



Southern African Young Water Professionals

Newsletter Volume 2 Issue 1

<http://www.wisa.org.za/ywp>

WELCOME

The soccer world cup is now all done and dusted and for most of us that means getting back to the grindstone to finish projects, start the second semester of our studies or do just get back to our day-to-day duties. Well done to Bafana for keeping our name high and to everyone who made this an enjoyable event!!!

As most of you know by this time the management committee for the SAYWP changed during the past WISA 2010 conference. Words of gratitude to the past committee lead by Jo Burgess for all the wonderful things they have done to promote the YWP's in South Africa. Welcome to the new committee, we have our work cut out for us but with the help of all the YWP's I am sure we will be able to build on the foundation laid for us.

The time has come to get all you YWP's actively involved in the YWP so that everyone gets as much from the programme as possible. In order for us to achieve this we changed the format of the newsletter so that we can follow who has been doing what, what has been happening around SA and the world, to give you information on institutions and people working in the water sector and a section dedicated to grooming YWP's for the road ahead. In order for us to make this work we do however need your help with getting all the information to us, so don't be shy let us hear from you.

WHO WAS SEEN WHERE

A Young Water Professionals (Gauteng) Event at TUKS: "Being heard in Water Policy debates"

Submitted by Nienaber, S., Funke, N., and Jacobs, I.



On 10 May 2010 the University of Pretoria Political Sciences Department hosted the Young Water Professionals (YWP), the Young Scholars Forum in Transboundary Water Governance (YSF) and the CSIR, for a collaborative event titled "*Being heard in water policy debates*".

The event was attended by young professionals and students from the Political Science Department, the CSIR, the Department of Water Affairs, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, the University of Johannesburg, and Kings College in the UK.

The issue of the science policy interface was explored in a number of ways. Firstly, a theoretical presentation about evidence-based-policy-making was given by Shanna Nienaber and Nikki Funke of the CSIR, and former students of the University of Pretoria's Political Science Department. This provided an overview of the issue. This was followed up by a presentation from the Department of Water Affairs who offered reflections "about policy makers, from policymakers" particularly looking at how evidence is utilized in their daily work and the challenges thereof.

With this background information in place the participants then engaged in an interactive role-playing exercise entitled "The White Paper on National Water Policy for South Africa: A complex policy development process for a complex array of actors". This exercise simulated the diverse set of role players that were involved in producing the water legislation that we have in South Africa today. By stepping into the shoes of the various actors involved in this policy development process, participants were able to understand the complexity of policy development, the way that evidence is generated to support a variety of, at times, conflicting stances,



and the value of trans-disciplinary perspectives in dealing with complex policy issues. All in all, this event aimed to encourage the recognition and mutual respect of multiple perspectives. Events such as these highlight the benefit of transdisciplinarity, with young water professionals strategically placed to take up the challenges in the water sector.

It not only offered participants an informative, fun and thought provoking topic to explore and consider, it also served as a platform to introduce the YWP (Gauteng chapter), currently chaired by Renay van Wyk; as well as an affiliated initiative known

as the *Forum for Scholars in Transboundary Water Governance* (YSF), initiated by Inga Jacobs and Shanna Nienaber. This is a trans-disciplinary forum aiming to build a community and network of young water professionals interested in water governance in SADC. It also aims to create opportunities for younger and more experienced water professionals to interact and share knowledge, as well as incentivising social science perspectives in the water sector.

WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND?

Research reports that 'grow dust on shelves' rather than being used in the 'light of day': Some musings about the science-policy interface

Submitted by Shanna Nienaber

Right, so you're a Young Water Professional and you're in the business of knowledge and innovation production for the water sector in some way or another. Part of what you're expected to do to grow your career and reputation is to create knowledge and solutions for the water sector that are relevant, real and impactful for the multiple challenges, needs and issues facing society today.

This is, at least in part, about gaining the personal fulfilment of 'making a difference' with your work. It's also however, practically tied to the reality that funding agencies and policy-makers need you to prove that your work makes enough of an impact to merit further funding in future.

This is likely to leave you with a bit of an existential crisis from time to time because achieving impact is, quite frankly, easier said than done as it's seldom a process that you personally have total control over. Ultimately, if you hope to 'change the world' with your research you need someone in the policy-making process to take an interest in learning about you and what you do. Then with a bit of luck, your work will be taken up and interpreted by some policy mechanism that will allow policy-makers who are involved with the complex task of implementing change and solutions to bring your research results into effect on the ground.

This makes sense right? You spend a lot of time researching, exploring and creating solutions to complex problems in the water sector. A policymaker then needs to take these solutions, incorporate them into policy, and thus make more effective policy. Why then has this process proven to be so difficult to achieve in reality? Recent research offers a number of ideas about all this.

Firstly, scientists and engineers often forget their place in the bigger policymaking picture. Whilst we like to believe that what we do is really important, useful, and special; there are thousands of other actors out there who think exactly the same thing. Executive policy-makers in water affairs have ideas about what the best solutions are and why, industry knows exactly how to produce evidence that help them to continue business pretty much as usual, other scientists may produce work that has a different perspective to yours, trade unions and interests groups and individuals and the press all have agendas and perspectives that they lobby government to incorporate into practise. It's in the middle of this right old muddle that your science has to compete to be heard.

Secondly, not only do you have to compete to be heard, you're also not competing on an equal playing field. As soon as you set your research free into the public and policy arena it becomes part of the complex game of politics. To win you need to understand, work with and gain power. If you don't have power and influence you need to find a powerful friend or tons of less powerful friends who may help you to gain strength in numbers. Put simply, to help your evidence to be heard you need to network extensively with a wide variety of official policy makers and civil society actors who are dealing (or should be dealing) with similar issues to you.

Thirdly, networking is going to place new demands on you as a person. It's going to take time (which you often

won't have the budget for so it's extra work). It's also going to mean that you'll have to learn to talk with, respect, understand and trust people who you just don't naturally click with. Upright, rigid, accuracy driven scientists are going to need to work with sensationalist activists and media journalists. Social scientists are going to need to learn to grasp the fancy jargon and graphs and numbers that those natural scientists and engineers work with. The possibilities are endless.

Whilst, I'll grant you that, this all sounds a little over-powering, *there is absolutely not reason to give up!* As young water professionals we are uniquely positioned to rise to this challenge of making our science heard in order to make a difference to South African society. This is, however, going to demand that we:

- become entrepreneurial about how we 'market' our research,
- open-minded about the connections and networks that we build,
- and committed to working and thinking in a transdisciplinary manner.

It is only by working with people from multiple different disciplines, perspectives and parts of the policymaking arena that we can hope to come up with integrated and relevant solutions to the problems we face in our sector.

The Young Scholars Forum in Transboundary Water Governance in Southern Africa (YSF) has been established to increase the awareness of the need for transdisciplinarity in the water sector. This initiative encourages the recognition and mutual respect of multiple perspectives to develop water solutions that are both technically innovative and socio-politically relevant to the water sectors of our region. In collaboration with the Young Water Professionals, YSF organizes workshops and facilitates transdisciplinary collaborative work for students and young water professionals to grow their competence in water in order to create solutions that stand a chance of bridging the science-policy divide.

For more information about YSF please contact Shanna Nienaber: snienaber@csir.co.za

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If you are studying at a particular university or working for a certain company there must be something that drew you there and that makes you want to get up to go to work. Let us know where you are studying or working and why YWP's should consider this institution. Send us information on why to consider this university or company, background about the university or company as well as contact details for how to contact the university or company and we will include it in the next issues of the newsletter.

All information can be emailed to tgbarnd@uj.ac.za.

YWP GROOMING SHOP

What should my CV contain? What should I wear to an interview? How do I network? Where can I learn to speak French for that dream job at the WHO?

We all battle with these questions and more. Our aim is to assist YWP's from SA and Africa in answering these questions, starting from the next issue. We already have some ideas about what we want to learn to improve our lives, like:

- How to become a star presenter
- How to network with leaders in the field
- Where to learn to speak French for a job at the WHO

But let us hear from you. What do you think we should include in this section? Don't be shy, tell us what you are struggling with and we will get advice from the leaders in the field, ensuring that you become the best YWP you can be!

All requests can be emailed to tgbarnd@uj.ac.za.

SITES TO VISIT

- Visit the new database developed by Springer, SpringerImages, at www.springerimages.com/about.aspx.

- Subscribe to the National Science and Technology Forum electronic newsletter to get information and links to national and international SETI news items and links. You can subscribe at www.nstf.org.za.
- Be sure to visit the National Research Foundations website (www.nrf.ac.za) for the newest funding opportunities, joint science and technology cooperation, student bursaries etc.
- Subscribe to www.my-water-career.com to view job vacancies and water-related course announcements in various countries.
- Join “ResearcherID” today at <http://www.researcherid.com/>. This is a global, multi-disciplinary scholarly research community developed by Thomson Reuters. Search the registry to find collaborators, review publication lists and explore how research is used around the world. Registration is free and offers a way to, among other things, increase visibility & recognition and measure performance of research
- UK Collaborative on Development Sciences published the book “Science and Innovational Development” and you can download the entire book (PDF 29.1 MB) from http://www.ukcds.org.uk/assets/file/book/science_innovation_book_lowres.pdf.

WHERE TO BE SEEN

Visit the WISA website at to get more information on the following upcoming events:

[Youth in Construction Exhibition](#): 8-11 Sept 2010: Gauteng

[Water in the Southern African Minerals Industry Conference](#) - 15-17 February 2011, Ingwenyama Conference & Sport Resort, White River

[AfriWater: The Biennial Water and Waste Exhibition and Conference](#) - 13-15 Sept 2011, MTN Expo Center, NASREC, Gauteng

Visit the IWA website at http://www.iwahq.org/Home/Events/IWA_events/Event_listing/2010/ to get information on the following upcoming events:

[Young Water Professionals Workshop at Water Week 2010](#) - Stockholm, Sweden, 5-Sep-2010

[Hydroinformatics](#) - Tianjin, China, 07-Sep-10 - 10-Sep-10

[1st IWA Young Water Professionals Workshop at IFAT](#) - Munich, Germany, 12-Sep-2010

[Diffuse Pollution](#) - Mont Sainte-Anne, Canada, 12-Sep-10 - 17-Sep-10

[Young Water Professionals Workshop at the WWC2010](#) - Montreal, Canada, 19-Sep-2010

[World Water Congress](#) - Montreal, Canada, 19-Sep-10 - 24-Sep-10

[Wetlands Systems](#) - Venice, Italy, 04-Oct-10 - 07-Oct-10

[13th International Riversymposium](#) - Adelaide, Brisbane, Australia, 11-Oct-10 - 14-Oct-10

[Membrane Technology and Water Reuse \(Regional Conference\)](#) - Istanbul, Turkey, 17-Oct-10 - 20-Oct-10

[Marine Waste Water Discharge](#) - Langkawi, Malaysia, 25-Oct-10 - 29-Oct-10

[Anaerobic Digestion](#) - Guadalajara, Mexico, 31-Oct-10 - 04-Nov-10

[Water Safety Conference: Managing Drinking Water Quality for Public Health](#) - Kuching, Malaysia, 02-Nov-10 - 04-Nov-10

[Sewer Processes and Networks](#) - Surfers Paradise, Australia, 07-Nov-10 - 10-Nov-10

[Water & Energy](#) - Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 10-Nov-10 - 12-Nov-10

[3rd IWA Asia Pacific Young Water Professionals](#) – Singapore, 21-24 November 2010

Also look out for:

[11th WaterNet/WARFSA/GWP-SA Symposium](#) - Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 27th-29th of October 2010

<http://www.waternetonline.ihe.nl/>

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Please contact Renay van Wyk (Gauteng chapter; rvanwyk@uj.ac.za), Maronel Steyn (Western Cape chapter; msteyn@csir.co.za), Preshanthie Naicker (KwaZulu Natal chapter; presh.naicker@gmail.com) or TG Barnard (Chair; tgbarnard@uj.ac.za) if

1. you have any queries or suggestions on improving the newsletter
2. want to start a regional chapter
3. want to join either WISA and / or IWA
4. or just simply want to chat

Please note that IWA if you join IWA between June and September and join for 2010 - 2012 you will receive 50% discount on the membership fees for 2010. To join as an individual member, download the application form at http://www.iwahq.org/Home/Membership/Become_a_member/Individual and return to members@iwahq.org.