



# The Spekboom

## Inside this issue:

Enviros Pizza Pledge	1
Giving a voice to invisible women	2-3
Not for Sissies	3
Trip to Tuscany	4-5
R U Enviro Savvy? Shoos Quiz	5
Not for Sissies contd.	6

## Enviros Pizza Pledge

Earlier this year Charlie mooted the idea of launching a bursary for a financially deserving Enviros undergraduate student from Grahamstown or Makana, and that the bursary be funded by postgrad alumni and staff of the department. Support for the idea was given in principle, conditional on a survey of the alumni and staff to assess the potential level of support.

The survey was done in the form of pizza pledge. Alumni and staff were invited to forego one or more pizzas per month, with options for three sizes and corresponding values. Thus, the bursary would not only assist a financially needy Enviros student, but it would also be beneficial to the alumnus (through watching their health through one less pizza per month and the feel good satisfaction of knowing you are helping a needy person) and the environment through adding to the pool of environmental scientists in the country and a reduction in fast food consumption and its attendant environment impacts.

The staff of the department were overwhelmed and humbled by the level of interest and support shown by the

Enviros alumni. It is an amazing testament to the character of the postgraduates who have helped build the department into what it is today. It speaks volumes about Enviros alumni's commitment to the discipline and recognition of the inequalities and needs of others in South Africa. To the best of our knowledge, such a department specific initiative is a first for Rhodes and probably any South African university. We received 23 pledges, totalling just over R18,000 for next year.

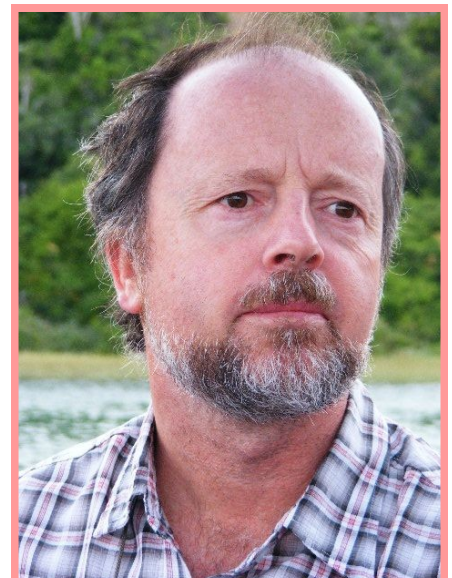
The department has opted to allocate a further R8,000 for 2012, which if all pledges are operationalised, will provide a bursary of R24,000 for 2012. This represents approximately 80 % of the undergraduate fees for 2012. The beauty of the system is that as the numbers of alumni increase, so too will the annual pool of funds. Who knows, in another ten years time, we might generate sufficient funds to support a second student, and be foregoing a lot of pizzas! Additionally, from now on the department will be allocating R1,500 per year from the profits of each of its short courses.

The intention is to open the bursary to an Enviro 2 student next year and if their academic performance is satisfactory the same recipient would be supported in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year too, and perhaps also Honours. This is quite clearly a potentially life changing opportunity for a local, financially needy young scholar – thanks to Enviros alumnus!

For the moment it has been called the Rhodes University Environmental Science Staff & Postgrad Alumni Bursary (RUESSPA), but that can be evaluated in time. A committee has been established to manage the bursary in 2012, comprising the postgraduate rep in the department (Rebecca Joubert), a representative from the NGO sector in Grahamstown (Michelle Griffith from Umthathi) and Sheona Shackleton. We are sure this initiative will grow from strength to strength, and we will be providing you with updates on a regular basis.

## Important Dates for 2012

- Feb 2nd: World Wetland Day
- Mar 21st: World Forest Day
- Mar 22nd: World Day for Water
- Mar 23rd: World Meteorological Day
- April 22nd: Earth Day



## Giving a voice to the invisible women in forest product value chains

By Karin Holznecht

BOGOR, Indonesia (October 2011) – Finding the hidden

links in non-timber forest product value chains could help government and non-government agencies lift women out of poverty, say Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) scientists in a special gender-themed

issue of the *International Forestry Review*. The team of CIFOR scientists examined the value chains of three internationally important non-timber forest products from Africa's dry forests: from production/harvesting to processing, packaging, transporting, and retailing. At each value-adding link in the chain, the team assessed the role women play, the benefits they gain and the challenges they face in securing their livelihoods through the trade. "In the value chains of gum arabic in Burkina Faso, frankincense in Ethiopia, and honey in Zambia, women are key actors at a variety of stages," says CIFOR scientist Sheona Shackleton, lead author for the team. "But the women who rely on the non-timber forest product trade are poor, uneducated and tend to have little status in society.

Their roles are generally poorly visible and inadequately acknowledged. Their voices are hardly heard or are even silenced because they are so under-represented. Fostering women's empowerment in these non-timber forest product value chains faces several constraints: some easier to overcome than others. Particularly difficult to overcome are gender-based, social-cultural barriers."

The constraints these women face are mostly related to issues of access. Women's access to productive resources such as forests is often restricted by cultural traditions. Accessing credit or opening bank accounts may be difficult because of their lack of legal status. And they cannot participate in certain activities perceived to be the domain of men due to religious norms and restrictions. Women's traditional roles in the home also mean they are constrained by household and caregiver duties, which may limit their mobility and time to participate fully in some of the more rewarding activities in the value chain. The AIDS epidemic in Africa has only increased this responsibility, as in the case of Mrs Zewditu, a 78-year-old who sorts gum in one of Ethiopia's state-owned companies: "Who would employ an elderly woman of my age and responsible for bringing up two grandsons orphaned by HIV/AIDS? Although I do not earn much from the job, it helps support me and my grandsons."

Mrs Zewditu's comment gives an insight into why women in both urban and rural settings continue to participate in non-timber forest product trade despite the challenges they face. Their involvement, however hidden, still provides

benefits such as increased business skills, independent incomes, protection from riskier work like prostitution, and greater security in general. And while some depend more on the income from non-timber products than others, all women use their earnings for key purchases: for food and clothing, livestock, health and education needs, and to support children or families. "I picked 37 kg of gum in 2008–2009 and the money I got has been used to buy clothing and shoes for myself and my children," said Hindatou Boubarcar, a 30-year-old woman involved in gum collection and sale in Burkina Faso, when interviewed by the CIFOR team.

Women are often targeted by development activities precisely because they are most likely to re-invest in households and contribute to their families. Empowering women not only benefits women, but society as a whole, and is essential for combating poverty. Despite this, as shown in the value chains Shackleton and her co-authors examined, gender discrimination is still a widespread obstacle to development and poverty alleviation. From their research, the CIFOR team came up with some practical suggestions for getting around this obstacle and building the economic opportunities of women through non-timber forest product value chains.

"First, and most important, the hidden roles of women and



*"The constraints these women face are related to issues of access. Women's access to productive resources is often restricted by cultural traditions"*

## Giving a voice contd.

their opportunities and constraints need to be sought out, understood, and recognised. Without this it is not possible to tailor support for these women," explains Shackleton. "Once their position is understood, action can be taken to give women tools to improve their involvement, such as helping overcome reluctance to speak out or act by support for collective action and organized groups. This can provide women with greater voice, access to resources and services, negotiating power and economies of scale." Because most of these women are uneducated, they could be helped with technical and other training geared towards their specific needs and roles, particularly where it is well established that women are key actors in a part of the value chain.

Addressing physical constraints through appropriate technologies could also be considered, so long as this technology does not then edge women out, Shackleton cautions.

"Everything must be done with an understanding of women's time and mobility constraints, giving women room to take advantage of these opportunities through flexible hours, childcare provision, or tools to learn or work from home." Government and non-government agencies will also need to carefully assess the hidden gender impacts of interventions to increase production, profits and efficiency in value chains. Commercializing non-timber forest products through a gendered lens means mapping the full value chain, the gendered division of labour along the chain, and the inter-

actions between men and women at different stages.

"There is no single recipe for success, but taking the time to understand the roles of women and their constraints is critical for taking appropriate action to empower women, reduce poverty and further economic development," says Shackleton. With increased awareness of the invisible women in non-timber forest product value chains, it is hoped that greater benefits for women could follow. In some cases, this awareness could even expand women's roles into new areas of value chains, so other women can share the sentiment of one of Zambia's women beekeepers: "I used to admire male beekeepers and the money they were making, now others admire me."



*"Environmental managers are tasked with seeing both the wood and the trees"*

## Not for Sissies by Natalie Way-Jones

Working in the environmental management field in South Africa is not straight forward by any means. The South African context provides a dynamic, shifting political and social backdrop against which our advanced and complex environmental legislation must be implemented. Our environmental legislation is first world in its design, but there are massive disparities within South Africa, with evidence of both first and third world development issues. There are the 'have-nots' clamouring for housing and basic services in rural areas, and the 'haves' clamouring for development and investment.

The quality of water resources is diminishing. There is growing pressure on threat-

ened ecosystems and uncertainties and lack of understanding around cumulative impacts in light of climate change. South Africa must grapple with the 'hangover' of historical, poorly planned development where there is lack of accountability and a lack of firm liability for remediation of damage.

Environmental managers are tasked with seeing both the wood and the trees, considering both the micro issues (the bugs and plants) and macro issues (regional planning strategies) and make sure that these are presented in a manner which ensures transparent, balanced and robust decision-making by the overburdened government officials.

This means that environmental practitioners have to be highly intuitive, use their initiative and think 'out of the box' to find creative solutions, in most cases, for complex problems. Applying first world legislation in this diverse country can mean that appropriate government administrative structures and institutional capacity are often not in place. In-roads are being made to change this, with an influx of new environmental fledglings that enter the system from the Universities. These disparities will be reduced over time but in the interim, knowledge-sharing and networking is critical.



# Trip to Tuscany: “Gender & Climate Change”

By Leigh Stadler



The famous Tower

*“There were presentations coming from multiple disciplines, which was refreshing and added a new conceptual dimension to the conference’s core theme”*

On the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September, the international conference “Gender and Climate Change: Women, Research and Action” was held in Prato, Tuscany. I was fortunate to attend and present a paper based on some key themes and preliminary findings from the Jongphambili Sinethemba/IDRC Climate Change and HIV/Aids research project. The conference was hosted by the Gender, Leadership and Social Sustainability (GLASS)



Vernazza

research unit of Monash University, Australia, in collaboration with Worldwide Universities Network and Gender Justice and Global Climate Change (G2C2).

Over a hundred delegates from 23 different countries attended, and this diverse group offered stimulating talks, debates and planning workshops across the crammed programme, covering topics related to three key themes: Gendered climate change impacts; Law and policy frameworks; and Advocacy, Adaptation and Innovation. The main aim was to get this mixture of researchers, advocates and policy makers to share their knowledge for input into the COP17 negotiations later this year, and the Earth Summit 2012.

‘Gender and climate change’ quickly became ‘women and climate change’, though this was not solely due to the fact that there were only about three men present. The added burden that climate change brings to women’s lives was highlighted across multiple studies spanning different geographical and economic spheres – from rural women in North-Eastern India to affluent women in Australia. It was great to get perspectives from studies with similar approaches and frameworks to what I’ve been working on, but based in areas which had their own unique social and ecological contexts shaping local vulnerability and adaptation practices.

There were also presentations coming from multiple disciplines, which was refreshing and added a new conceptual dimension to the conference’s core theme. For instance, there were a few philosophical papers: one had an

ethics approach exploring the discourse of responsibility, while another critiqued the pervasive modernist notions of objective knowledge and control in most climate change discourse.

While the absence or lack of recognition of gendered impacts and possible responses was emphasised and lamented throughout the conference, the progress that has been made over the last decade in addressing these issues and bringing them to attention of policy makers offered hope for positive change to come. Overall, the presentations emphasised not only ‘women as victims’, but also the power of ‘women as agents’ capable and willing to rise to the challenges posed if given the opportunity.

One noteworthy session was from a group of 3 delegates from Pacific islands – the Cook Islands, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. It was pertinent enough to hear this group talk about the changes they were already experiencing back home and the frustration with having to live through these changes after contributing so little to the cause of them. It was even more poignant to watch a film clip from Bougainville Island, directed and filmed by youth in order to raise awareness about the impact of sea level rise on their lives. It is likely that this entire community will have to relocate within the next 5 years due to rising sea levels, forcing them to lose their cultural history and natural heritage, while exchanging their future for a precarious life on a neighbouring, already inhabited, island.

There were a bunch of us young researchers (later termed ‘emerging researchers’

## Trip to Tuscany (contd...)

(later termed 'emerging researchers' so as not to be ageist and discriminatory) who decided to form a group to keep in touch and share resources. This is still being formalised, but it is and will be an open group, and if any emerging researcher is interested in climate change, gender issues, and especially the interactions between the two, please drop me an email (l.t.stadler@gmail.com), or follow the group's development via Facebook by searching for the page 'Gender and Climate Change'.

After the conference I took a week's holiday and travelled

from Prato to Pisa, from there to Florence, then on to the quaint and quiet coastal town of la Marina de Castagneto, and finally to La Spezia with the beautiful Cinque Terre around the corner – five villages which collectively form a UNESCO world heritage site owing to the stone hand-built agricultural terraces covering the hills, and a marine protected area. I did very little of the typical touristy things besides the leaning tower and its neighbouring cathedrals, one art gallery, a walk up the 463 stone stairs of il Duomo cathedral to a panoramic view of Florence, and the Cinque Terre. Be-

sides these I found myself entertained and engrossed enough by the maze of ancient cobbled streets filled with stern Italian women cycling in high heels, the ubiquitous American tourist offering endless comic one-liners, and ice-cream cafes on every street-corner.

It was an all-round unforgettable experience. Thanks again to Sheona, her NRF and the IDRC for funding, to Sheona and George for their collaboration in the paper, and to Nick and Zeldia for their help and advice.



Duomo

## RU Enviro Savvy Schools Quiz

By Louise Bryson

On the 20<sup>th</sup> September the Departments Honours class hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Schools Environmental Quiz. Four learners from Mary Waters High, Graeme College, St Andrews, Nombulelo High, DSG, Victoria Girls High and Kingswood participated in the exciting 'R U Enviro Savvy quiz'.

This fun evening began as spectators and contestants alike arrived to the timeless tune of "Captain Planet he's our hero, gonna take pollution down to zero" and yes the first question pertained to this environmentally conscious cartoon from the 90's. Although things started off light-hearted the questions in the first two rounds were tough and of the seven

schools that participated, many were left guessing.

Four schools made it to the final round where the questions became even tougher. A tense tiebreaker between DSG and Graeme College ended after Graeme College answered a sudden knock-out question about when and where the COP 17 conference was to be held this year. This resulted in first place being taken by Kingswood, second place Graeme College, third place DSG and fourth place Mary Waters High.

The winners of the quiz also won R250 book vouchers to feed their 'Enviro Savvy' minds. No-one left empty handed as all participants received a hamper that included spekbooms donated by Zeldia Odendaal from the Environmental Sciences De-

partment. There were also two large spekbooms that were won by lucky spectators.

At the end of the evening it was safe to say that everyone left with a little more knowledge about the environment and a healthy competitive spirit!

*"Kingswood College took first prize and DSG third prize"*



Graham College in 2nd place

# Not for Sissies contd.

From page 3....

Increasingly environmental managers must rely upon a set of personal ethics in carrying out their work - work which carries a weight of responsibility not matched by current regulatory control. A personal ethic is not something one can learn at university. It's not a product of one's qualifications; the length of a CV; the number of reports produced. It's a product of who we are and how we behave every moment of our life. Standing one's ground in a boardroom when challenged by a developer who is charismatic, powerful and connected, requires strong personal ethics and confidence.

We all know what the right thing is to do. We can study and analyse the environmental law; we can know the

science; but ultimately we can't hide behind it. The difference we make is through our personal ethics and a sense of responsibility; our knowing that every decision we make, every report we produce, every meeting we attend, carries an environmental impact. We must investigate and scrutinise our moral fibre. We must develop a personal set of ethics, look at our intentions and plot a course that aligns with our ethics amidst the clutter of environmental legislation and policy, and stand our ground when the time comes.

Natalie Way-Jones is a Senior Environmental Scientist at SRK Consulting in Westville, Durban. Natalie obtained her Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology and Environmental Science at Rhodes University, as well as her Honours in Biotechnology and Environmental Sci-

ence at Rhodes in 1999 (she was the first ever Honours graduate from Environmental Science at RU), and her Masters in the Philosophy of Environmental Management at University of Stellenbosch. Natalie has also completed a certificate course in Environmental Education at Rhodes, is a certified Environmental Assessment Practitioner and is registered with the Professional Natural Science Institute of Southern Africa. Natalie specialises in environmental assessments and strategic policy and planning. She was involved in the compilation of the Emakhazeni Local Municipality Environmental Management Framework, the City of Tshwane Biodiversity Strategy and Management Plan and a set of Environmental Management Systems under the umbrella of the eThekweni Greening 2010 programme for a number of 2010 FIFA World Cup venues in Durban.



Sheona, Nick, Caryn, Injairu and Leigh at the COP17 Summit in Durban in December 2011.

