

Lessons from Communities on Climate Change Impacts

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The Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute, SAFCEI, is a multi-faith environmental organisation committed to supporting faith leaders and their communities in Southern Africa to increase awareness, understanding and action on eco-justice, sustainable living and climate change.

THANK YOU, BUT DO YOU
ALSO HAVE RESILIENCE
FUNDS TO UNDO TWO
HUNDRED YEARS OF
IMPERIAL INJUSTICE?

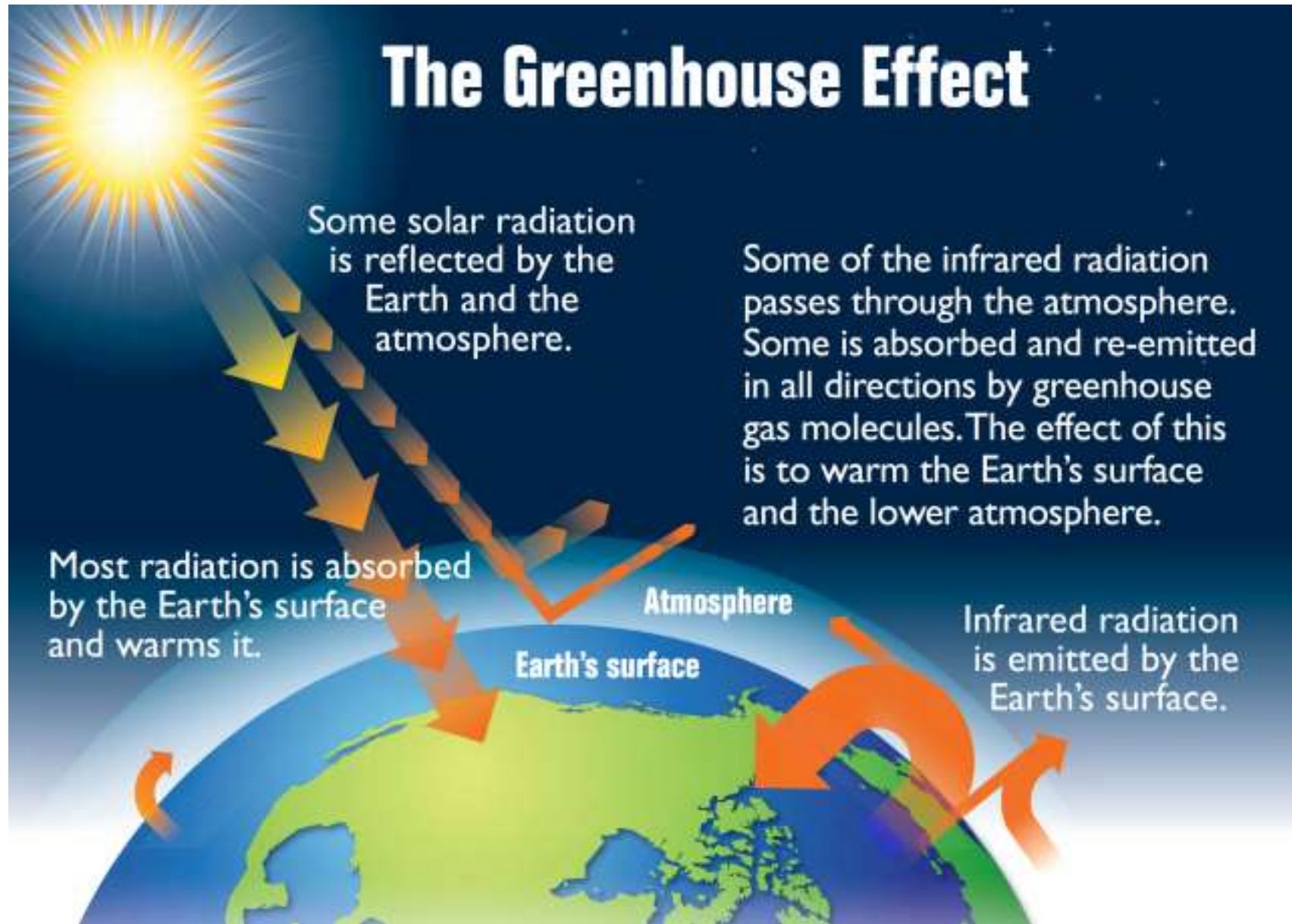


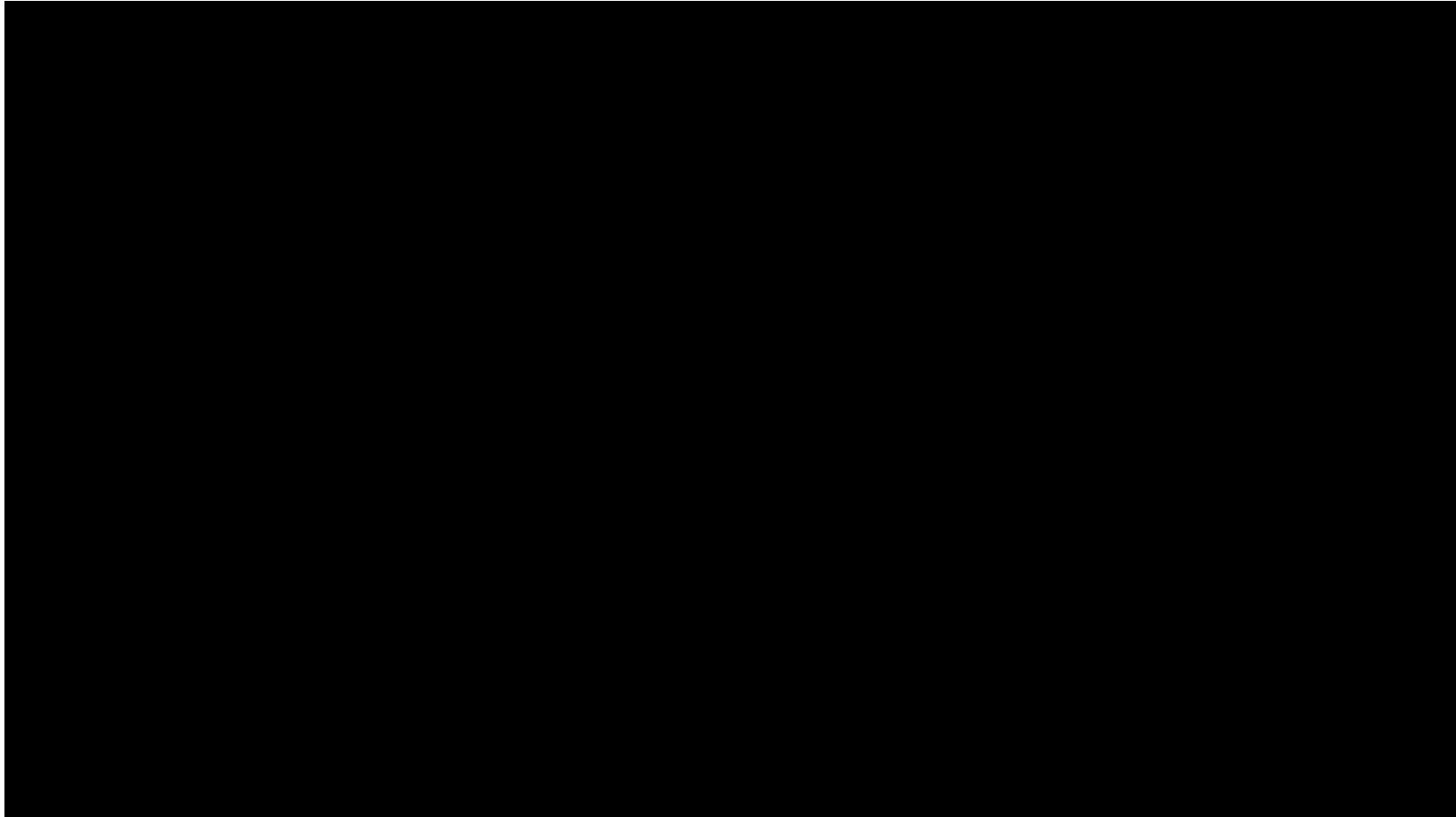
Rohan Chakravarty/CartoonStock.com

Weather, Climate, Climate Change

- **Weather** is an every day experience where you are- its hot today in Durban, its raining in Joburg and so on. *What does weather help us decide?*
- **Climate** is a longer term trend of climatic conditions- it rains in the summer in Joburg and it starts in spring, Durban has an average temperature in spring of 25 degrees. *What does climate help us decide?*
- **Climate Change** are changes in the long term trends which have been caused by human activity, namely **industrialisation**. *What does climate change mean in terms of what we know about climate and weather?*

The Greenhouse Effect





“The era of global warming is over, the era of global boiling has begun.” UN chief António Guterres

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Rural Action for
Climate Resilience



SOCIAL CHANGE
ASSISTANCE TRUST



HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
CAPE TOWN
South Africa | Namibia | Zimbabwe



Co-funded by
the European Union

- SAFCEI has partnered with the Social Change Assistance Trust and Heinrich Boll Stiftung for a Rural Action for Climate Resilience project in South Africa.
- The RACR project is in its third year and data shared here is from rural communities in Western Cape, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape.
- Climate finance community data is from a previous project by the Green Belt Movement in Kenya
- As well as information about the Just Energy Transition from the Fair Finance School.

Climate Change in South Africa

- Climate change is already triggering a wide range of impacts in South Africa, from increasingly intense and frequent fires, flooding, heat waves, and droughts.
- Climate change impacts community members differently, according to privilege and position.
- Rural communities are at the forefront of climate impacts.
- Climate impacts are gendered and will increase over time, impacting youth more.
- Repetitive climate impacts in close succession have a cumulative affect that has long-term repercussions on community's ability to access basic services including food, clean water, basic services, and infrastructure. (seen in a number of areas hit by successive floods this year such as Port St Johns).

National Government response

- South Africa's policy environment and governance practices have are not thus far been conducive to responding to the climate change impacts already being experienced in much of the country.
- The Climate Change Bill has not been passed.
- Local governments struggle with lack of finances and capacity, and mismanagement have been left to take the initiative to prepare for climate change.
- There are some expectations on Metropolitans, in circulars issued by the National Treasury, to build a response to local climate change impacts.
- Not enough is being done pressure to insist on action by other local governments; or support in the form of capacity and finances.
- There is mention of climate change in some of the local government IDPs but in reality, people are already feeling climate impacts with little government intervention to buffer them.

Local government capacity to respond

- Ailing infrastructure compounds climate impacts. Leaking pipes worsen water shortages, while poor storm water management and drainage infrastructure exacerbate flood damage. Insufficient firefighters and fire-fighting equipment delay the response time for fires which became uncontrollable.
- In turn climate impacts cause additional damage to infrastructure (such as roads, housing, and electric cables) which threatens service delivery, and requires further resources for restoration, in already resource-constrained local governments.

Gender and Climate Change



Gender & the Climate Crisis

- **Climate change impacts women more than men, exacerbating existing social inequalities including GBV.**
- **Women experience cultural, political, and economic barriers to climate justice.**
- **Gender inequality worsens and compounds climate change impacts as women have an increased the burden because of their gender role and the expectation to care for their families. Women rely on access to food, water and infrastructure.**

Nonetheless women are at the forefront of implementing solutions to the climate crisis

Communities on the frontline

- For example, flooding causes both short-term and long-term impacts. Short-term impacts involve the need to avoid the immediate destruction of floodwaters. Long-term impacts are often socio-economic repercussions of short-term destruction not being addressed timeously. These include the lack of food, and housing, disrupted service delivery, closure of small businesses due to disrupted supply chains impacting the local economy, and the damage and disruption of medical clinics, and schools threatening the ability of matric learners to complete their final exams.
- “silver-bullet” solutions that do not adapt to different contexts.
- Public participation is limited and rarely ever experienced as meaningful
- Extractive-ist approach to development

CBOs & FBOs trying to fill the gap

- Climate change impacts governance of local municipalities and yet municipal officials do not know or understand the importance of climate change.
- The poly-crisis being experienced at a local level places multiple burdens on local community organisations and faith groups.
- Community-based organisations and faith groups are filling in the gap that municipalities leave.

CBO & FBO recommendations

- The following approaches to assist or lessen the impacts of climate change include the following:
 - **Food:** Municipal land can be leased to train and practice permaculture for sustainable community food gardens to due food insecurity.
 - **Water:** Municipal support for sustainable water provision, through jojo tanks for example, while also sharing information on water harvesting and conservation techniques. Municipal maintenance of water infrastructure can prevent and address leakages.
 - **Employment:** The Community Works Program (CWP) could be involved to support garden workers, providing the economic benefit from a stipend, while also supporting the learning of skills that can be applied in home gardens and elsewhere.
 - **Localised Assistance:** There needs to be tailored assistance for different communities- as different experiences of climate change impacts and so

CBO & FBO recommendations

- Silver bullet solutions don't work unless they are contextualised.
- **Community project support:** There needs to be more active support for community-based projects from the government, such as grants for community development.
- **Climate preparedness:** There need to be public campaigns to build flood awareness and local response, while also informing communities on what available government resources exist to respond, so that municipalities can be held accountable.
- **Effective early warning systems:** early warning systems (for storms, flooding, extreme weather, wind) are needed so that people can prepare themselves.
- **Information in Schools and Public spaces:** Information and awareness raising can be made accessible by using schools to communicate information, or sharing information in lines of SASSA queues for collecting grants.

CBO & FBO recommendations

- **Sustainable Seed Banks:** The government can support the set up of community-run seed banks for indigenous seeds that are not genetically modified and can be used as hubs for seed swaps.
- **Municipal capacity building:** Municipal officials can attend workshops run by community-based organisations, to enhance their understanding of local climate impacts and what is needed from the government locally to build resilience to climate impacts.
- **Government and Community Orgs work together:** Local governments can collaborate with well-established community organisations, to co-create disaster preparedness and response plans, to conduct training for firefighters and build local fire-fighting responses.

CBO & FBO Recommendations

- **Solar energy solutions:** Where appropriate, support can be provided to install solar energy infrastructure that connects to the grid for community ownership.
- **Prevention of Gender Based Violence:** Support needs to be provided for organisations conducting gender-based advocacy and awareness, to address the increasing levels of GBV that contribute to greater gendered vulnerability to climate impacts. Additionally, targeted support needs to be provided to address the traditional limitations imposed on women, such as access to funding, land ownership, and decision-making power in communities.
- **Effective Public Participation:** There need to be more meaningful public participation-dates and locations should be set ahead of time and should not change at the last minute. It should be clearly indicated where public participation has influenced a concept/policy or approach taken by the government, in order to create greater transparency around the importance and impact of public participation. In particular, special efforts should be placed on enabling women to be involved in public participation.

Climate Finance

- **Top down**
- **Large scale**
- **Technical in nature**
- **Stringent requirements, burden on the implementers**
- **Unrealistic in expectations on governance structures**
- **Not designed for environmental-socially driven projects**

The South African Govt's response to Climate Change: The Just Energy Transition- Investment Plan

"Climate finance refers to local, national or transnational financing – drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing – that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change"

What is it?

- A deal to support the decarbonisation of South Africa
- Announced at COP26 in 2021
- \$8.5 billion to be mobilised over 3-5 years
- Investment Plan launched in November 2022 (and then taken to COP27)

Stakeholders (who are the key role players):

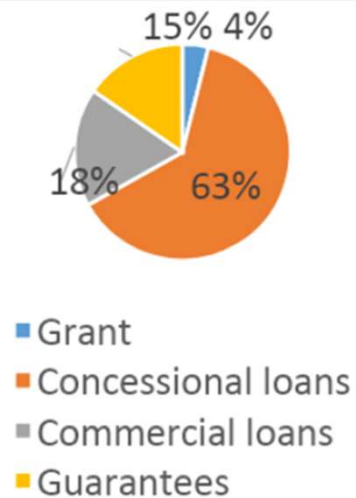
- International Partners Group (IPG)- UK, USA, France, Germany and EU
- Public Finance Institutions
- Presidential Climate Finance Task Team
- Presidential Climate Commission

CREDIT: Fair Finance School

Source: <https://www.fairfinancesouthernafrica.org/>, <https://www.iej.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/IEJ-policybrief-ClimateFinance1.pdf>

Just Energy Transition Investment Plan

Figure 1. Breakdown of the Sources of finance



Source: The South African Presidency (2022)

- **3 main objectives of the IP:**
 - Electricity sector
 - Electric vehicles
 - Green hydrogen
- Predominantly an infrastructure plan (89.4%)
- Only 4% grants
- Mix of concessional loans, commercial loans and grants

CREDIT: Fair Finance School

Source: <https://www.fairfinancesouthernafrica.org/>, <https://www.iej.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/IEJ-policybrief-ClimateFinance1.pdf>

Further lessons for Community Engagement in Climate Finance Opportunities

- Communities rights, culture and livelihoods.
- Full and effective participation of rural communities.
- Investment in education and empowering communities, and developing grassroots governance structures.
- Free prior informed consent, enforcement of agreements, safeguards, clear and equitable benefit sharing and conflict resolution guidelines.
- The heavy burden of the project delivery and all its requirements is left to communities.
- Scope of project mean communities are prevented from accessing funding.
- Risks of fuelling conflict and undermining rights

Thank you