felt they had no agency to influence the decisions that were being made.

Another important reason why people’s stories are important is they often point to tensions in a practice. For example, when it comes to water service delivery, someone who is not receiving water may say that it is the fault of the municipality. Then when you go and speak to the local municipality they talk about budget constraints and lack of capacity. You may also find out that the water service provider is a private company from France. Suddenly the water service delivery problem is being influenced from as far away as France and by economic policies that make it possible for water service delivery to be contracted out to multi-national corporations.

Using photographs and maps when developing stories with people

Support materials: Context and Camera

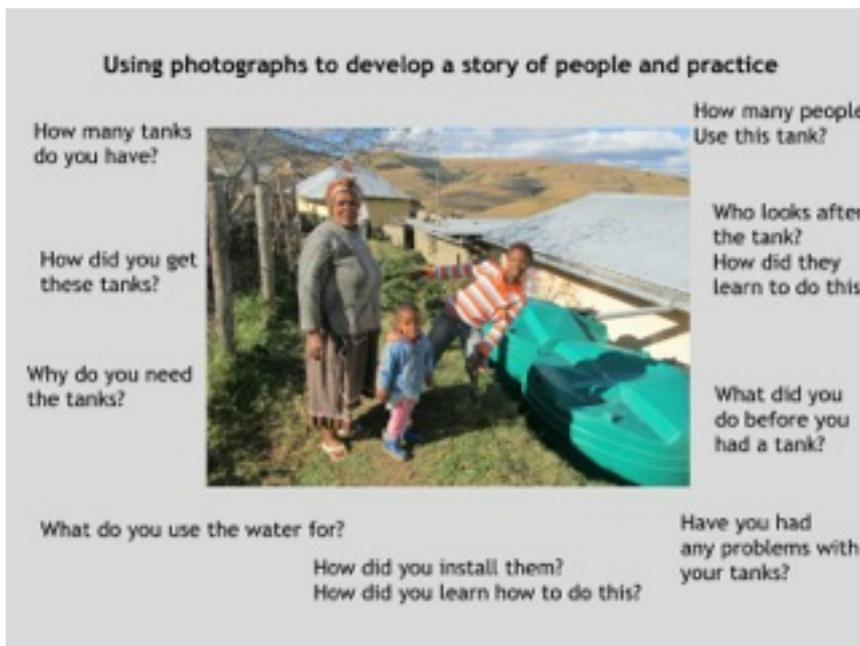
To develop stories with people you can use maps or photographs. It sometimes helps people to talk about a practice if they have a visual cue. A map is useful as people can point out where they live, where the problem lies and trace how it effects the landscape.

Here is a photograph of Derick du Toit from the NGO, the Association of Water and Rural Development talking to people about their practices using a map of the Olifants catchment.



Photographs are also useful as they help people to start talking about the context. By putting the picture in the middle of a piece of paper you and whomever you are speaking to can ask yourselves what lies outside this photograph that may influence what you can see in the photograph.

Here is an example of a woman from Cata with her rainwater tanks. Nina Rivers from Rhodes University used this photograph to develop a story of context and practice. with the woman and her children



Exercise 4:

Take one of your photographs from your pre-course assignment. With a partner, see if you can start mapping the context using this photograph.

While you are talking to people you will need to think of some way to remember what they say. You can do this by taking notes while you are listening to them, recording the interaction (for this you will need to gain their permission) or sitting somewhere quietly after the discussion and writing down everything you remember. You can then share your notes with the person you spoke with, to make sure you didn't forget anything or write something that wasn't said. Another idea is to take someone along with you to take notes while you listen.

STEP 5: Writing up stories of people and their practice:

Now that you have talked to people about their stories of their practice you can write up these discussions into stories.

We suggest structuring your stories as follows:

- a) A brief biography of who they are, where they live and, if necessary, who they work for.
- b) A description the type of activist practice or practices that they are engaged with.
- c) What are the doings, sayings and relatings of this practice (s)?
- d) What contextual factors influence these doings, sayings and relatings?
Remember to also consider historical factors.
- e) Does the person see any problems in the doings, sayings and relatings?

- f) What does the person you spoke to think needs to change in the doings, sayings and relatings and at what level?

Below is an example of how we would structure a story based on this approach and using the methods of questioning and observing.

*Mrs Phiri and her husband decided to **install a water tank** on their house as they needed this to provide water for the household. They chose this **water management practice** because **the water supply in Makana district does not always work due to poor maintenance of the water pipes by the local council**, and also due to the fact that **the pipes have been there for a very long time and have not been replaced**. This affects the community because they cannot get a reliable water supply.*

This is a specific practice that Mr & Mrs Phiri are engaged in.

This is the type of practice they have chosen.

This is the reason they are doing this practice.

This is the result of the practice of water service delivery not working.

Doings: To install the water tank, Mrs Phiri's husband had to take a loan from the bank because the tank cost R2000. Then he had to find a supplier of the tanks, and he had to ask them to deliver it to their house because he does not have a bakkie. Then he had to build a cement base on which to put the tank, and he had to get his son and uncle to come and help install the tank. This took a whole weekend. This was not the end of the story! After that he also had to buy gutters and again his son and uncle had to come and help put up the gutters.

Getting a loan
Finding supplies
Building the tank

Sayings: Mr Phiri says that installing a water tank is not an easy thing to do ... Mrs Phiri says she is very happy about the tank, because now at least there will be water but she is worried because last week her neighbours tank was stolen. Mr and Mrs Phiri also have a lot to say about the municipality. They say that the municipality should fix the pipes properly or they should pay for the tanks.

Installing a tank is not easy.
Tanks need to be secured.
The municipality is responsible.

Relatings: In order to get the rain tanks Mr Phiri had to rely on the bank. He now owes the bank money at a very high interest rate. He also needed to find a supplier and pay more money because he did not have a bakkie. He drew on his relationship with his son and uncle to help him with the tank. Then he had to find a supplier that had gutters and hope that he could still ask his son and uncle to help.

Mr Phiri has signed a contract with the bank. He is now in debt.

Mr Phiri had to rely on the supplier to transport his supplies. This cost him more money.

Mr Phiri has strong family bonds. His family were willing to help him over the weekend to install his tank.

*Contextual issues: Mr and Mrs Phiri are **employed** so they were able to get a loan from the bank for the rain tank. Their neighbour is not so fortunate. There is a high unemployment rate in Makana and it is hard to get a job. Mrs Phiri lets her use the water in their tank when there is no piped water.*

High unemployment rates. This may be linked to the low pass rates in the local schools.

In the local newspaper it is reported that Makana Municipality says that the reason there is a problem is because of a lack of capacity and budget. There was a report in the newspaper last year about how Makana Municipality did not spend all their budget. When the problems first started Mrs Phiri and her neighbour went to the municipality to complain but nothing was done. They started getting water from the local spring where all the towns people got their water but without a transport it was too difficult.

*What can be improved? Mr and Mrs Phiri's story shows that there is need for better practices in the municipality. The municipality must **improve their planning and maintenance practices**. But how can this be done? Who should be involved in this practice? Mr Phiri says that there is a local organized social movement group called 'Water for Dignity' in Makana who are actively **lobbying** the Makana Municipality to improve their services. They are using the **Blue Drop campaign** in collaboration with the local university to try and hold the municipality accountable. A local NGO has also raised money for rain water tanks but you have to have a garden to get one. The NGO offers training in **home food gardening for food security**. A student body at the local university called Galela Amanzi is also **raising money for tanks**. They give tanks to groups rather than individuals and they install it for you.*

What do we need to think about? There is a lot going on but do these different practices support each other? Are all these practices working and if not why not? What about the security issues relating to water tanks?

A lack of capacity and budget at the municipality.

There is budget but maybe it is not allocated to water supply but is allocated elsewhere. It will be important to see whether this community can have a say in how the municipal budget is allocated.

There are alternatives to piped water and water tanks but the water is too far away.

This is a water service delivery practice which needs to be improved.

This is an activist practice that can be supported and encouraged.

This is a compliance practice that can be used to support activist practices.

This is a social justice practice that could be linked to activists practices.

This will support the water management practice of supplying rain tanks.

How can my changing practice project make a difference?

Exercise 4

How can we use these stories in our work? We will look at this question in more detail during the next module, but for now lets brainstorm how stories of practice can be used to guide the expansion of civil society water engagement/ activist practices.

Theories of civil society and the history of the SAWC.

Support material: Assessing the role of civil society in South African water policy within the context of legal requirements and demoratic discourse.

The role of civil society has a history that has changed over time and is still changing and being debated. The role that people ascribe to civil society can influence the effect that it can have. It can lead to organisations being excluded or included in important discussions. During the course EMG will present to us a study they have done on the different theories of civil society and in particular the history of the SAWC. This will help us to position the practices that we are all engaged in within a wider social movement for change. We could then also consider how our different practices are ‘linked together’ in such a movement, and what we might do to strengthen our collective action across our institutions. Doing this will also allow us to discuss how we could collaboratively support the SAWC to strengthen its already established role in South Africa.

Exercise 5

If you think about the history of the SAWC, what have been the doings, sayings and relatings?

How do you think we could collectively strengthen the organisation in relation to what the organisation does, what it says and who it relates to? For example, in the booklet “How the NWRS2 can support us as water activists” one of the recommendations is that DWS reinstate the yearly meeting between the minister and the SAWC. This is strengthening ‘relatings’.

One of our ongoing projects for this course will be to think about, research and discuss how the SAWC, supported by our organisations’ activities, can become better skilled in practices like:

- a) using the press
- b) presenting information
- c) being more vocal and visible for effected communities
- d) becoming more literate around law and Chapter 9 institutions
- e) building relationships both nationally and internationally

The history of the SAWC shows that these kinds of practices are very important for the work of a social movement, and for the social movement to continuously adapt to the changing political, social and ecological context, it must also adapt or expand its

own practices. How to best do this, will be a strong topic of discussion throughout the course. Thus, working on a specific practice at a local level must also be seen as being connected to a whole range of other practices that take place at different levels and with a range of different organisations in a connected ‘movement for change’. This movement for change relies on grassroots practice-based changes, and hence in this project we focus on the concept of ‘Changing Practice’. During each course we will invite someone to share with us their expertise and skills relating to these points. We will also map out how the different practices we are all expanding and improving at our various local levels, in our spheres of influence, collectively combine to produce a social movement that can strengthen the actualisation of the NWRS2 and its social justice intentions, and the participatory implementation intentions of the South African Water Act, and the environmental and water rights that are enshrined in our Constitution.