
Editorial comment

About this issue

This is the first edition of *TD The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research* that is only available in electronic format. It has been somewhat of a strange experience for the editorial team to prepare a product that will primarily be read in electronic format. However, in view of the growing trend towards electronic publishing, we believe it is a move to make our articles available to a larger audience and simultaneously help us make our contribution towards saving trees that might have been pulped.

Apart from the switch to electronic format, we have also started changing systems. Currently we are in the process of learning how to work with new software and should be in a better position to cope with the publishing process by the time of the next edition in December 2010.

We request our loyal readers to please be patient. We were one week behind schedule, before the first texts appeared on the web. Sabinet's SAePublications website (<http://www.sabinet.co.za>), is currently the premier source of access to *TD*. The journal will shortly be accommodated on a new website. An announcement to this effect will be made.

The first two articles in this edition were presented at a colloquium held at North-West University's Vaal campus in November 2009. The papers are based on transdisciplinary reports compiled by research leaders and students in the Niche Area for the Cultural Dynamics of Water (*CuDyWat*).

The first article deals with problems related to unlawful irrigation from the Liebenbergsvlei River in the Eastern Free State. Local farmers have been extracting water for irrigation purposes. The water, coming from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, is in fact officially earmarked for South Africa's Gauteng Province – the economically most active region of the country. The article explores some of the problems experienced by both the farmers, and the department of water affairs (DWA). It is a matter of grave concern for water security in South Africa.

The second article deals with the crisis of water service delivery in the North West Province's town of Sannieshof where local residents have formed the Sannieshof Inwoners Belastingbetalers Unie (SIBU). They took over local municipal services in town from the Tswaing Local Municipality. In the article there is a historical overview of the developments leading up to the formation of SIBU and the manner in which local residents have started working together to secure clean drinking water.

Of particular interest may also be an article by Chris Cloete and Andrie Meyer of the University of Pretoria on the architecture of Mapungubwe. Currently this important heritage site is under threat. The controversial plans of an Australian coal mining company planning to start mining operations in the region have caused an outcry from the quarters of environmental conservation groups. It is hoped that this article may make us once again aware of the important heritage we have on the Limpopo border of South Africa.

In an article of Francois Durand en some colleagues at the University of Johannesburg there is an interesting view on how acid mine drainage (AMD) is bound to affect the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Cradle of Humankind. It is an important contribution to the growing corpus of public information available on the consequences of mine closure in the region previously known as South Africa's Witwatersrand.

Currently the National Research Foundation (NRF) has the Akili Project. The project's managers, in collaboration with South Africa's universities, the Water Research Commission (WRC) and the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), are working on plans to strategies to promote integrated research in transdisciplinarity. This fertilisation of skills will undoubtedly benefit the field.

In this edition of *TD* there are contributions in the theoretical field of transdisciplinarity by Preiser of the University of Stellenbosch and Van Eeden of North-West University. They share their views on philosophical and methodological approaches to the discipline. There is considerable space for more investigations of this kind.

Another addition to our editorial content is a somewhat stronger focus on information communications technology (ICT). We have been successful in communications with researchers working in the field of information technology and they appear to be eager to explore fields beyond the confines of their skills-based technologies. It could trigger off some new ventures for transdisciplinary research.