

National Adaptation Plan Advocacy Capacity Building among Civil Society Organisations Pilot Project Report

28 October 2025

Introduction

This report constitutes the second written report on the National Adaptation Plan Advocacy Capacity Building among Civil Society Organisations Pilot Project being undertaken by the Adaptation Network (AN) with funding support from the NAP Global Network (NGN) via its host organisation, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). The AN is further supported in this project by its host organisation, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), and the communication function of the AN provided by Mycelium Media Colab. This report covers the ‘Implementation Phase 2’ (62004RLDA7) of the project.

Deliverables

The following deliverables are associated with Implementation Phase 1:

1. Map policy environment (partially carried over from Implementation Phase 1)
2. Policy engagement and advocacy workshops
3. Policy engagement strategy development
4. Brief report (2-page) on workshops
5. Provide regular updates on progress of the project to IISD

Project Progress

Implementation Phase 2 saw the bulk of project activities taking place with the convening of a full five-day in-person policy engagement and advocacy workshop. This was in fulfilment of Deliverable 2, namely ‘Policy engagement and advocacy workshops’. Attendance included:

- Two, and in some instances three, representatives from the four participating community-based organisations
- Two representatives each from a) a gender and climate advocacy organisation, and b) a youth and persons with disabilities advocacy organisation.
- Four representatives from the Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)
- One representative from the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD)
- One representative from the University of Fort Hare (UFH), one of the previously disadvantaged universities in the Eastern Cape.

Each day had a particular focus, threaded together by the larger aim of the workshop to strengthen policy engagement and deepen advocacy around the rights of marginalised groups, as captured in workshop Graphic Harvest 1. All graphic harvests in this report were created by [Claire Rousell](#), a member of the [Mycelium Media Colab](#). Project progress reported here therefore follows the programme agenda, highlighting deliverables where relevant.

Day 1 – Deepening Understanding of Key Concepts

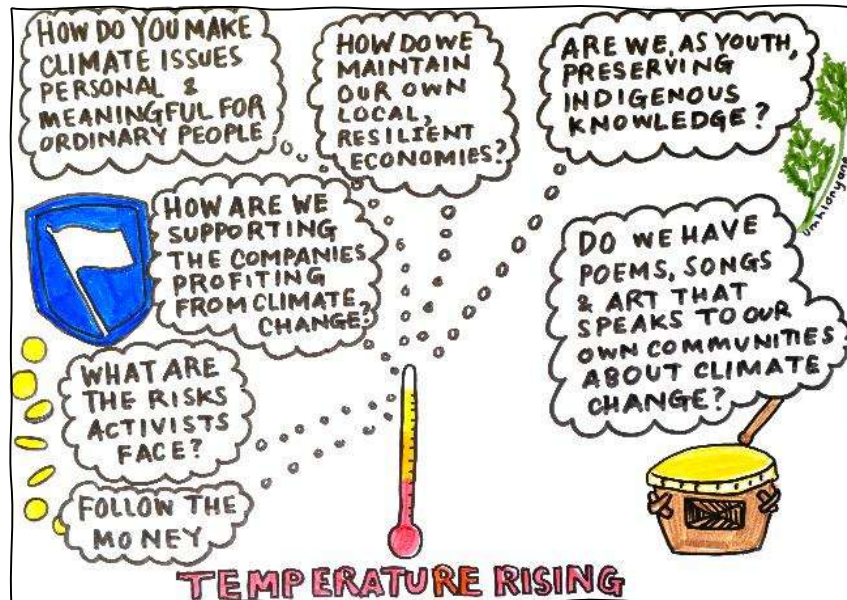
Following introductions and some ice breakers, the first activity of the workshop was to agree on the aim and objectives of the workshop. This is captured in Graphic Harvest 1.



Graphic Harvest 1: Workshop aim

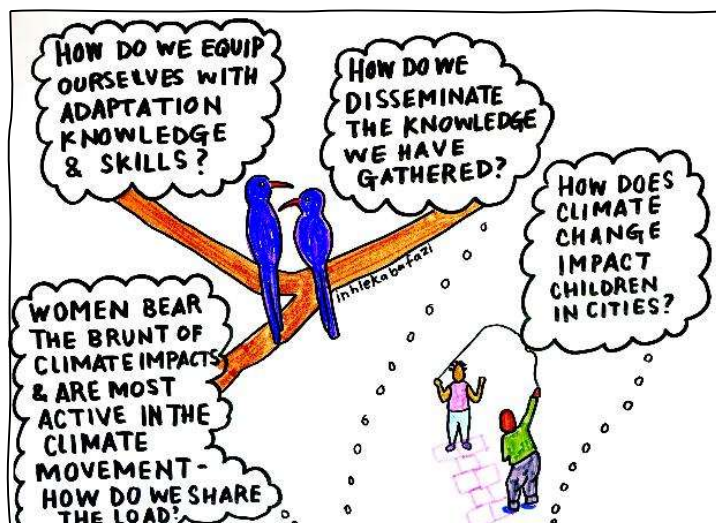
The key concepts unpacked on Day 1 included climate adaptation and intersectionality, and the relationship between these two concepts. The day opened with a discussion amongst participating groups on the pre-workshop exercises that had been done on identifying the climate impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation needs of the groups. [This content](#), developed over three weeks, provided a useful foundation by grounding the work in people's own lived experiences of climate change and adaptation options. Participants' pre-workshop reflections on this exercise can be found [here](#).

This was followed by a facilitated viewing of the film 'Temperature Rising', which showcases the three activists' perspectives on climate change in South Africa, captured in Graphic Harvest 2. The facilitation was led by a local youth, Noluthando Mdayi, who is part of the [Sunshine Cinema's Impact Facilitator Network](#). The film set the tone around advocacy and climate change, as captured in Graphic Harvest 2, and a rich discussion followed.



Graphic Harvest 2: Some of the discussion points following the screening of 'Temperature Rising'

In the absence of a formal presentation on [‘Women Take the Care Burden in Adaptation’](#) prepared by Ndivile Mokoena of GenderCC, who was delayed in the rural Eastern Cape due to flooding, her colleague Noluthando Lebaka, gave an informal introduction to intersectionality and climate change through the gender lens. Reflecting on the screening while drawing on her project work in the Johannesburg area, she wove the initial threads of intersectionality into the adaptation and advocacy quilt the workshop was slowly developing. Reflecting the ensuing discussion, Graphic Harvest 3 draws an analogy using the cacophonous birds, [‘inhlekabafazi’](#) or the [Green Wood Hoopoe](#), that travel from tree to tree seemingly announcing the news as they go, accompanying the question, “how do we disseminate the knowledge we have gathered?” Presenting this drawing to the participants at the end of the session, Claire Rousell (the artist), posed the following question: “Can these colourful and cacophonous birds could teach us something about ‘spreading the news’?”



Graphic Harvest 3: Climate advocacy

Pictured in Figure 1, Thembelihle Ngcai and Onele Jakavula, the Chairperson and Secretary General of the Eastern Cape branch of Disabled Youth South Africa (DYSA), picked up the intersectionality, climate change and advocacy thread with a powerful [presentation](#) on the importance of inclusivity in climate adaptation approaches.



Figure 1: Onele Jakavula and Thembelihle Ngcai, Secretary General and Chairperson respectively of the Eastern Cape chapter of Disabled Youth South Africa prepared a presentation on inclusivity in adaptation



As illustrated in Graphic Harvest 4, Thembelihle, who delivered the presentation, highlighted the disproportionate impacts of climate change on people with disabilities. Cautioning against viewing the persons with disabilities community as a homogenous group, she emphasized the need to recognise the diversity of climate impact experiences being felt across the range of disabilities. The inclusion therefore of this community within adaptation planning and implementation would require broad consultation and a sufficient evidence-base. On the latter, she noted a gap in data on persons with disability, particularly data that is sufficiently disaggregated to reflect the diversity embodies within this community.



Graphic Harvest 4: Marginalised groups and climate adaptation

She concluded by presenting an inspiring disability-aware vision for a climate just future – a visual representation of which is contained in Graphic Harvest 5.



Graphic Harvest 5: Vision for a disability-aware climate just future

The afternoon session was convened by Sanelisiwe Yekani, a performer with the [Well Worn Theatre Company](#), as well as a theatre and performance lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand. Sane, in collaboration with Jacqueline van Meygaarden, a theatre practitioner and film producer from Mycelium Media Colab, had prepared a number of exercises to take the group through that spoke to climate vulnerability and intersectionality. Drawing on an array of props she brought with her, Sane masterfully led the participants through a set of warm-up games and exercises, an example of which is included as Text Box 1, designed to foster participation.



Text Box 1: Example of warm up theatre game

THEATRE GAME: “This is not a stick”

Purpose

This game loosens people up, acquaints them with the props in the space, and sparks creativity - all important for role-play.

Setup

There will be a pile of props at the centre of our circle, e.g. scarves, sticks, beads, crutches.

Action

One person picks a prop and uses it as something totally different during a climate crisis that is called out by the facilitator or fellow participants, for example, a scarf becomes a rope during a flood, a cup becomes a cell phone during a storm.

Everyone takes turns.

Thereafter she introduced a range of climate impact scenarios for participant groups to enact, adding increasing levels of vulnerability to the characters and circumstances, and thus bringing home the compounding challenges associated with intersectional identities. A collage of images from these exercises presented in Figure 2 bear testament to the level of participation and positive uptake of this approach.



Figure 2: Participants enacting skits exploring climate change and intersectionality

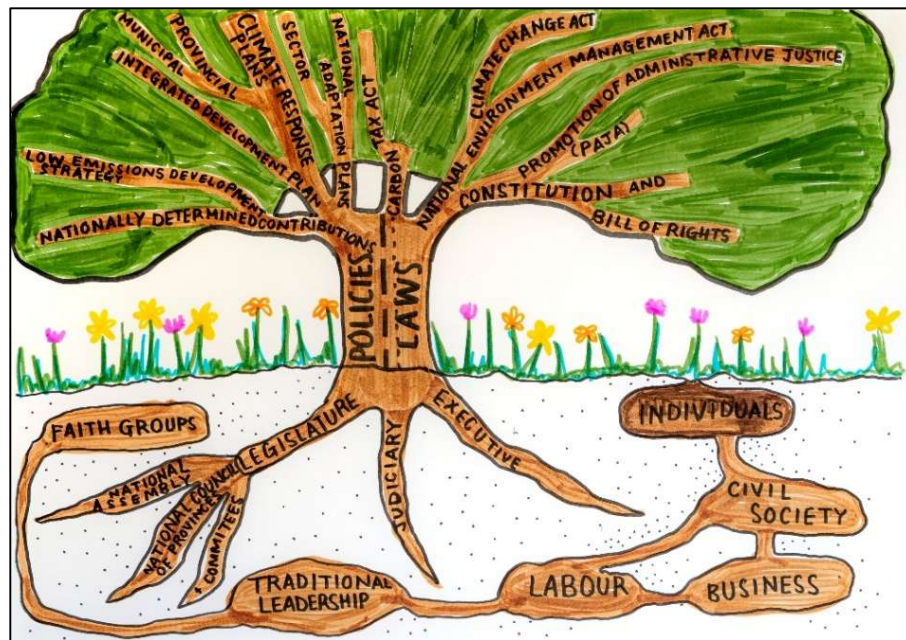
Day 2 – Understanding the Policy Environment

The morning session on the second day was convened by Brandon Abdinor, a climate advocacy lawyer from the [Centre for Environmental Rights \(CER\)](#), and [Commissioner on the Presidential Climate Commission \(PCC\)](#). Brandon presented a framing of the social, legal and political structures that make up the advocacy and climate change space in South Africa and globally. As reflected in Graphic Harvest 6, he introduced the importance of Climate Justice as a framing approach that considers colonialism and capitalism as some of the root causes of the climate crisis. It also centres those who have contributed the least to the climate crisis and are largely the most impacted by it.



Graphic Harvest 6: Climate Justice as a policy advocacy framing

As reflected in Graphic Harvest 7, he also introduced some of pertinent national legislation, policies, and key stakeholder groups as well as taking the group through the development and content of the Climate Change Act.



Graphic Harvest 7: National policy context

Following this, as depicted in Figure 3, a card game was played which had been developed for the occasion. The first part of the game consisted of cards representing the points in the process of creating legislation, such as the Climate Change Act. These included cards depicting the fundamental principles of democracy, through to the promulgation of an Act. Groups were tasked with correctly sequencing a mixed deck, which resulted in a lot of debate and fun as the groups laid out their take on the order of things. This exercise really helped to embed the learning on a topic that can be quite dry and abstract, but which is vital for those wishing to input on policy to understand. It also underscored the importance of active citizenry. Participants then drew on the ‘climate change policy role players’ cards to map out the role players and public participation / comment points in the legislation-making process that they would target for their advocacy. These were complimented by the ‘channels of engagement’ cards, which reflected a range of actions and channels participants could use to convey their advocacy messages. This activity delivered another component of the ‘mapping the policy environment’ deliverable.

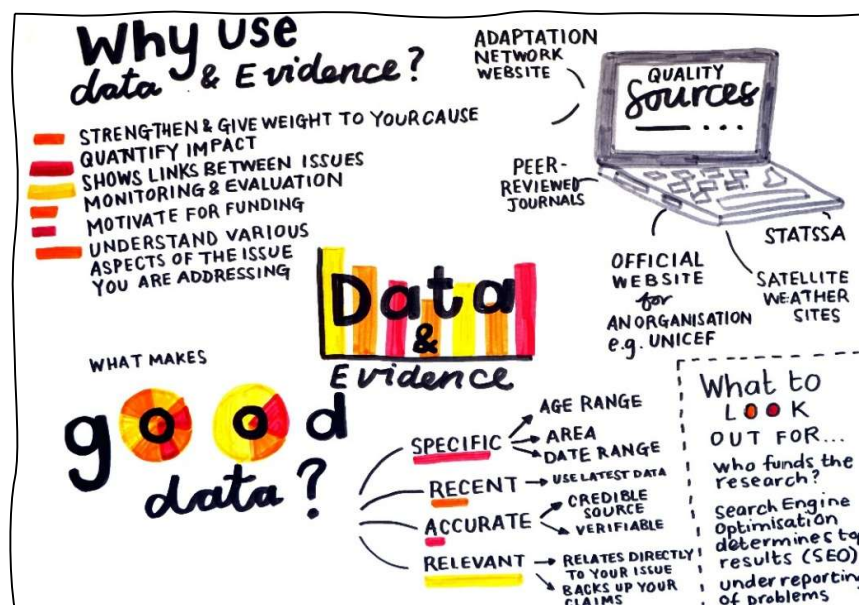


Figure 3: Some of the cards and activities taking place around the Policy & Advocacy Cards

The afternoon session started with a ChatGPT tutorial led by Mycelium Media Colab's Natalie Nolte. As the uptake and use of AI has been swift, many are not aware of the pitfalls, as well as the means of optimising the contribution AI can bring to an advocacy campaign. Natalie gave some pointers and tips as well as taking the group through some practical exercises.

Advocacy requires sound evidence to present a compelling case, and integrating quantitative evidence with poignant storytelling can be a powerful way to reach both policy makers and affected communities alike. The afternoon session therefore covered both quantitative data sources and a practical tutorial on storytelling through photography. The quantitative session was led by Shadrek Muchaku, a researcher from the University of Fort Hare (UFH), who

introduced the group to some reputable online datasets, stressing the importance of ensuring that data is accurate, current, specific and relevant. He also took participants through some practical exercises of finding data relevant to their advocacy on the Statistics South Africa website. Penny, the AN Coordinator then gave the participant a short introduction to the AN's '[Climate Information Tool](#)' webpage which contains links to numerous reputable data climate information data sources. This session is captured in Graphic Harvest 8.



Graphic Harvest 8: Evidence for Climate Advocacy

Displaying the range of her skills, Natalie led the final session of the day – a practical exercise in storytelling through photography. This is captured in Graphic Harvest 9 and photographs in Figure 4.



Graphic Harvest 9



Figure 4: Learning about the effective use of photography for storytelling.



Day 3 – The Climate Change Act (NAS) and the UNFCCC

Mikateko Sithole from the DFFE's Adaptation Chief Directorate, led the morning session which involved a [detailed presentation](#) and discussion on the content and implementation of the Climate Change Act. She also introduced the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), highlighting the outputs the DFFE is mandated to produce that form part of South Africa's participation in the Paris Agreement. One of these is the National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) – a key element of the implementation of the Climate Change Act, which serves as South Africa's National Adaptation Plan (NAP). The presentation was supported by visual materials developed by Claire Rousell as part of the project activities. These included Figure 5, depicting the adaptation components of the Climate Change Act; and Figure 6, a rough timeline of the implementation of the Act. Photographs of the session are shown in Figure 7.

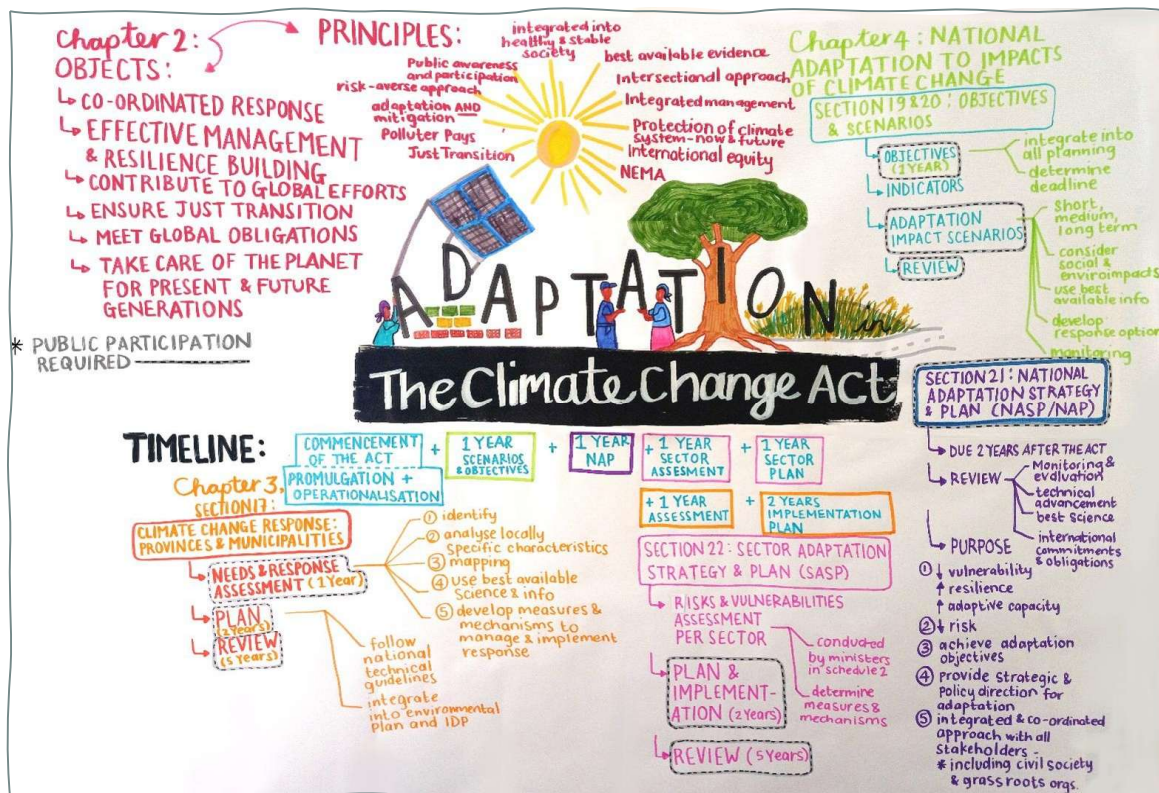


Figure 5: Visualisation of the adaptation components in the Climate Change Act

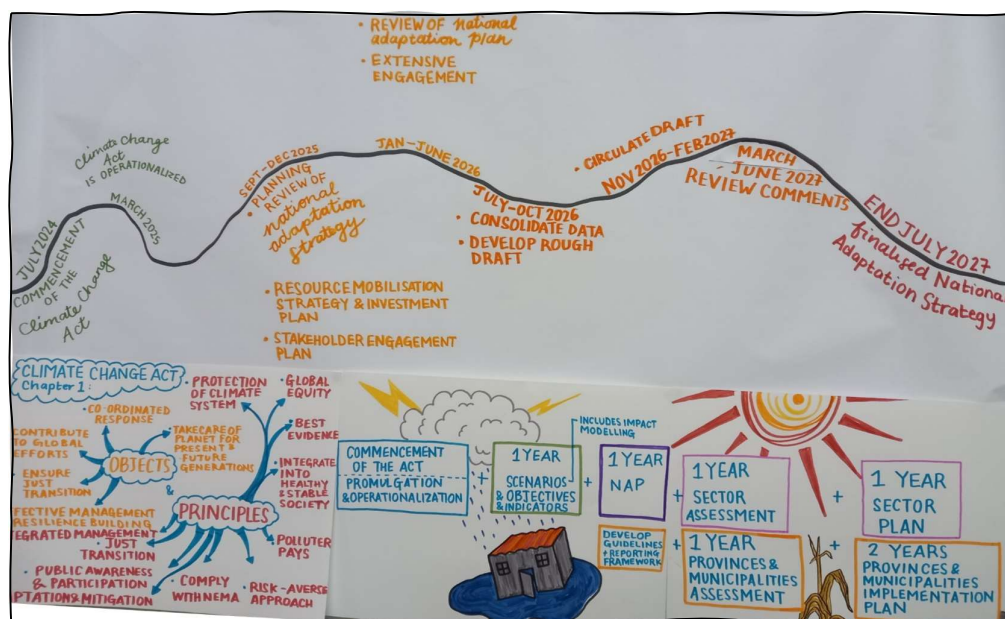


Figure 6: Anticipated timeline of the implementation of the Climate Change Act

The presentation was followed by a rich question and answer and discussion session, which illuminated some of the challenges faced by government officials like long lead in times to get budgets and activities approved, budget and capacity constraints, etc. The relatively small size



Figure 7: The DFFE official, AN Coordinator and artist engaged during the session on the implementation of the Climate Change Act

of the group, along with the level of trust and cooperation between the AN and the officials, enabled a frank discussion, which proved invaluable to all participants.

Sanelisiwe Yekani and Jacqueline van Meygaarden led the afternoon session, using theatre to explore some of the barriers to engagement in the policy space. Two separate exercises were enacted. The first included acting out a public engagement skit that involved swapping of roles between policy makers and community organisations. This was very revealing, especially when those acting out the role of the government officials got so frustrated that they reverted back to being ‘community members’. This was a very humorous moment!

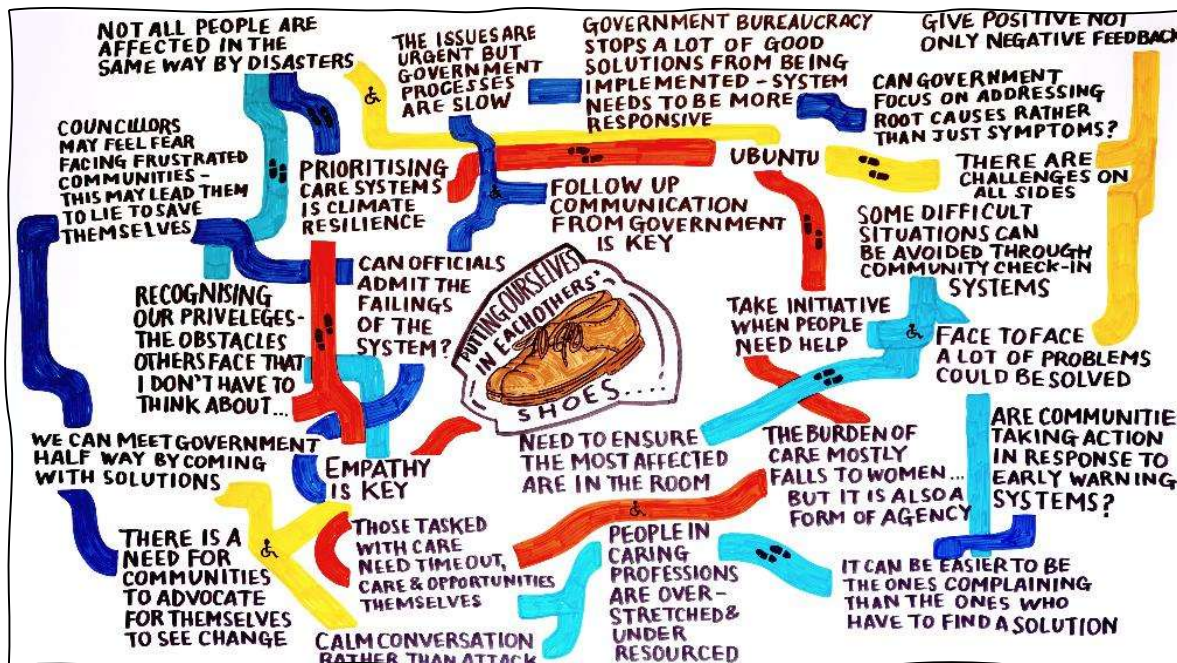
The second drew on a theatre technique called ‘Forum Theatre’, in which a small group play out a scene that leads to conflict, and the audience stops the acting when they recognise a point that could be played out differently, thus resulting in a different outcome. The audience member either steps in to the role and acts out the alternative, or directs the actors to do so. This is a powerful method of changing behavioural pathways. Small groups devised and acted out scenes that are common frustration points for them in their engagements between government and civil society, and the group applied the method to introduce alternatives. This was a great learning opportunity in terms of alternative approaches, which has already been adopted by one of the participating groups in their engagement with government officials post the workshop.

Figure 8 shows a series of photographs from the session, illustrating the richness of incorporating theatre into capacity building workshops. This is well captured in this description written by artist Claire Rousell for Graphic Harvest 10:

“Well Worn Theatre and Mycelium Media Collab facilitated two poignant processes using participatory theatre techniques to invite community-based organisations, civil society and government officials to put themselves into each other’s shoes, revealing the challenges faced by each group and the particular knowledges and contributions each



has to offer. This was a unique opportunity to build meaningful, face to face connection between people who often do not have the chance to see each other as people.”



Graphic Harvest 10



Figure 8: Theatre used to experience 'walking in each other's shoes' – exploring across policy makers, advocacy organisations and CBOs, and as a means of conflict resolution.

Days 4 & 5 – Advocacy Planning

The day started with two presentations on climate advocacy and marginalised groups as pictured in Figure 9 – one showing Ndivile Mokoena who presented on gender and climate, and the other showing Simmi Pillay who presented on persons with disability and climate.



Figure 9: GenderCC presenting on their gender and climate change advocacy work and an official from DWYPD presenting on the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities

Graphic Harvest 11 reflects the content of the presentation given by Ndivile Mokoena, Project Co-ordinator at GenderCC, who opened the morning session with an [overview of their work and current projects](#). She challenged the equating of gender with women, bringing the complexity of gender into the room. Drawing on her extensive experience in the gender and climate advocacy space, she offered some guidelines on effective advocacy.



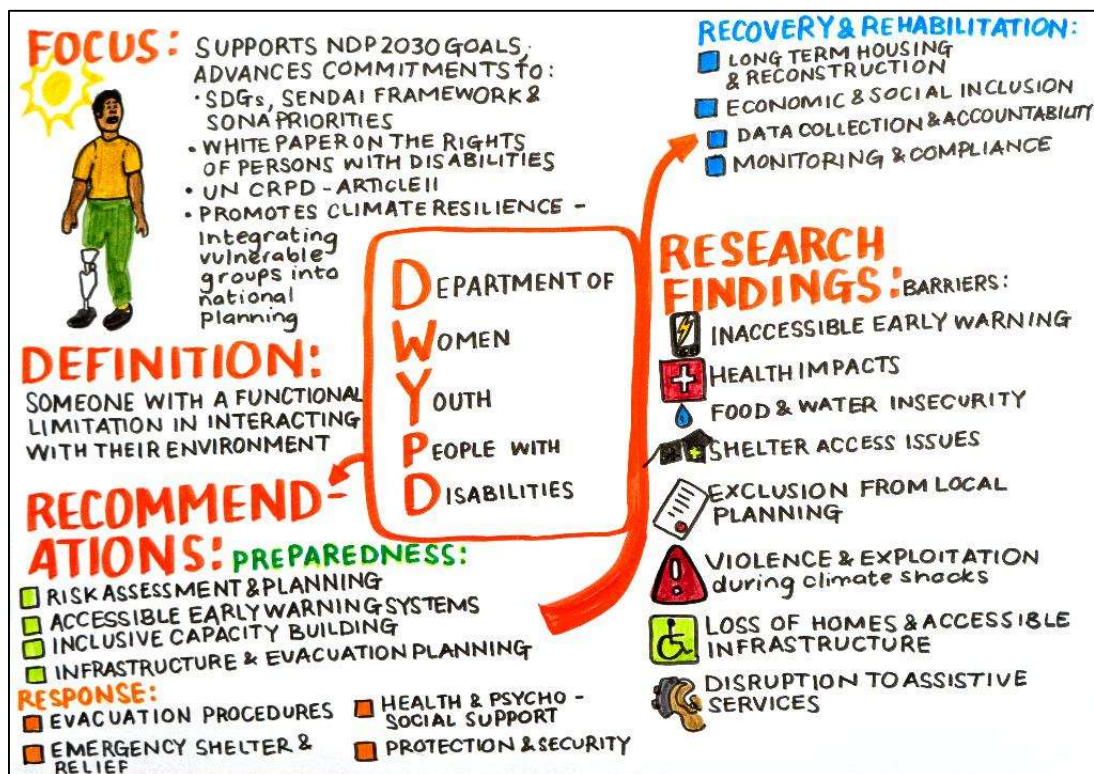
Graphic Harvest 11

This was followed by a presentation by Simmi Pillay, Chief Directorate for Governance and Compliance, DWYPD, in which she outlined the sectorally-broad mandate of their small unit and department. She engaged the group on terminology around persons with disability, bringing everyone up to speed on the latest definitions and terms. She went on to present the content of the research report recently commissioned by DWYPD, entitled: [‘The Impact of Climate Change on Persons with Disabilities in South Africa’](#). The research findings revealed gaps in inclusive disaster risk management, policy implementation, and participation, citing the following as key barriers:

- Inaccessible early warning systems
- Lack of inclusive data
- Socio-economic vulnerability
- Exclusion from decision-making



The report offered strategic recommendations for disability-inclusive climate action, which strongly resonated with the rationale behind the project. A summary of her presentation is captured in Graphic Harvest 12.



Graphic Harvest 12

Following a late tea, Natalie Nolte led a short technical introduction to Canva, an online graphic design platform well suited to creating digital visual content such as flyers. She also gave a brief overview of a range of social media platforms and their applicability to different audiences and messaging types.

In fulfilment of Deliverable 3, namely 'policy engagement strategy development', the afternoon session saw the introduction of the advocacy planning module developed by Natalie Nolte and

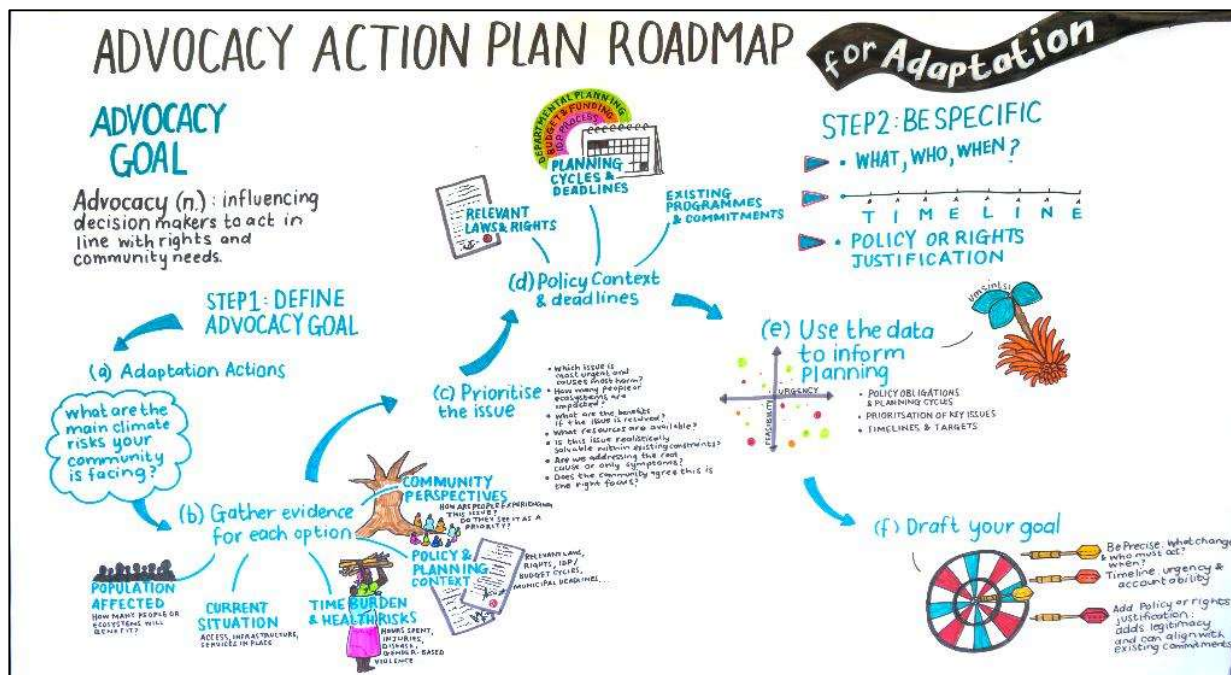
Stef Swanepoel of Mycelium Media Colab. Participants, working in their organisational groups, were supported in developing an Advocacy Action Plan Roadmap as shown in Figure 10. This step-by-step process involved the following measures:

1. Determining their advocacy goal. This included identifying the issue, the implications of the issue, the change that is needed, and the policy link(s)
2. Naming the objectives associated with the goal, ensuring that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).
3. Identifying partners and resources that can assist in reaching your goal. This included mapping out internal resources, potential partners, resource needs and gaps.
4. Identifying the target audience of the advocacy was assisted by exploring the level of interest and influence of potential audience targets, the communication channel to reach them, as well as noting if they are an ally, neutral or opponent.
5. The next step was to develop the key messages for each objective, bringing in the rights and policy linkages, and developing a policy-facing/formal message and a public-facing message and action.
6. The final step involved pulling all this together into an Advocacy Plan with the following headings: Objective, Audience/decision makers, Message, Tactics / how to reach, Next steps, Who Responsible, Timeline, and Resources needed.



Figure 10: Participants working through the step-by-step advocacy planning training

Claire captured the advocacy planning in Graphic Harvest 13, drawing on the symbolism of the flowering of the Coral or Umsintsi Tree, which when flowering serves as a signal to begin planting at the end of winter. In the image, she draws an analogy between the flowering of the tree and the data inputs that are the ‘signal’ to inform planning.



Graphic Harvest 13: Advocacy planning

Despite this exercise spanning the Thursday afternoon and Friday morning sessions, it was too comprehensive to be done in this timeframe. Most groups spent all of Thursday afternoon busy with exercise one, namely setting their advocacy goal, and only one or two moved on to the exercise two – setting the objectives. By lunchtime on Friday, it was collectively decided that continued work on these plans would have to be done beyond the workshop.

After lunch, an exhausted but well-capacitated and well-networked group held an in-depth reflection session and closed the workshop.

Conclusion

The workshop packed a lot of learning, peer-to-peer exchange, network building, creative innovation and travel into one week, but was well worth it. The level of content and logistics planning, materials preparation, creativity and care by a small organising team was well

matched by the level of participation, enthusiasm, trust and sharing amongst the participants making it a remarkable event. It provided an excellent springboard for continued work in this arena.

Evaluation forms were completed, the results of which can be found [here](#).