

Good Day,

I belong to the NGO sector, in particular, I am one of the Projects Coordinators for the Wildlife and Environment Society (WESSA). Over the last year I have been involved in a pilot project on Climate Change in partnership with the Climate Action Partnership (CAP) and Eco-schools (An international Environmental Education schools initiative). This project has adopted a “train the trainers” approach to Environmental Education by empowering the educators to involve their learners in action projects that would enhance mitigation strategies, learning and positive action towards adaptation. This model is based on the concept of positive “handprints for action” rather than focusing on negative “ecological footprints” that tend to lead to action paralysis, otherwise known as the “gloom and doom” approach.

My educational background lies heavily in the Social Sciences, having achieved an Honours degree in Geographical and Environmental Sciences at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban. I have also completed the coursework requirements of a Masters Degree in Environmental Science, with courses such as Geographical Information Systems and Tools of Environmental Management to my credit. Part of the reason for my wanting to attend the winter school course is to deepen my understanding of the science of Climate Change, in particular to understand the data upon which we so heavily rely when making projections for the future and upon which we design our adaptation and mitigation strategies. One might wonder why I would find this course of benefit since the work that I do focuses more on the educational and behavioural sciences, however this is precisely why it would be of benefit as it would enable me to deepen my conceptual understanding of difficult concepts that I am responsible for explaining and propagating amongst learners that range from scholars to educators, the general public, the media and even company managers.

I believe that I will be more effective in the work that I do, in particular in helping this pilot project to evolve into something that is more conceptually sound and to enable me to tackle, grasp and mediate over the meanings of what I am reading so that I may present this in a scientifically sound manner. This course is also very important for me in that the environmental and ecological movement (social movements) have often been weakened by propagating ideas and being involved in debates that are not based on “sound science”. As such when dealing or addressing fora of “scientists” and others with “expert knowledge”, we can sometimes seem as if we don’t know what we are talking about!

The other reasons for my interest are personal in that I would like to pursue my Masters thesis on climate change and in order to ensure that my research is of a high standard, this course would be of enormous value to me and hopefully to all those who read my thesis! In my professional work I have also been called upon to present Climate Change Information to adult learners who are studying through

WESSA to achieve their Environmental Educators course credits and also to provide input on WESSA's Climate Change accredited courses that are still being developed.

The case study that I mentioned earlier is the Eco-Schools Climate Action Project. Eco-Schools is an international project of the Foundation for Environmental Education and I have included a brief synopsis of the project below:

The Climate Change Coordination activities of the WESSA/WWF Eco-Schools programme creates a specific focus for projects and activities that Eco-schools are involved in or wish to undertake as part of the five themes that schools work on. These themes are the focus for their portfolio of activities, a record of all their environmental activities for the year. Currently schools identify between one and five core themes to focus on for the duration of the school year. These themes are:

- a. Resource Use
- b. Nature and Biodiversity
- c. Local and Global Issues
- d. Healthy Living
- e. Community and Heritage

One of the objectives of this project is to relate these themes to Climate Change, for example our resource use directly affects our fossil fuel use and thereby our carbon emissions. The Eco-schools climate change programme seeks to help educators to make these links by developing lessons and researching the background information necessary to adequately address the theme through action projects. This is assisted through the educator workshops.

Some of the objectives of the project are to:

1. Coordinate and work with a total of 20 schools in Kwazulu-Natal . 13 schools within the eThekweni municipality are currently being coordinated by Anisa Khan and 12 schools in the Pietermaritzburg/ Howick/Midlands are coordinated by Bridget Ringdahl.
2. Provide appropriate support to the schools participating in this project eg. through telephone calls, e-mail contact, visits to schools, workshops, etc
3. Support the schools to develop lesson plans and action projects specific emphasis on Climate Change.
4. Conduct educator support workshops in both Durban and Pietermaritzburg groups. Workshops to cover covered aspects such as climate change terminology and concepts relating to climate science.
5. To give support to Eco-Schools node coordinators and educators in the province around climate change learning and action projects that is related to the curriculum and their Eco-Schools work.
6. To provide learning support materials related to climate change have also been supplied to all the participating schools
7. To develop additional learning support materials/ programmes eg. RNCS compliant and phase appropriate lesson plans on Global Warming and Climate Change

My involvement in the Eco-Schools Climate Action Project has been most rewarding and continues to challenge and inspire me to improve my understanding of the complexity of climate change and all the related aspects of it and on how to move forward by designing appropriate responses and effective learning processes. I would be most grateful to be included in the Winter School Programme.

Thanking You Most Kindly,

Anisa Khan