



LEARNING
by **DOING**

Scaling up Ambitious Leadership
Learning By Doing
South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA

2022 ACTIVITIES



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1. Introduction

This country report for South Africa describes the key activities undertaken and deliverables achieved in the third year of the Project, Scaling Up Ambitious Leadership: Learning by Doing (LBD). The South African team is led by Prof Harald Winkler at the School of Economics and Dr Andrew Marquard from the ESRG, both at University of Cape Town (UCT), and supported by Natasha McDaid from Wits University.

2. Scrum

A core activity of the LbD project in South Africa are scrum meetings. As reported earlier, the South African SCRUM is made up of 28 carefully selected members who create a good mix of private and public sector partnership and has engaged in groupwork including writing and presentations by scrum members. The LBD team at UCT had obtained advice from Mr Jongikhaya Witi, a key official in the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), in the careful selection of scrum members.

Two scrums were held in 2022: the second one of the series and first one in 2022 took place from the 7th to 10th February 2022; and the second one of the year was organised from the 11th to 14th July 2022. These were the second and third scrum meetings organised in South Africa since the start of the project. Building on Scrum 1 (from 2021), discussions focused on a good life under 1.5 °C proved highly generative, attendance was good and scrum members actively engaged. Scrum 2 continued work on narratives of a good life in SA under 1.5 °C in 2050. The end point of a just transition in SA needs to be attractive. The scrum also starting to think about backcasting pathways, that can develop scenarios with both imagination and rigour. Scrum 3 discussed two draft narratives – one on a good life broadly, and a complementary one on public affluence. Scrum members made excellent additional input, and suggested two drafts be combined. This enabled the UCT team, together with support from Sonja Klinsky from the KM team in writing, to produce a final narrative. This has been released on the LbD web-site,¹ with beautiful layout by the international LbD team. We have seen the narratives disseminated by scrum members, for example, Mike Levington posted it on a WhatsApp group with many influential thinkers in SA's energy sector.

1. <https://www.learningbydoingproject.org/south-africa/>



More broadly, the SA LbD project has developed thinking about opportunities for cooperation (Task 3). This as focuses primarily at the national scale. A rich set of issues is emerging, mindful of what might add be innovative beyond the existing national portfolio, and where this indicates opportunities for multi-lateral cooperation. In the context of a just transition in SA, skills, capacity and knowledge at a systemic and institutional level have been highlighted as crucial to implementation. Indeed, the capacity of poor communities and workers to define their own futures if – and to ensuring that the transition indeed is foundational to ensuring that transitions are just. The ‘good life’ cannot be a future vision only, the pathways of getting to such a future must become real for local communities.

It can be seen from the above how the learning and knowledge of the LbD project in South Africa is advanced through the scrum. This is salient to Task 4; activities are not limited to the scrum only, but have also generated additional discussion processes, referred to as ‘spin-offs’.

The baseline report (submitted by UCT team in March 2021) had highlighted the importance of the concept of a “just transition” (JT) within the development and climate change debate in South Africa. It is a concept embedded in the current discussions but more importantly it engages with the development agenda in the country. In 2022, in the broader context of South Africa, the Presidential Climate Commission submitted a Just Transition Framework to President Ramaphosa, who accepted it on behalf of government.² Other stakeholders have developed their thinking on a just transition. COSATU published a blueprint for workers in a just transition,³ talking to other formations in organised labour. Its five top demands were employment-creating and sustainable industrial policy; a Universal Basic Income Grant for all aged 18-59; reskilling and upskilling; land redistribution; and ending austerity for a climate just macroeconomic framework. The inclusion of land was relevant to the spin off on land (see below). Business and civil society have also undertaken work – the key point here being that the context has changed since the outset – while the premise that a just transition is central to the public debate has been proven correct. Beyond the outputs of the project, notably the narrative so far, various scrum members are involved with government, labour, civil society and business discussions on a just transition. The scrum members, their interconnections, and the creative thinking developed in the LbD project in SA are, in our view, the most important ‘output’ of the project.

3. *Spin-offs*

From the three Scrums to date, other discussions have ‘spun off’. Spin-offs are led by scrum members, and involve smaller sub-sets of the scrum members interested in a specific topic – and in some cases also inviting strategic thinkers beyond the scrum. The spinoffs held have focused on electricity, public affluence, place-based solutions, the land question and transport.

1. An Electricity Spinoff, led by colleagues from civil society and Eskom. Scrum member Richard Worthington was active in initiating this spin-off, in consultation with Mandy Rambharos,

2. <https://www.climatecommission.org.za/just-transition-framework>

3. <http://mediadon.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/COSATU-Just-Transition-Blueprint-Full-version.pdf>



initiating two meetings. The initial meeting on 13th September 2021 with a follow up meeting to be decided upon. Participants provided insight on the issues such as debt, the just transition & increased energy demand in SA from those involved in the sector. It heavily focused on funding of Eskom – which has continued to be a major issue not only in energy, but affecting the SA economy and society as a whole. The electricity crisis and Eskom debt are two key elements that a just transition has to take into account. Yet views diverge, and the spin-off with scrum members who had created good relationships with each other, helped ease divergence. The spin offs also discussed the Just Energy Transition (JET) plan and partnership. This spin-off has been overtaken by events, with a JET Partnership between SA, four developed countries and the EU being announced in Glasgow, and an investment plan passed presented at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh after approval by Cabinet.

2. A public affluence spinoff was inspired by Scrum discussions, and a narrative drafted by Jose Garibaldi, the LbD international lead, on public affluence. The second spinoff was on public affluence, with two dimensions. In South Africa, Harald Winkler held a spin-off meeting on this concept, after it had emerged in Scrum1, together with Julia Taylor, who brought in other colleagues from the Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ). IEJ has assisted the labour federation COSATU with a new blue-print for workers in a just transition. The initial spinoff occurred on the 26 August 2021 with the narrative being drafted in a collaborative manner between scrum members as a result of this spinoff throughout 2022. This narrative was one of two discussed and finalised in Scrum 2 and 3. Public affluence is seen as a core basis, and indeed purpose, of cooperation – at multi-lateral, national and local scale (Task 3).
3. Public debates on land and climate change have been disconnected in South Africa. They have in the past largely been among different groups of people. An innovative element of the LbD scrum has been on cooperation between different communities of practice – in a spin-off on land and climate change. Scrum members Julia Taylor, Melisizwe Tyiso and Dick Forslund organised the first two spin-off discussions. The first discussions (20 June and 10 August 2022) drew in several new voices: Nonhle Mbuthuma: The founder of the Amadiba Crisis Committee who oppose destructive mining projects; Victor Munnik: Associate Researcher at Groundwork and an academic who works on coal dependence and water quality; Matthews Hlabane: Environmental activist and coordinator of Southern Africa Green Revolutionary Council; Michelle Pressend – Lecturer at UCT on environmental sociology; and Siviwe Mdoda – A land rights activist working with PLAAS and Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education. Julia reported on this rich exchange during Scrum 3 (July 2022), and it was decided to hold at least one further spin-off meeting on the 10th of August that further discussed the intersections of land and climate change . The potential of local cooperation to inform national policy debates is salient to Task 3, and represents outreach under Task 5.
4. A spin-off on place-based solutions was led by scrum member Mike Levington on the 8th of April 2022. This spin-off explored concrete renewable energy projects. These may be initiated by private firms, but engage with local communities on socio-economic development. Cooperation at local level emerged as a key theme, providing an interesting perspective on Task



3 of the LbD project.

5. A final spin off focus on transport – as a system, connected to others. Harald Winkler convened a spin off on 15 August 2022, with participation from Marianne Vanderschuren, Tanya Lane-Visser, Andrew Marquard, Zane Simpson (Stellenbosch University), Jongikhaya Witi (DFFE), Sizwe Tyiso (NALEDI), Richard Worthington, Jose Garibaldi, Natasha McDaid. Tanya, Andrew and Zane presented various kinds of existing models, with different approaches to transport. This laid a good basis for backcasting some transport development pathways – in a manner that connects to broader systems.

Some broader reflections on insight from the spin-offs are that they helped identify in more detail exactly how a Just Transition (JT) is included in the pathway and the vision for a good life in 2050 that is compatible with limiting global warming to well below 2 and 1.5. °C. Multi-lateral cooperation on the Just Energy Transition Partnership has the potential to show how multi-lateral cooperation (at least among some countries) can address decarbonisation in electricity – while also supporting social justice. Whether this potential is realised depends on details of the political declaration on the JETP will be implemented in a transformative manner. President has appointed Mr Daniel Mminele to head a task team, focusing on important financial aspects. In other words, the JETP is being taken up a high level, and while some individual scrum members are involved in further work, the scrum as a group continues its focus on just transition to a good life. The work in the LbD scrum raises broader issues, around electricity, supporting public affluence, the land issue – and ultimately, whether the JETP contributes to a ‘good life under 1.5 °C in South Africa’.

The success of the project can be seen in the fact that spin-offs have been led by members of the Scrum, other than the core team from UCT and Energeia. This speaks to ownership of the LbD process by scrum members of learning and knowledge Activities related to the project (Task 4). It is also in itself participation and outreach (Task 5), and has potential to lead to further dissemination. The Land and Climate spin-off in particular has included a distinct community of practice. Some scrum members have particular expertise in modeling transport, in various ways, and this may also reach out to other strategic thinkers (beyond the excellent scrum members themselves.)

4. *Backcasting pathways*

The team is looking at the ways in which modelling can be used to complement the narratives as well as include different scenarios in guidance with the finalized narratives. Backcasting pathways was discussed at sessions during Scrum 2 and 3.

The team developed some working definitions - Scenarios: “Scenarios are stories told in words and numbers; with rigour and imagination” (GSG). Narrative: painting with words the society we envision in future. Pathways: Trajectory from present to future, or future to present, typically modelled, emphasis is on numbers. Storylines: can mean a) the narratives, or the story, or b) description of modelled pathways in words, then translated into numbers (qualify when you use this word).



The LbD team in SA has held back from diving into modeling. Too many modelling projects consider storylines only briefly, in the urgency to parameterise a model, do the hard work of collecting data, and making the model run. We have spent more time and care, to develop narratives. And as described above, from a very big picture narrative of a good life, are developing a narrative of Transport Development Pathways (TDPs). The transport spin-off described above has given the team a good sense of existing studies and tools. The intention in the final year is to commission some analysis of backcasting TDPs.

5. Perspectives on Year 4

We end this report with some perspective on elements to be refined in Year 4 (Oct 2022 – Sept 2023). In the spirit of learning by doing, the following plans may be adapted, but give a sense of the future direction.

As the LbD project ends in September 2023, the UCT team together with Scrum members will aim to ‘finish well’. The final year of the project (2022/23) will include holding a final Scrum meeting (Scrum4), build on the narratives, and model to back cast pathways towards a ‘good life’. Having finalised a narrative of a good life in South Africa under 1.5 °C in South Africa in 2021/22, the LbD team in South Africa will also consider how the narrative might be used further; and the international LbD team is developing graphic and visual materials based on the powerful narrative. While winding down the project, we will be exploring avenues in which this project can engage with government and community shareholders to guide a diverse vision for the ‘good life’ under 1.5 degrees could look like. Scrum 3 had developed a focus on transport, with following spin-off brainstorming on sectoral transport development pathway (TDPs). Some scrum members have experience in transport modeling – system dynamic, energy-economy-environment and engineering model approaches. The aim is to translate a TDP narrative into modeling, in a manner that connects to broader systems (e.g. food, urban, energy, etc.). This information should be of interest to the Presidential Climate Commission – one scrum member is a member, and Dr Marquard is leading a separate study for the PCC on net zero emissions, which will include the transport sector among others. The work is also salient to work by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment on sectoral emissions targets (SETs), and Jongikhaya Witi of DFFE is keen for the LbD work to cross-pollinate with his work on SETs. In these ways, discussions from these sector specific topics will be part of comprehensive 2050 national vision for the country – as reflected in the narrative.