WRC Project 2313

Citizen monitoring of the NWRS2

Deliverable 1: Report on a workshop on methodology, framework and scope of civil society policy assessment and action research; and on planning with lead action researchers to refine methodology and agree on initial case-site research.

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Introduction and project overview

The objective of the two day meeting was to:
1. work through the methodology, framework and scope of civil society policy assessment and action research with the core team, arriving at a shared toolkit of theory and method (day 1) ; and then;
2. refine the methodology and agree on initial case-site research plan with the core team and the lead action researchers from the case-study areas (day 2).

Jessica welcomed participants and discussed the logic of the 2 days: starting with big picture planning and methodology on day 1, and doing a 'reality check' against case study work on day 2 when 'anchor organisations' for the case studies will join us. She invited each person to introduce themselves, to speak about their expectations of the two days and how they see their own role in the project.

Victor: I want to first introduce the big picture, and then focus in on the details. So don't be alarmed if I say we are going to change the world – which we are – we will start with small steps. My role is to synthesise different world views and perspectives – intellectual theories, and each of our own theories of change, and particularly to work between practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge. I want to take away the boundaries between them, because they are not actually real. So I see my role as a facilitator and a synthesiser. I work as Wits University in the Society, Work and Development (SWOP) Institute, in the nature and society cluster with Jackie Cock. I do academic work that supports the environmental justice movement. That takes half my time. The other half of my time, I'm carrying on with research and offering active support to the environmental justice movement.

Thabo: This project will be a learning process. I sometimes struggle with understanding policy and how to track policy, and to better understand where we are, and where do we fit around water decision making.

Thabang: My interest is in working with the SA Water Caucus (SAWC) and the provincial water caucuses, and having worked towards commenting on the NWRS2, is to see where that policy goes, and how the caucus fits in, to see how the caucus monitors and tracks that policy. I think it will contribute value to the caucus work, and strengthen our work at that level.

Taryn: My meeting expectations are to get to know the other members of the team better, to have a conversation between the academics and ourselves, as NGO practitioners, about our different understandings and approaches to research and learning, and to get a good practical sense of what we would

be doing together in this project. My role will be to assist with some of the 'desktop' research (including interviews) and writing, participating in and assisting Jane (where appropriate) with the social learning course, and providing support especially to the Western Cape Water Caucus case study on WC/WDM.

Heila: I'm from Rhodes University, where I'm the coordinator of the Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC). My interest is change-orientated learning, and how we can support that, lift it out, grow it, in the socio-ecological context. How can we support change-oriented learning, not just look at it? I'm interested in the practice of policy monitoring, it's a very interesting practice; how can social learning support this? If we can understand the practice of policy monitoring very clearly, that would be a great achievement for these two days, so that our methodologies can support the practice, not be led by the methodologies.

Jane: I'm working for AWARD, looking at the resilience of the Olifants catchment, using the social learning framework. I'm also doing a PhD and interested in learning for emancipation. I'm interested in how knowledge is developed; in knowledge as a process of being and doing. I'm also very interested in how we monitor and evaluate change, and how that can also be a learning process. What causes change, what brings about change, and what we can learn from that process? I did a project with Heila on change oriented learning at a CBO and NGO level, and we developed a social learning course as part of that project which was very enjoyable and useful (Burt et al, 2014).

Jessica: My expectations of these 2 days is to reach a more detailed understanding of our approach, about the relationship between theory and practice, and how we work with it on a daily basis. We need to discuss the case study areas, because there are some challenges with some of them, and we might need to think about each of them differently. I'm managing the project, which means I will be ensuring that all the deliverables are met. I'm also quite excited about the experiment, and working with this really nice team.

Jessica, project manager, confirmed the project roles as they'd been envisaged in the proposal:
- Jane holding the social learning side of things;
- Heila bringing her wealth of experience, keeping us connected to academia, helping us to be rigorous, connecting us to the academic world;
- Taryn attending social learning and also doing a lot of the 'non-case study' research – interviews with officials, policy analysis etc.;
- Thabang keeping us honest, connected to what's really happening in the caucuses and politically;
- Thabo at the coal-face of organising a caucus, also wanting to learn more and bring that learning to the caucus;
- Victor as facilitator and synthesiser, also documenting what we are learning.

The other organisations involved are VEJA (Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance) and Geasphere. We invited someone from TCOE (Trust for Community Outreach and Education), because they are

supporting Mawubuye and Zingisa (two potential areas for the water for productive use case studies). These could be other potential partners.

Raising challenges and examining assumptions

A reminder of the objectives of the project
1. To assess civil society involvement in water policy.
2. To test an approach that empowers civil society to participate in local water governance.
3. Explore how social learning can support capacity building in the water sector.
4. To strengthen CBOs and networks in the water sector.
5. To help implement the NWRS2 in an effective and just way.

Cross-cutting this are 5 streams of activities
1. The social learning modules X 4.
2. The case study action research in 3 or 4 sites.
3. Reflection and analysis on civil society engagement.
4. Methodology development, refinement and documentation.
5. Project team meetings, reference group meetings and outreach.

Jessica raised some of the challenges or assumptions that might arise.

First of all is the need to understand the SA Water Caucus as an organisation. On the one hand it is resilient, and has lasted a long time. On the other hand, it seems to go through cycles of intense participation, and then periods where it seems quite thin on the ground.

The other concern is whether there will be good continuity of participation in the social learning modules, and whether they will feed back to their communities/organisations. Heila and Jane shared that their social learning processes have had very good participation with a low drop-out rate. They are very linked to practice; and very embedded in where people are working.

A discussion followed on the nature of the SAWC and the provincial caucuses, and how they work. People are busy doing the work. We know that a lot of work is going on, but without provincial coordination there wouldn't be a caucus: it doesn't exist until everyone comes together. Still, people identify with it, are proud of its achievements, call themselves members of the caucus, even if we perceive that they are not very active.

It might be interesting to look at a history of project-based development – where processes start with little bits of money, and then that falls away, and the expectations and perceptions that grow around that; how to support networks, without propping them up and dooming them to failure.

Victor shared that at the SAWC strategic planning meeting there was a rich discussion on decentralization, and its value, where there isn't a central group holding the power and the money.

EJNF (Environmental Justice Networking Forum) was really active in the Western Cape in the past, when those in other provinces felt that they had plenty of water and didn't need to organise around water. However, over time people have made the links to mining, service delivery and other issues, and those issues make it easier for people to relate to the caucus.

The second issue is around defining content. How do we frame, refine and discuss issues in a way that we all understand? When we are talking about the content, how do we arrive at a common understanding? As people in NGOs and universities, we might think about these issues – e.g. water and climate change – theoretically, at a 'bigger picture' level; but this is very different to how people are experiencing things on the ground. The challenge is bridging different perspectives, and different scales.

Jane: the social learning process does help to mediate, or develop a conversation, between knowledge that is produced by specialists or in special spaces, and people's own experiences and practice: a mediation of everyday knowledge and scientific knowledge. Ideally, we would like people attending the caucus meetings to become better equipped to understand and grapple with the bigger picture and scientific knowledge. One of the tensions in environmental justice is between immediate struggles, e.g. pollution, and the need to relate such struggles to broader questions.

The third issue is how do we ensure that our work is relevant in the broader political economic context – in other words, understanding where these issues sit within a globalised neoliberal world?

Heila: It might be worth doing a situational analysis or contextual profile in each of the case study areas before beginning the case study action research, and sharing that with the participants, as well as sharing how that knowledge was found.

Key dates and deliverables for the project were presented at the end of this discussion (see Appendix 2).

Input and discussion on methodology and theory

Victor facilitated this session which looked at EMG-style action learning, explored who is civil society, what is democratic discourse and introduced critical realism, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and social learning as theoretical methodologies to inform our work.

Introduction: civil society voice with the authority of research

This project helps civil society to work with the WRC and create a voice for civil society which speaks with the authority of research. It gives recognition to the SAWC, and allows us to take issues from the

ground and link them to policy with validity. In this way, these issues may become more important to decision makers and more real to them.

What is a theory of change? We look at a situation over time and then develop a theoretical explanation of the situation, in order to know how to intervene to change it. We then monitor the results, reflect on the results, learn from this cycle (including possibly adjusting our analysis and theory of change) and intervene again.

- What has SAWC done & can we assess it in a scientifically valid way?
- What is civil society (and SAWC)?
- How do we use social learning in partnership with action-reflection cycle to strengthen the role of the SAWC in the future?

Research assumptions around validity

The question was raised: What if we find that the role of the SAWC is not valid? In other words, are we driving research to validate something, or to find validity within. The question is rather *how* is it valid, and how can it be strengthened?

Does it not relate to the reason behind the formation of the SAWC? For example, we were influenced by The Water Dialogues (international and also in SA); and we started a dialogue in Khayelitsha, and some of the assumptions we made is that this dialogue approach will result in a change we want to see. But after some time of engagement, we didn't see this change. So now our assumptions are challenged, and we need to revise our approach and change our theory of change.

I understand the theory of change at a higher level…if we as a network of NGOS & CBOS get together to share our knowledge using evidence, experience and a shared set of principles, then something will happen. Just the existence of the network helps already.

Another way of asking this question could be: If the SAWC did not exist, what would be lost? And what are some of the key successes of the SAWC?

This idea that we're trying to understand our role and history in order to validate ourselves to policy makers….but there is also great need for greater understanding *within* the caucus about its functioning, role and successes. We should do these reflections with a broader group of the SAWC – who are we and how do we work? This can be a reality check and confidence booster. It is also interesting to see the contextual need for the SAWC – do we need it? More or less than we did in 2001 when it started? And what about the "competition", who else is entering this space? E.g. SAWC has not been involved in any services protests (although individual members might have been involved). Political parties are very active in the water space, while we are non-partisan in terms of political parties.

We might not achieve our stated intention (e.g. stop an incinerator, or stopping Water Management Devices or fixing leaks) but knowledge of these issues and social mobilisation has grown. Also, results might not come in the period of project. This shows that our theory of change has changed – that engagement leads to learning in-and-of itself. I think we (EMG) see this, but people in Makhaza don't – they see no material change.

If you switch perspective, to ask "what is the best way to build civil society strength?", then you'd look for 3 campaigns to build strength and wouldn't matter so much if you win or lose campaigns. If you have in-depth analysis of what it takes to change society…it's a big and ambitious task. We could look at the history of other campaigns, e.g. anti-apartheid struggle where people initially tried to talk to the Queen to change things.

This points to the need to categorise different forms of change that occur in different circumstances at different scales (for which critical realism provides the tools, see below). Then we could answer by saying "through this kind of campaign at that time we did this or that".

Theories of civil society

In order to achieve a valid assessment, and to understand what roles civil society does and can play, we will be working with theories of civil society. There are five main ones (the meeting started with four, but from discussion it emerged that the South African forums tradition was an important influence and needs to be well understood, see point 4 below):

1. The oldest theory, deriving from the Scottish Enlightenment in the 18th century (see Oz-Salzberger 2001, and other writers in the collection Civil Society, History and Possibilities, Kaviraj and Khilnani, 2001) that "the whole of society should be civil". This theory was interested in achieving a civil, polite and liveable society. It did ask "what is the relationship between citizens, state & capital (which was small at the time)". It was applied more widely in Europe to ask whether there was space besides the space occupied by the monarchy and the clergy. Is there a public space in which people can argue etc? (see Habermas, 1996, who traces the emergence of public space in Europe at that time and later – starting with Prussian history) . There was a notion of solidarity in the public interest, which is an aspect of today's civil society, for example in climate change debates. The question arose who should be active in the public interest – and the answer was very much the new rising bourgeoisie based in trade, outside of the landed gentry. First pamphlets and then newspapers entered. Newspapers etc. entered this space to influence what the state does. Only later did a civil society theory develop as we know it now, in other words, arguing that it is the role of active citizens to push back the state and capital, after capital had become really powerful. This theory did not isolate "civil society" as a specific part of society, distinguished from government and capital.

2. Gramsci was an important influence in the Marxist tradition, although he was a revisionist in some sense (Femia, 2001; Gramsci, 1957, 1971). When we organised caucuses in 2002, as part

of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, a version of this theory was used to attack civil society as a "liberal formation" that is reactionary and working with capital to impose neoliberalism. In some cases this can be seen – for example big aid organisations (international NGOs) who do align with and implement neoliberal policies. Gramsci's theory was that elite segments come together to form a ruling bloc or government. Institutions of civil society defend the interests of this ruling bloc (for example the church, the arts, the educational establishment). Those who want to challenge the ruling bloc are diverted and confused by ideas of obedience, rarity and excellence, for example. An elite culture may disempower the working class by making them feel inferior, and inspiring them to aspire to the standards even though their chances achieving it are slim (for example, rewarding individual excellence, as we see in sport). Gramsci's ideas are generally interesting because he was a pioneer in analysing how ideology and especially hegemony (dominance) through ideas is engineered. However, current developments, for example social movements and networks that combine NGOs and social movements critical of capital and for democracy and the working class, have called into questions the validity of this description of civil society. However, it is still used today to critique NGOs in South Africa from trade union and social movement perspectives.

3. The tradition of civil society organised in the form of a *caucus* came partly out of the logic of the UN Major Groups, in particular in relation to the WSSD. A caucus in this tradition is a forum where independent organisations come together and discuss, without the caucus being an organisation on its own – it is rather facilitated and supported (often hosted or provided with secretarial support) by an alliance of otherwise independent organisations. This logic is developed in Agenda 21 (UN, 1993) which was formulated and signed at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, where chapters describe specific major groups such as NGOs, women, youth, first people, scientists etc. This logic is used to organise the participation of some parts of civil society in UN events, for example climate change negotiations (see Munnik and Wilson, 2003). While this tradition has had an influence on the SA Water Caucus, including its networking internationally, for example to the International Freshwater Caucus, and its participation in UN events, discussants felt that the SAWC was much more strongly influenced by the South African forum tradition of the early 1990s, discussed in the next point.

4. The South African forums tradition was particularly influential in the early days of policy making in democratic South Africa, or South Africa in transition. There were forums in every policy sector: housing, health, water, environment etc., in which citizens and organisations were consulted and co-formulated policy for the new South Africa. There were also a host of local and provincial forums. In the water sector, such forums led to the early formulation (1994) White Paper on Water Principles. In the environment sector, the CONNEPP process (Consultative National Environmental Policy Process) was instrumental in the formulation of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) which provides framework legislation for environmental issues including water, energy and waste. Many environmental issues emerged and were debate in forums. CONNEPP also led to the formulation of section 24 of the Constitution, the environmental right. The Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF)

assembled as big a constituency as possible (500 organisational members!) and had very big presence in CONNEPP. The forum tradition persists to today, for example in policing forums, catchment forums, wetland forums, etc.

5. The SA Water Caucus is also bound up with and active in a space determined by theories of Integrated Water Resources Management, and specifically its view of the existence and structure of a South African water sector (the "sector wide approach"). The early formalisation of IWRM (e.g. Dublin principles in 1992) coincided with the period of policy formation in the new South Africa. Many of these ideas of "water reform" were drawn into South African water policy. They landed in a vacuum, because before the 1990s, there was a very different "water sector": farmers, a department of irrigation, municipalities that provided water, fragmented provision in the homelands, although of course there was a commercial water sector providing engineering services, hardware, treatment chemicals etc. IWRM contains an emphasis on participation (the subsidiarity principle). DWA as sector leader would interact with the rest of the sector, including business, water boards, civil society. This has found formal expression in the Water Sector Leadership Group, in which the SA Water Caucus has participated. It can be used to share information, make decisions, hold officials to account, and report on progress. These functions are also fulfilled elsewhere, for example in the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA) bi-annual meetings, although these are industry led. IWRM has given rise to Catchment Management Agencies, and extensive research on participation, adaptive management, resilience, social-ecological systems etc, of which this research is also an outcome, in the way it is placed with the WRC.

History of SA Water Caucus

This history is reflected here as a discussion. Like the sections above, it will be revisited in more detail as part of deliverable 2, which participants felt should include a critical historical review.

The SAWC emerged from discussions like CONNEPP, the EJNF, the Green Coalition, influenced by 1992 earth-summit (which Earthlife Africa attended); the language of sustainable development, from which the ideas of local A21 (engagement of cities with sustainability and climate change) emerged. The Earth Charter from 1992 (developed in a civil society event parallel to the official Earth Summit) had a strong influence in South Africa, e.g. ELRC worked with NGO-Forum principles. We need to capture this history (deliverable 2 will use documentation that Heila wrote, Victor wrote with Mashile, also SA Water Caucus archives).

A striking aspect is that the same people have moved through all these organisations: Green Coalition, EJNF, water task team, water caucus, etc. It seems we are not stuck in institutional form! A lot of energy is taken up in building and changing institutional forms, but these may not be the crucial units for agency. Our project needs to consider to what extent agency resides in individual activists.

Back to SAWC. After the forum period, people in or close to the SAWC started saying that we are attending so many meetings with government, e.g. met with all the Ministers, but not seeing any results. So there was a perception that Bryan (Coordinator) pulling SAWC into the pockets of government and not doing the challenging work on the ground. And at EMG have discussed recently whether our engagements with government (and good relationship) are helping us achieve what we want to. The answer was no: people don't have water or reparations. So some felt we're not achieving what we want, but others say we are stronger because of these relationships. We are still battling with these questions, even today.

IWRM discourse says there should be partnerships with government, and yet forming these relationships can be disempowering. The City of Cape Town, many years ago, tried to build a partnership with us to fix leaks. The City said they couldn't. WRC has asked us to include DWA more actively and earlier on in this project, yet our overtures to include or be included by DWA often lead nowhere, i.e. it is not civil society who is stalling the relationship. This points to anticipated forms of government versus what is actually happening. In the past government would pay for us to come to meetings, but now say don't have money for us to participate.

IWRM can be seen as a neoliberal process that does exactly this…but it also facilitates a grass roots social movement, which is autonomous and can enter into invited spaces at our choice.

Is there another theory or understanding of civil society, i.e. grassroots social movements emerging; after a period of appropriation? A new form that is emerging? Highly contested, links with political formations, how environmental justice relates to social justice? There are some theories of "radical reformism", and the Occupy movement has come with an urging to move from dissidence to mainstream influence. These are quite new, and this project could develop them.

Another factor is scrapping of the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) and the introduction of the Growth Equity and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. This has made it much harder to organise and influence government at a local level. There are no longer local spaces to discuss development priorities and options; and it is part of a neo-liberal approach to service delivery.

One of the trends is the language of resource management that we're co-opted into. Nature is cut up and redescribed as "resources", which are thereby prepared to be fed into the economy, available to those with most money. It raises the question of how we participate; we want to be talking not just about management but opportunities for connection, rights of nature, etc. Thus there are two streams, e.g. in WSSD: NGO-forum and the Social Movements Indaba (SMI) process, which was more hostile to the official process.

But there is a question to the (exclusively) protest movement: what is your theory of change? Through protest the authorities do get the message clearly, that what they are doing is not popular, but what happens then? How is it going to change and what are we going to do? Do you just leave government and business to decide what to do next once they've got your message?

So at WSSD, as EJNF and SAWC we deployed people to i) Sandton ii) Nasrec and iii) SMI, to both the negotiations and the protest spaces.

We will have an opportunity to deal with these questions further (1) understanding of our history and (2) case study action research. We're reconfiguring a model for grassroots social movement work at this time in which appropriation has happened (of language, resources, participation, etc). Then we will look at the preferred practices that we would like to see emerging – can test them in case studies.

The point re deconstruction and reconstruction is important. There is the protest (deconstruction) but how do we then reconstruct and what is the agency we need for this?

EJNF also were protesting, but then started to talk about practical demonstration projects, e.g. food growing, solar cookers; and also dialogue with government. So the vision of the future becomes visible in the present (another point that critical realism makes). One thing we can work on: how to make something of these alternatives, to move to viable mainstreaming; what makes it a reality for every SA household? Of course there will a worry that this is also appropriated. This comes to questions of who is representing it, so we are not just talking about show-casing on pamphlets; there is a need for people to own their own projects and processes and talk about them on their own terms.

EMG's current action-learning approach

The intention of the next session is to bring existing action research learning reflection cycle from EMG together with social learning. Then Heila can show how critical realism can hold it together.

This is the current EMG action-reflection learning approach:

- Network building: we work hard to build networks, to understand them and to nurture them. They give legitimacy to our work; they help to ensure that our work is relevant, responsive, contributing to a greater movement.
- Our main motivation for being in networks is often offering support to the network, rather than having a particular agenda or position we are trying to drive. This seems to result in us being one of the more trusted and reliable NGOs in these spaces, although it leaves us open to the critique that we are 'apolitical' or not involved enough in struggles. We see ourselves as offering support to others to take their own struggles forward.
- Spending time establishing relationship: there is a strong focus on the relationship, on transparency about what we are offering, what we stand to gain from the relationship, what we realistically see as possible gains for the community partner.
- Asset based approach: we start with what people have, with what they are already working on, and have energy for.

- When there is a particular topic or issue that a community group raises as something they would like to understand better (identified in different ways – sometimes coming out of open-ended conversations about a potential relationship; or in a workshop setting; or being directly approached), the starting point is always people's stories – how do they experience the issue, what are they doing already to respond to the issue.
- Once people have told their stories, we try to identify some of the 'unknowns' in people's stories - what do we need to understand better? E.g. in Makhaza – needed to see what people's bills really were, and check how widespread the leaks were.
- Design some kind of research approach that involves people in doing the research: e.g. door-to-door interviews; climate diaries; subsistence fishers collecting weather and catch data; in Ngqushwa, people doing a biodiversity inventory.
- Then, we come together again to look at what we have found, and strategise next steps.
- Often, if problem is identified and then better understood, it's time to start looking at the bigger picture, and visualizing the changes that people would like to see.
- Next, is to draw in decision makers who might have the authority to facilitate those changes. We have tried to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues in various contexts, with varying results.
- Sometimes, we then need to move into the realm of researching the institutions within the sphere of influence – those with the authority to make decisions but who don't make good ones, for some reason – exploring where the blockages are, and what is needed for blockages to be removed.
- We sometimes use the media to highlight issues, to contribute to public discourse, or to expose injustice.
- We also take our research to parliament, to conferences, to national SAWC meetings, other civil society networks, as case studies to illustrate our policy recommendations.

Discussion

We (EMG) use a rights based approach, and an asset based approach. We use timelines and maps, including what services and infrastructure had been in place in the past. We do the research and then present the findings to broader group. We follow a similar approach with EDE (Ecovillage Design Education) in the Eastern Cape.

This could be described as institutional ethnography: trying to understand realities at each scale. Starting point is people's stories, e.g. how is their access to water being restricted and then go up through the scales to see the disjuncture with the policy of water for all at City level.

We are often struck by the gaps in the system. For example, the parliamentary portfolio committee on water draws us in because they're lacking the kind of information we bring. Why are the gaps there? Parliamentarians are actually like civil society. But this form of governance is 'happy uselessness', they seem uninformed and not to be getting information from any 'real' places, like their constituencies or active civil society organisations.

2-day Citizens Assembly on Water Quality on the Vaal in 2011, influenced how we work in the Kuilsriver catchment, which is through a multistakeholder process.

Technocratic nature of water sector – engineers make decisions, and social issues aren't incorporated – is a reality, and there are some in water sector who know it and want to change it.

Social learning approach

It is also useful to look at 'expansive learning cycle', which is close to what Taryn presented.

Social learning is a particular approach to learning, where the focus is to transform practice. The one we're using at AWARD is where you understand & confront your context; and then deconstruct that. We would train people to collect local data. Then we look at where questions are coming out of practice. They develop the stories by gathering empirical data and listening to people. You can then see where the contradictions and questions lie. Your question becomes the focus of learning. How then do you change practice? The answer could lie in a technical solution, or communicating more effectively. It could happen at different scales. Social learning helps consciously designing this.

Are there any contradictions between the social learning and the EMG approach? No. But the thing EMG approach could work on more is to focus on contradictions: what are they and what causes them? How can they be made more visible? The Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) approach does this. It looks at contradictions internal to an activity system, or it can take 2 or more activity systems and look at the contradictions within them and between them. The social learning provides a more formal language of description.

We can also take this lens to look at contradictions within civil society, e.g. EMG is both insider and outsider, which causes contradictions. We should be proud of these different roles! It is important for clarity on these, and not trying to flatten ourselves into not being there. There is a role for a researcher.

Social learning literature also talks about dissonance. It is important to make it visible for discussion and negotiate our way through it. Action is focussed on contradictions that make the activity not work.

We have different levels of contradiction. E.g. in Makhaza we are busy negotiating the relationship between NGO and community, which we didn't (and couldn't) do upfront. At a different level: discussing the National Water Resources Strategy (NWRS2) during Marikana shooting showed the dominance of the neo-liberal paradigm. So even if we come up with a good NWRS2, there will always be contradictions because we are operating within that bigger paradigm.

There's nothing transformative about social learning per se…and this is why I think this is a really interesting project: if we can understand what is happening at grassroots level process and then apply it there…we will see what is possible. So it is good to link Social Learning (form, transform, reform) and

with really difficult challenges like governance, neoliberalism, etc. We should look at Ray Ison's work in the water sector on governance.

We have finished a 2-year social learning research project (Rhodes with the WRC) in the Eastern Cape that resulted in changes to practice (Burt et al, 2014) We can see evidence of transformation in terms of practices, confidence & voice and social networks. But…the real issues were coming from local government failures to provide basic core resources, which this project couldn't address.

So for this problem a CHAT analysis would have community activity system (e.g. from above) + local government activity system + NGO activity system, and we would need to understand all 3 equally well; and then look at contradictions. The common interest could be water rights, or water quality, and we would look at what is coming from each activity system that makes it stuck. E.g. is it neo-liberal governance vs rights based approach, and can we bring it into a discussion with people from each activity system? This helps shift the discussion away from 'blame'.

Shared understanding of how we proceed? E.g. go into 6 points of activity system, or agree what kind of social learning are we after. Could look at this in a phased approach – e.g. bring aspects of CHAT in later in the project.

Cultural Historical Activity Systems (CHAT)

Historically CHAT developed out of learning theory by Vigotsky, who asked (1) who are learning, (2) what are they learning and (3) what tools, concepts, ideas are they using to learn? The focus was on these three things. Engestrom expanded this schema to real-life context (outside a lab or a classroom) and added (4) rules (spoken or unspoken, cultural, family rules), (5) who else is involved and has an influence and (6) the division of labour (who does what and why). These things shape and influence people's activities. Also…we need to remember that an activity system is always culturally and historically shaped.
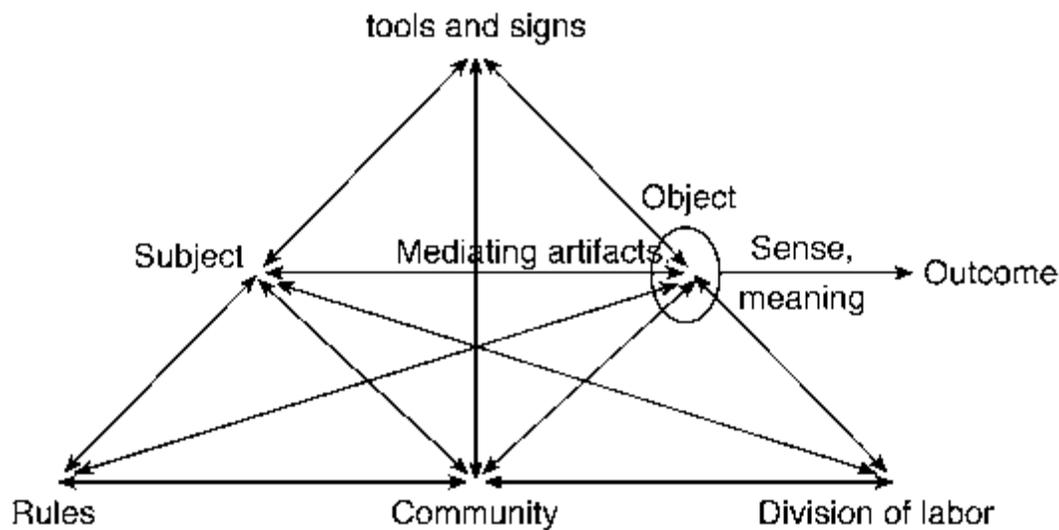
Figure 1: The structure of a human activity system (Engestrom, 1987, p. 78).
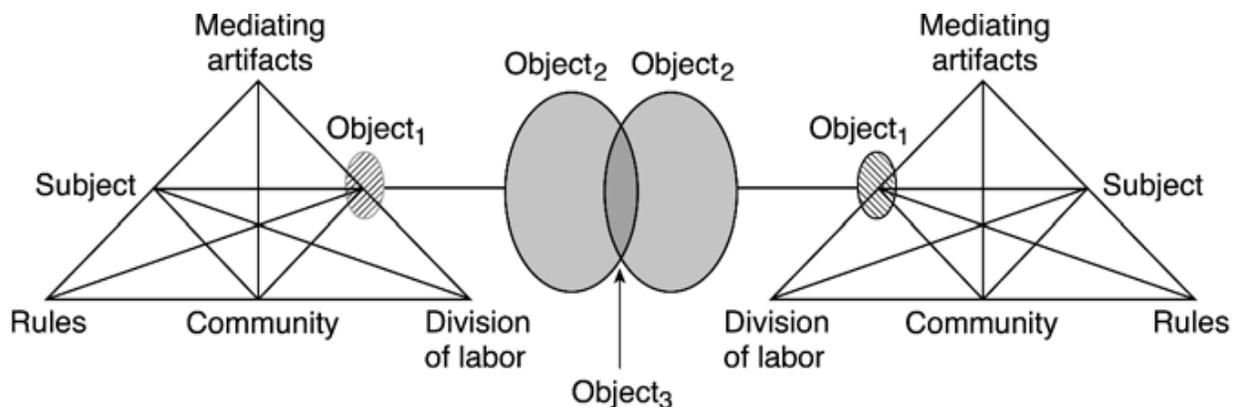
Figure 2: Two interacting activity systems as minimal model for the third generation of activity theory. (Engestrom, 2001, p. 136)

In this system, we will always find tensions, e.g. within an element in the basic triangle (1st generation contradiction), such as people who don't see themselves as activists, but are doing activist tasks; between two elements (2nd generation), e.g. tension between the tools and the subject, e.g. language in a pamphlet. And 3rd generation, between two activity systems. We would try to understand these tensions and contradictions, and use them as the basis for social learning work. 3rd generation contradictions are the hardest to understand and work with, because the contradictions have to be explained in a way that the participants in both activity systems can understand, relate to and want to work with. A researcher would present their observations re tensions and check with people in each

activity system to see if they make sense (a mirroring process during a meeting). Contradictions can best be understood in dialogue. Dialogue can then lead to expansive learning.

Expansive learning includes modelling possibilities -> building solutions -> implementing-> reviewing and consolidating new practice. In this way it is similar to the more traditional action research. So CHAT provides a more robust starting point from which to work together. To do an activity analysis (and expanded learning) we need a 'common object', that is a common objective in our activity, e.g. to ensure communities have good quality drinking water. So CHAT allows us to get insight into the interplay of agency (individual and collective) and track this.

In the big picture, the water sector has a declared common object – the provision of water (or the aims in the National Water Act). We can analyse all those in the water sector trying to implement the NWRS2 as interacting activity systems.

We can use this tool analytically (for developing contextual profiles) and for mobilising. It is a way to create platforms for multistakeholder forums. For example, AWARD is looking at activities that could contribute to resilience of the catchment, with, for example, water resources protection (ecological reserve) and water use regulation as two key activities. Our researchers might be very aware of tension and contradictions, so they could use these to map back onto the activity system, and find a better way of explaining the contradictions and working with it.

In South Africa (compared to for example Europe) we anticipate antagonism to government, and then someone will have the courage to speak out. In South Africa, civil society and government are actively shaping each other. In the Crocodile River (Inkomati) research, we have written Heila's diagram as 7 questions (adding an active history question), and as a checklist for focus group discussion.

Ecological relationships do shape activity systems but aren't obviously included in CHAT, which speaks to the human activity system. This is where **critical realism** comes in because it relates the natural and social science to each other.

EMG's been grappling to work with things like gender in our work. This falls into hidden/unspoken rules and play out in division of labour, etc. We could include a question re gender in each of the elements.

Critical Realism

Critical realism enables the researcher to look more deeply at what is happening, including at different scales, from planet to individual (7 scales). It also indicates at what scale you need to solve a particular problem (e.g. neoliberalism at a planet scale). But although there are different scales, they are interdependent and we are all part of one world.

Critical realism works explicitly with change and understands the role of history - and specifically that things could have turned out to be different. It brings different perspective to science, for example, a

different and arguably more sensible way to proving pollution. It works with entities that other theories would see as contradictory. It allows for more complex and comprehensive analysis of causality. So, for example with critical realism one could collect stories (e.g. on Water Demand Management experiences) and track them to events and what caused them. So, GEAR was a result of a neoliberal trajectory that was a shift of power relations. It allows us to focus on these more deep-seated issues that could be playing out all over the country. It can help us make generalisations from case studies. It enables us to bring up issues and explanations that would not be possible following a 'positivist' approach, which is quite limited in describing causality. Critical realism can draw conclusions at the level of mechanism that causes an event or conditions, with more certainty than common sense, but in a way that resonates with common sense and people's existing knowledge. So it can create strong and defensible arguments about what is the most likely cause for this situation.

At this point the meeting agreed that we had arrived at a shared understanding of theory, and are excited about pursuing a deeper understanding of it.

Scope, approach & action plan for 2014 deliverables

Deliverable 1: methodology workshop report
"1-day team meeting to workshop methodology, framework and scope of civil society policy assessment and action research; followed by 1-day planning meeting with lead action researchers from case-study areas to refine methodology and agree on initial case-site research. Methodology discussion will be led by Heila Lotz-Sisitka. Scope for a masters student research project will be identified."

The deliverable is a report based on this workshop, including identifying research options for a student.

Two options for students are: i) a political science look at civil society and ii) a critical analysis of IWRM. The first option is preferred and will be explored first by Victor through Wits. If a suitable student is not identified, Heila will look to find a student to explore one of the case study areas, or a geography student who wants to move into water resources. After preliminary exploration, a more detailed scope will be developed and presented to the Reference Group.

Given the limited budget (R90 000 for one year); we are probably looking for a student doing a coursework masters who can do a desktop analysis for a mini-thesis. A full time Masters student should not be ruled out.

Deliverable 2: scientific assessment of civil society involvement in key water policy documents
"A report assessing the role of civil society in water policy, such as NWRS1, NWRS2 and NWPR, within the context of legal requirements and democratic discourse. The scope and criteria of assessment will be discussed at the methodology workshop. The report will be based on desk -top research, interviews (including with DWA officials) and include examples of successful civil society monitoring from other sectors. A steering committee meeting will follow this deliverable."

The theoretical basis for this deliverable includes:
- Consideration of the 5 frameworks for understanding civil society that we discussed earlier
- legal requirements for participation and engagement, an analysis of all water sector legislation and what it means for democracy and participation
- background on democracy and interpretation of democracy – the contrast between popular democracy and 'tick-box' approach
- literature on newer parts of democracy where people need to learn to participate
- recent experiences due to loss of space from government
- more radical forms of engagement
- invited and created spaces
- constitutional rights: access to information, rights to organise and demonstrate
- democratic practice doesn't just end at protest, but other forms of collective action, including demonstrative projects
- we will describe the 'spectrum' of democratic spaces, those that are required by law and those that we create/ claim ourselves

Kinds of scientific analysis we will do:
- triangulation
- self assessment (internal reflection is as important as other methods)
- activity system analysis in SA water sector and civil society
- explanatory analysis via critical realism, looking at causality at the levels of the real, the actual and the empirical
- discourse analysis to identify textual impact of lobbying

Triangulation is important – and possible – because we are talking about events that are interactions within a context. E.g. the NWRS2 was a response to the Water Act; within that space, how did we act? Are there other people who observed how we acted, and when we put that all together can we come up with a plausible explanation or description of what we did?

We would do the interviews, then look at the legal requirements and see how civil society did within that framework (were legal requirements met, could civil society have done more, what more could have been done). Who was involved and who was left out? Compare this to different descriptions of participation (e.g. the ladder of participation). Identify whether legal requirements were enabling or disabling.

It is important to describe the (historical, contextual) differences between NWRS1 and NWRS2 in terms of spaces for participation.

We can look at textual impact – seems that we had more of an impact on the text in the NWRS2 (catchment forums).

What is the purpose of this to the rest of the project? WRC specifically wanted to insert this, in this form. It's about the validity of what we are going to produce. It's to add authority. To say yes, civil society has an important role, and has played an important role, for validity out there in the world and for our own confidence. Making links between policy intervention and local action. Is it possible to transform people's experiences into a policy change? What has to happen in the translation between everyday experience and policy?

For example, at the 2-day SAWC meeting on NWRS2, we heard from people about their own struggles, and that was taken up into our submission to the NWRS2, a direct link between people's experiences and our attempt to change policy. That can be evidence of the strength and quality of our work. There were provincial meetings too, which helped to directly link people's experiences to the SAWC submission. So we've got good evidence for the 'amplifying voice' process that we facilitate.

We don't need to narrow down to the four areas of content of the case studies, we can keep it broad. We can also look at local legal changes.

We're looking at involvement, not impact. Where impacts can be identified, let's talk about them, but we want a document that we can use, as the water caucus, to talk about why it is worth it to engage with policy. It's a review, and examples and cases to show.

Criteria of assessment: levels of participation; legal requirements; how broad and how deep has civil society involvement been in policy development, and to what end? Where in the policy cycle are we active? How do we conceptualise the size and power of civil society? Can SAWC be used as a signifier of 'civil society' at large? Look at the difference between civil society and organized civil society. Do we want a timeline, or a history?

Summary of our scientific approach:
It is a critical realist historical analysis, which will provide the most reasonable explanation of events, backed up by evidence from others. Interviews and document analysis are the 2 methods. Show traces of impact then provide plausible explanations. Because it is historical, it will need to include some chronology. Possibly there will be strands of 'content' tracked through history.

Deliverable 3: report on social learning (module 1) in case study areas – context and practice
This was presented and discussed during day 2.

Evaluation of day one
Participants discussed in pairs and reported together.

Taryn and Thabang: Both enjoyed learning about different theories and methodologies, the history of the caucus and civil society. The afternoon session was quite crammed and overwhelming.

Victor and Jessica: We were happy to find that we gelled as a team and are essentially on the same page. An observation that it's an important and ambitious task, and that there's a tension between

developing a general understanding that we use, and the excitement from the academics to explore the edge and the innovation, rather than focus on the basics underpinning all the theory, the solid holding of the problem. We enjoyed the relaxed style of discussion, open flow of ideas.

Jane and Heila: We enjoyed the morning session on the history of the water caucus. Heila is looking forward to getting into the case studies tomorrow, and we're both interested in understanding how the case studies link to the social learning course. Enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere, looking at horrendograms from the couch rather than 'death by powerpoint'.

Victor: This is a dream team!

Thabo: The history around the movement and the caucus is something we've been wanting to do in the Western Cape water caucus, so that was exciting for me to hear. I want to hear more, because it is motivating to hear that this has deep history, to show what we have achieved. I also enjoyed talking about the learning theories, so this project will also enrich my studies at a personal level. I enjoyed seeing the 'back-door' of our work, it was fascinating for me.

Thabang: I am not a researcher, so this afternoon's session challenged me a bit in a good way, to see what is needed to make a research project valid, and this has made me interested personally to understand more about research.

Day 2: Thursday 15 May 2014

<u>Participants</u>: *Jessica Wilson (EMG), Victor Munnik (Wits/Independent), Taryn Pereira (EMG), Thabo Lusithi (EMG), Thabang Ngcozela (EMG), Heila Lotz-Sisitka (Rhodes, ELRC), Jane Burt (Independent), Samson Mokoena (VEJA), Thelma Nkosi (Geasphere).*

Samson Mokoena and Thelma Nkosi have joined us and Thabo led us through a round of introductions.

Project overview and introduction to proposed case-study sites

Jessica introduced the project and that we met yesterday as the core project team to talk about some of the details. Today we want to go more deeply into some of the potential case study areas, and the social learning course. Jessica described the objectives:

Objective 1: We are going to be doing some of the work that we usually do in the caucus, but we are going to be thinking more about the methods we use, and reflecting on our practices more. That is what makes this project different to other work we do as a caucus.

On Objective 2: "Test an approach that allows civil society to participate in local water governance" – we need to unpack this governance word; it will include how we influence water decisions; it will also include our own engagement / local management of water (because governance is not just government).

Objective 3: For the social learning modules, for 10-12 people: if you fulfil all the criteria you get a certificate of competence, otherwise you get a certificate of attendance.

Objective 4: we need to make sure that this project strengthens us as CBOs and NGOs, as well as water activists and the caucus more broadly.

Objective 5: Implementation of the NWRS2: each of the case study sites will be linked to something in the NWRS2, will contribute to our understanding and monitoring of that aspect of the policy.

Discussion
We also want to build an alliance between activists and academics, and to give the water caucus a bigger presence within the research arena of the WRC, and hopefully give us more influence on policy. (We need to define policy upfront as the whole policy cycle – including implementation, monitoring, institutions, new agendas being introduced – maybe governance is a better hold-all word?).

It would be good for civil society to understand what is meant by the whole policy cycle: (1) agenda setting; (2) policy formulation (3) legislation (4) institution building (5) implementation (6) monitoring and evaluation – after which a new phase of (1) agenda setting begins based on changes in context as well as insights from previous rounds of implementation. Clearly, in reality these phases are not that neat. There are some deliverables that relate specifically to policy documents; when we go into the case study areas we are going more deeply into the implementation, institutions (the other parts in the 'cycle').

Maybe we should try to investigate some of the blockages to the implementation of the NWRS2 upfront. For example, the NWRS1 was never read by the officials, why not, and is it reasonable to assume that the same blockages will be there for the NWRS2? This is a huge scope; maybe in the case studies we will go into some specific examples of obstacles to implementation, from a grounded perspective. It is possible to be holistic and specific at the same time. The business review took 10 commissioners 2 years. It's a massive question, and some of the findings were incorporated into the NWRS2. It is too big a question for us to tackle, although we will acknowledge and reference the weak implementation of NWRS1 and all other water policy. Via the case studies we will point out some of the practical blockages to implementation that we encounter.

In terms of the Reference Group, we suggested Melissa Fourie, Eureta Rosenberg, Bobby Peek, Barbara Tapela, Matume Mahasha, Thoko Sigwaza, Mary Galvin. Eiman Karar is the project manager. Victor suggests that we find a civil society academic – maybe Richard Pithouse, or Jeanne Prinsloo.

This project can hopefully help to strengthen the water caucuses in the different regions. We need to keep this in mind, when we think about who we nominate from each caucus to participate in the social learning course, and try to make sure they are people who will feed back and help build capacity more broadly.

The proposed case studies

1. **Water demand management.** This is work that EMG has been involved with in Cape Town and the Western Cape. We wanted to look at NWRS2 within the context of climate change; and then at the urban issue of unequal access to water. How to build governance around real water scarcity in ways that are fair and just. EMG will be the anchor organisation in WCWC, and the anchor person will be Thabo (supported strongly by Taryn).
2. **Plantations and water.** Geasphere will be the anchor organisation in the Mpumalanga Water Caucus. Bigger picture question of industrial plantations sucking up our water; is this the correct economic activity, taking water away from people, plantations are competing with other users for water.
3. **Access to productive water for poor communities and small farmers.** This has many potential sites and interpretations. One issue is that for urban food growers people are using municipal water, which is very expensive. In rural areas people do not have physical access to water. Case study is not yet pinned down; hoping to have TCOE, or one of their 'twigs' (Zingisa or Mawubuye) be the anchor organisation.
4. **Monitoring of water quality.** This builds on VEJA's work for last 7 years. Working directly with industry and municipalities who are not complying. The Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) question. A really nice case study of a massive national problem.

The case studies are all quite different but very interesting, and all have a historical aspect, in terms of water caucus work.

Anchor organisations and their case studies

The objective of this session is to hear from the 3 anchor people from anchor organisations

1. describe the organisation you work in
2. describe the water caucus that you are part of
3. describe the relationship between your organisation and your caucus

Then break into three small groups, headed by Thabo, Thelma and Samson, and each group will have a researcher and extra support (Samson, Victor & Thabang; Thelma, Jessica & Jane; Thabo, Heila & Taryn), to talk about the case studies – what is the problem how are you organising, what have you tried, what is working and what isn't. Then come back, present for 20 minutes, and then look at how it links to the NWRS2 when we come back. We will then spend half an hour talking about the fourth case study – water for productive use – and decide whether we should go ahead with the next case study or not.

Samson Mokoena is project coordinator at VEJA, running day to day operations, fundraising, making sure things happen in time. Also running water quality project. We are an NPO but not registered. We are still running as a loose network. We have 2 paid staff by VEJA, and 2 paid stipends from Benchmarks. We link to 13 CBOs, working on water quality, air quality, energy and climate change, and environmental

health/industrial waste. There is a historical legacy of waste that was dumped in the region, and that waste has a big and ongoing impact on water quality. We are focusing on Vaal River. We are looking at industrial effluent and mine effluent. We also have these old municipal treatment works that are dysfunctional, that release dirty water to the Vaal. In the late 1990's, early 2000's, people who were relying on groundwater and river water discovered that was dirty.

We are working through water forums, e.g. Rietspruit water forum for the last 8 years, trying to influence how big players make decisions – e.g. mines, industry, regional DWA, other civil society (Save the Vaal is also involved in litigations around transgressions). We are working with local CBOs from Southern Gauteng to Northern Free State, trying to understand their water quality challenges at local level. We work with Earthlife Africa on the AMD issue. Forums we are currently trying to influence include the Rietspruit and LeeuTaai Forum (which is affected by the Sasolburg chemical complex). The impact of huge industries on rivers made us get involved. In 2008 lots of fish died in the Vaal River and no one was getting involved. We tried to understand, there was media coverage, no one wanted to take responsibility. People around the Rietspruit blamed industrial effluent. Industry was not disclosing their effluent discharge. We took Omnia to court, using PAIA. Two years ago we settled out of court. Our successes include that we managed to get all industry to share all their discharge data before the forum meets, so there is more transparency. Rand Water is good at monitoring the catchment.

The Gauteng and Free State water caucuses have been meeting often. GUBICO organizes the Central Free State. VEJA organizes Northern Free State and Gauteng (incl the East Rand, where the Ekhuruleni Environmental Justice (EEJ) is very active). We meet quite often, have more than 30-40 members attending, Judith Taylor is coordinator and Samson helps. VEJA brings water quality issues, Earthlife brings AMD issues, others bring WDM issues. We participated fully in the NWRS2. We have also assisted the North West province to organize. There was a steering committee elected for NFS and Gauteng WC (Judith Tayor and Mich from East Rand). We initiated some projects on capacity building, and on WDM (e.g. prepaid meters installed in Soweto). The Soweto Electricity Crisis Campaign is part of the Gauteng Water Caucus. There are 3 or so members from Alex. There is a proposal to invite EMG to talk to them about WDM. Four big municipalities in those regions have to reduce water demand by 50% by 2015. Water offsetting is starting, SASOL etc are getting involved, via the big water users group. We want to have a workshop around this, and Thabo can share the WC case study.

Thabang: we should share how the GUBICO training and monitoring programme compares and connects to this project.

Thelma: Geasphere is a small organisation, with 5 staff, and 2 volunteers from Germany each year. We also have a coordinator in Swaziland. Our focus is on ecological integrity, especially looking at plantations, mining, and water issues. The Mpumalanga Water Caucus (MPWC) is an important place for us to work, because plantations affect everybody - but affects some people the most. We work through the caucus with traditional healers, who try to collect medicines and do rituals at the water, and because of plantations they can't do that anymore. We are working with them to limit the expansion of plantations. We also work with traditional leaders who are trying to do land claims, on land that is now

covered by plantations, e.g. at Mariepskop. Some of those traditional leaders are against the plantations, because they disrupt the flow of the river, and also make the forest and the land inaccessible. The leaders want those plantations removed. The MP water caucus has 7 different regions, because the province is vast and it's too expensive to travel around. We appointed coordinators in each region, but in February we had a meeting which decided there will be 2 regions: the Lowveld and the Highveld, with a coordinator in each region, and maybe once a year we come together for one meeting. The Highveld region is mostly concerned with coal mining and water issues; Lowveld most concerned with plantations, sugar, gold mining and coal mining. There are usually 25 – 30 people to each water caucus meeting, from communities and organisations. We meet a few times a year, and we have created a google group and have a facebook page. We also have a good relationship with the DWA in Mpumalanga. We had a strong relationship with one particular official, who has passed away, but we have now met the new person and he was excited to meet us. We are also trying to build a relationship with the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) which allocates mining licences. Thelma participates in the Lower Komati Catchment Management Forum (CMF), December participates in the Sabi Sand CMF and Philip and the volunteers participate in the Crocodile River CMF.

Victor: there's a project that I'm leading looking at the progress of the forums, let's see how to bring it into this case study.

Thabo: EMG has 8 staff in Cape Town office and 2 interns, and we also have an office in the Northern Cape, with one permanent staff member. I work for the water and climate change programme. We try to facilitate processes between community members and decision makers, and understanding policies, trying to make links between people's experiences and policy. We also do research. All of this feeds into our networks because we work strongly with our networks, e.g. the water caucuses and the 1 million climate jobs campaign. The Western Cape Water Caucus (WCWC) is active in 4 communities in the Metro: Makhaza, Mitchells Plain, Dunoon and Site C. They have similar issues: water affordability, leaks, unresponsive councillors, food security and waste. We also work in the Winelands: Bonnievale, MacGregor, Ashton, Villiersdorp, Robertson, who link via Mawubuye, dealing with land reform issues and access to water. In 2012 WCWC elected a coordinating committee, with only 3 NGO members, and the rest from communities. It meets quarterly, after every WCWC meeting. It also meets informally via cell phones, and site visits etc. EMG provides materials, financial support, human capacity and coordinating support. TCOE also provides financial support for Winelands people to participate in WCWC. We use the CEJ googlegroup and Whatsapp.

Vaal case study
We want to look at users of the water – specifically African spiritual healers who use the water religiously and spiritually in the Upper Vaal catchment area. We are trying to understand what their contact with water is, and how they organise themselves, in some smaller rivers like the Blesbok, Rietspruit and tributary rivers. We feel that these spiritual groups have been left out of policy and decision making, but they are an important user group. As VEJA we have been pushing for their involvement, and this will help us understand them better.

Water quality information sits in different institutions: Rand Water, DWA, etc., and we will be trying to bring that information together, and looking at how it impacts on this group of people. We want to see how they organise themselves in contrast to elite groups. They have been excluded and not noticed by decision makers around water. They are taking water to make medicines, baptising people, and doing cleansing rituals in the river. We want to bring them to notice and show that there is an impact on this group. The spiritual users of water resources are not aware that there is effluent discharge from the mines, from sewerage, mines, industry etc. Their assumption is that the water is cleansing but it is actually poisoned. Maybe we will start with a broader scoping process as a stage 1: which currently invisible users are there in the Vaal and its tributaries, how are they impacted, bring those impacts to light. A question: do we need to do this broad scope first, or do we want to zoom in on spiritual users from the beginning? They also contribute negatively to the river (Thabang's example from Makhaza where spiritual leaders put waste from their rituals into the river). What will be interesting in this case study is the current treatment of AMD in the catchment, to see how that might impact on people using the water. We will focus on the three forums that we are active in. There was work that Mvula did, and found that VEJA had done similar work, that there was a whole language to describe different kinds of water. This could be a very powerful way to challenge the mainstream view of water as just a resource – linking it to some of the Latin American work on intrinsic value of nature, connection between people and nature, etc. It can be a powerful ally in challenging big industry – a moral and spiritual challenge.

So this case study would still look at water quality, impacts of mine and industry, through the lens of impacts on traditional healers. Let's also look for other research on spiritual practices relating to water. It will be important to imagine alternatives for people to use different sources of water if they discover that the water they are using is poisonous. Let's also look at Venda MUPO project (ABN) where traditional people are also involved in resisting coal mining, and connect to the Mpumalanga case study where traditional healers are concerned about river health.

Western Cape case study

The case study will deal with high and unaffordable bills, e.g in Makhaza average house owes R80 000. Leaks contribute to high bills. Leaks come from the poor quality of materials that are used in houses. Some leaks are part of the infrastructure outside households. We will look at the Makhaza context: the ownership of houses and who should be paying for the bills. The Makhaza houses were built for a certain group who didn't want to live there as far from time and so others have moved in. We will look at water device (flow limiting devices). In the view of the community it was wrong to install them in principle, but they also have technical faults and do not function. There is a lack of communication from the municipality about why they were installed and what to do when they don't work. The devices are locked and take away a sense of ownership of monitoring, because households cannot monitor their own consumption.

This is happening Makhaza but also in the Dunoon area close to Tableview. Because of the lack of public participation from the municipality, the community is confused about where to go when they no longer have water. They don't know where they belong in terms of municipal boundaries and political structures.

One of the EMG initiatives in Makhaza was the Makhaza water dialogues. These brought in the municipality and councillors to look for ways to address issues in areas of high bills, leaks and poor aging infrastructure. Makhaza houses have outside taps and toilets so it is not clear how they can owe so much when all they have is this level of infrastructure. A need expressed in the dialogues was the training of community plumbers, and to find ways to decrease the stress levels of community. We need to look at the amendment to the by-laws which said the municipality will only fix leaks if the household applies for a flow limiting device.

EMG has undertaken water saving education: how to read a water bill, how to understand the water cycle and why are we paying for water. We want the city authorities to understand and recognise that this kind of awareness-raising is already happening in the community.

In 2012 we had "big shots" from the municipality and the department, who admitted materials were poor. The dialogues pushed them into a corner. The City looked at policies so that leaks can be fixed without the requirement to install these devices and to freeze the debt so it does not collect more interest.

It was a difficult process to discuss the proposals for improvement with the City of Cape Town. It had to first go to a sub-council of local councillors. We had pre-meeting to look at the proposal and think about how to present it to sub-council and ensure that it would be in agenda. Dates kept changing. EMG was then told that the meeting had been cancelled. Then through another channel we heard that the meeting happened. So that was a direct lie to EMG.

To summarise: this is the history of an attempt to deal with a problem by going to City of Cape Town. It is an unfinished history around a core problem of their water demand management approach. The approach is to restrict water to people who can't pay under the guise of water saving. The conflict is between protecting (saving) water and making money from water. The water device is the object that we focused on, but the problem is broader than that.

We would like to do the Makhaza case together with the Dunoon case. We could get the two communities to work together. In Makhaza there is unfinished work and in Dunoon we can learn from what we have experienced in Makhaza.

A comparative study could be possible. Two people from each site come on social learning course. There could be exchanges between the two communities. Through this work we could focus in on the policy gap in credit control policy. It could be leverage point. It is related to the broader policy of tariffs. Over time, this has become less and less progressive. According to policy, higher use consumers are subsidising lower consumers. But water bills at lower level are really being pressurised. Connecting the device instalment with leak and interest assistance is a typical technocrat solution but it is probably not legitimate.

The meeting expressed a caution: We are not sure about feasibility of distances and practical dynamics of having two areas on the course. It was remarked that social learning takes place not only on the course, but also in between the modules, and in between different case studies in the project. There could be one case study but two sites of action. The caucus might take it up as a campaign, making it more visible and then looking at spaces for action.

Mpumalanga case study: Mariepskop

There is a lot of history around the Mariepskop case. The first water minister, Kadar Asmal, said the Mariepskop timber plantation should be removed to free up water for Bushbuckridge, but it ended there. The Mpumalanga Water Caucus has searched, but you don't find that statement written anywhere. We heard it in a meeting but we can't track it down. When we go to government they ask for proof that the plantation is a problem and of Asmal's statement. There is a land claim on Mariepskop and claimants want the plantation removed. The government says the claimants don't want it removed. There is a history of Swazis and Bapedi fighting for this land. Most of the Swazis were killed on the Mariepskop and the claimants are Bapedi. They see it as a sacred place and it is important to restore land to sacred space. If the plantation is removed the rivers would flow.

The Water Dialogues in the area focused on water boards. It did not focus on the core cause of the water shortage.

It will be good to see the diversity of the eco-system, instead of the monoculture of the plantation. We will see people doing things for themselves. An alternative to the plantation is organic farming. Plantations only can be harvested after 15 years. Who owns plantation? It has not been cut. We could help the claimants to push what they want. What is stopping the cutting of plantation? The progress of the land claim. There will be a meeting organized by government after these elections for final process to get land back. Klaserie/Klasedi (the name of the river that flows from Mariepskop) is the name of the great great grandfather of people of the royal family.

Thelma brought up the possibility of another case study on sugar plantations. The emerging farmers in the Nkomaze area are unhappy because they are working for TSB on their own land and they do not benefit. They don't make much money but sugar cane is watered 24 hours a day. It would be better if the farmers can work for themselves rather than working for the company. However they stay in this situation because TSB gives them money to plow the sugar cane. Sugar is not good for soil. Victor knows about studies being done on those sugar cane plantations. TSB is a large sugar irrigation board that is now owned by Rembrandt. It used to be Transvaal Sugar Board. The amount of water that is used is massive. They are a major player in all the catchment management activities. They rely on sugar cane from both emerging farmers and large scale farmers. Sugar cane grows in wetlands. What do the claimants want to develop there?

Has much successful work happened after it has been a plantation? What are the methods of rehabilitation? It takes a long time to rehabilitate. It would be worth to look into cases of this.

Geasphere is part of an international network that has very detailed research on plantations. We may be able to call on resources to fill in the information.

Sugar is also involved in land claims. Mpumalanga has big land claim issues and a large number of emerging farmers. We have not set how deep the case studies go. So we may just do scoping work (first phase research to see what the issues are and what the study sites look like). What are the issues? We could consider starting with an early phase that relies on people's stories and anecdotal evidence and then deepen it later. The other part of the project is broad (NWS2) and WC history is broad. The main purpose of the case studies is to test and expand participation and learning in water.

In Mariepskop there is a great deal of community involvement. It is important to understand the geography of Mpumalanga. Thelma is far away from the plantations. There are logistical considerations. But it is up to Geasphere to decide who is engaged on the course.   Do we see it as building the caucus or Geasphere?

We can take the sugar cane plantation in the future. We need to understand how the sugar plantations impact on water because it does provide more jobs.

There is a link between ecosystem services that are removed through plantations, and who makes sure that these ecosystem services are returned to people. The drying up of rivers is not only an issue for water security but also an issue of reduced dilution service of the river in the river itself and how tributaries contribute to the river system.

Discussion on 4th case study
There is potentially a 4th case study on water for productive use. Thabang leads the discussion: we need first of all to define what we mean by productive use. It is not just about food gardens, there are other ways in which people use water to earn money. This includes brick laying, car-washing, cattle, etc. If we zoom into the productive use of water for food gardens and farming… in Makhaza we are working with Soil for Life to support lots of permaculture gardens. We started with a first group of 45 people, then another group, spreading to other areas. We also asked the Department of Agriculture for equipment, e.g. rainwater tanks, which the department promised but nothing has been delivered yet. During the process of the water policy review, we attended a meeting at Loskop dam in Mpumalanga, where we raised the issue of water for productive use. DWA said people won't have to pay for water for agricultural use (Schedule 1 use), but in practice they do have to pay, it just appears on their domestic bill. As much as the department says they have a provision for this, at municipal level this is not realised, so there is a tension between the policy of the Department of Agriculture and municipal policy. Mawubuye has been working with farmers who have got farm through land claims. Everyone around them has water, but they have no water. They have been told that their borehole is finished, or that the water is un-usable, but all the neighbouring white farmers have abundant water. They wanted our support in getting water rights.

In terms of water rights, there is an issue of people trading their water rights amongst each other; government was saying that if people are not using their water rights it's going to be taken away from them.

Within SAWC is there any other organisation that could take responsibility for this case study: TCOE. They work with land restitution in many provinces. They work with small scale farmers all over the country. All the water in SA has been allocated already, so they need to find water for the emerging farmers from somewhere. People with water rights don't want to give it up.

Victor's response: There is a difference between rural and urban water policy. Urban, treated water is ten times more expensive than raw water. Municipal water is treated water and that is why it appears on people's bills, whatever they use it for including food gardens. Usually the department is talking about raw water when they talk about water for productive use. And yes, raw water is all allocated, and tied up in old existing water rights, a situation which has perpetuated apartheid era water allocation. There is an option of looking at productive water through the framework of multiple water use, where communities are able to use water in different ways, while planners are expected to make sure they support it. At the moment water planners do not work together in that way.

For policy reasons this case study is very important, but we are worried we won't find the core organization to hold it. TCOE would be well positioned, but we don't have a clear sense from them yet whether they will actually be able to take it on.

Abalimi Bezekhaya uses borehole water rather than municipal water; that's an interesting alternative. In that there is a worry about over-extraction of borehole water with the result of saltwater intrusion.

Another option is Zingisa who could hold the case study. They are well established in the Eastern Cape. A reason in favour of TCOE/ Mawubuye is that they have engaged with the NWRS2 process.

Victor: This case study is less developed than the others. It's also an area that's most stuck in terms of policy and legislation. So maybe this could be a more initial investigation, an early look at water for productive use.

Jane: In terms of the social learning process, we could look at the different case studies as being at different places in the learning cycle – this case study could be the early questioning phase.

Jessica: The question is still who will be doing the work, doing the questioning, so we need to have that deeper conversation with Siviwe/ Welile, or Zingisa, and decide from there.

Social learning modules and application to case studies

The focus of social learning is transformation. The modules help to move from identifying project problems, to identifying some possible solutions. Through the project, you identify a 'change project'.

Module 1: To investigate context and practice, through developing stories. We draw out from the stories participants bring to the module, the questions about what is stopping the change that we want to see. So we identify the questions that come out of practice.

Module 2: Throwing our questions out there to see if any knowledge already exists to help answer questions. Are there gaps? We learn how to develop a knowledge network – that is, ways of accessing the necessary knowledge.

Module 3: How do we mediate the knowledge we have gathered back into the context where you're working? We develop a draft resource. We take the tool back into the field, to the people we have been working with, to test the tool, in participants' own area and in another area.

Module 4: We review, reflect on and learn from what we have done.

The rhythm of process is important. There is an interaction with the facilitators (during the module), then participants go out and carry out an assignment between modules. Then they come back to another module, reflect on what they've learnt and learn something new, and then go back into the field.

At module 3 we will be developing the actual 'action research/ change project process that will then be tested in the field, which will contribute to our citizen monitoring guidelines.

We have a year and a half over which to do the social learning. It is ideal to have a year to do it. In other projects we have found it would be useful to have a final reflection meeting or indaba a few months after the final module, to look and reflect on the progress of the change project. This could be in a big national SAWC meeting, that we invite the WRC to, potentially.

The pre-course assignment will be: What do I know about my context. This includes bringing pictures, photographs or sketches. You build the evidence base of your case right from the start.

In terms of content with a course like this, you can insert whatever content is most useful and relevant as stimulus material, for example climate change materials, the history of the SAWC. So the base material is what people bring, but then that can be enriched. We could bring deliverable 2 (history of civil society), or examples of successful social movements, etc.

It can also be nice to have a trip out to see something in practice.

It is helpful to have mentors who know what the overall process is. They support people. It can also be helpful to have a translator mentor. In terms of budgeting, we might need to have different mentors at each different module (local people willing to contribute some time!). Jane, Taryn, the caucus anchors

and 1 or 2 people from each case study will be the consistent participants. We would draw in different speakers at each module too – e.g. Victor to talk about the history of the caucus, have different voices.

Thabang: SAWC has quarterly tele-conferences; provincial caucuses have meetings, so we will take a report about this meeting to those meetings, so that we can start identifying who might participate on the course.

Samson shared that Bobby Murray is running a course through Benchmarks with the monitors. This consists of diary keeping, free writing, media skills, and running an activity. Maybe we should speak to them, since they are doing similar work. We are entering into very similar space, especially in Mpumalanga, Free State.

One of the issues at SAWC co-ordinating committee strategic planning meeting that was raised was that we wanted training – and this project can address that. Another person to talk to is John, the director of Benchmarks, they are very invested in the monitoring sphere, give lots of resources to organisations to monitor, and run these trainings.

Victor: Groundwork is also running an Environmental Justice School. The issue for all these trainings is getting NQF/ SAQWA accreditation, so that activists can get actual boost to their careers and personal development.

Heila explained the principles of getting accreditation. The Rhodes course (this social learning) does result in a certificate of competence, or of attendance (if evaluation finds that the competence did not develop). Heila will do some research and we can try to talk about helping other activist training to get accreditation, so that they can be more useful to activists.

Before the course, participants will have to identify people in their organisations who will work with them and support them, so that there is organisational support for the change projects; needs to be something that adds to what you were already working on, enhance and enrich your existing work. You can ask people who you work with to give feedback on what you're doing.

There are some resources (money) to go to each anchor organization to do the case study development. It should be work you're doing anyway, but there is this extra money for extra costs incurred. EMG will negotiate this with the anchor organisations.

There are project team meetings after each social learning module (present budget has those meetings happening in Cape Town) so it could be that Jessica or Thabang (for e.g.) are drawn in as mentors.

Where and when? First module in Cape Town 22 – 24 September (team meeting on the 25th)

The meeting agreed on criteria for selection of social learning participants:
1. People with matric.

2. People should already be active in the project area/ case study.
3. Should have enough time to participate, the more you can integrate it with your own existing work the better.
4. Recommended that you are physically close to the case study area.
5. Preferable that people should be able to understand English, and to write in English (if possible); people could write their assignments in their own language.
6. Participants should already be active in the water caucus.
7. They should have already 'proven' themselves; and have already shown interest in water activism. They might provide leadership in future.

Jane will circulate the information about the course (description, what is required from participants); including the pre-course assignment. Jane and Jessica need to talk about mentors for each participant. EMG will liaise with the anchor organisations about participants.

Anchor organisations: roles, commitments and support needed

They will be the organisations through whom the action research happens. They will initiate the case studies, take responsibility for the case studies, develop the situational analysis, initiate the campaigns, call meetings, and play a mentorship role to other participants. They will have a contract with EMG, and some money to cover time, logistic costs, printing costs etc.

Thabang asked what will happen after the training, to ensure this goes somewhere. This goes back to the selection criteria, where it is very important that we try to choose people who are interested in using these skills to further environmental justice.

Jessica asked whether the anchor organisations feel that this is reasonable and possible.

Thelma said that Geasphere will be very relieved because they have wanted to work in Mariepskop and didn't know how to do so. "Maybe we will find some young person who is a potential future leader, so that we can grow the MP water caucus."

Samson said that VEJA will definitely want to participate in this course, but it might be difficult to make the decision of who can participate. There are too many people who want to be involved, so how will we choose only one or two? But it will relieve pressure from us in terms of running caucus meetings etc., and we have wanted to do this research project for a long time.

Re: the selection of participants might be politically difficult, just because there is so much interest. Victor suggested that there is a core research team, who are participants in the training, but that there might be more people involved in the research on the ground. They can be supported through the workshops, and through research transport budget, etc.

In this project, maybe we see the anchor organisations as mentor organisations, there can be a small peer group that meets once a month to add support.

The rest of us (in this whole team) can be the beginning of the knowledge network. An important principle is that the participants need to learn to reach out to ask mentors, people in the knowledge network, in the broader team, etc. Get the confidence to ask for help when needed. The social learning principle is applicable to the entire team; we are all learning, and drawing on each other.

The meeting then reviewed the summary of actions and next steps (see appendix 2 for dates of deliverables), and then conducted a final review.

Closing and evaluation

Everyone was invited to do popcorn responses

Samson: As VEJA we are excited to be part of this project.

Jessica: I am also so excited. It is great to have everyone in the room who wants to do a similar thing, and all of whom we like! We all have lots to contribute and to learn.

Thelma: Geasphere will also be very happy. It will take us further, and will grow the Mpumalanga Water Caucus very much.

Heila: I also find it very exciting. There are lots of things I have been working on which see coming together in this room and in this project. The case studies are absolutely amazing. It will be great to see how far we can take these case studies, so I'm very interested.

Jane: This feels like a very grounded project, which is great. Getting involved in bringing learning into these case studies is exciting. I love co-learning, I love exploring learning as an emancipatory process.

Thabang: Today has been an exciting day, hearing where the comrades are coming from. The session where we spoke about specific case studies and sharing back was very useful; and the social learning session was also very fruitful. We have achieved what we wanted to achieve with the day.

Thabo: I am very excited about the project; it also comes at the same time for me, wanting to learn about writing and making sense of what's going on around me.

Victor: I look forward to working in this project and seeing what we can produce together.

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Appendix 1: Methodology Workshop Agenda

Day 1: Wed 14 May 2014

9am Welcome, team introductions, project overview and roles, including 2014 deliverables and time-frame   *Jessica*

10am Input & discussion on methodology and theory   *Facilitation: Victor*
- EMG-style action learning   *Taryn*
- Critical realism   *Heila*
- Activity theory   *Heila*
- Social learning   *Jane*
- Democratic discourse   *Heila/Jane*
- Who is civil society *Victor*

A tea break at some point during this input…

12.00 Open discussion on how these theories/approaches apply to the work we want to do (method, activity theory diagram)   *Victor*

1pm LUNCH

2pm Getting more specific: agreeing on a scope, approach & action plan to:
- Del 1: methodology – write up of this workshop and securing a student – scope of work, recommendations and who will supervise   *Jessica*
- Del 2: scientific assessment of civil society involvement in water policy (including criteria of assessment)   *Victor to lead*
    - Theoretical basis, including of democratic discourse: papers to cite?
    - Legal requirements for participation/engagement/role of civ soc
    - Criteria of assessment
    - Examples of civ soc monitoring from other sectors?
    - Interviews with: DWA (who?); Civ soc (Liane, Liz McDaid, Hameda, other?); CER (legal requirements + engagement in policy)
    - Documentation to review: EMG review of comments from NWRS1 (Liane?); submissions to NWRS1&2 & NWPR (SAWC, CER, EMG, WESSA, WWF…);
    - Draft annotated table of contents
- Del 3: social learning module 1 (including what prep is needed by participants or anchor organizations; scheduling & write-up + team meeting)   *Jane to lead*
- (Case study work)   *will include brief discussion, if time; otherwise on Thurs*

4pm Contracts, roles, next steps and preparation for Thurs   *Jessica (with possibly Stephen)*

4.45 Evaluation of day and close by 5pm   *Thabo*

Day 2: Thurs 15 May 2014 – to be revised at end of day 1.

9am   Welcome & introductions (esp to Samson & Thelma)   *Thabo*

9.30   Brief project overview and introduction to proposed case-study sites   *Jessica*

10am   Discussion and agreement on scope & location of case studies   *Facilitator: Jessica*

       This will include

- *articulation of the key concern/issue and work to date*
- *physical location and level of organisation there*
- *what the NWRS2 says about it (and what the SAWC said about it…)*
- *whether or not to include case study on water for productive use, and where to locate it*

A tea break at some point during this discussion…

12.30   Social learning modules and application to case study sites   *Victor (facilitator)*

- Overview of 4 modules (Jane)
- Module 1: when, where, preparation & selection criteria; mentors

1pm   LUNCH

2pm   Social learning modules continued…

2.30   'Anchor organisations': roles, commitments and support needed *Facilitator: Jessica*

3.15   Summary of actions and agreement on dates & next steps (Del1-3)   *Jessica*

3.45   Evaluation of day and close by 4pm   *Thabo*

Appendix 2: Key dates & deliverables

<u>2014</u>

15-16 May	Methodology workshop (includes Project team meeting 1)
May	Contracts signed with Victor, Heila, Jane
30 May	**Deliverable 1 due:** methodology report – *propose shift to **6 June***
31 July	**Deliverable 2 due:** report on civ soc engagement – *propose shift to **29 Aug***
26 August	Reference group meeting (inaugural) – *Jessica prepare docs, Taryn/Victor attend*
Aug-Sept	Case study prep for social learning module 1
22-24 Sept	Social learning module 1 (3-days) – *Jane/Heila to circulate draft programme to team for comment approx a month prior*
25 Sept	Project team meeting 2 (1-day), immediately following social learning
28 Nov	**Deliverable 3 due:** social learning in case study areas – context & practice

<u>2015</u>

16-18 Feb	Social learning module 2 (3-days)
Feb-April	Case study situational analyses developed & initiation of action research
Feb-April	Interviews with DWA officials regarding constraints to citizen participation
Feb-June	Knowledge network resource (assignment)
April/May	Project team meeting 3 (1-day) to discuss situational analyses, perspectives from DWA & to develop meta-analysis of obstacles & opportunities for civil society
30 May	**Deliverable 4 due:** draft citizen monitoring guidelines
22-24 June	Social learning module 3 (3-days)
25 June	Project team meeting 4 (1-day), immediately following social learning
July-Dec	NWRS2 monitoring through action research, local workshops, engagement with DWA, evidence gathering, input of expertise (legal, scientific, economic)
29 Aug	**Deliverable 5 due:** designs and action plans for case studies
Sept/Oct	Reference group meeting 2

<u>2016</u>

15 Feb	**Deliverable 6 due:** description & assessment of case studies
1-3 Feb	Social learning module 4 (3-days)
4 Feb	Project team meeting 4 (1-day), immediately following social learning
30 April	**Deliverable 7 due:** learning, reflection & evaluation based on social learning
30 June	**Deliverable 8 due:** reflection report on citizen engagement & democracy
31 Aug	**Deliverable 9 due:** draft final report
13 Sept	Reference group meeting 3 + broader stakeholder meeting (including Indaba from course?)
30 Nov	**Deliverable 10 due:** final report