



ACTIS & The Sustainability Institute

YES Alumni Course

FOOD SECURITY & SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

SUMMARY REPORT

Stellenbosch, South Africa
25th November – 7th December 2009

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1. Introduction

The Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES) is a pioneering sustainability education program that has trained over 1000 graduate level university students from more than 95 different countries over the last 10 years. Originally developed at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, the program is now hosted by ACTIS, a specially created ETH spin-off organisation. The YES program is targeted to high potential Masters and PhD level students from all disciplines and nationalities and focuses on delivering knowledge and skills necessary for these future leaders to address the multifaceted challenges of sustainable development. A typical course is two weeks in duration and covers an intensive program with lectures, field trips, guest speakers, group work, case studies, role-plays and student projects. Each course is hosted in a unique natural setting where participants live and work together and experience hands on application of the course content. The locations for the 25 courses that have been held so far include Switzerland, Costa Rica, Slovakia, Japan, Austria, Australia and Kenya. Living and working together for two intense weeks the participants have an opportunity to forge strong social bonds with one another, which remain long after the course is finished. This supports the alumni as they go on to carry out their own influential research and projects in fields of sustainable development at the local, regional and international levels. Further to this network of alumni, the program boasts a network of faculty from world-renowned institutions who play an important role in implementing the unique pedagogic approach of the program.

Recently, ACTIS has put a greater focus on further leveraging the potential of this international network of high potential alumni students. At the end of 2007 an online social networking platform was launched to facilitate online interaction and knowledge sharing among the group for issues related to sustainable development. The next milestone was to begin hosting specialised follow up courses for YES Alumni students. The goal of such Alumni courses was to build on the valuable knowledge and skills gained in the YES course, bring alumni together to learn from one another and support ongoing projects and activities. The courses focus on one concrete topic and also provide training in valuable skills such as project development / management, fundraising, cross-cultural communication and working in multidisciplinary teams.

The topic for the first course was “Water and Sustainability” hosted in the Sinai desert in Egypt. ACTIS partnered with the Wadi Environmental Science Center (WESC), located just outside Cairo, to host the program. The second course was hosted under the theme of “Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture” in Stellenbosch, South Africa. This course was a partnership between The Sustainability Institute in the Lynedoch Ecovillage and ACTIS. The details of the course and the outcomes are outlined in this report.

2. The Organisers

ACTIS – Activating Talent in Sustainability, Zurich, Switzerland

ACTIS is an official spin-off organisation of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) based in Zurich, Switzerland. ACTIS was established in early 2009 in order to manage the continuation and expansion of the successful Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES) initiative and the associated alumni activities, which have been running for over 10 years. ACTIS hosted the first YES Alumni special course in 2008 on the topic of “Water and Sustainability”. For more information see: www.actis-education.ch

The Sustainability Institute

The Sustainability Institute is an international living and learning centre located outside the South African university town of Stellenbosch. The Sustainability Institute provides a space for people to explore an approach to creating a more equitable society that sustains rather than destroys the eco-system it is embedded within. The centre offers many educational courses, including post-graduate programmes in sustainability for the University of Stellenbosch, and is currently working with the local municipality on programmes to promote food security, sustainable agriculture and land reform in the region. For more information see: www.sustainabilityinstitute.net

3. Course Sponsors

The course was made possible by funding from the Sustainability Institute, the University of Stellenbosch and the Foundation Academia Engelberg in Switzerland and in kind donations from local organizations.



Sustainability Institute, South Africa



Foundation Academia Engelberg, Switzerland



International Office, the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa

4. Course Content and Delivery

Recent food riots from Haiti to Mozambique have brought to international attention the increasing price of basic food and the alarming global food crisis, which is directly affecting the lives of millions of people around the world and serving as an immediate impediment to human development. While market forces have largely been blamed for recent events, much deeper and more complex causes lie beneath the surface, including the marginalisation of small-scale farmers, the loss of ecosystem services and extensive agricultural market control. These challenges will only be further compounded by the increasing demand for food from growing and more affluent populations, the effects of climate change, expanding bio-fuel production and the end of cheap oil. At present the increasing global demand for food is being met by large commercial farmers in developed countries who largely rely on unsustainable agricultural practices that are socially and environmentally damaging. The environmental impacts of the modern agricultural system extend far beyond the soils and water sheds they degrade, to affect the fundamental ecosystems services we depend on for life and even the climate itself. In light of these challenges a fundamental transition towards a sustainable global system that values food and livelihood security through environmental sustainability is required, that reconnects us to the food system that supports life. These issues of food security and sustainable agriculture raise some important questions which will be explored in the course:

- Should food be treated as a global commodity?
- Is industrial scale farming the best way to meet global demand and protect the environment and provide for society?
- Should more be done globally to protect small independent farmers and the food they produce?
- What role do sustainable agriculture practices play and what do they involve?
- What can be done on the demand side to influence consumption patterns?
- In the African context, how do unequal patterns of land ownership and calls for a 'new green revolution' impact on food and livelihood security?

In order to do this the participants were engaged in a number of diverse teaching methodologies, including lectures, workshops, group discussions, practical field experiences, project work in small multicultural, multidisciplinary teams, and artistic and creative activities.

Participants were required to participate in the program in three stages: pre-, on- and post-course. At each of the stages the participants undertook learning and action components that lead to specific outcomes. Each of the experiences build toward meeting the learning objectives and empowering the participants to influence meaningful change through a process that builds their understanding and skills. The learning and action requirements of the participants at each stage are outlined below:

1) Pre-Course Activities:

- Learning : Research based pre-assignment
Review of an extensive set of documents provided as pre-reading
- Action: Engage with local organisation and document “good practice” case study

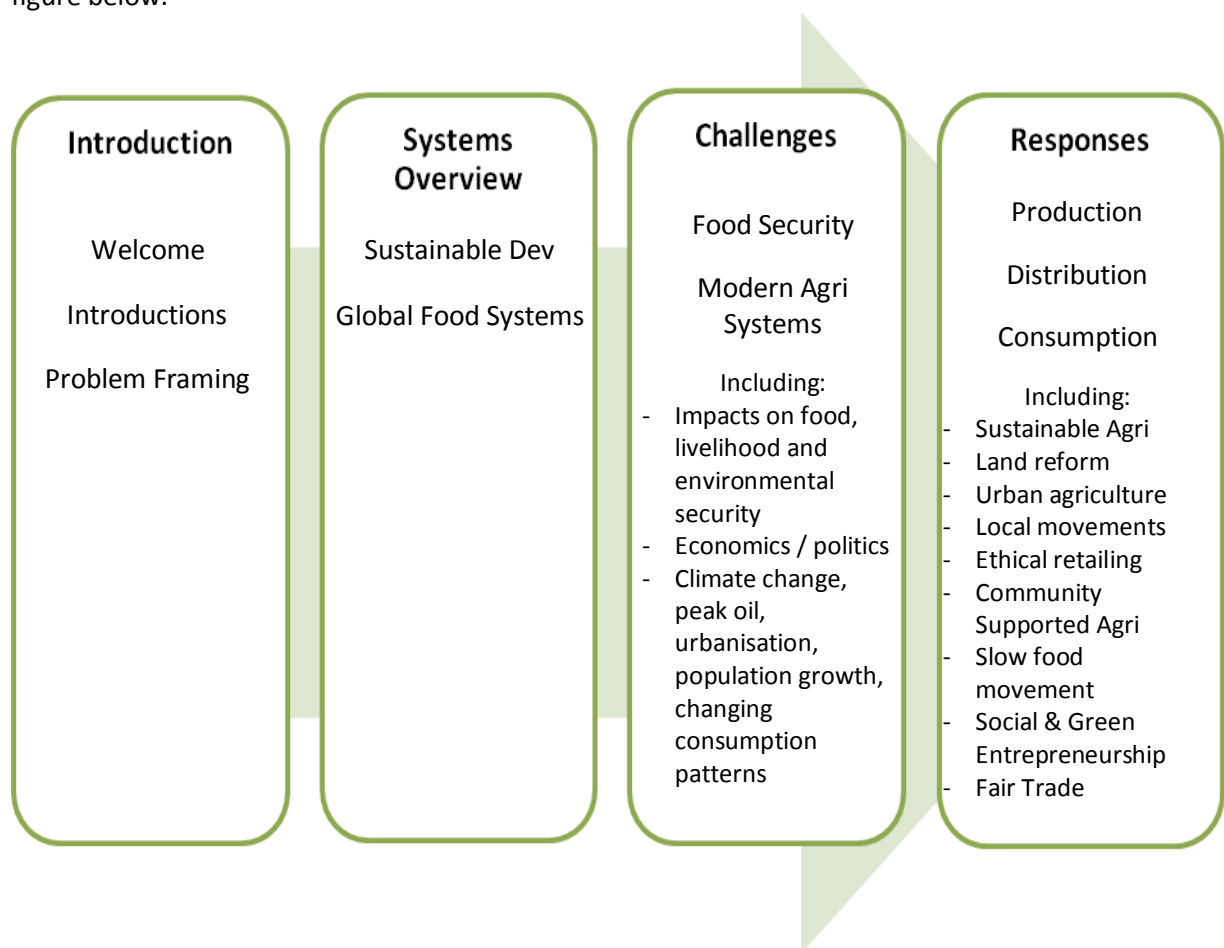
2) On-Course Activities:

- Learning : Exchange of participant pre-assignment and case studies
Lectures and field trips
- Action: On course volunteering

3) Post-Course Activities:

- Learning : Transferability of learning to local context
- Action: Completion of case study & compilation of booklet showcasing all participant case studies from around the world

On the course, the content was structured around 4 principal modules, as outlined in the figure below.



The full program overview is provided in Appendix 1.

5. Location

The course was hosted in Lynedoch Eco-Village, close to the historic town of Stellenbosch in the Cape Winelands of South Africa. As a nation of diversity, South Africa reflects current global challenges in both agricultural practices and systems of distribution. The course location was especially chosen as it reflects many of the challenges, as well as opportunities, for moving towards sustainable agriculture systems. The Lynedoch Eco-Village is an ecologically designed, socially mixed community built around a learning precinct, the heart of which is the Lynedoch School, attended by 450 children from the families of farm workers. This community offered a unique African setting where creative work and learning could be inspired by the successes and challenges of sustainability in practice. This community is strongly connected to the local farming activities and supports the development of organic farming practices, land reform initiatives and local food networks for the wider region. Through daily community work, course participants gained hands on experience with the realities of farming and conservation. The location provided a number of interesting case studies in close proximity that highlighted not only development challenges in both urban and rural contexts, but also local measures to promote food security and implement sustainable agriculture. Several field trips were arranged for participants to gain a wider understanding of these issues and be engaged through practical, hands on experiences.



6. Participants

Applications to the course were open to all alumni in the YES alumni network. A comprehensive selection process was undertaken to ensure a participant group that had a high potential for positive impact after the course, both individually and for the group as a whole. Individuals were selected from various disciplinary backgrounds, all of whom had interesting and diverse education, work and extracurricular experience where they had demonstrated strong leadership skills. Preference was given to applicants who had proven that they implemented concrete action after their first YES course experience, and who had a strong connection and understanding of their local context. Furthermore, the group composition was balanced in gender, with representatives from all world regions and various cultures and disciplines.

The 18 participants that were selected for the course impressed the faculty and facilitators with their motivation, eagerness to learn and the diverse experiences they contributed to the discussions. This provided the group with a unique opportunity to learn from and with intelligent, driven and like minded peers from around the world.

An overview of the 18 participants in the course is provided in Appendix 2.



7. Faculty

The selection of the appropriate team of faculty to deliver the course was considered of the utmost importance for the quality of the program. The Sustainability Institute has close ties to the University of Stellenbosch and is responsible for running their Masters in Sustainable Development Management and Planning. This wide local network of expert academics and professionals provided the opportunity to access world-renowned faculty from the fields of globalisation and economics, food security and international policy, land reform and livelihood security, community supported agriculture, organic farming and urban agriculture.

The course was organised and facilitated by individuals who were themselves alumni of the YES course. They played an important role to bridge the gap between faculty and participants and to create an integrative atmosphere and a strong group dynamic.

An overview of the faculty is presented in Appendix 3.

8. Outcomes

Achievement of Learning Objectives

Comprehensive learning objectives were drawn up before the course as a basis to design a curriculum that would have maximum impact on the outcomes of the course. The main learning objectives were as follows:

Understanding:

- To gain a comprehensive understanding from a systems perspective of global challenges related to food and agriculture and sustainable solutions.
- Understand potential benefits of sustainable interventions in current food system at both local and global levels.
- Gain insights into the issues from various disciplinary and cultural perspectives.
- Develop an understanding of the major relationships, interactions and trade offs in current food systems, covering the entire supply and consumption chain.
- Understand the various types and scales of food production and distribution systems and the importance of the diverse, political, economic, social and cultural contexts they are embedded in when shaping solutions.

Skills, Experiences and Tools:

- Have to opportunity to experience successful local solutions first hand in an interactive and participatory manner.
- To explore transferability of solutions to challenges in their own locality in light of the particular context.
- Gain access to tools and materials to support participants in their own projects or education initiatives on the topic they may go on to implement.
- Train skills in: systems thinking, multi-cultural and multidisciplinary collaboration, back-casting, participatory processes and project development.
- Take home: case studies and contributions to local initiatives

Motivation:

- Inspiring participants to take responsibility to make a positive contribution to addressing the issue, at whatever scale.
- Provide a memorable and life changing experience for each participant.
- To foster a sense of belonging in a group of like-minded, motivated peers.

At the conclusion of the program each of the participants were requested to complete a comprehensive evaluation process, both written and verbal, that could be used to determine the success of the program against the learning objectives.

From the participant responses in the evaluation process, it was evident that the course met the expectations and learning objectives originally established. The participants reported that the programme gave them a comprehensive overview of the complex dynamics of the global food system and the emerging responses in a transition towards a just and sustainable global food system. The multicultural and multidisciplinary background of the participants combined with the unique local context were highlighted as key success factors for the programme and for enabling the learning outcomes to be realised. Several of the participants have already begun to initiate new projects or implement their learnings into

their existing projects in their local communities based on the new knowledge, perspectives and skills that they gained over the course. The full summary report of the evaluation process can be provided on request.

A selection of quotes from the course participants are provided below.

“The YES course offers to the world the opportunity to create social drivers to promote sustainable development all over the world. What is unique for me is the extraordinary motivation of the people and the knowledge that everybody has. “

Mexican Participant

“ The YES Alumni course on Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture was unbelievable. In order to solve the global food challenges you HAVE to be able to understand how food is produced and distributed from different cultures and people around the world. You can’t read a book about these issues and get the same depth of knowledge and context like this course could. All of the teachers were passionate and engaging, and willing to listen. “

American Participant

“ This YES alumni course was a great opportunity to learn about a specific topic in depth, and brought together highly qualified individuals to build a global network of determined change-makers. It was a great experience and a very useful contribution to the global push towards sustainability. I think applying the YES concept to more topic-specific courses like this is definitely very valuable. It was very valuable for my career. “

Swiss Participant

“ It has also allowed me to gain a new perspective on the cultural challenges that exist in different countries and the impacts of those challenges on societies. It allowed me to reflect on my own behavior as a consumer and a member of the society and act towards changing to a more sustainable behavior. “

Egyptian Participant

My participation in food security and sustainable agriculture contribute to the body of knowledge needed in tackling food crisis in Africa. I feel indebted to make meaningful efforts after this training to make a difference, however small it maybe.

Kenyan Participant

“ We got straight to the core of very complex issues, including how global food trade relates to individual farmers and consumers around the world. Many issues such as poverty, food insecurity, environmental problems and political instability are interconnected, and this course explained how. “

Swazi Participant

Case Study Booklet

Prior to joining the course each participant was asked to put together a case study on an organisation working in their local area to address issues of food security and sustainable agriculture. Participants were requested to carry out background research and visit the organisation in order to carry out interviews and gain an understanding of the methodology and the challenges. During the course the participants shared their case studies with the one another and discussed similarities, differences and transferability to different contexts. At the end of the course all of the case studies were compiled into a booklet for the participants to keep as a reference document.

Group Project Work

During the course a total of 3 days were dedicated to group project work. This activity presented an opportunity for participants to engage more deeply with some of the core challenges of food security and sustainable agriculture, as well as learn more about the local context. The aims were for participants to engage with local stakeholders to make recommendations that promote social and environmental sustainability and food security, as well as to design a set of recommendations that can be put forward to similar stakeholder groups regardless of their context, culture and geographical location in the world.

The motivations for localising the group project work with transferrable outcomes include maximising participant energy and concentration during the course, deepening the practical learning experience and providing an opportunity for participants to apply their learning to their own local context on their return to their home countries.

Each project group worked with a different stakeholder group from the local Stellenbosch area, including a local farmer, the local kindergarten and the local supermarket. The groups were multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural in composition allowing a diversity of perspectives and contributions. Each group met with their stakeholder at the start of the project work to conduct interviews and gather the necessary background data.

The outcomes of the project work were a report outlining recommendations for the specific stakeholder, along with general recommendations for similar stakeholders in different contexts. Each of the participants then spent time outlining their personal commitment and follow up to implementing their recommendations when returning home. For example, one participant from Egypt will carry out a farmer training program, one participant from Australia will set up an education centre and a farm to fork initiative linking farmers to restaurants and catering venues.

9. Budget Allocation

A total budget of 17,400.00 CHF was executed to carry out this program. The break down of the budget expenditure is outlined below.

Item	Amount	Funding Source
Administration		
Project Manager ACTIS	CHF 3,225.00	Academia Engelberg
Overheads ACTIS	CHF 1,300.00	Academia Engelberg
Local Expenses		
Lodging & Meals	ZAR 57,600.00	Sustainability Institute
Course Materials (inc. T-shirts)	ZAR 4,350.00	Sustainability Institute
Local Transportation	ZAR 4,630.00	Sustainability Institute
Faculty Remuneration	CHF 1,200.00	Academia Engelberg
International Transportation		
Participant transportation	<i>Varies by participant</i>	Participants
International Faculty	CHF 2,275.00	Academia Engelberg
TOTAL Academia Engelberg		CHF 8,000.00
TOTAL Sustainability Institute		ZAR 66,580.00 or CHF 9,400.00

10. Going Forward

A short documentary on the course highlighting the learning process and outcomes is currently being compiled and will be completed by early 2010.

There is a growing demand for future YES Alumni Special Academic Courses and given the incredible value of these programmes in stimulating positive change in communities across the world, the host organisations have expressed an interest in continuing their collaboration going forward to consider hosting the same and similar programmes in the future.

Appendix 1: Program Overview

Day	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
07h00 - 08h00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast		
08h00 - 09h00	Welcome (M & J) Introduction and Discussion (Eve) Tour of Lynedoch	Community Work	Community Work	Excursion: Beach and Hiking	Breakfast	Breakfast
09h00 - 10h00		Lecture: Global food systems (Saliem)	Lecture: Food Security (Scott)		Project Work Intro (M & J)	Lecture: Production / Agroecological responses: (Candice & Gareth)
10h00 - 11h00					Workshop: Consumer Choice / Food Product LCA (Michelle)	
11h00 - 12h00						
12h00 - 13h00		Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch at Ate
14h00 - 15h00	Lecture: Introduction to sustainable development (Mark)	Lecture: Food Security (Scott)	Lecture: Global agriculture challenges (Candice & Gareth)	Fieldtrip: Sustainable Operations - Spier tour & wine tasting (Gareth)	Workshop: Slow food movement & cooking class (Kate)	Lecture: urban agricultural & other initiatives (Gareth)
15h00 - 16h00						
16h00 - 17h00						
17h00 - 18h00				Free time		
18h00 - 19h00	Free Time	Discn: Medicinal Herbs (Carlos)	Discn: Wine & Sus (Jess)			Dinner
19h00 - 20h00	Welcome Dinner@ Moyos	Free Time	Wine Tasting	Dinner	Dinner	Set Up
20h00 - 21h00		Dinner	Dinner	SI Movie Night	Movie Night	Cultural Night

Date	01-Dec	02-Dec	03-Dec	04-Dec	05-Dec	06-Dec
Day	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
07h00 - 08h00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
08h00 - 09h00	Case Study Compiling	Fieldtrip: farm (Anri)	Project work	Project work	Project work presentations	Participants Depart
09h00 - 10h00						
10h00 - 11h00	Fieldtrip: Kayamandi projects					
11h00 - 12h00						
12h00 - 13h00						
13h00 - 14h00	Lunch @ Roots				Packed Lunch	
14h00 - 15h00	Fieldtrip: Kayamandi tour - township systems	Fieldtrip: farm (Anri)	Project work	Project work	Free time	
15h00 - 16h00						
16h00 - 17h00						
17h00 - 18h00	Free time	Free time	Free time	Hand in Project		
18h00 - 19h00		Dinner				
19h00 - 20h00	Dinner	Heart Presentation	Dinner	Dinner	Farewell dinner- Braai	
20h00 - 21h00	Free Time		Free Time	Free time		

Appendix 3 : Faculty Overview**Eve Annecke**

Eve Annecke is co-founder of the Sustainability Institute trust and the Lynedoch EcoVillage. She is director of the Sustainability Institute, located within the Lynedoch EcoVillage, focusing on learning for sustainability. Restoration of life and beauty in contexts of inequity and climate change are key interests, along with her teaching on the masters level programme in the partnership between the Institute and Stellenbosch University. She is currently co-authoring a book, 'Just Transitions' with her husband, Mark Swilling.

Contact: eve@sustainabilityinstitute.net

Mark Swilling

Professor Mark Swilling is Programme Coordinator: Sustainable Development Planning and Management in the School of Public Management and Planning, University of Stellenbosch and Academic Director of the Sustainability Institute. Prior to this Professor Swilling co-founder and Director of the Graduate School of Public and Development Management at the University of the Witwatersrand, 1995-1998; and co-founder of PLANACT in 1985, an urban development NGO. Professor Swilling obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Warwick in 1994 and has a BA and a BA (Honours) obtained through the Department of Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand where he was also a lecturer from 1982 - 1987. He has published over 50 academic articles, five books and written extensively for the popular media on a wide range of public policy issues. In 2007 he was invited to be a member of the International Panel on Sustainable Resource Management, established by the United Nations Environment Programme to assess ways of making the global economy more sustainable.

Contact: Mark.Swilling@sopmp.sun.ac.za

Saliem Fakir

Saliem Fakir is the Head of the Living Planet Unit at the World Wildlife Fund South Africa. The Unit's work is focused on identifying ways to manage a transition to a low-carbon economy. Saliem Fakir was previously (2007-2008) a senior lecturer at the Department of Public Administration and Planning and associate Director for the Center for Renewable and Sustainable Energy at the University of Stellenbosch. Prior to this he worked for Lereko Energy (Pty) Ltd (2006) an investment company focusing on project development and financial arrangements for renewable energy, biofuels, waste and water sectors. He also served as Director of the World Conservation Union South Africa (IUCN-SA) office for 8 years (1998-2005). Prior to the IUCN he was the Manager for the Natural Resources and Management Unit at the Land and Agriculture Policy Center.

Between 2002 and 2005 Saliem served as a chair of the Board of the National Botanical Institute. He also served on the board of the Fair Trade in Tourism Initiative, and was a member of the Technical Advisory

Committee of the Global Reporting Initiative, based in Amsterdam. He currently serves of the advisory board of Inspired Evolution One – a private equity fund for clean technology.

Saliem holds a B.Sc Honours molecular biology (WITS) and a Masters' in Environmental Science (Wye College London). Saliem has written over 300 papers, articles and reports on various subjects related to environment, economics, politics and religion. He most recently published a book on Barriers and Opportunities for Renewable Energy in South Africa.

Contact: sfakir@wwf.org.za

Scott Drimie



Scott Drimie is a Research Fellow with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). His major responsibility is the coordination of the Regional Network on AIDS, Livelihoods and Food Security (RENEWAL), which facilitates research in southern and East Africa, ensuring that scientific evidence is made accessible to decision makers through different communication strategies. He held a research position at the Human Sciences Research Council and ran a consultancy company from which he consulted for various public and private sector organisations. His PhD was on the political economy of land reform in South Africa, conferred by the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Contact: S.Drimie@cgiar.org

Kate Schrire



Kate Schrire graduated from Brown University, USA, with a BA in International Relations, and formally trained as a chef. She designed, implemented and coordinates the sustainable dining programme, Farm to Fork, at the Sustainability Institute. She also runs a series of projects for the local Slow Food movement, and works as a journalist, activist and consultant in sustainable food systems.

Contact: kateschrire@gmail.com

Candice Kelly



Candice Kelly graduated cum laude from the MPhil in Sustainable Development Planning and Management in 2007. She has Bachelor of Business Science Honours (Finance) from UCT and has worked for developers and the private sector in various capacities. Her MPhil thesis was on sustainable agriculture, using the experience of Indian small-scale farmers to argue that the proposed Green Revolution for Africa will be disastrous for African farmers. She was appointed the Co-ordinator of the Sustainable Agriculture specialisation in November 2007 at the Sustainability Institute. She is responsible for the sustainable agriculture modules on the BPhil programme of the SI, coordinating student research on sustainable agriculture and supporting small farmer projects.

Contact: candice@sustainabilityinstitute.net

Gareth Haysom

Gareth is a Research Fellow at the Sustainability Institute involved in number of Sustainable Development oriented action research areas including work on societal and corporate change, food security and sustainable agriculture, ecological design, decoupling and resilience. Gareth also lectures at the Sustainability Institute on courses delivered in partnership with Stellenbosch University.

Gareth's original training was in the hospitality industry, working in the operational side of the industry for 15 years. On leaving Spier in 2003, where he held the position of MD of the Leisure operation, Gareth shifted focus to work on Sustainable Development issues relating to both the tourism industry as well as other industries. This work included working on transformation oriented activities for the tourism industry on topics such a partnerships, procurement and corporate change. In addition work was conducted with Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa focussing on procurement and other project related activities. Additional activities include work with the private sector assisting in development projects focussing of poverty alleviation and the links between this and conservation aims.

Gareth has a Masters of Philosophy degree in Sustainable Development Planning and Management from Stellenbosch University and a National Diploma in Hotel Management from Technikon Witwatersrand (now University of Johannesburg). Gareth also sits on the boards of a number of community or non profit organisations

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