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SOUTHERN AFRICAN
WILDLIFE COLLEGE



Curriculum Innovation for Institutions of Higher Learning

PROJECT SUMMARY



USAID | SOUTHERN AFRICA

USAID: RESILIENCE IN THE LIMPOPO BASIN PROGRAM (RESILIM) - OLIFANTS



Project Partners

Limpopo Basin Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Curriculum Innovation Network

The Limpopo Basin Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Curriculum Innovation Network (LBCIN) is a collaborative initiative involving the following IHL partners who have agreed to work together on curriculum innovations for a more climate resilient catchment:

- University of Limpopo, South Africa
- University of Venda, South Africa
- University of Mpumalanga, South Africa
- Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique
- Pedagogical University, Mozambique
- Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa

The LBCIN start-up period was supported by Rhodes University's Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC). Rhodes University are the implementing partner for this sub-grant.



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Introduction

This Institute of Higher Learning project was designed to:

1

- Undertake a participatory assessment of existing learning programmes offered in IHLs;

2

- Work with academics to form a learning network to share expertise and to revise or develop a set of courses / Learning Programmes for use in the Olifants Catchment;

3

- Support IHLs to submit their programmes for accreditation and quality assurance;

4

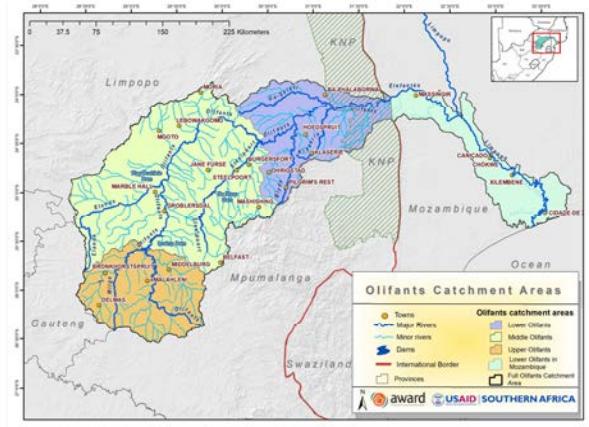
- Develop an e-learning and resources platform for shared knowledge resources and approaches to be used by the participating IHLs in the learning programme innovation work.



The project was implemented in two phases:

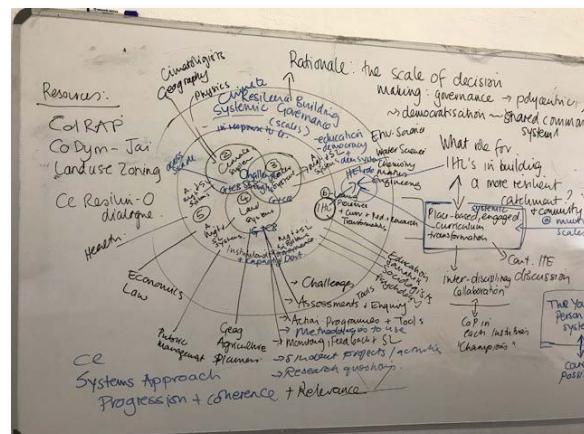
Phase 1

- Participatory Learning Programme Review;
 - Learning Network Formation;
 - e-Learning platform; and
 - Materials development.



Phase 2

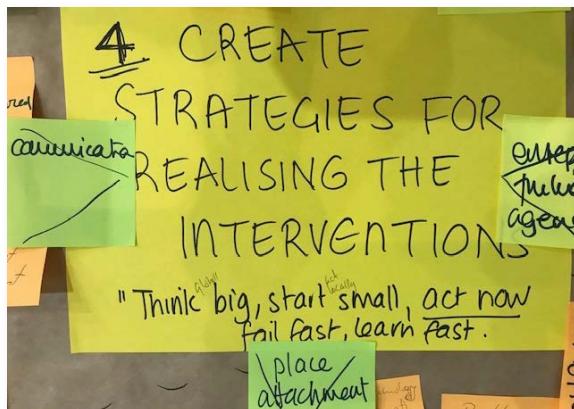
Participatory Learning Programme development for accredited offerings in the participating IHLs.





Project Purpose

The Institutions of Higher Learning in the basin are key resources for expanding systemic and social learning approaches as they have responsibility for the education of the next generation of biodiversity and natural resources managers and practitioners, farmers, extension officers, and public service officials. They also, through higher degrees, lead and supervise scientific research in the Olifants Basin, and therefore have potential to extend and also institutionalise use and further development of the scientific research approaches being developed in RESILIM-O.



The initiative was designed to strengthen the institutional capacity and expand intellectual capital in the Olifants Basin IHL system to ensure wider social learning and long-term uptake and engagement with the work and objectives of the RESILIM-O programme. This is key to longer term sustainability of the RESILIM-O initiative and its outcomes and methodologies and to longer term climate change resilience building, water and biodiversity governance and management (including agriculture) in the catchment.

Additionally, these institutions have capacity for contributing to shorter term professional development programmes that might be needs in the Olifants basin. At the outset of the project there was inadequate knowledge of the existing programmes of learning in the IHLs and how these could further expand the work of the RESILIM-O systemic and social learning approaches.

Disaster Risk Related Research in the School of Environmental Sciences (Hon, Masters & PhD)



Dr Chikoore with Malaria Control Officials at the weather station at Mhinga Clinic: 18 March 2016

University is a quality driven, financially sustainable, comprehensive university
University of Venda
13



Integrating theory and practice

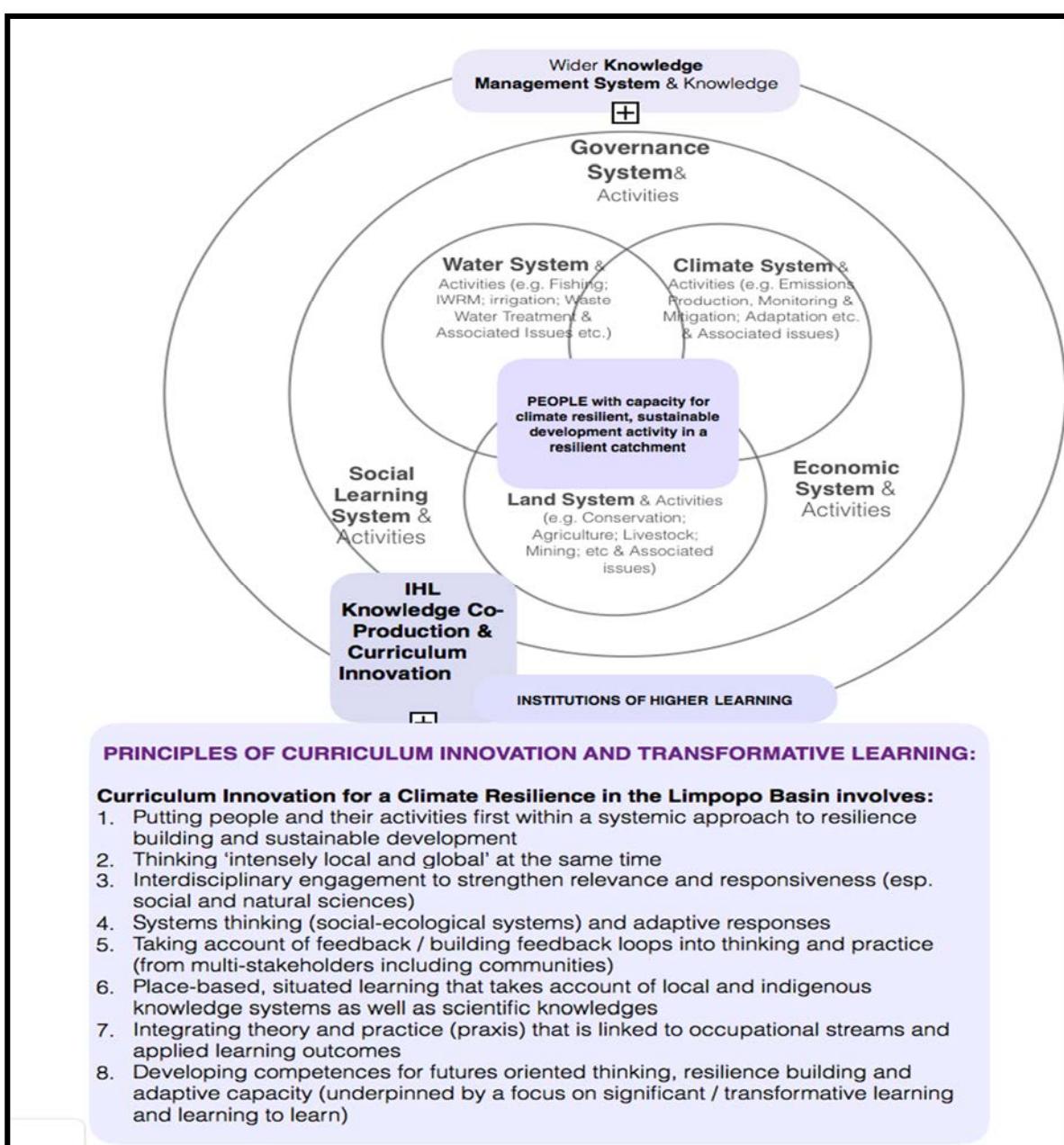
Role players with regards to applied learning in the Nature Conservation Diploma programme

Role players	South African National Parks (SANParks)	South African National Botanical Gardens (SANBI)	Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency (MPTA)	City of Mbombela	Balule Nature Reserve	Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC)
Areas of collaboration	Experiential training and research opportunities in conservation and integrative park management.	Experiential training in botany and environmental education.	Experiential training in conservation and environmental education.	Research, teaching and learning in environmental management and water management.	Environmental education and biodiversity.	Conservation education and Wildlife Management Training.



Activities

- Participatory assessment of existing learning programmes offered in IHLs
- Development of a conceptual framework for supporting IHL Learning Programme development through workshop-based peer review
- Establishment of the Limpopo Basin IHL Curriculum Innovation Network (LBCIN)
- Development of the LBCIN e-learning platform
- IHL level, inter-departmental review and revision of learning programmes
- Collaborative authorship of an academic paper on the learning programme review and revision process
- Presentation of the LBCIN initiative and collaborative academic paper at a conference





Results

- Limpopo Basin Curriculum Innovation Network established with six Institutes of Higher Learning
- Shared e-learning platform developed containing up-to-date knowledge and praxis resources for learning programme design orientated to reduce climate change vulnerability and a workroom where work in progress can be uploaded, co-edited and improved
- 14 learning programmes developed at IHL level and ready for implementation (15th under construction)
- One inter-institutional, transboundary field-based course developed
- Systemic and social learning knowledge incorporated into the revised learning programmes
- Learning programmes are more responsive to the immediate social ecological challenges, needs and opportunities in the Limpopo Basin
- Courses demonstrate agreed-upon principles of curriculum innovation including curriculum relevance, pedagogy, systems thinking, multi-discipline approach, praxis and transformative learning and agency
- Academic paper on the LP review and revision process collaboratively written and presented at the Global Change Conference in December 2018

UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA
Creating Opportunities

Examples of applied learning in Dip CON

- 1st year students field trip to Kruger National Park
 - Focus was on biodiversity assessments, game capture, control of alien invasive species and park management.
- 2nd year students field trip to Balule Private Nature Reserve
 - Focus is on environmental education, elephant impact assessment and control of invasive alien species.



Recommendations

The institutional make-up of LBCIN is set to expand to include IHLs from Botswana and Zimbabwe that carry out research, teaching and community services in the Limpopo Basin. Two IHLs in Zimbabwe - Midlands State University, Zimbabwe (Gender Institute) and Chinhoyi University (Ecology, Wildlife and Natural Resources Faculty) - and one in Botswana (University of Botswana) have already formally expressed their interest to join LBCIN.

CHINHOYI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



MIDLANDS
STATE UNIVERSITY



LBCIN plans to build stronger linkages with like-minded organizations such as SARUA, Chalmers University in Sweden while remaining closely connected with AWARD, RESILIM-O and its system of stakeholders. It also plans to build stronger ties with NGOs that work with participating IHLs and with Pan-African and regional NGOs, notably the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) and the Eastern and Southern African Small-Scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF).

Through resource mobilization efforts for Phase 3, the LBCIN has built strong ties with the Coventry University's Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR), with whom it plans to build stronger bonds in future.



ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA



Research Centre
Agroecology, Water
and Resilience





award

The Association for Water and Rural Development

AWARD is a non-profit organisation specialising in participatory, research-based project implementation. Their work addresses issues of sustainability, inequity and poverty by building natural-resource management competence and supporting sustainable livelihoods. One of their current projects, supported by USAID, focuses on the Olifants River and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems to sustain livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment.

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About USAID: RESILIM-O

USAID: RESILIM-O focuses on the Olifants River Basin and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems that support livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment. The 5-year programme, involving the South African and Mozambican portions of the Olifants catchment, is being implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) and is funded by USAID Southern Africa.

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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE