

## PRAXIS MAPPING: A methodology for evaluating the political impacts of international projects

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### I. Introduction

This report describes the participatory development of a process we have used to consider the political implications of a climate justice project we worked on together from 2010 to 2013, called *Strengthening the role of civil society in water sector governance towards climate change adaptation in African cities – Durban, Maputo, Nairobi* (see <http://ccaa.iris.yorku.ca>). This project was funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) through their Climate Change Adaptation in Africa programme.

As we brought the three-year project to a close and reflected on what we had done together, we felt it important to go beyond assessing whether and how we had accomplished the project's original goals (as approved by the funders). These goals related to generating and sharing information on the effects of climate change in the three cities where we were working, and on ways to strengthen equitable, participatory water governance through the work of civil society organizations in each city. We also felt compelled to examine the effects of our project more broadly – its political impact on the various communities and the people we work with regularly, its implications for our own political understanding of the context within which we work, and its potential for advancing the broad political goals which we hope will progressively help to build climate justice and equity in water governance in the coming months and years.

To the extent that so-called development projects tinker at the edges of social change, providing temporary services, meeting short-term goals, or deflecting the effective action of organized groups which are trying to build viable longer-term social and political alternatives, these projects' praxis is convoluted and unproductive or even counterproductive. We wanted to check in with each other and consider our project's long-term implications together, from our various standpoints. What had we learned through our collaboration that might help us truly work for climate justice?

Traditional project evaluation and assessment methods tend to focus on a project's direct results in relation to its specific goals, defined very concretely and practically. Going a step beyond this, some evaluation methods consider second-level behavioural change exhibited by those influenced by the project. For example, Outcome Mapping – which looks at “changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a program works directly” (Carden, F., et al., p. 1) – is a tool for project design and evaluation often used in IDRC projects. Going further, what we are attempting with Praxis Mapping is to examine the project's contributions towards long-term progressive global and local social and political change. In other words, Praxis Mapping tries to consider whether the project has planted seeds of new, equitable and democratic approaches to the problems that people face, rather than helping to patch together institutions, which maintain repressive systems instead of challenging them.

***STEP ONE: Brainstorm questions and goals.***

Our first discussions resulted in a set of questions we wanted Praxis Mapping to help us consider:

- Overall, has our project done more good than harm?
- Has the project helped local people gain politically relevant skills and information that they can use at local, national, and international levels to benefit their communities?
- Has it improved the ability of local participants to protect and/or improve their subsistence and livelihoods in the face of climate change?
- To what extent has it contributed to local communities' social, ecological and political strength?
- Are its results applicable and relevant in other locales?
- What are the paths by which the project's outcomes show political results?
- What has the project demonstrated about the politics of climate change response and about climate justice activism?
- How can participatory evaluation of these factors be carried out?

We sought out ideas for HOW to do Praxis Mapping and consider these questions, which led us to the work of Ashwin Desai in Durban, Elinor Ostrom and Karen Bakker on commons governance and water commons, David Harvey on how revolutionary change develops in urban areas, and the [Catalyst Centre](#) in Toronto, an activist community training centre. There are countless other sources we might also have consulted, but these were our starting-point, and they provided some interesting ideas to consider for a praxis evaluation process (which are presented below in no particular order).

The following sections of this report briefly outline the ideas we gathered in relation to praxis mapping, and then return to a discussion of our own process, how and what we shared, and our reflections on the usefulness of carrying out some sort of

praxis mapping exercise as part of responsible participatory international coalition-building. We have written this in the hope that these ideas may be relevant for others involved in similar collaborative work who want to assess their success in relation to long-term social change goals.

## II. Literature related to Praxis Mapping concepts

### ***STEP TWO: Check the 'literature' and others' work for ideas and inspiration.***

#### A. Ashwin Desai: African radical collaboration

Ashwin Desai is a community activist and writer with long experience in South African struggles to defend dignified subsistence and opposition to neo-liberalism. Desai et al. have critiqued the contradictions in post-apartheid South Africa which “on one hand... is among the most consistently contentious places on earth, with insurgent communities capable of mounting disruptive protest on a nearly constant basis, rooted in the poor areas of the half-dozen major cities as well as neglected and multiply-oppressed black residential areas of declining towns. On the other hand, even the best-known contemporary South African social movements, for all their sound, lack a certain measure of fury” (Desai et al. 2012:1).

Because most community protestors “operate in close interconnection with” the South African Tripartite Alliance of the African National Congress (ANC), Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU), and the South African Communist Party (SACP), “the line between insurgencies and governing organizations is not always clear” (ibid: 1). “But beyond the community protests, in many respects, the problems that have faced more traditional radical social movements in South Africa are familiar to students of social movements elsewhere: of moving from movement to governing; of cooptation and shifting roles vis-à-vis the state; of the limits of localism; and of the joining of community- and workplace-based organizing to forge a strong working-class politics” (ibid: 1).

Desai et al. critique “participation” as largely manipulative ‘spectator politics,’ much more likely to result in progressive change when it is exercised in ‘invented’ rather than ‘invited’ spaces – although even there, seldom fundamentally questioning power relations and social structures or neo-liberalism due to budgetary constraints and competition among community organizations (ibid.)

They draw on Trotsky’s analysis of ‘uneven and combined development’ and Gramsci’s distinction between what is “systematic” and what is “conjunctural” to conclude that apartheid was conjunctural, but uneven and combined development in South Africa (and also in Africa and globally) is systematic. This leads them to ask,

“How could a joined-up movement respond to the conjunctural pressures upon it, such as the apparent advantages to the unemployed of labour-market flexibilization schemes or to the quality of life of township residents of evicting

shack-dweller settlements? What kind of ways can – or should – Marxists talk about taking on the systemic problems of uneven and combined development with people who are located in different, and even sometimes opposed, areas of this combination? What organizational forms might be applied to start this conversation and yet keep it focused on the systematic elements of the present? How do we move beyond the concern for access, the localism, the constitutionalism, and the anti-political populism of contemporary protest – even as these sometimes yield concrete results – while also moving beyond the ambiguity of a simple slogan? To us, the protests represent a profound critique of neo-liberalism by working class communities. But are protesters aware of the greater significance of their protests? And to what extent do protesters’ demands require solutions that challenge neoliberal policy and even entail a challenge to the capitalist mode of production? Or is it the case that the overarching neoliberal economic framework constrains the realization of not only the people’s aspirations, but their ability to think beyond capitalism?” (ibid.)

They see some hope for the way forward in the development of “organic intellectuals” – Gramsci’s term for people from all classes who articulate the feelings and experiences of the masses -- from within various movements and contexts, and in their discussions and alliances with one another and with academics (ibid.) Desai points out elsewhere that community movements with winnable agendas grounded in “neighbourliness, dignity, and life” are “fairly effective. They are wary of the ideological archaism of the ultra-left and the desperation of pure protest ... (and are) developing a form of class politics, but imbued with passions beyond left politics” (Desai 2002:149).

Traditional kinds of politics must be grounded in and driven by local people’s realities and priorities.

#### B. Elinor Ostrom and Karen Bakker: Commons governance for water

Climate justice clearly requires new kinds of governance, which recognize equitable access and shared responsibilities for managing common resources: water, air, and ecosystems, which all people rely on in interrelated ways for their livelihoods.

As Nobel prize-winning socio-economist Elinor Ostrom noted in her book Governing the Commons, it is at the local level that people can, under the right circumstances, generate the trust necessary to set up governance institutions which are complex and flexible enough to manage common property resources sustainably. “...(I)n the smaller-scale common property resources (CPRs)...individuals repeatedly communicate and interact with one another in a localized physical setting. Thus, it is possible that they can learn whom to trust, what effects their actions will have on each other and on the CPR, and how to organize themselves to gain benefits and avoid harm. When individuals have lived in such situations for a substantial time and have developed shared norms and patterns of reciprocity, they possess social

capital with which they can build institutional arrangements for resolving CPR dilemmas" (Ostrom 1990:183-184).

As opposed to justifications for water access as a human **right**, "alter-globalization strategies centred on concepts of the **commons** are more conceptually coherent and also more successful as activist strategies" (Bakker 2007:430).

Bakker says, "the most progressive strategies are those that adopt a twofold tactic: reforming rather than abolishing state governance, while fostering and sharing alternative local models of resource management... They build on local resource management and customary norms... In each instance, a place-specific model of ... 'water democracy' emerges" (ibid:446).

The networks, linkages, and interrelationships, which are necessary for forging these new governance systems, are built when people work together to respond to climate change as they experience it, in each local area and community.

### C. Naming the Moment: assessing political conjunctures

The Toronto-based [Catalyst Centre](#)'s "Naming the Moment" is a process for assessing the political factors influencing a given situation at a given time and from there determining where groups can move forward, given those variables.

The basic principles of Naming The Moment include:

1. Starting with people's daily experiences and knowledge.
2. Assuming that education and mainstream culture are not in fact neutral but serve the interests of the people in power.
3. Holding the belief that no leader is neutral; everyone comes in with his or her own assumptions and wishes.

There are four key phases to the process of Naming the Moment:

#### Phase I - Identifying Ourselves and Our Interests

This consists of acknowledging the identity of the group such as age, gender, class and race representation. The first phase also involves the identification of the group's assumptions or expectations, and assessing the strengths and limitations of the group.

#### Phase II - Naming Issues/Struggles

The group tries to uncover the major concerns that affect them in society. After selecting the issue they are going to pursue, the group explores their (often) contradictory interests, and personal histories. They also explore the structural analysis of the society plus the long and short-term goals for the issue.

#### Phase III - Assessing The Forces

This stage requires a deeper analysis of who in society supports or opposes the

goals of the group. There is an assessment of who in society might initially be supporters but who would likely pull out and under what circumstances.

#### Phase IV - Planning For Action

Now the group assesses where the possibilities for action lie. They determine who can do what and when and address limitations and build on strengths.

Workshop activities suggested for using a Naming the Moment process include having the whole group consider the following questions:

- What issue are we working on?
- What is the history of this work?
- What are we working for?
- Who's with us and who's against us in the short-term and long-term?
- Who's winning and losing and why?
- What actions could we take?
- What are the constraints and possibilities of each?
- Who will do what and when?

This sort of process helps a group to consider its social change goals and the broad political strategies it can adopt to try to achieve them. For mapping the outcomes of a project, Naming the Moment would allow the group to build on its past work together and discuss ways forward.

#### D. David Harvey: Dialectics of understanding

Harvey, whose life work focuses on global urban inequity and poverty, and the need for social change on a massive scale, calls for a revolutionary paradigm shift in geography and the social sciences, pointing out that the existing paradigm is “not coping well.” “(E)merging objective social conditions and our patent inability to cope with them .... (show) the necessity for a revolution in geographic thought” (n.d.:6). And to be flexible and dynamic, this must be a dialectical process of understanding “which allows the interpenetration of opposites, incorporates contradictions and paradoxes, and points to the processes of resolution” (ibid:7).

In fact, the new paradigm must be based on and grow from a fundamental critique of capitalism, since “capitalist solutions provide no foundation for dealing with deteriorated social conditions which are structurally necessary for the perpetuation of capitalism” (ibid:10). “Our task is therefore to mobilize our powers of thought to formulate concepts and categories, theories and arguments, which we can apply in the process of bringing about a humanizing social change.... Our thought cannot rest merely on existing reality. It has to embrace alternatives creatively.... A revolution in scientific thought is accomplished by marshaling concepts and ideas, categories and relationships, into such a superior system of thought when judged against the realities which require explanation, that we succeed in making all opposition to that system of thought look ludicrous” (ibid:11).

With these ideas as motivation, we turn to a collaborative process for discerning and moving forward.

***STEP THREE: Share/develop an analytical framework for the Praxis Mapping approach.***

During our final project meeting, after we had completed a facilitated final group evaluation and discussion of how we'd met our project's stated objectives – and in fact gone beyond them in a number of ways – we tried our own Praxis Mapping process. One of our team members, Patrick Bond, gave a talk to the whole group, setting out the distinction between “reformist reforms” and “non-reformist reforms.” This served to focus our subsequent discussion.

E. Patrick Bond's presentation on “reformist and non-reformist reforms”

Here is a summary of what Patrick said:

There is a literature in social movement studies that tries to generate creative post-capitalist strategies, by looking at the anti-systemic movements of the past. It includes the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, Andre Gunder Frank, and many others. These authors basically look at world history and try to ask the question, 'how did the big system change?' The small system that you're working with in a township or a slum typically only changes when there is a movement from below, and likewise, national states have the same kinds of dynamics.

'Rights' talk in relation to water is individualist: it's private and familial; it's not public, it's not political. It's oriented to consumption, how much I consume, it doesn't link to production or to ecology. It's framed not to resist but to legitimize the broader economic system called neo-liberalism. It leaves in place class structure; it bleeds off any real move to dismantle those processes through redistribution and reparations. It's technicist language; it doesn't mobilize the masses.

The mass organizations just become clients, they're domesticated. People who object to unjust water rules in this kind of 'rights' system are often told, 'stop protesting, we have to impress the judges that we are good people. Don't protest!' So it's de-radicalizing. The rights are watered down, through clauses in the constitution. 'Take reasonable measures; do this within the state's available resources.' So those are the escape routes, the caveats, the slippery language, weasel words that the constitutional writers put in. The legal alleyways distract from a more transformative route to politics.

In South Africa, our test of rights, the most advanced test ever in the world for rights talk in water, was decided three years ago in the constitutional court. Activists demanded that the allocation for free basic water go up from 25 litres to 50 litres per person per day, and that there not be any pre-payment system with meters that cut the water off. So what they wanted was doubling of water, and a system of credit

no different from what wealthier white people enjoyed. There are lots of reasons why they made that demand, including women whose children died in a fire because they didn't have enough water to extinguish the flames, because they only had a pre-payment card, so they couldn't put out the fire. That was what the case was built on – an incident where a couple of children died. The mother took this case up.

And they won in the hearts and minds of the people, they won in their first venue, the High Court. They won in the middle court known as the Supreme Court. And then they lost in the Constitutional Court in October 2009. They lost because the Constitutional Court was scared of interfering with state policy. In short, South Africa's liberal, capitalist democracy put a ceiling on the expectations people could have of their water system, a system designed in part by the World Bank to limit cross-subsidies and initially implemented by a French company, Suez. And then the activists helped kick Suez out, with constant protests during the early 2000s that made it very difficult, so they left after five years. But what they left behind was a policy of only 25 litres per person per day – that's only enough for tooth brushing and a couple of toilet flushes – plus pre-payment metres, where you have to pay first. So that experience of protesting them was, until 2008, a defeat in terms of changing policy, though it mobilized thousands of activists.

The court challenge was ultimately no better, because human rights talk in water was deflected by the government. This was very much about the social education of mobilization. If you take people into the courts with the rhetoric, 'Oh we have human rights' and then you reach that ceiling of what the system gives you, you're 'inside the box'. And you can't get out of that box. If you stay there, what happens? You demobilize. You take the wind out of their sails.

So to get real relief, the Soweto activists had to 'get out of the box'. They did so by destroying the water meters, ripping them out. In fact, they have a new name for the meters in Soweto. They call them 'the statue'. They even leave them in place so it looks like a statue. But underneath, the water pipes are bubbling away with water, or the electricity lines are running with electricity and that meter is just the statue. Sometimes they hook it up so it shows a little bit of usage so the police don't say, 'oh you're just cheating'.

The result was that instead of just claiming our individual, human right to water in the courts, we should have a commons of water. That also, by the way, should ultimately include nature's rights, the rights of Mother Nature to have a decent water system, so that rivers can flow clean to the sea.

The result is that we have a tough critique of rights talk as reformist-reformism not non-reformist-reformism. Why? It strengthens the system, sucks you in, legitimizes the system and takes away your momentum. Those are the reasons why this politics can be very weak, if you're simply doing rights talk.

Let's also look at a profound victory: access to AIDS medications in South Africa.



In 1999, a South African movement called Treatment Action got going in response to the AIDS epidemic and also the victimization of AIDS educators, who were sometimes called witches. People said, 'well look, you know, we have to stand up and fight this stigmatization about AIDS. One way to get beyond it is to give people hope, not stigma. You can get medicines for this disease. They're expensive; so how do we get them cheaper?'

The medicines that people needed were coming from the U.S., and they cost \$15,000 a year. South Africa tried to get an arrangement so that people could get much cheaper generic, not branded, medicines, from India, Brazil, or Thailand, where they were made.

But the U.S. vehemently opposed this. Activists said, 'maybe we need to have an organization' against the profiteering. It's called TAC, Treatment Action Campaign. And I believe, with as much objectivity as I can find, that this organization saves more lives than anything anybody else has ever done since the end of apartheid.

The pharmaceutical companies were the barriers but they have friends in Washington, and they have other people in Geneva who are running the World Trade organization that gives trade-related intellectual property rights, TRIPS, and then they have their friends in Pretoria. And none of them, none of those guys wanted people to have cheap medicines. The government was in denial and said things like 'If we give medicines to HIV-positive pregnant women to prevent transmission at birth, who will care for their babies after they die?' South African employers did a cost-benefit study, which showed that it was only worthwhile to give medicines to 12% of the top highly trained workers; the others could be easily replaced, given an unemployment rate of 40%.

So TAC was fighting against so many forces, and I'll be frank, I thought they would lose. You can't take a few hundred activists, whose immune systems are depleted, and expect to fight world capital – Big Pharma, one of the biggest industries – along with the US government in Washington, the South African government, which was in genocidal denial, and the World Trade Organization, the trade-related intellectual property system.

But when they fought the US State Department, they had friends called ACTUP, AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, who helped with protests all over the U.S.. And they actually defeated Al Gore. When Al Gore was running for president, in 1999, everywhere he went there were activists saying, 'Al Gore's Greed Kills African Babies!', protestors disrupting him because of how much money he was getting from big pharmaceutical companies. The statistics that year were 2.3 million dollars. And he looked at the money coming in on the one hand, and on the nuisance of the activists on the other. And then he gave in to the activists and said, 'ok, we'll change the policies'.

So a few activists defeated the US. And then the same thing happened with the World Trade Organization. And then besides Al Gore, Bill Clinton surrendered, Thabo Mbeki's 'denialism' came up, the pharmaceutical companies even sued Nelson Mandela to overturn the 1997 Medicines Act which gave a license for local production of the medicines. How stupid can you get? Even the Wall Street Journal said, 'that's dumb'. The tide had turned. Generics began to be produced, 800,000 suddenly were on drugs. Now it's over 1 and a half million South Africans. Is that a success? You'd agree, right? Without any doubt, that's a huge victory.

Oh, by the way, we just got the mortality statistics from the census, two weeks ago. Do you know how much our life expectancy has improved? It was down, under Mbeki in 2004, to about 52. And in 2012? 60. Right, that's after the AIDS medicines came, we've gone from average mortality of 52 to 60. So the life expectancy's improved dramatically.

Another view of common intellectual property is that it's one of these things that everyone should have. Larry Lessig of Harvard Law School has made the argument that drugs, medicines, books, articles, everything should be in the public sphere. Medicines should be de-commodified. It shouldn't be about money if they are needed for life. And they should be de-stratified. Everyone should get those medicines no matter their income. And no means testing should delay that. Capital, which makes medicines in New Jersey, should be de-globalized. We should have generic production in Johannesburg, in Kampala, in Nairobi, in Maputo. Well, we can; actually, these generic companies are able to do so. And we need to globalize solidarity. So you de-globalize capital, but you globalize people by training activists.

We can use these two examples of movements to illustrate the distinction between a reform that is "non-reformist," because it fundamentally works to change the overall system, versus a reform that has the effect of strengthening an existing system.

The right to water is a "reformist reform" because it actually strengthens the system.

The other example that doesn't is access to AIDS medicines. I would call that a 'non-reformist reform.'

Those are my favourite cases of a bad reform where we lost, because of our excess faith in constitutionalism. I was personally very involved in that water case where we lost and I know how bitter it was. And I was a little bit involved in the AIDS case, but not very much. But this is the case that really shows you can have a non-reformist reform.

Why? If you're a reformist, in the first case, your work strengthens the internal logic of the system. If you're in a capitalist system, and you're in Kibera, you're selling water for money and you've denied the state access to those pipes, then you're wrecking the public good of water, right? You're allowing the system to re-legitimize; you're giving confidence to the ideas of the status quo, the

commodification of water. Activists are disempowered, they're co-opted. People still fear the power and they're apathetic and they're cynical about activism. Do you know activists who, by mistake, try to get reforms but have these flaws? I've done a lot of bad reformism. So that's why I call it reformist-reformism.

But there's also non-reformist reformism, which contradicts the logic of the system. When the system says you have to pay for AIDS medicines, you fight that and say no, this is something people need for life and it's a commons.

The contradiction is that the medicines are huge profit centres, and the reform is to de-commodify and take away the profit. So the internal logic of the system is contradicted. The system is continually de-legitimized. So big pharma-corps can't now say, 'oh, for your TB medicine it's going to be expensive', or 'for your yellow fever medicines...' No, no, now we keep it ... all of the medicines, not for profit.

This gives confidence to critical ideas and social courses so that activists get much more empowered in their momentum because when they just won eight medicines, now they can demand clean, free water so they don't die when they drink, and then have clean energy! Now they're thinking about lots of things, and they've replaced social apathy with confidence in activist integrity and leadership.

To me, that's the politics that we should always be seeking, that I always learn from, when there are really clear activists who fight cynicism with sustained courage and strategic intelligence. And when the system is taken aback, those activists get sharper and clearer. Activists are sometimes repressed badly: we saw 34 mineworkers killed in Marikana on August 16th, when they were really getting strong. And it's now being revealed that police not only shot them through the head, when they were surrendering, but then the police put weapons next to their dead bodies. There are two sets of photos, before and after. It's very embarrassing for these murdering police.

So we know systems repress, but we also know systems can co-opt and we also know systems can be beat. Sometimes systems can be overthrown. But I'm an armchair academic and I never know what a system will do. And I was wrong about TAC, I didn't think they could do it. The head of TAC is starting soon as a PhD student at our Centre. It's so important for the armchair academics, therefore, to understand the knowledge of activists, and to have the interplay that allows us to deal with change through fighting systems, through conflict. There's a lot of heat but hopefully there's a lot of light. To me, that's what praxis is.

### III. Discussion and Collaborative Analysis

After considering all these questions and procedures, various goals for Praxis Mapping, and how to frame them, we decided to simply discuss the following question: Have the outcomes of our project been positive or negative when considered from the perspective of the kind of political change which can sustain

environmental and climate justice? In other words, in this project, were we building reformist or non-reformist reforms?

***STEP FOUR: Discuss how all this relates to the project and the initial evaluation questions.***

We split into small groups, of about 5-6 people, with at least one person from each country in each group, and considered this question for about half an hour. Then we came back together and shared our thoughts. Here are some of the points that came up in our discussion:

- The climate catastrophe is a challenge to market ideology.
- We have created new relationships with the communities where we work, between community members and academics, and with others internationally, which have a lot of potential.
- People are learning they can live differently and try different subsistence strategies outside the market, in the face of climate change.
- We've been inspired by others on our team! For example, Nilza Matavel (a Research Assistant at Justiça Ambiental) is so young, but working so well in really difficult conditions – it's inspiring!
- We have a new respect for indigenous knowledge.
- We've lost fear of "research" because of its language; participatory action research is more approachable and helpful.
- Going back and forth with academics means sometimes I (a community organizer in a CSO) am the expert!
- People in communities want more information, so they are better equipped. They do their homework and know it's for them.
- People are learning about not building houses in wetlands, because of the danger; also about alien plants and how to remove them.
- We are glad to be producing publications on grassroots methods of action.
- "Climate Change Adaptation in Africa", the title of the funding program for our project, is a problem because that language fits within the dominant way of looking at climate change – that the people affected just have to adapt.
- Water governance needs to be understood as social transformation for agency. We have to think and act politically on the fundamental question that "climate change adaptation in Africa," as a concept, is trying to derail: the emerging energy for social transformation and justice.
- One example of how this disenfranchisement happens is the distinction between inclusive vs. exclusive decision-making for access to global resources.
- The short timing of this project was a drawback. The processes we are involved with take decades, but we only really had two years.
- On our field visits in Nairobi, we saw examples of water sales, meaning the commodification of water. How do we recognize this and de-commodify? How do we strengthen the social forces working for change? And relate this to struggles in the North? Who is expected to adapt?

- The global division of labour around the climate catastrophe needs to be articulated.
- This project would have benefited from more links with progressive groups in Toronto.

***STEP FIVE: Consider the implications of the project, in a Praxis sense, for future individual and collaborative work. Take time to have fun together, too!***

Our discussions began to shift towards what we have learned and what we plan to do in the future.

- Collaboration between academia and citizens brings a legitimized process and energized discourse.
- We can develop our own definitions of environmental justice and climate justice, like the Bolivians and others globally have done.
- Communities have no fear in contributing to this discourse.
- There are differences between countries in how or whether we can work with governments, but water governance, unless it is within communities, will not work.
- It is sometimes possible to find people within the government who are amenable to change, and ask them how they can help you to become spokespeople for ordinary citizens.
- Academics can become activist academics, like Dennis Brutus in South Africa.
- We need a Centre for Civil Society in Maputo! A community of activist, engaged scholars, to mobilize communities and maintain links between the university and communities.
- In Mozambique, we are still improving in terms of participation. We invited environmental NGOs to work with us. Now we can share with the government. Unlike in the past, we can lobby the government.
- The community is aware they will not own the economy. Top-down decisions are always being made. So people are aware that they are still not in control. Our minds are still colonized, but we have knowledge.
- The gap between rich and poor is ever bigger, and the good will is smaller.
- Access to water is an entitlement, not a right. Where do we locate social and cultural entitlements?
- The problem is with extraction for the few. The answer is commons governance.
- Who holds the water jug? That's where "water governance" has brought us!
- When we address what people are concerned with, we are moving ahead of the government. For example, the Kenyan National Climate Change Response Strategy focuses on rural areas and source water protection, but people in cities also are affected and concerned about climate change.
- A watershed perspective is so important, especially to address negative effects of climate change. The scale of the problem needs to be understood and it should be addressed at the same scale.
- We cannot deal with watershed governance without the whole picture.

- Urban poor connect with rural poor. It is an economic question for economic liberation. You can galvanize people in watersheds when you ask, “Who is in control of the water tower?”
- Students are members of civil society. As they learn about existing Civil Society Organizations (CSO), they learn it’s possible to address environmental issues directly. Other students then become interested to do the same.
- Groups organizing the poor, like the slum dwellers international and the cooperative movement, are getting involved in climate change responses. Members do self-help construction and build housing themselves on public land. They may welcome an environmental focus.
- Mozambique faces a political uprising due to extraction. Climate justice is also an aspect of this. Sustainable environmental justice and climate justice are tied together: both are about how people’s lives are guaranteed.
- We have relocated the question of water governance as a political question. Water governance gives us a better framework for commoning.
- This project has deepened the academic and CSO connections between Mozambique and South Africa – cross-country activist engagement, as opposed to just technicist engagement. We can envision “African civil society”.
- Here’s a question we can ask: “Is your university a liberated space, or a space to regenerate bourgeois cadres and the status quo?”
- These spaces are needed to demystify **who** the actors are who are making creative change. By linking universities, civil society, and communities, this sets up a starting point for examining what is happening with climate change.
- We can strengthen the space where commoning of issues can be engaged for justice.
- There is support from civil society for progressives in universities.
- We need a new cadre/group of people to carry the activist climate justice movement and the water commoning movement forward. Where is the energy to deliver the commons?
- There seems to be a great acceptance of false solutions now. Adaptation and mitigation are packaged as Foreign Direct Investment. This is not the answer.
- The global climate adaptation agenda depends on false framing, and false solutions. The real issue is **who is responsible for climate change?** Names must be named; locations must be given.
- With climate change, we see the same mindset that justified slavery and neocolonialism. But we are the owners of the climate catastrophe.
- We can frame this also in terms of the successes of people’s struggles, and movement successes. This reinforces the potential of the climate justice movement.
- The commons have the energy to transform this world – we just need to join it!

#### IV. Conclusion

We have tried to reflect a bit on how this Praxis Mapping process worked, and its significance and applicability, in some form, to other local or international projects.

For us, this discussion was a good way to “wrap up” our project and our last team meeting together. We came away with ideas for ways of deepening our “non-reformist” work in our own separate contexts, and also a sense of shared purpose and support for each other in these efforts.

To conclude, let us return to the questions raised at the beginning of this report, as subsumed in our short-form version: "Has the impact of our project been positive or negative overall?" It seems that our discussion led to a somewhat mixed conclusion.

Insofar as project partners and activities facilitated or strengthened the initiatives of corrupt, incompetent or malign power regimes, this would mean we were "reformist" in our outcomes, and actually worked against the structural reforms required to truly address power inequities, water mismanagement, and climate change.

On another hand, our project could only have been "reformist" (that is, acting to strengthen existing institutions), if it had operated in areas where functioning water governance institutions actually existed. In fact, our partners' experience was that our activities took place in the virtual absence of functioning water governance. There was nothing to "reform"; or at least, local people largely did not seem engaged in official processes or decision-making related to water and sanitation. In Kibera and Huruma, a multiplicity of private sector and NGO water and sanitation providers occupy the vacuum created by a near-absence of the State. In Maputo neighbourhoods, infrastructure is provided, renewed, or ignored, without any sense of local people's involvement. Even in outlying areas of Durban, a city which in some circles has a good reputation for its water policy, equitable public engagement – or civil society engagement at all – remains largely a mirage.

Can we conclude, therefore, that our project's work was "non-reformist"? Perhaps, in a guarded sense. We supported the activities of a range of civil society organizations that are working mainly outside the State to create water, sanitation, education, and organizing options for slum dwellers in the face of climate change. One exception was the JA! environmental education program in Maputo public schools – a supplement to the normal state-supported curriculum, to bring greater environmental awareness to youth. It is probably not a coincidence that this activity was chosen by our Mozambican partner organization, which is very far from a sycophantic supporter of the Mozambican government – quite the opposite! It is the near absence of democratic alternatives to the State there which led to JA!'s choosing this activity as its focus.

The support the project gave to university programs and students in public universities could perhaps be viewed as "reformist" – but this also in the context of a near-absence of alternatives, as well as the distinction between public-university academia and government.

Educating young people on environmental and climate change realities is a priority if climate change is ever to be addressed at a structural level. Both JA! and KI are doing this explicitly, and young people provide the energy behind most CSO activism in all three cities. We also saw great energy and commitment among the university students whose work fuelled our project.

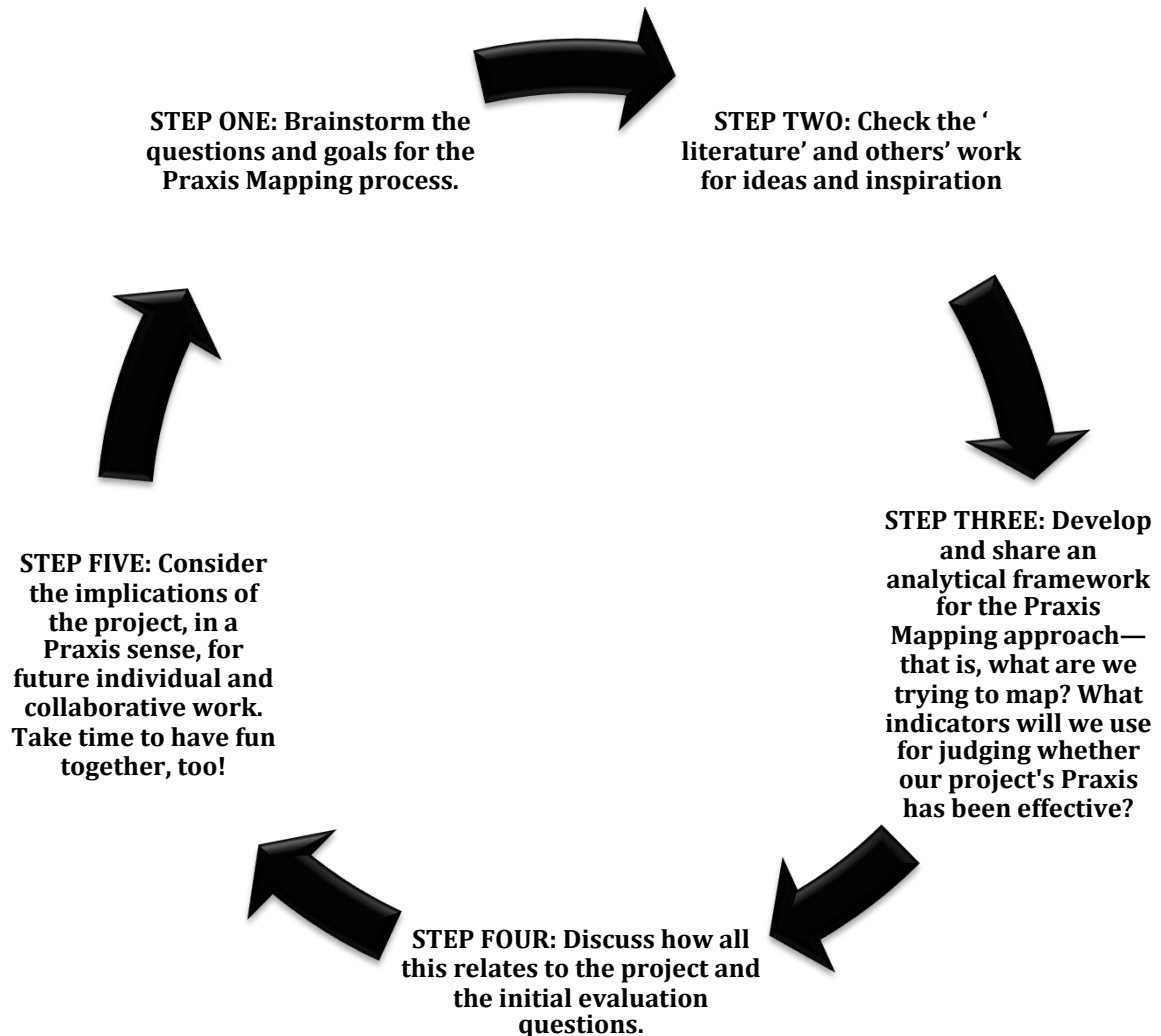
As David Harvey notes in *Rebel Cities*, citing Lefebvre and others, radical change nearly always begins in cities. We have witnessed through our work on this project both the grave problems in African cities resulting from climate change, and the impressive potential which exists there for activism, organizing, and political movements for structural change to address climate change at its source, in the global North.

We encourage anyone reading this, or who has experiences and ideas related to praxis mapping, to share and post their thoughts on our project website: <http://cca.iris.yorku.ca>.



## Praxis Mapping: Steps

“Praxis Mapping” involves collective self-evaluation of how what a group did together relates to members’ long-term visions of fundamental progressive social and political change. What was the project’s broad, long-term political impact?



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*“What is noteworthy (about economic crises) is the fact that the crisis is looked upon and treated by all concerned, by all of society, as something beyond the sphere of human volition and beyond human control, as a heavy blow struck by an invisible and greater power, an ordeal sent down from the heavens, similar to a heavy thunderstorm, an earthquake or a flood.... The analogy of unemployment and floods ... points up the striking fact that we confront great natural catastrophes with less helplessness than our own, purely social, exclusively human affairs! .... However, the means for the control of the flood danger and for the harnessing of the raging waters do exist in present society, even if it is unable to apply them...*

*An all-powerful ruler dominates all workingmen and women: capital. But the form, which this sovereignty of capital takes, is not despotism but anarchy. And it is precisely this anarchy which is responsible for the fact that the economy of human society produces results which are mysterious and unpredictable to the people involved... To recognize and to acknowledge that anarchy is the vital motive force of the rule of capital is to pronounce its death sentence in the same breath, to assert that its days are numbered.”*

From Rosa Luxemburg, “What is Economics?”, the first chapter of her textbook for workers whom she taught between 1907 and 1912, which she polished for publication while in prison in Berlin in 1914-16. First published in the 1920s. This version published in Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, edited by Mary-Alice Walters (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), pp. 231-238.

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