



ACDI MSc /MPhil

Specialising in Climate Change and Sustainable Development
Student Profiles 2014

Katrine Claassens (South Africa)

I graduated with a Visual Arts degree from Stellenbosch University. In my work as an artist I have aimed to create meaningful social engagement and empathy with issues related to human impact on the environment. In particular my work has addressed my interest in the unwitting ecological impact of suburbs on biodiversity and animal life in North America, France and Africa. I believe that accelerating economic growth and the resulting swift expansion of (sub)urban development in Africa provides us with an exciting window to challenge and divert from the conventional paths of development that have proved to be unsustainable and destructive. It is this window for reimagining the growth of cities that I want to explore in the ACDI Masters. I'm a passionate organic gardener with no green thumbs and when I'm not working you'll find me up Table Mountain.



Monica Giermek (USA)

As an environmental scientist and entrepreneur, I have found myself in Southern African for the past five years (Malawi and South Africa). In 2008, I completed a four year degree of Environmental Science (focusing in Watershed Science) in Syracuse, New York. After graduation, I moved to a rural village in Malawi and worked as a District Forestry Extension Agent as well as completed projects on a permaculture demonstration farm. After 27 months in Malawi, I relocated to Cape Town in 2011 where I launched my own eco-education and green lifestyles consultancy. I am passionate about water catchment areas, urban farming and have recently joined the Green Building scene here in South Africa.



Roy Gilb (USA)

I am a post-graduate student from Warrenton, Virginia (just outside of Washington DC) with interests in physical geography and computer science, particularly in climate modeling, geomorphology, and GIS. My undergraduate studies included research on the Milankovitch cycles, alternative energies, landscape ecology, climate change science, and remote sensing. After graduating from the University of Richmond in 2013, I worked for four months at a Conservation Organization in Virginia working on an urban growth model for my home state



and then spent the next five months working as a GIS technician for the Department of Transportation in Richmond, Virginia. My ultimate career goal is to incorporate the disciplines of geographical sciences and computer science to eventually pursue a career in GIS or remote sensing with an emphasis on modeling, and either biodiversity conservation or urban ecology and disaster risk management.

Kristen Kennedy (South Africa)



I am an ecologist with a diverse range of interests particularly regarding landscapes, land-use change, resource supply and human-environment conflict and interactions. I completed my undergraduate degree in Ecology with a strong focus on mathematics, through two years of pure maths at Wits. My honours in Biological Sciences at UCT in 2013 included two major projects, the first of which focused on the connectivity of fynbos as perceived by endemic bird species, while the second was an intensive exercise in Matlab programming in the form of a phytoplankton biomass model. I enjoy problem solving and understanding systems and through UCT's ACIDI programme I hope to improve my understanding of human systems and apply my passion and knowledge to develop practical solutions to the problems facing growing urban areas

in the face of a changing climate.

Alexandra Logan (South Africa)

I graduated from Stellenbosch University with a BSc in Earth Sciences and BSc (Hons) in Earth Sciences (Environmental Geochemistry). I am interested in the concept of a sustainable lifestyle, particularly in urban areas, as well as sustainable tourism. I am particularly interested in how the efficient use of resources may impact ones carbon footprint. My previous studies provided me with an extensive knowledge on how the earth works on both a physical and chemical level and I am eager to learn more about the human interactions and their effects within these systems.



Asimenye Nthakomwa-Chitika (Malawi)



I am a natural resources management graduate who has worked on climate change projects as it relates to agriculture hence my passion in the area. I am so much interested in climate change adaptation and mitigation and I plan to do research in these areas. I am so excited about the course!

Tamzin Ractliffe (South Africa)

I am a social entrepreneur with a passion for sustainable social development and the environment and hungry to find innovative ways to resolve the tension between those sometimes competing objectives. My current research interests focus on defining policy frameworks to facilitate growth in the social / small business / green economy, understanding opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in the green and blue economies most especially in an urban township environment and on the design potential for growth in environmental leadership development education.



Albert Novas Somanje (Zambia)

I have worked in the field of agriculture for 8 years. Am currently working for the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in Zambia, Acting District Agricultural Coordinator. I have also worked in collaboration with local and international Organizations in implementing Agricultural Development Projects. As an MSc Climate Change and Sustainable Development student, i am interested in sustainable ways of food production and agricultural development. My interest in the course is very high considering that it can greatly contribute to the development of the agriculture sector and food security, knowledge and skill from the course will enhance my profession in implementing adaptive and mitigation measures to climate change.



Adila Tire (Ethiopia)

I studied Physics at Dilla University and Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. The last few years I worked as Physics teacher for a school and a public University. I became more interested in Climate Science and joining ACIDI to study Climate Change and Sustainable Development at the University of Cape Town in the Development of EGS. My research interests will be on Climate Change Science and applications in affected areas.



Viviane Umulisa (Rwanda)



I am a soil and environment junior scientist with interest in water management for agriculture production and sustainable development. I have been working for trees for food security project in areas of climate variability with unpredictable weather causing drought and floods as main constraint affect the agriculture production in Rwanda. My involvement in research on trees species mixed with crops contribute most to water and soil conservation; increase production and assure environmental sustainability are among reasons I would like to increase my knowledge and develop my career in climate change and sustainable development

Joshua Weeber (South Africa)



I am passionate about all aspects of the environment and specifically interested in the complex cycles of the earth and the interactions between organisms (specifically humans) and the environment. After studying Archaeology and Physical Geography I began to investigate past environmental change in southern Africa, focusing on reconstructing the palaeoenvironments of the Holocene period. I am interested in learning more about the contemporary challenges faced by organisms as a result of a changing climate and the possible solutions we humans can pursue.