



# Introducing the EPIC Model

African Regional certified  
Teach-In on Climate Justice  
12-13 May 2022

By Mzime Murisa



# epic-network



# A radically simple question:

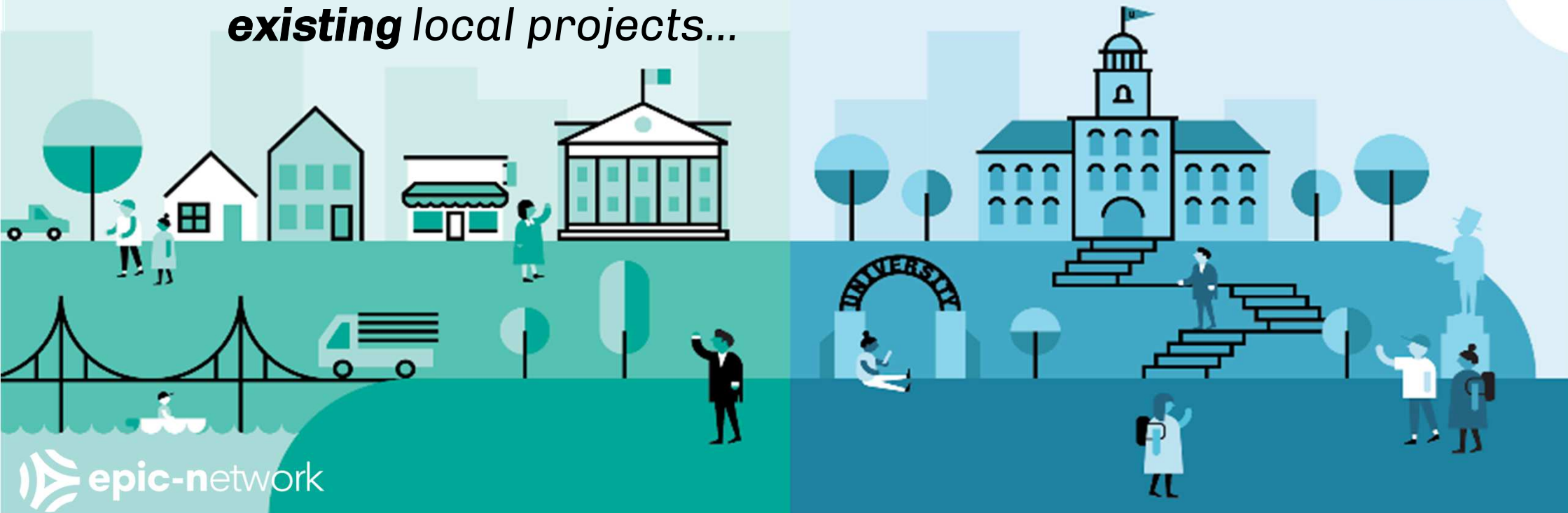
What if we could connect ...

**existing** university instructors

**existing** courses

**existing** local projects...

...**at a scale** that magnifies  
value for all?



## Roles in an EPIC Model: municipality/community, university

### City/community side:

City leadership identifies a coordinator

- Coordinator makes it easy for other staff to participate

Staff members identify projects/goals in their existing work plans

- If a project is matched, the staff person is only involved during class term

Coordinator and staff also identify additional stakeholders to be involved



## Roles in an EPIC Model: municipality/community, university

### University side:

University identifies EPIC program coordinator

- Coordinator makes it easy for instructors to participate

Instructors identify what types of analysis or products their students can produce

- If a class is matched, the instructor is involved only during class term

Coordinator and instructor also identify additional stakeholders and data needed for class



# About the African Network of Young Leaders ([ANYL4PSD](#))

- Pan-African Network **working across Africa** is committed to **climate justice**, and **biodiversity conservation and restoration** in order to ensure that the continent's **natural resources** are **sustainably managed** to bring about **positive ecological and socio-economic transformation** for **communities**.
- Working on the nexus of environment, peacebuilding, migration, and conflicts to ensure the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

# Introducing the **EPIC-Network**: the Education Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N)

- **International network**
- **Model of university-government-community partnerships**
- **Works in Africa and other regions**
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**
- **Mantra on using existing, and sustainably managing, resources**
- ***Mainly via working with students in existing coursework with faculty oversight to harness innovations, energy***
- ***Creating win-win solutions through partnerships***

# How the EPIC Model Works





# The EPIC Model's 5 Elements

1. **Respect Existing administrative structures/individual responsibilities and incentives on all sides**
2. **Create a genuine Partnership with local governments (or community organizations)**
3. **Intentionally aims at improving quality of life**
4. **Focus on Community-identified, -driven, and -evaluated contributions to the community**
5. **Catalyze multi-disciplines and large Numbers (courses, students, hours)**



# EPIC experiences from Durban

## **City Challenge Phase 1**

The Palmiet informal community has had a lengthy history of chronic solid waste and flood issues. The city wanted to explore options for addressing these issues.

## **Responses/Results**

As part of the city's first EPIC project with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, students were called upon to analyze and assess the waste and flood issues in the Palmiet community and make recommendations to the city on options to improve waste management as well as options for adapting and building resilience to frequent flooding events.

- Students mapped sources and types of solid waste and waste discharge, the location of dwellings, and flood-prone areas within the Palmiet informal community and submitted an assessment and policy brief to the city and community on their findings and recommendations, many of which were implemented or are in the process of being implemented.
- Through interviews with Palmiet community members students were able to guide the city and the community on implementing a successful pilot waste management policy whereby community members organize the collection and sorting of waste while the city arranges regularly scheduled pick-ups.
- Students worked with community leaders to clean up and identify ways to better manage waste and help restore ecosystems along the denuded banks of the flood-prone Palmiet river.

- Students also worked with the city and the Palmiet community to develop a disaster management plan and disaster early warning system to reduce the occurrence and impacts of frequent and often devastating floods in the Palmiet area.
- These plans were the first of their kind for the City of Durban and the Palmiet community.
- However, the city has provided US\$350K to help implement a long-term disaster early warning system, restore the natural vegetation along the banks of the Palmiet river ecosystem, and reduce and manage waste in the Palmiet community.
- This activity also included the unblocking of waste-filled drainages to help render the area more resilient to floods.

## **City Challenge Phase 2 –**

- The city of Durban wished to explore options and approaches for implementing a sustainable regional-scale Transformative River Management Program (TRMP) in partnership with several universities, 6 surrounding municipal governments within the greater Durban metro region, and the C40 Cities Africa and create jobs in the process.
- TRMP is an ambitious regional effort aimed at community-led management of all 18 watersheds in the greater Durban metro region.
- The river catchment and 6 surrounding municipalities represent 6 additional communities living within 6 other river catchments.

- Most rivers and bays in these watersheds have been seriously deteriorating due to flooding, frequent sewage discharge, industrial effluent, and the dumping of solid waste.
- The primary focus of TRMP is to explore ways to improve the management of solid waste, trash, and sewage and reduce flooding and associated health risks due to flooding on a regional scale across multiple municipalities.
- Blockage of natural drainage systems with trash/waste has been identified as a major contributor to flash floods and their impacts in nearly all 18 watersheds in the region.

## **Responses/Results –**

- As part of a 2nd EPIC project students from several universities are working with the city community leaders within the Palmiet informal settlement and their counterparts from 6 other watersheds in 6 other municipalities and C40 Cities Africa to establish a training methodology on the best practices for identifying, sorting and reducing waste and enhancing resilience to floods through waste management, the clearing of natural drainage areas and restoring ecosystems along watershed riverbanks and spillways.
- Students were also asked to work with Durban and municipal partners to identify plausible ways of permanently supporting river management jobs for members of communities living along these 6 watersheds.

# Check out these videos and stories on the Durban EPIC project:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=C40+durban+transformative+river+management&oq=C40+durban+transformative+river+management&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160l4.13650j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>



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## Join the EPIC-Network

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### Join the Network:

Sign up for the EPIC-N [Member Commons](#) for access to resources.

### Connect with us:

[kaynp@epicn.org](mailto:kaynp@epicn.org)

[mmurisa@start.org](mailto:mmurisa@start.org)

[mcurry@epicn.org](mailto:mcurry@epicn.org)



Connect with us via phone

Call us at: 608-709-8644

Email at: [info@epicn.org](mailto:info@epicn.org) or [mzime@epicn.org](mailto:mzime@epicn.org)

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## Who's in the Network

Edit



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info@epicn.org

PO Box 44009  
Madison, WI 53744

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