



Module 3

Topic 3.4: Case study examples of learning processes and interventions

Introduction

This topic provides a collection of five different learning process case studies that showcase different ways in which learning processes have been designed and implemented. The purpose of this topic is to provide practical examples of how the theory and methods you have been learning about in Topics 3,1, 3,2 and 3,3 have been and can be employed in practice. Most of these case studies were of long term learning processes that required careful planning and implementation of many smaller learning activities over several months. This does not mean that you will be required to develop and implement a long term learning process or program. Some of you will be designing longer-term learning processes that extend well beyond this course and be in line with the work that you do while others will be designing once-off learning activities. Rather, these case studies provide examples of how other people have planned and run learning processes in natural resource management contexts.

The five case studies have been uploaded to the ToT Youtube channel, the links of each are provided under each case study description below. Review the case studies and complete the activity at the end of the handout.

Case Study 1: A learning intervention to improve the functioning of a Catchment Management Forum, a multi-stakeholder participatory water governance platform. This Case Study tells the story of how a learning intervention was facilitated with and for the Makana Water Forum in Makhanda, Eastern Cape, where together, learning facilitators and the management committee of the Forum explored ways in which to overcome challenges

constraining the ability of the Forum to support participatory water governance. The learning process relates strongly with the *learning as transformation* learning metaphor with its use of expansive learning theory to promote change in the Makana Water Forum activity system.

[Link to Case Study 1 Video:](#)

Case Study 2: Taryn will share some reflections on the Changing Practice course run by the ELRC and EMG with community-based activists in the Olifants River catchment in 2017 / 18. In this project, our role as facilitators was to support participants to describe environmental concerns in their context. Participants then identify their own ‘change project’; from these locally developed cases, we work together to develop strategic partnerships to bring about change. The change projects become the focus for the development of the participants’ knowledge about their specific context, as well as about broader cause and effect relationships that affect their context, and the development of strong networks and the confidence to take action to bring about change. In such a learning process, the facilitators have to be open to learning with and from the participants who are experts on their local context; and to being open and flexible enough to adapting the course to respond to challenging issues that emerge from the group, such as issues of power dynamics related to gender and race; as well as issues of trauma that many activists carry as a result of their work.

[Link to Case Study 2 Video:](#)

Case Study 3: Social learning to support adaptation to climate change. This case study presents practical insights on social learning from a participatory social learning process that evolved to support individual and community level adaptation to the myriad of stressors affecting rural people. It is based on engagements in two communities in the rural Eastern Cape region of South Africa.

The social learning process was developed as part of a broader scientific research project on vulnerability and adaptation to climate change and other stressors, with a focus on knowledge building, led by a team of researchers and facilitators from Rhodes University (see Cundill et al (2014), full details below, for more information on this project).

The most critical factor emerging through the experience of this social learning process is how facilitators see their roles and their relationships with participants. It is essential to strive for a balance between responsiveness and guidance, achieved through an approach that is open, based on a principle of seeking equality, and one that is fully prepared to follow a path different from the one that may have originally been envisaged. This

adaptive approach embraces the concept of co-learning and was one of the objectives of the social learning processes embarked on in this project.

In this case study, presented via video, Georgina Cundill discusses her experiences of working in this social learning process, followed by a brief interview facilitated by Jessica Cockburn to explore linkages to the social learning approaches which are the focus of the Training of Trainers short course.

Reference:

Cundill, G., Shackleton, S., Sisitka, L., Ntshudu, M., Lotz-Sisitka, H., Kulundu, I., Hamer, N. (2014) Social learning for adaptation: a descriptive handbook for practitioners and action researchers. IDRC/Rhodes University/Ruliv. Available online: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/handle/10625/52509>

[Link to Case Study 3 Video:](#)

Case Study 4: This is a commentary/podcast-format case study in which three researchers Ms Kim Weaver, Ms Mandilive Matiwane and Dr Luke Metelerkamp reflect on learning processes associated with the Amanzi for Food Project. This Project sought to enable co-learning around different rainwater harvesting and conservation techniques to promote food production. Stakeholders involved in the co-learning processes included farmers, extension services, agricultural education and training institutions and agricultural NGOs and CBOs. This case study touches on some of the learning processes including an agricultural focussed Training of Trainers course, a stakeholder learning network and a particular focus on agricultural demonstration plots. The demonstration plots were designed and used as tools to catalyse learning around rainwater harvesting and conservation practices. This Case study is under the final development by the authors and will be uploaded after the 8th of February.

[Link to Case Study 4 Video](#)

Case Study 5: By Maletje Mponwana and Reuben Thifhulufhelwi - Reflections on transformative learning processes for capacity building towards improved transboundary water and biodiversity governance. Please note these are reflections from a large-scale catchment based programme called the RESILIM-O (Resilience in the Limpopo Basin-Olifants), which was a 5-year USAID funded project which was implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD). The main aim of this programme was to work towards building capacity to strengthen the resilience of communities and institutions under different climate change scenarios within the Olifants Catchment. In order to build the resilience, the programme was aimed at reducing the vulnerability of people and ecosystems in the Olifants Catchment specifically, by improving how

transboundary natural resources are managed. By understanding the systemic causes of vulnerability, including climate vulnerability, it was promoting new ways of thinking and acting to promote integrated water and biodiversity management. (through the adoption of science-based strategies and systemic and social learning approaches).

The project was structured in two phases: phase 1 (2014-2015) and phase 2 (2015-2017/9). Phase 1 comprised of contextual understanding, synthesis, research, etc. It was intended to aid in understanding the multiple drivers of environmental (climate) change within the Olifants catchment. Some of the insights from the contextual profile were: Unchecked pollution, inappropriate land resource use, weak and poorly enforced policies and regulations and poor protection of habitats and biodiversity are degrading the Olifants at an alarming rate. What's more, the area is however under threat from factors such as mining for heavy metals, inappropriate land management, rural sprawl and unsustainable use of natural resources. This affects the level of goods and services provided by the ecosystem. The diverse population groups living in the Olifants Catchment all have one thing in common; they rely on the river and the catchment's natural biodiversity for their livelihoods. This reliance can be direct or indirect. Rural communities rely on it for things such as traditional medicine, grazing and browse, fuel, food and housing materials. Some people in river-side communities harvest reeds, collect water from the river for washing and drinking and use it for recreational and spiritual practices. Subsistence farmers in Mozambique rely on the catchment's flood plains. There are also large mines and associated industries, large scale agriculture and the wildlife economy, which all rely on a healthy, functioning river system. Often people forget that what they do upstream affects people downstream, sometimes with dire consequences. Whilst phase 2 comprised innovation, testing, embedding and institutionalizing of new practices for systemic management and governance (taking the outputs from phase 1 into action through testing, reflection, and hence institutionalisation).

The project comprised of four themes (Systemic resilience approach, integration and coherency, support for Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), support for Biodiversity (BD) conservation in high priority areas, and support for capacity development through social learning). The different themes were designed to work together towards attaining the overarching RESILIM-O goal. AWARD's way of working in all its projects was attention to processes that foster a 'safe' learning space where people participate with each other to create new ideas or meanings. A number of tools and frameworks were applied as part of the testing and institutionalization of resilience-based practices. A systemic basin-wide approach to natural resources governance was key in the implementation of the project.

For more details see AWARD webpage:

<http://award.org.za/index.php/projects/usaid-resilm-o/>

[Link to Case Study 5 Video](#)

ACTIVITY:

Analyse the design of any two case studies and note how they might inform the design of your learning process (see Assignment 3)



Listen to each of the case studies. Select two case studies that resonate with you and using the template of questions provided below, analyse the design elements of the case study. Note the design elements that might be useful in informing the design of your learning process. Discuss your analysis within a study buddy and your tutor group.

1. What was the learning activity?
2. Who mediated it, for whom?
3. What was the purpose?
4. What was the context in which it took place?
5. What did the learners already know?
6. What did they need to learn?
7. What method(s) were followed/how was learning facilitated, and why?
8. What resources were used?
9. What did you learn about the useful methods and processes / the facilitation of learning, from the case study that might be useful in the design of your learning process?