

Current Opinions in Environmental Sustainability

Fostering collaboration for knowledge and action in disaster management in South Africa

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Abstract

Engaging diverse stakeholders in collaborative processes to integrate environmental information into decision making is important, but challenging. It requires working at and across the boundaries between knowledge types — a complex milieu of different value systems, norms, and mental models — and multiple stakeholder-engagement processes which facilitate knowledge exchange and co-production. Using a qualitative, inductive approach, we analysed perceptions and outputs of a transdisciplinary project which aimed to generate new knowledge, awareness and action for ecosystem-based disaster management in South Africa. Several obstacles that could potentially undermine the project's objectives were identified, including: preconceived assumptions; entrenched disciplinary thinking; and confusing terminology. Enabling factors included efforts to ensure project co-creation and the use of knowledge brokers in promoting systems thinking that is grounded in practice.