

NEWSLETTER

October 2020

The changing face of public participation

If there is one thing that we cannot ignore is that millions more people in the world and in South Africa are going to have to think differently to be able to survive financially. COVID-19 does not take status or wealth into account, as far as I can see, and suddenly ABCD becomes even more applicable and valid than ever. Okay, I will explain first what ABCD means ... asset-based community development, i.e. “nobody has nothing, everybody has something”. We have been using this methodology with huge success for several years and I will provide some heart-warming examples later. What this programme does is make people aware of what they have around them, i.e. one has a vehicle, the other has a fruit tree, the other has an oven. There is no need to wait for a handout from industry around you ... you just need to get the inspiration and confidence to do something together.

Almost all industry, and especially the mines, are required to start a corporate social investment fund, which they all did in the past, but a number of them have now ceased putting more money into these funds because it is not used properly in a way that benefits more than just a few people in a philanthropic way. The days of giving away T-shirts and thinking you are doing a good job for your community, is over, thank heavens!

My most wonderful awareness when the ABCD programme is in full action is that previously unemployed people, who basically have lost all hope of employment in the formal sector, awaken and get their dignity back and can feel proud of what they can do themselves. In one community, we found a young lady who was trained as a nano-scientist but could not find employment. Her neighbours realised in the ABCD training that they could use someone like her to make sure that the water that they wanted to bottle would be of the highest standard and quality. To my knowledge they are currently making plans to get their water bottling project off the ground.

In the past few months, we taught people in the Rustenburg area to make their own masks, to make their own sanitiser and to plant little pot plants that are carbon friendly. We

asked for unemployed volunteers from all the communities in the area, without the promise of any financial aid, and we were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm that came out of these recruitment drives.

One group decided that they could start a *takkie* washing business and even developed a Facebook page advertising their services; another group started making *vetkoek* and selling these. I received a video showing a young man watering his vegetable garden – the fence was made out of an old mattress inner spring, but so what, he was not holding out his hand for something, he was making a plan. Yes, with the original R20 that he used for seed he could have bought a whole lot of carrots, but the pride when the plants started to grow and when he could harvest the first carrots is absolutely priceless. He is now going around the neighbourhood encouraging people to start their own little gardens.



Even during the pandemic, engagement needs to continue and can, if you follow basic rules.

Two SE specialists pictured in front of a community dwelling doing engagement as best as possible.

As I said in the beginning, this concept is more important than ever post-COVID-19. If you need more information do not hesitate to contact us at admin2@iap2sa.org.

Keep safe.

Erika du Plessis, IAP2 Southern Africa outgoing chair

Growing the practice of public participation and stakeholder engagement in the new IAP2: The Role of IAP2 Southern Africa*

The IAP2 enterprise

IAP2 is the preeminent international organisation advancing the practice of public participation and stakeholder engagement. Founded in 1990, the mission of IAP2 is to advance and extend practice through professional development, certification, standards of practice, core values and advocacy. The IAP2 international family includes affiliates in the USA, Canada, Australasia, Southern Africa and Indonesia. Latin America is moving toward full affiliation.

Change, transformation and new horizons

IAP2 embarked on a change and transformation journey in 2018. This has been an international effort, seeking to build a future-ready organisation with strong regions and a strong international body. The idea of advancing and extending public participation and stakeholder engagement practice is prominent in the change initiative. To this end, the Advocacy and Emerging Practice (AEP) Committee was established.

AEP has focussed on two areas of advancement and extension: a) approaches to advancing tools and methodologies and b) geographical outreach. In the latter case, volunteer task teams have set up guidelines and a Business-in-a-Box toolkit to facilitate the entry and growth of new regional affiliates, and have considered and reviewed modes of mentorship, cooperation and support.

In the context of advancing tools and methodologies, AEP has worked with a dynamic IAP2 team building a partnership with the United Nations in Indonesia and globally. The interface with partner organisations such as the UN is seen to be fertile ground for co-innovation and practice development.

A key committee in the change and transformation process is the Global Practice Development Committee (GPDC). Training is a key product and activity for IAP2 across all regions. A central task entrusted to GPDC is the harmonisation of training products and processes across the IAP2 family, capturing the collective power of regionally-informed innovation in this critical area of work.

A leading role for IAP2 Southern Africa?

The historic core of IAP2 is largely in North America and Australasia. Perspectives, products and services have evolved to a significant extent in these “developed world” contexts, with their typical regulatory frameworks, participation and training cultures and participation / engagement customers.

Colleagues from Southern Africa have contributed to the evolution of IAP2 over several decades, and now there is a unique opportunity to do more. A geographically expanding and practice improving IAP2 has much to learn from Southern Africa, Indonesia, Latin America and elsewhere.

We can and should be leading aspects of the change, through building the diversity and relevance of IAP2 practice. Ways to do this include:

- Showing the variety of contexts in which participation and engagement can be powerful tools for participation and empowerment in developing countries;
- Assessing and demonstrating the array of tools and processes that has been developed for and used in these contexts;
- Advancing research and innovation around new frontiers of participation and engagement practice; and
- Exploring opportunities to welcome new national and regional groups into the IAP2 family, and with them understanding the kind of transformed IAP2 that will be valued and used worldwide.

Tim Hart, IAP2 Southern Africa

**Based on a keynote address to the 2020 AGM of IAP2 SA.*

“I found the webinars interesting. While the projects discussed were larger than what we typically deal with in Southern Africa, the concepts were still applicable. It was also nice having the group discussion/questions at the end.”

– Michael Leach, IAP2 SA member, on IAP2 Canada’s learning webinars held in July and August.

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For more information, please contact

Sue Cato, training coordinator

at admin2@iap2sa.org or

on +27 83 564 1613

international news

IAP2SA's participation in international focus groups

IAP2SA, as an affiliation of the International Federation, has been involved in task forces that are aimed at growing IAP2 globally to ensure that public participation practitioners work together, share their knowledge, and are aligned in the way they practice.

Task forces that IAP2SA is currently involved in are:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) – IAP2 is undergoing a process of organisational evolution and change and, as such, it seeks to ensure that it remains a world-class, inclusive, and relevant organisation into the future. To advance and extend the practice of public participation, IAP2 needs to actively represent diverse perspectives, ideas, influences and ensure that there is diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organisation.

The **Emerging Regions Support Task Team** is another group where IAP2SA is involved, and this is aimed at expansion of IAP2 to effectively reach IAP2 members at different regions, worldwide. Through its participations, IAP2SA will acquire skills and learning from other bodies, good working relationships and growth that will sustain its existence.

Dr Thato Shale, IAP2 Southern Africa board member

IAP2SA 2021 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members will be able to renew their membership from 1 January until 28 February 2021.

Renewal packs, including information about the fee for 2021 and other initiatives (introduction of a membership number), will be sent out in November, followed by a reminder in December.

Members who have not renewed their membership by the end of February will be removed from the database.

For more information, please get in touch with us at admin2@iap2sa.org.za