



## Environment Program Highlights

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### Simplifying the Climate Change Message: INRs “Adapt Able” Game



Members of the Ha Tsui and Ha Koporale communities in the highlands of Lesotho actively engaged in the “Adapt Able” game, as USAID staff watch attentively during a field visit.

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Communicating climate change can be a challenge. Introducing new adaptation concepts to communities is even more challenging. Climate change is clouded by too much information circulating, highly technical terms and inadequate translation into the layperson’s language. In addition, the climate change message is easily influenced by the cultural, social and political environment. Against these odds, the USAID Climate Change in the Lesotho Highlands project implemented by the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) is making tremendous gains in the harsh rural highlands of Lesotho. The project is building an understanding of the impacts of climate change and implementing appropriate response measures by applying six basic communication principles: Identifying the key message; keeping the message simple; adapting the message

to the target audience; keeping the message factual and science-based; relating to audiences through images; and most importantly, using their language.

The project, initially funded through USAID’s Development Grants Program, has introduced a simple, yet innovative approach to climate change adaptation and resilience building. Applying all six communication principles, the “Adapt Able” board game has been used as a tool for raising awareness among communities about the need to conserve natural ecosystems, climate change implications on livelihoods and alternative practices to help them adapt to the impacts of climate change. The game was designed as an educational tool that helps communities understand

climate change and its impacts. The game has a visual appeal, is interactive, fun and has been proven to attract a large number of community members. This paves the way for community members to share experiences, creating a good foundation for discussion and decision-making. “Adapt Able” is not just a game for fun. It is about simplifying the climate change message. It is about creating a common platform for men and women to sit together and discuss their options. It is about the dos, don’ts and reasons behind climate change adaptation. What is fascinating about this game is that it can be adapted to any development sector, anywhere. For this reason, it truly can be said to be “Adapt Able”.



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### What's New

#### \* Making International Headlines:

Our very own “Reef Rescuers” project in the Seychelles caught the attention of CNN. See “Interesting Links” below. The project, funded under the USAID Development Grants Program is working to restore coral that have been bleached by intense climatic events over the past ten years.

#### \* Welcoming New Staff:

The Environment team has two staff that have joined during the month of July 2015, with three others expected soon.

Mahlodi Tau joins the team as Project Development Specialist-Environmental Governance.

Tawonga Ng’ambi joins the team as Project Management Assistant.

Robert Rhodes - will be joining us on August 3rd as the REED Office Chief.

John Harris - will likely be arriving in early September as a Natural Resources Officer.

Jeanette Normand will be arriving December 11 as an Environment Officer.

\* **A Sad Goodbye:** On a sad note, the team said an emotional farewell to Environment Team Leader, Roopa Karia during the month of July. Below: Roopa’s last field visit –Makuleke, South Africa.



### Building Capacity for Catchments-WESSAs Approach

The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) has embarked on a series of leadership seminars focusing on building the capacity of key stakeholders in catchment areas in South Africa. The seminars address capacity development needs, catchment issues and risks. Stakeholders targeted include influential people whose occupation requires sound understanding of environmental systems. The seminars also focus on providing a practical fieldwork activity for all participants in order to have hands-on experience. The seminars are relevant to the workplace needs of the participants and allow them to experience the challenges faced in natural resource use and options for sustainable solutions.

As of May 2015, there have been six seminars held with over 118 participants. Participation was from senior government officials, municipal officials, traditional leaders and representatives from a range of government departments. A key finding from the seminars is that building relationships that promote trust is crucial as is the manner through which the workshops are conducted.

The seminars are part of WESSA’s work under the USAID’s Stepping Up to Sustainability project aimed at helping citizens across the Southern Africa region cope with the stresses of climate change. Over 6000 participants have attended various presentations, workshops and trainings since the project began. In South Africa, eleven “Sustainability Commons” sites have been set up as spaces for learning and testing of tools and technologies for climate change adaptation. These include rain water harvesting and water storage, organic agriculture, solar power, solar cookers and heat retaining ‘wonder baskets.’

The project presents “change choice,” options for the participants to make their own choices for stepping up to sustainability. The project

values approaches that engage with the participants to impart pride and purpose in their ecological responsibilities. This is done through methods that encourage sharing of knowledge, experiences and views of participants.

To date, over 80 “Stories of Change” have been received from participants attending various training and workshops. These are narratives of how participants have taken the lessons learnt and practically applied them in their own environments. These are indicators of the positive impact on citizens as seen through the narratives of participants.



Above: Typical settings for WESSA’s field components

### Interesting Links

[http://edition.cnn.com/videos/intl\\_tv-shows/2015/06/29/seychelles-biodiversity-inside-africa-b-spc.cnn/video/playlists/intl-inside-africa/](http://edition.cnn.com/videos/intl_tv-shows/2015/06/29/seychelles-biodiversity-inside-africa-b-spc.cnn/video/playlists/intl-inside-africa/)

<http://natureseychelles.org/knowledge-centre/news-and-stories/latest-news/653-minister-launches-first-ever-coral-reef-restoration-training-program-in-seychelles>



## In the Spotlight: South Africa LEDS's Linda Manyuchi



Linda Manyuchi joined South Africa's Low Emissions Development (SA-LED) program in May 2015 as the Chief of Party. Her previous experience includes working with the Department of Science and Technology, the City of Johannesburg on climate change and air quality, as well as the South African Local Government Association. Her experience working on a Swiss-funded project, dealing with municipalities, and on promoting the implementation of programs, has led to her current role with the SA LEDS program.

Linda is very excited about the SA-LED program. Being a new initiative, this can make it quite challenging. So far, the program only has two staff members on board. As the Chief of Party, Linda is responsible for ensuring the project goes according to plan. Linda explains how "there is no typical day" for her at the office. She is currently doing everything that needs to be done. She meets with key stakeholders and donors, manages finances and human resources, and is working on developing the work plan for the year. Determination and passion is all you see as she speaks. With a busy schedule every single day, Linda has to sometimes stay in the office late to coordinate matters associated with doing business in South Africa as well as meeting American Government requirements.

Linda is very passionate about her work, viewing low emissions development as an area where there is a lot more that needs to be done. She enjoys new initiatives where she is able to see progress in greenhouse gas reduction. She finds it very rewarding to see new projects being implemented and in seeing municipalities getting involved and sustaining their efforts. Linda hopes to provide technical support to at least 5 projects by next year, and greatly appreciates the special effort from the US Government to empower local staff. Linda does not have one single role model. She prefers to take good examples from many people, appreciating the diversity that each person brings. She points out however that there will be things she will not always agree with. Linda absolutely adores her grandmother who she says has been a great influence for her. Listening to her speak, it is clear she has a strong compassion for people. Where possible, her passion is to look after people and make sure they are happy, but also expects kindness from people. When asked about her strongest beliefs, she explains how life is more important than material things, saying, "Life is a spirit; more than what we see. The stuff that we touch--your house--your car--it's not really real. What is more real is what you don't see." One cannot help but look at her strong, very focused, very caring character with admiration. In her free time, Linda likes to bake and do gardening. Close to her heart however, is the time she spends with her three children aged 4, 5 and 7. She absolutely loves watching animated movies with her children.

## AWARD's Strategic Partnerships With Local Government

Although local government is responsible for planning for water and biodiversity development, research shows that climate change and other environmental issues are often excluded in local planning. Technical and financial constraints are often cited as underlying reasons for the lack of inclusion. The Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin (RESILIM)-Oliphants Catchment project implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD), and working in the Oliphants River catchment has begun working with local municipalities in the area. Recognizing the role that municipalities play in making decisions related to resilience of both people and ecosystems, AWARD is providing support to municipalities in strategic planning for climate change. AWARD is focusing on building the capacity of municipalities to better understand the links between water resources, biodiversity and other natural resources, and municipal systems, practices and land use planning.

The Oliphants Catchment has a total of 25 district municipalities. Ten of these municipalities are located in South Africa, and 15 in Mozambique. The project has embarked on an exercise to raise awareness on climate change and biodiversity planning within these municipalities. This includes attending and contributing to environmental forums associated with municipalities. Activities include management of wastewater, protected areas management and zoning and land use planning. The main objective of building these strategic partnerships is to build more resilient municipalities that will help achieve the projects overall goal-to reduce vulnerability of people and ecosystems in the Oliphants Catchment through improved transboundary governance and management of natural resources.

The five-year, \$10.7 million initiative funded by USAID's Development Grants Program (DGP) promotes new ways of thinking and acting to improve integrated water and biodiversity management.

*The U.S. Agency for International Development provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance worldwide. USAID supports people's efforts to develop themselves and their countries. In Southern Africa, the United States seeks to increase trade and strengthen economic ties within the region, address the HIV/AIDS crisis, mitigate recurrent food insecurity, and strengthen democracy to reduce the risk of conflict in the region. USAID/Southern Africa, located in Pretoria, South Africa, complements and enhances USAID's bilateral programs in the region, supporting unique and innovative regional activities and providing a range of services to assist USAID missions in the region.*

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For more information about USAID/Southern Africa Environmental projects, please go to: <http://www.usaid.gov/southern-africa-regional>