

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

SÜDAFRIKA

Lars Thomas Burchert

Susanne Winter

Mai 2015 [www.kas.de/suedafrika/en/](http://www.kas.de/suedafrika/en/)

## Renewable Energy and Community Impacts

**Research methods and solution strategies for climate change mitigation, adaptation and low carbon development were addressed at the workshop that was jointly held by the Mandela Institute and the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation South Africa. The discourse highlighted challenges due to global climate change and urged for greater responsibility in addressing the consequences thereof. The research approach introduced by the Mandela Institute seeks to contribute knowledge on how renewable energies could contribute to sustainable development, as well as to the needs of local communities.**



Left-hand: Dr. Fola Adeleke, Senior Researcher Mandela Institute Right-hand: Dr. Dix, KAS Resident Representative South Africa

The gathering followed prior recognition of the urgency on the matter following the "[Climate Change, Energy and the Environment Scoping Workshop](#)", jointly held by the Mandela Institute and KAS South Africa on 14 November 2014. The workshop thus marked the first official meeting with further briefings intended over a period of two years. Research conducted by the Mandela Institute intends closing the gap of yet missing research on the topic. Scientific knowledge shall be generated that unfolds meaning beyond the

scientific community in order to reach a lasting impact on sustainable development goals. Research by the Mandela Institute evaluates the energy policy framework of the South African government, the so called „Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme“ (REIPPPP), focusing on two broad parts: Firstly, on the extent to which the programme contributes to meeting international commitments on climate change mitigation and secondly, on solution strategies to climate change mitigation. Emphasis is placed upon the particular needs of residents in rural areas.



Dr. Fola Adeleke and Kgaugelo Chiloane (both from the Mandela Institute)

The Mandela Institute analyses research on topics collected by government, non-governmental organisations and independent power producers. Further, an extended field research will be conducted that consists of research interviews and focus group discussions. "It is paramount that the weakest sectors of society gain access to affordable and clean energy, while at the same time their economic vibrancy is stimulated", notes Dr. Fola Adeleke, Senior Researcher of the Mandela Institute. Therefore, strategies that align the implementation of renewable energies with the creation of jobs need to be developed. Research conducted by the Mandela Institute intends closing the gap of yet missing research on the topic. Scientific knowledge that unfolds meaning beyond the scientific community in order to reach a lasting impact on sustainable development shall be generated.

"The research results contribute to the development of the South African Energy Framework and may influence the world climate summit COP 21 in Paris on December 15<sup>th</sup> 2015", added Dr. Adeleke. In South Africa, the dialogue and collaboration of different stakeholders

shall be enhanced". The lively discussion that followed Dr. Adeleke's remarks, marked the first step into that direction. Dr. Dix, KAS Resident Representative South Africa, illustrated that it lays within our ethical and moral responsibility and duty vis-à-vis our fellow men, future generations and the environment to actively contribute to sustainable climate- and social policy. It is in that way the consequences of climate change can be reduced, while using the potential of renewable energies for climate change adaptation and mitigation. „Together with our partners, we want to make a lasting impact in climate protection. The activities of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation both in Germany and throughout the world mirror the aim for environmentally friendly and economically sustainable energy supply", notes Dr. Dix.



Left-hand: Manisha Gulati, WWF South Africa  
Right-hand: Edith Kiragu, Mandela Institute

Edith Kiragu, research assistant at the Mandela Institute pointed out that the contribution of public means of conveyance for renewable energies needs to be scrutinized. From her point of view, the path to sustainable development cannot solely address the economic sphere. "It is similarly important to include civil society in the transformation process". Her colleague Dr. Adeleke adds that responsible good energy governance should foster sustainable farming and water supply. Mr. Sinegugu Zukulu, Conservation South Africa, highlighted the social dimension of sustainable development and criticized an overemphasis placed upon economic gains, while neglecting people's needs at grassroots level.



Conversation among workshop participants

Prof. Coleen Vogel from the Global Change and Sustainability Research Institute recognized the effort by the South African government in climate change adaption strategies, she nevertheless stressed the need that relations between different stake holders need to be harmonised in order to indulge responsibility of civil society, politics and businesses towards our planet and its resources. "In this respect, the research project by the Mandela Institute could contribute solution strategies that allow for the decentralisation of the South African energy sector, while promoting public-private-partnerships". Prof. Vogel elaborated further that the private sector could contribute expertise and capital investment in the process, which could also disencumber ESKOM, the state-owned enterprise. In that way contributions could be made in ensuring reliable energy supply at affordable prices, while protecting our natural resources. Manisha Gulati highlighted the need of various stake holders to collaborate in order to improve the quality of outcomes and to ensure valuable impacts. Hence, "conflicting interests need to be identified in order to push forward the initiated process of engagement to make it a success".