

DANISH DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH NETWORK (DDRN)

Travel report

Reference: South Africa_10012008
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Travelling to: South Africa
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1. Objectives for the travel

- To meet with Urban Environmental (UEM) Programme staff in South Africa and staff of the Danish Embassy in Pretoria to follow up on previous activities, introduce DDRN to new staff and collect information related to collaboration on UEM research and knowledge for development
- To hold two workshops on UEM research and knowledge in Southern Africa
- To 'brand' DDRN and identify potential members and collaborators in Southern Africa

2. Background

The DDRN activities described in this travel report are mainly a follow-up and an outcome of the dialogue which took place during 2007 between DDRN and the Danish Embassy, UEM programme staff and partners in SA; between DDRN and University of Aarhus (founding member of SANORD); and among members of DDRN with expertise and interest in UEM research and development. The following people participated in the mission to South Africa: Peter Vangsbo Madsen (DDRN member), Hans Hessel-Andersen (Consultant and DDRN member), Anne Sørensen (DDRN secretariat) and Marianne Forti (DDRN secretariat).

The thematic focus area for the visit was UEM research and knowledge for development. Increasing urban population and growing levels of industrialization have led to a number of environmental problems in Southern Africa. Development and sharing of knowledge and engagement in research aimed at developing locally relevant responses to UEM challenges are crucial elements in addressing the problems and negative effects of environmental degradation on poor urban communities. The meetings and workshops described in the following all serve to promote a constructive North/South and South/South dialogue on ongoing research, knowledge needs and new initiatives aimed at improving current UEM.

3. Activities

Meetings: A meeting was held with Bo Leth-Espersen, UEM programme adviser, on 3 December 2007 in Pretoria. The purpose of this meeting was to collect information on the status of the programme and discuss the possibilities of further collaboration and information exchange on research and knowledge related areas. The Danish team also met with staff at the Danish Embassy in Pretoria on 3 December 2007. People met were the newly appointed Ambassador, Dan E. Frederiksen, Vibeke S. Pedersen (counsellor, development) and Portia Poulsen (programme officer, environment). Furthermore, a meeting was held with Sharon Lewis from Cities Network (SACN) in Johannesburg on 4 December 2007. SACN is a network for the large cities of which Sharon Lewis is knowledge manager. SACN is the leading local partner in implementing the knowledge component of the Danida supported UEM programme. This component is administered directly from the Danish Embassy in Pretoria. Finally, contacts were also made and information gathered through informal networking and meetings with individuals from the Southern Africa region and the Northern universities which participated in the SANORD conference and the DDRN workshop sessions during the period 5-7 December 2007. The DDRN consultant, Hans Hessel Andersen had separate meetings with key persons, who could provide information and input to the consultancy commissioned by DDRN on UEM research in Southern Africa.

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Workshops: Two workshops on Urban Environmental Management (UEM) in Southern Africa were held in Cape Town, South Africa on 5 December 2007 at University of Cape Town and on 6 - 7 December at University of Western Cape, respectively. The latter workshop event was organised within the framework of the SANORD conference on Nordic/Southern African collaboration within Higher Education and Development. The University of Aarhus and the University of Southern Denmark are members of the SANORD group and had invited DDRDN to join the Conference. 20-25 people attended each of the workshops. DDRDN sponsored the participation of two Danish researchers/members, two South African and two Mozambican.

Branding of DDRDN: Information about DDRDN and the benefits of joining the network was carried out throughout the period spent in SA during meetings, workshops and through the poster exhibition at the SANORD Conference.

4. Outcomes

- New links, contacts and information
- Strengthening of links to Danish Embassy and UEM programme
- Knowledge on research collaboration needs of research institutions and Danida Programmes within UEM in South Africa and Mozambique
- Increase in number of members of DDRDN
- Input to review report on UEM
- Proceedings of DDRDN workshops
- Process action plan

The meetings held with Embassy staff, the UEM programme staff and its South African partners have enabled the establishment of new DDRDN contacts and links in SA. Furthermore, a lot of useful information which can guide follow-up activities was gathered. Especially the meeting with SACN (Website: www.sacities.net.webloc) was inspiring and informative. SACN's activities include informing policymakers about changes and trends in urban policy mainly in South Africa, to promote innovation and strategic thinking among cities and facilitating cooperation and exchange of good practices. SACN also partner with universities and research institutions and is facilitating dialogue between researchers and practitioners.

At the Danish embassy in Pretoria the visiting team had the opportunity to meet with the newly appointed Danish ambassador and was informed about the process of developing a new country strategy for South Africa, focusing on SA's position in the region, and the recent review of the knowledge component of the UEM programme. The report from this review among other things recommends a greater emphasis on strategic research in the remaining period of the programme. The meeting with the chief adviser of the UEM programme updated us on the overall status of the UEM programme.

During the field trip to SA the consultant who is preparing the research review report collected a lot of information on the knowledge and research needs of partner institutions, donors and development programmes and other issues of importance to further work in the Southern African region.

The workshops organised by DDRDN offered good opportunities for networking and branding of DDRDN and contributed to strengthening the links between DDRDN members in the South and in Denmark and between members South-South. A tangible result of this is the increase in number of African researchers and practitioners, who want to register as members of DDRDN observed after the return to Denmark.

More information about the SACN, the South African research institutions/researchers and the development context for UEM research collaboration, will be available in the forthcoming

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DDRDN review report on UEM research in Southern Africa (2008).

The two DDRDN workshops organised on UEM research and knowledge were very successful and especially the pre-conference workshop was well attended by mixture of researchers from SA and Mozambique and development practitioners, including staff from the Danish Embassy in Pretoria, the UEM programme, SACN and the municipalities. The results from the workshops will be reported on in a separate report and will not be dealt with any further in this report. Workshop reports will be available on the website in the beginning of 2008. Meanwhile see 'Briefs on outcomes' at:

[www.ddrn.dk/filer/forum/File/MEMO_on_UGANDA_wshop_governance_website\(1\).pdf](http://www.ddrn.dk/filer/forum/File/MEMO_on_UGANDA_wshop_governance_website(1).pdf)

5. Conclusions and DDRDN process plan

The activities carried out by DDRDN in SA have contributed to increasing South membership of DDRB and to making DDRDN more visible in the South, especially among researchers and other stakeholders working with UEM and development in South Africa, but also among colleagues from the universities in other countries in Southern Africa and Scandinavia, who participated in the SANORD Conference. The workshops organised by DDRDN were highly appreciated by the participants who emphasised the importance of meeting across disciplines, institutions and countries to discuss some of the burning issues related to UEM research and knowledge in Southern Africa. The participants all agreed that it was important not to lose momentum and work towards conceptualising and concretising the ideas presented during the workshops. The forthcoming overview from the DDRDN consultancy, drafting an application for seed money to FFU aimed at developing a larger regional research programme on UEM, and a second workshop were some of the milestones agreed upon.

Process plan:

1. Finalise and distribute minutes from SANORD workshops
2. Facilitate application for initiative funds
3. Establish window for UEM network at website
4. Comment on HHA report
5. Distribute report among researchers for comments and suggestions
6. Initiate a dialogue with the Danish Embassy in Pretoria on the recommendation in this report, and how DDRDN can support
7. As relevant, initiate dialogue with the Ministry of Science and Technology
8. Follow up with embassies in Maputo and Dar es Salaam.
9. Initiate discussion among researchers about the networking framework. If possible, fund a facilitator to support the development of the cooperation.
10. Plan a new workshop in Southern Africa in May/June 2008 to establish a network and discuss concrete proposals/ideas for research co-operation.

AS/- 18 January. 2008