

Knowledge exchange enhances engagement in ecological restoration and rehabilitation initiatives

Ecological restoration and rehabilitation practitioners are people who address complex challenges posed by ecosystem degradation. Two not-for-profit companies, [Living Lands](#) and the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve (GCBR)'s [Jobs 4 Carbon](#), focus their work on restoring the health of social and ecological systems in degraded areas across the Eastern and Western Capes

of South Africa. Their work improves people's capacities to adapt to climate change impacts and generates alternative livelihood opportunities, driven by social learning and collective action. Research undertaken between 2019 and 2020 assessed the impacts of knowledge exchange activities undertaken between Living Lands and Jobs 4 Carbon.

Effective knowledge sharing and community engagement enable progress towards social goals of ecological restoration and rehabilitation through

7 MAJOR IMPACTS

1



INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS STRENGTHENED

The social interaction stimulated by knowledge exchange creates opportunities for continued involvement in the work of fellow practitioners. It enables individuals to share multiple viewpoints and tools used to seek common solutions based on practice. A process of continued engagement is key to achieve common benefits.

2



CAPACITY INCREASED

Knowledge exchange increases the capacity of local and field-based staff to understand the broader priorities and challenges experienced by practitioners and vice-versa. It provides field-based staff with a deeper appreciation of common project management challenges.

3



IMPROVED INSPIRATION AND SENSE OF PLACE

Knowledge exchange enables participants to learn about other realities, familiarise themselves with peers from other contexts, and feel part of a broader national commitment to fight degradation, which results in increased inspiration and motivation to do more.

4



IMPROVED SOCIAL BONDING

Knowledge exchange strengthens social bonding and teamwork. Field-based training enables participating practitioners from different organisations to work together as a team. Participants develop a feeling of being colleagues of their external partners and become reference points to their peers.

5



IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF WELFARE GOALS OF RESTORATION

Knowledge exchange improves the understanding of the welfare goals of restoration pursued by practitioners. It stimulates conversations on how each practitioner can combine or upscale best practices for greater long-lasting benefits.

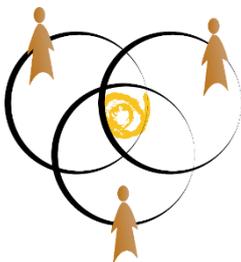
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INTEGRATED PRACTITIONER AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Exchange of knowledge and experiences between peers pursued through social interactions during knowledge exchange enables shared learning, which can be used for wider dissemination and application across the respective communities.

7



KNOWLEDGE ENHANCED AND INNOVATED

Knowledge exchange enables horizontal learning between practitioners, for example by sharing knowledge of restoration, rehabilitation and erosion control approaches pursued through multiple techniques. It enables identification of transferable practices.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Short-term and localized knowledge exchange grounded in practice fosters benefits across multiple social dimensions through stakeholder engagement and knowledge enrichment.
- Professionally facilitated knowledge exchange processes help to raise visibility of best practices and explain potential sources of future support.
- Combining different engagement approaches in knowledge exchange and advancing from short-term to systemic and long-term knowledge exchange is essential to enhance different forms of learning and deliver applied socio-ecological benefits.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Read the original research paper in the thematic series 'Arid Lands' of Restoration Ecology:

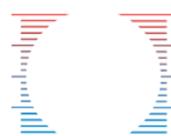
Favretto N, Stringer L, Dougill A, Kruger L. 2021. Knowledge exchange enhances engagement in ecological restoration and rehabilitation initiatives. Restoration Ecology, pp 1-8. [Doi:10.1111/rec.13565](https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.13565)

Read the annual Living Lands report

Our Journey on the Landscape – Living Lands ([click HERE](#))



This work is jointly part of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy (CCCEP), Grant Number: ES/R009708/1, and the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) project awarded to the University of Leeds. Focusing on climate compatible development trajectories, the funding supports maximisation of the impact and influence of CCCEP research on non-academic beneficiaries and fosters non-academic stakeholder engagement.



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