

Early Career Workshop

Applied Center for Climate and Earth System Science

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Igshaan Samuels and Julius Tjelele represented the Grassland Society of Southern Africa (GSSA) at a 2-day workshop hosted by the ACCESS programme from 4-6 March 2011 at Club Mykonos in Langebaan, Western Cape.



Some of the ACCESS participants

The aim of the workshop was to create a network of early career Earth Systems scientists in the country. ACCESS seeks to provide a platform for transformation in science in the country and capacity development for young scientists who will form the next generation of scientific leaders. The 28 participants were associated with various national and provincial government departments, conservation agencies, academic institutions and research councils.

The ACCESS programme is in a phase of robust growth and is looking to engage the next generation of Earth Systems scientists (broadly defined) with a focus on global change. (Includes Climate)

The ACCESS programme is developing new sub-programmes focused on Earth Systems science on a range of space ((local, sub-regional, regional and continental) and time scales(paleo to future predictions). In addition, the programme seeks to provide a platform for meaningful capacity development and transformation in science and thus seeks to engage young scientists who will form the next generation of scientific leaders in the region.

The programme kicked off with a presentation by ACCESS director Dr Jimmy Adegoke who put ACCESS context of the DST Global Change Grand Challenge Science plan. Dr Romilla Maharaj made participants aware of NRF funding opportunities especially for young scientists.

Scopes for research in the terrestrial environment, marine science, atmospheric science and socio-ecological systems were outlined by various early career scientists. Participants were also given the task to critique concept notes considered for incorporation into the portfolio of sub-programmes that ACCESS support and for possible funding. Lastly, a plenary session was held to discuss limitations and opportunities in Earth System Sciences.

The common challenge outlined by young scientists was of funding and most probably this is also a challenge to other young scientists who were not part of this workshop. One of the lessons we learned from this workshop was that there are plenty of funding opportunities out there; it is just up to us as young scientist to utilize such opportunities.

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