CAPTURING WATER

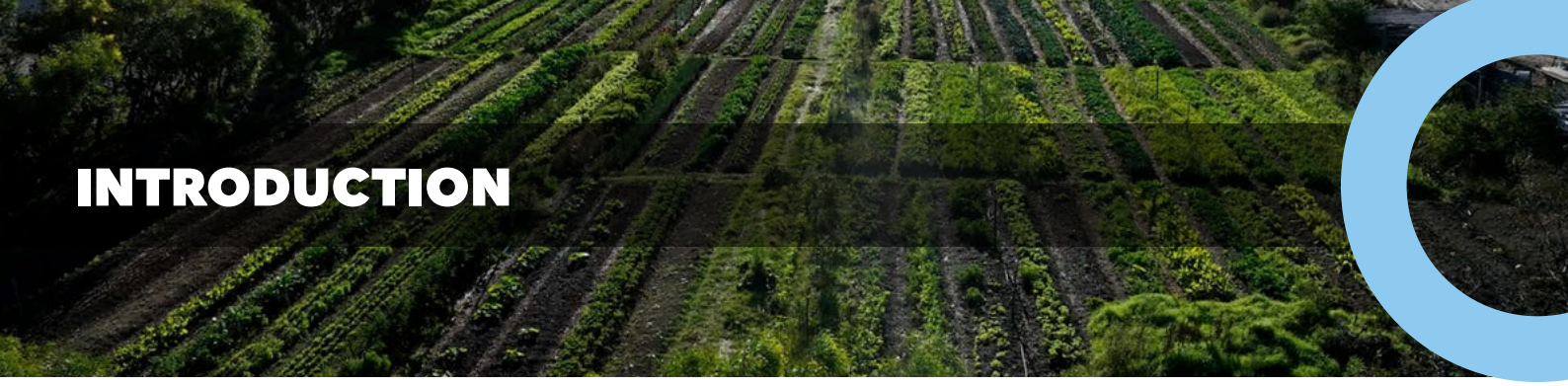
FACILITATORS' GUIDE

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SCREENINGS AND WORKSHOPS

CONTENTS

"One has to question how seriously the City is taking that duty of care, when they are allowing some of their own infrastructure to pollute the lagoon. In fact, be the major sources of pollution in the lagoon. And yet, it seems to be business as usual for the City, and I think that is something that has to be challenged."

Caroline Marx, Activist - Rethink the Stink



INTRODUCTION

In South Africa we use, lose and pollute more water than we currently have available. At the same time, sewage management systems are collapsing, and the country threatens to surpass its capacity to process safe drinking water. Who uses our precious water, and for what? Is water seen as a common good or as a commodity to buy, sell, and make money out of? The current threat to privatise water services, which often results in higher tariffs and greater polluting, will just make access to clean water even less affordable for low-income communities.

The *Capturing Water* Film Impact Campaign aims to ignite new water justice movements and boost existing campaigns and groups who are organising around water issues. The film can be a tool for providing space for local conversations about water issues. Differing points of view can be turned into learning opportunities to benefit everyone.

Open debates have the potential to further understand the complex water issues, understand what divides us, and to generate new ideas and people-centred solutions.

The depth of the water crisis is not going to disappear and is set to worsen in the short term, which will mean initiatives aimed at finding common ground across the social, racial and gender divide in order to defend the human right to water, have the potential to develop. Understanding and supporting the anti-privatisation movements across Africa, will allow different groups and initiatives to find common goals that support the idea of 'Water for All'.

The goal of this campaign is to support education, movement building and mobilisation among civil society in South Africa. We believe that civic-led action is critical and that partnerships are essential in building collaboration between civil society organisations and community based organisations and towards the building of alliances around the issue of water justice. The screenings of the documentary *Capturing Water* are aimed at inspiring, educating and raising awareness.

However awareness does not always lead to change or action. This is where this guide assists communities and facilitators with the tools to effectively engage an audience to elicit a constructive discussion and create spaces to think through possible action. We suggest that the film should be accompanied by structured dialogue co-created with a local campaigning organisation, to facilitate the development of clear and accessible demands concerning water justice action and the implementation of water coalitions.

Through this Facilitation Guide, facilitators will be equipped with the knowledge to host screenings, and stimulate debate and discussion amongst diverse audiences and age groups. You can share the film anywhere: in classrooms, in schools and universities, community centres, youth groups, churches, office spaces and living rooms. Water is something that affects all of us and all struggles, so you can also use this film with groups interested in health, housing, food security, climate, spirituality, education, gender based violence, racism, and more.

Visit our website capturingwater.co.za to find more information.

CAPTURING WATER STORY

Capturing Water brings fresh insights into activism and hope. You will meet working class activists bravely mobilising against water restriction devices and water privatisation; an activist farmer litigating to stop city plans to cement over an aquifer that provides affordable food to thousands of people; and a suburban activist tirelessly engaging a city that makes decades of empty promises to stop the sewage flowing into life-giving wetlands.

In 2018, Cape Town narrowly averted completely running out of drinking water. The dry taps crisis, termed 'Day Zero', followed an extended drought. In a country sitting 29th on the list of water scarce places in the world, this became a ghastly harbinger of things to come. In the wake of Day Zero the city council committed to take urgent action to protect the supply of water by enforcing a policy of limited access to anyone who could not afford to pay for water.

Capturing Water follows the unfolding fight, led by working class activist Faeza Meyer, to overturn Cape Town's city council's water cuts-offs. For Faeza, the city's strategy of cutting water to households that 'over use' the limited water supply is punitive to the Cape's many impoverished and over-crowded dwellings. As the film follows Faeza's quest to build a movement around water rights, the contradictions faced by a liberal city Mayor who has been pressured to self-finance major water and sanitation infrastructural spend to augment its water supply, are unpeeled.

Faeza Meyer

The film features two other protagonists, both of whom are also victims of market led solutions to the water crisis. Caroline Marx is part of a community living next to a lagoon that emits a terrible stench due to poor maintenance and sewage spills. This has killed aquatic life and forced closure of the lagoon and surrounding beaches. The film follows Caroline's use of environmental legislation to demand accountability over the sewage crisis.

Caroline Marx

Nazeer Sonday is a famer and campaigner who has been defending the city's groundwater. He successfully fends off big housing developers who are eyeing the prime recharge area of the largest aquifer. Nazeer's story takes us to the food-water nexus and the symbiosis between land and water rights, augmenting the short fall of fresh water and the polluting nature of chemical fertiliser used by large scale intensive agriculture.

Nazeer Sonday

As the three activists take on various aspects of the city council's mistreatment of the water cycle, what is starkly revealed is the role that a cost recovery market approach to critical public services plays in maintaining South Africa's water crisis, alongside its place as the most unequal country in the world.

WATER JUSTICE MANIFESTO

This manifesto was developed in 2023 by water justice movements from around the world to amplify the voices of water defenders and front-line communities. The manifesto insists that the following issues are fundamental to achieving water justice for all. You can read the detailed version here on the Peoples Water Forum website.

1

Access to water and sanitation are fundamental human rights. Water is a **common good**, and must be accessible to all without discrimination, under public control and not a commodity. (Read more in the FAQ's on page 12 below about why we don't want privatisation of water)

2

Water policies must prioritise the sustainable management of rivers, lakes, wetlands, springs, and aquifers, guaranteeing their good ecological status, within the framework of the **human right to a healthy environment** and as key to confronting ongoing crises of pollution, deforestation, desertification, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

3

Indigenous Peoples have distinct and inherent rights, as well as their own knowledge systems to relate to water in a harmonious way, and states must, therefore, recognise their status as collective subjects of rights and respect their territorial rights, their right to self-determination and their right to be consulted to obtain free, prior and informed consent to any project that affects them, and ensure that the management of their livelihoods, including water, is carried out in accordance with their own standards, in compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

4

In most countries, rural populations and those living in informal urban settlements are the most discriminated against in terms of access to water and sanitation services. It is the obligation of states to make access for these populations their highest priority.

5

The active, free, and meaningful participation of "rights holders" in all water policy issues should be recognised, supported and guaranteed, with an emphasis on the substantially equal participation of women, overcoming the marginalisation they suffer, despite the fact that they bear the greatest responsibility for and the work of supplying water to their families. Such participation must have the capacity to influence decision making, overcoming false participatory models, which only legitimise decisions taken by societal elites.

6

Water and sanitation services must always be guided by human rights, **leaving no one behind**, including those who, because they live in situations of vulnerability, marginalisation or poverty, find it difficult to pay.

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

A facilitated screening is a platform for learning, sharing, experiencing and even planning through discussion. The facilitator needs to create a safe environment in which the audience feels free to respectfully voice its opinions, share thoughts and feelings and ask questions. Consequently, the facilitator's key role is to guide discussion without dominating it.

Things to think about:

- What specific information might I need to answer questions that arise out of this film?
- How do I ensure access to a diverse audience, regardless of levels of literacy, education level and so on?
- How do I pre-empt and manage potential disagreements/conflict?
- Do I need to identify and invite relevant people to the film screening who can provide accurate information and know how to support the viewers with organising themselves after the screening?

It may be obvious, but it needs to be said: *watch the film at least once in advance.*

QUALITIES OF A GOOD FACILITATOR:

Attitude

- Friendly and welcoming
- Viewing self and participants as equals
- Committed to participatory learning
- Respectful and nondiscriminatory of others, regardless of differences
- Welcoming of all contributions
- Accepting and non-judgmental
- Self-aware and honest

Skills

- Good planning and organisation
- Encouraging and valuing participation
- Good communication, active listening and constructive feedback
- Remaining neutral in dealing with conflict and emotion
- Summarising and keeping discussions on track
- Time management
- Clarifying objectives and agreements

Knowledge about

- The audience
- The film and how to use it
- The issues that the film addresses
- How to facilitate and guide a constructive discussion after a film screening

Introducing the film

Use the synopsis of the film to prepare a short introduction before the film starts. Keep it short and simple.

Think about the people in the room:

- Who are the viewers? What is their education level, primary language, age etc?
- What are their interests and concerns?
- How might the issues raised in the film affect their lives, directly or indirectly?

If possible, identify and invite relevant people to the film screening who can provide accurate information and follow-up support.

You could ask people about why they came and about their expectations of the film before the audience watches it. This also helps make viewers aware that their opinions are valued. Or you could ask them a question that they need to think about while watching - that will be discussed later. Where possible, try to introduce points for discussion before the film shows so that the group is focused.

Make sure to get consent from the audience for taking photos at the screening workshop.

After the screening

- The film touches the heart and can stir emotions. Therefore, wait until the credits completely finish and let there be some silence before you speak; this way the participants can reflect and move into the discussion part.
- When the film is over, always spend some time allowing viewers to speak freely, and raise questions for themselves.
- A recommended first question: "Any thoughts or comments? How do you feel?" Allow a few people to share their reflections.
- If you had an introductory discussion in which specific points and issues were raised, you can refer back to them.
- Or you can host a structured dialogue on water and social justice with specific questions for discussion and group work. You can use the Guiding Questions on page 9 of this document to host a facilitated discussion.

Closing

It is always a good idea to ask the group to evaluate their experience of the whole event at the end. Thank the participants for their insights and comments.

You can ask questions such as:

- How has this experience been useful?
- What have you gained from taking part in the discussion?

CHECKLIST OF PRACTICAL MATTERS

1. Book the venue in advance and check its power points/toilets/seating facilities.
2. If you are showing to a large group – is the ceiling high enough for a big screen?
3. If you are showing in the daytime, can the room be made dark?
4. Advertise the film, date, time and venue well beforehand.
5. Make sure all the equipment is in working order, for the sound and the visuals.
6. Decide who will facilitate the discussion at the screening.
7. View the film before the screening and prepare a film outline and introduction.
8. Arrive at the venue early and check power points, leads, lights and equipment.
9. Arrange the chairs so that everyone can see the TV or the screen and participate in discussion.

Technical stuff

Equipment checklist:

- The digital file of the film on a harddrive or USB stick
- Laptop and power cables
- Cable to connect laptop to screen or projector
- TV monitor (if you screen to a small audience)
- A projector and a screen (if you screen to a large audience)
- Projector stand or high table for the projector
- Speakers and cables
- Electrical extension leads, with multiple sockets
- Double adaptors for a two-pin plug
- Own electricity supply i.e. generator or charged batteries; if no electricity is available at the venue
- Black plastic (builder plastic) or black sheets and tape to black out the windows in the screening venue
- A torch to use in the dark during the screening

Remember

- You need reliable transport to carry the equipment safely to and from the screening venue.
- Don't forget to check all the equipment before the screening – preferably before you set off for the venue.
- Don't screen where there is too much light - people will not be able to see the film. Make sure you can switch off lights and darken the room.
- Make sure that everyone can see the screen from where they are sitting.
- Don't forget to ask everyone to switch off their cell phones :)
- Don't forget to check all the equipment before the screening – preferably before you set off for the venue.
- Before the start of any screening, check that the image on the screen looks good. Are the colours bright? Is the image in focus?
- Make sure everyone can hear the sound. Check the volume. Play the film loud so that the audience is able to experience the film to its fullest.
- Make sure you have everybody's attention before you start playing the film.
- Don't forget to take the film file with you to the venue!

GUIDING QUESTIONS

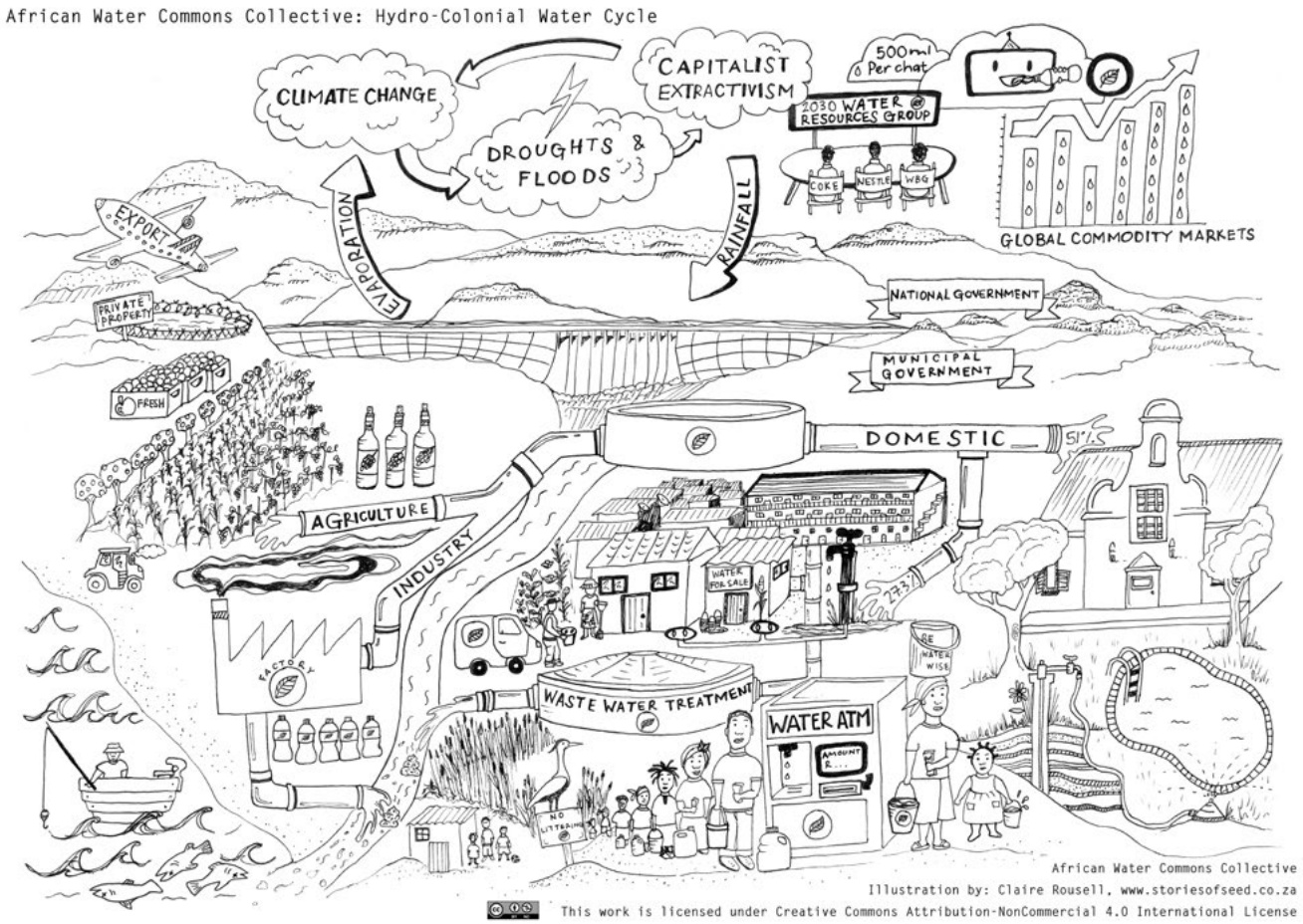
Use these questions to guide a discussion with your audience. Remember to be respectful and welcoming of all contributions.

- What is the main message you get from this film?
- Have you noticed changes in how people access water in your community or neighbourhood in the last few years?
- How have these changes affected your life or those of people around you?
- What do you think the local or national government should be doing to ensure that people are water secure?
- How do you think you can be involved in helping your community to organise for water justice? Discuss
- Across Southern Africa, not everyone has equal access to water. What do you think needs to happen to change this? Discuss
- In the film, the activists talk about and demand for universal access to clean, pollution free water. What does this mean to you?
- Should water be free? If so, for some, or for everyone?
- This film shows people who stand up for justice against the intersecting systems of oppression. To achieve a just future, we need to imagine alternatives... What alternative ways of doing things do you see are possible in your community? Discuss
- What would it take to have cross-race and cross-class alliances in the water struggle?

"They were telling the poor to save water, and they were asked to save water that they don't have."

Ebrahiem Fourie, Activist

Hydro-Social Water Cycle



This diagram shows the different ways that water moves across the land, how it is distributed, and how the distribution is an intentional direction of water towards a set of priorities (industrial agriculture and industry) – both away from life-giving uses such as water for basic needs and agroecology farming. To face the dilemma that in South Africa, we use, lose and pollute more water than we currently have available, we need to look at where our water comes from and what it is used for.

You can use this diagram to create a conversation after the screening. Some ideas of questions to ask:

- Ask people to position themselves in this diagram
- What about the image is familiar and what is not? Discuss reasons.
- Do you see water commons in this image? What does water commons consist of?
- Who is responsible for getting water to people?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What does water justice mean?

The water situation in South Africa and other parts of Africa is urgent. The latest United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) report estimates that by 2030, two hundred and fifty million Africans will be resident in water stressed towns and cities. In most cities there is a pattern where the urban elites and wealthy have proportionately far higher levels of water consumption than the average urban resident. Privatising water will create large problems of access for many people, and the need to redistribute water from the wealthy and economic elites. Rather we need to see action that courageously defends water as part of the commons and the need to institute democratic governance over it.

Water justice is about treating water as a basic human right, not a privilege or a product just for those who can afford it. It's about fairness, sustainability, and dignity for all.

2. What is the Just Transition in relation to water?

A just transition for water justice in Southern Africa means making sure that changes in how we manage water — like dealing with climate change, droughts, and pollution — are **fair and benefit everyone**, especially the majority who are in poor and working-class communities.

Right now, many people in South Africa don't have clean, safe, or reliable water. Big companies, farms, or rich areas often get more and cheaper water than poor communities. A just transition means fixing this unfair system by:

- Making sure everyone has equal access to water, no matter how much money they have or where they live.
- Protecting rivers and water sources so they don't dry up or get polluted.
- Creating decent jobs in water-related work (like maintenance, infrastructure or conservation) that support local communities.
- Making sure local people and those most affected are the ones making decisions about water.

In short, the Just Transition is about fairness, access, and respect for people and nature as we change how we use and protect water. It is about insisting that we have a more democratic society.

3. Why don't we want privatisation of water?

Water is a finite and natural resource that all life depends on. It is a basic need for all humans and other beings to exist. Without water, life is not possible. Water is also part of a global commons, a natural resource that should never be owned by any one nation, state, business or individual, or only be enjoyed by those who have money.

Equal and sustainable access to clean water is crucial for leading a life of human dignity. So what does privatisation of water mean? **Privatisation is the act or process by which assets or property (e.g. land), enterprises (e.g. Eskom) and services (e.g. water) and financing (public funds) that are owned or run by the state or by other public entities, are transferred to the ownership or management of the private sector.**

Privatisation of water means that the private sector will control water access, which means that a company controls the water. When a private company takes over, their main goal is usually to make money, not to make sure everyone has water. This can lead to higher prices and less access for poor or rural communities. People will lose control, and local communities often have little say in the matter.

To save costs, some companies may cut corners on water treatment, or overuse water sources, which can damage the environment and water quality.

Fresh water is becoming more and more limited because powerful actors like extractives companies and large agricultural industries divert, displace and pollute water on a large scale. Water has also become big business, some even call it the 'blue gold'. All over the world, people are fighting to gain control over their water resources and their way of life. Women are often at the frontline of these struggles as the lack of access to clean water simply makes the lives of their families and communities impossible.

At all levels of life - political, social, economic and cultural - the privatisation of water in whatever form, is anti-democratic, anti-social and anti-human. From a water justice perspective, we don't want the privatisation of water because it turns something essential for life into a product for profit instead of a basic human right.

4. What is e-coli and what are the levels that legislation sets for what is acceptable and what is not?

Escherichia coli (E. coli) is a type of bacteria commonly found in the intestines of humans and animals. While most strains are harmless, some can cause serious illness. It is widely used to indicate faecal contamination in water, food, and environmental samples because its presence indicates that many other disease-causing microorganisms may also be present.

Any presence of E. coli in drinking water is unacceptable as it indicates fecal contamination. For recreational water the standards set by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and coastal management authorities are:

- Excellent quality: ≤ 250 CFU / 100 mL
- Good quality: ≤ 500 CFU / 100 mL
- Sufficient quality: ≤ 500 – 1,000 CFU / 100 mL
- Poor quality: > 1,000 CFU / 100 mL

The general limit for Wastewater effluent is E. coli: ≤ 1,000 CFU / 100 mL

CFU = Colony Forming Units
CFU is a term from Microbiology, and is a unit of measurement for the amount of living microorganisms in a liquid or sample of water.

5. What is a directive issued against a municipality by the Department of the Environment and Tourism?

A directive issued against a municipality by a provincial or national department is a formal order requiring the municipality to take specific actions to comply with laws, regulations, or governance standards. Failure to comply with a directive could result in fines or even imprisonment.

6. What are Aquifers and why are they important?

30% of the planet's fresh water is stored underground, it is called groundwater. Africa's **groundwater basins are declining**, mostly due to increased extraction rates, climate change, and land use changes. Climate change has caused reduced rainfall, which leads to reduced recharge of aquifers. The pace and nature of economic development is exceeding the ability of aquifers to naturally sustain themselves. We have extracted so much groundwater that the planet has shifted on its axis, moving the poles 80 centimetres, as water is redistributed from below to above ground.

During the 2018 Day Zero water crisis, when the City of Cape Town opted to use the Cape Flats Aquifer as one of their new sources of water, there was the possibility that over-extraction would cause salt water intrusion. This could salinate the aquifer and make the water unusable. Active citizenry via Water Use Licence (WUL) public participation process, added recharge as a condition of extraction, and prevented salination from being a possibility. The WUL also requires a Monitoring Committee which meets quarterly, community groupings attend these meetings and ask hard questions.

We should conserve and protect aquifers because groundwater is a vital resource for: drinking water, agriculture, industrial processes, and ecosystems; its depletion can lead to water shortages, economic problems, public health issues, and environmental degradation, and once contaminated, it can be difficult and costly to clean up. Therefore it is essential to develop a precautionary approach to extraction of ground water from the aquifers.

Important reasons to conserve and protecting aquifers:

- Limited resource: Groundwater is a finite resource, and over-extraction can deplete it, leaving future generations with less water.
- Critical for drinking water: Many people rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply, especially in areas with limited surface water.
- Agriculture and industry: Groundwater is essential for irrigation in agriculture and various industrial processes.
- Environmental impact: Groundwater sustains ecosystems like wetlands and rivers.
- Contamination concerns: Groundwater can be easily contaminated by pollutants, which can pose serious risks to human health and the environment.
- Difficult remediation: Once polluted, an aquifer can be very difficult and costly to clean up.

7. What is an Algal Bloom? How are they formed in the ocean?

When high levels of microbial pollution (contamination of sewerage or faecal matter) exists in water, phytoplankton or blue-green algae grow quickly, feeding on the nutrients from the pollution. Blue-green algae are cyanobacteria, a type of bacteria with attributes of both bacteria and algae. These cyanobacteria can be found in almost all water systems such as dams, rivers and oceans, and can appear individually or in groups.

In the right conditions, blue-green algae can grow rapidly and form visible blooms, or scums. Blooms are usually somewhere between dark green and yellowish brown, and can turn the surrounding water green. These blooms occur when there are large amounts of nutrients to support the development of huge numbers of the algae. This occurs in waters that are contaminated with untreated or poorly treated human sewage, animal manure or fertiliser runoff. It is referred to as eutrophication, or more accurately hypertrophication. This is the ecosystem response to the addition of artificial or natural substances, such as nitrates and phosphates, through fertilisers or sewage to an aquatic system. Algal blooms generally occur during summer and autumn, when nutrient levels are high, temperatures are warm, and the water is relatively still. Weather conditions, nutrient levels and water flow will affect how long a bloom lasts. These blooms often surround the oceans of the Cape Peninsula and are visible from space, due to their extent.

Water affected by blue-green algae may not be suitable for drinking, playing or doing sports in or for agricultural use. Human contact with these blooms can cause illness such as hay fever-like symptoms, skin rashes, eye irritations, vomiting, gastroenteritis, diarrhoea, fever and pains in muscles and joints. Effects of algal blooms on water bodies can include hypoxia (the depletion of oxygen in the water), which when severe, will cause die-off of specific fish and other animal populations.

Avoid contact with algae-affected water and organisms, particularly in areas with visible scums or discoloured water. Follow the advice on any nearby signs and keep out of the water until authorities advise that the risk has passed. If you come into contact with contaminated water, you should remove any affected clothing and wash yourself thoroughly with clean water. Always wash any contaminated clothes thoroughly with clean water before wearing it again. If you feel sick, see a doctor.

AFTER THE SCREENING

Your Reflections

Each time you facilitate a discussion it will be a different experience. Reflecting after each session helps you to learn and develop your capacity as a facilitator.

- **We would love to hear from you!**
  Your sharing of experiences allows us to gather insights from across the country so that we can continue to learn how to use the film most effectively in different spaces, cultures and age groups.
- Please complete the Facilitators Feedback Form by filling in the online form at this link: https://forms.gle/v1XXX633Vgvas1pw8

Photos

Please take photos of the event: the screening, parts of the discussion and group photo and share these with us:

1. Send photos to anita@hrmt.org.za
2. Please indicate if we have permission to use any or all of these photos on our social media pages.

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Urgent Action Fund Africa
Wallace Global Fund

"The signs of a healthy economy should be a drinkable river"

-Li An Phoa

To follow the campaigns of the three organisation presented in the film, visit their websites:

1. **The African Water Commons Collective:**
   africanwatercc.xyz
   Contact:
   africanwatercommonscollective@gmail.com

2. **The Philippi Horticultural Association and its Food and Farming Campaign:**
   https://www.vegkopfarm.com/about

3. **#Rethink the Stink and Stop the Stink**
   http://rethinkthestink.co.za/
   https://www.facebook.com/rethink.the.stink
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