SADiLaR:
Bringing digital skills and resources to Humanities and Social Sciences

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DHSI 2021 - Open/Social/Digital Humanities Pedagogy Training and Mentorship
17 June 2021
Online

https://escalator.sadilar.org

science & innovation
Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SADiLaR
South African Centre for Digital Language Resources

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Background

Digital Humanities in South Africa

- Initial focus on digitization
  - South African History Online (SAHO) (2000)
  - University of KwaZulu-Natal: Digital Innovation South Africa
  - Rhodes University: International Library of African Music
  - ...
- Emerging field of computational linguistics (tools and resources)
  - Centre for Text Technology (CTexT), NWU (2004)
  - University of South Africa
  - University of Pretoria
  - Stellenbosch University
  - Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR, Meraka Institute)
  - ...
  - National Centre for Human Language Technology ->Resource Management Agency 2012

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DH and CSS in South Africa

- Around 2014 specific (isolated) DH activities started
  - North-West University: DH awareness symposium and first national workshops on DH
  - University of Pretoria: Symposium (DH and representations of self)
  - Durban University: Best Digital Humanities Tool Award
  - …
- Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa (DHASA)
  - founded in 2016, formally joined ADHO in 2018

https://digitalhumanities.org.za/

South African Centre for Digital Language Resources

- SADiLaR https://www.sadilar.org
- Research infrastructure founded 2016
- Funded by Department of Science and Innovation (South Africa)
  - South African Research Infrastructure Roadmap (SARIR)
- Hub located at North West University
- Several nodes
  - NWU CTexT: Text technology
  - ICELDA: Language testing
  - University of Pretoria: Digitization
  - University of South Africa: Terminology and Wordnets
  - CSIR: Speech
  - Stellenbosch: Child language

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Programs

SADiLaR runs two programs:

- **Digitization**
  - Creation of text, speech, multimodal resources, digitization of analog resources
  - Development of (computational linguistic) tools
  - Website
    - Repository of data collections and tools
    - Online tools: corpus portal, Voyant, machine translation, …

- **Digital Humanities**
  - Build (DH) research capacity
  - Organize training events
  - …

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Training events

Within DH program SADiLaR organized several training events
- At different universities in South Africa
- Open to interested researchers and students in Digital Humanities
- Various topics
    - Data analysis and annotation tools
    - Digital Humanities
    - Corpus creation
    - Linguistic text processing tools
    - Carpentries (various computational topics)
- Successful, well attended events

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Limitations of training events

Well perceived training events have limitations

- No follow ups (training events are ad hoc, no building on experience)
- Limited focus on South African context
    - Languages, culture, ...
- Unclear impact
    - On education (do participants teach learned material?)
    - On research (do participants use learned material?)
- Participants have no additional help after the training
    - E.g., when they run into problems or have questions afterwards

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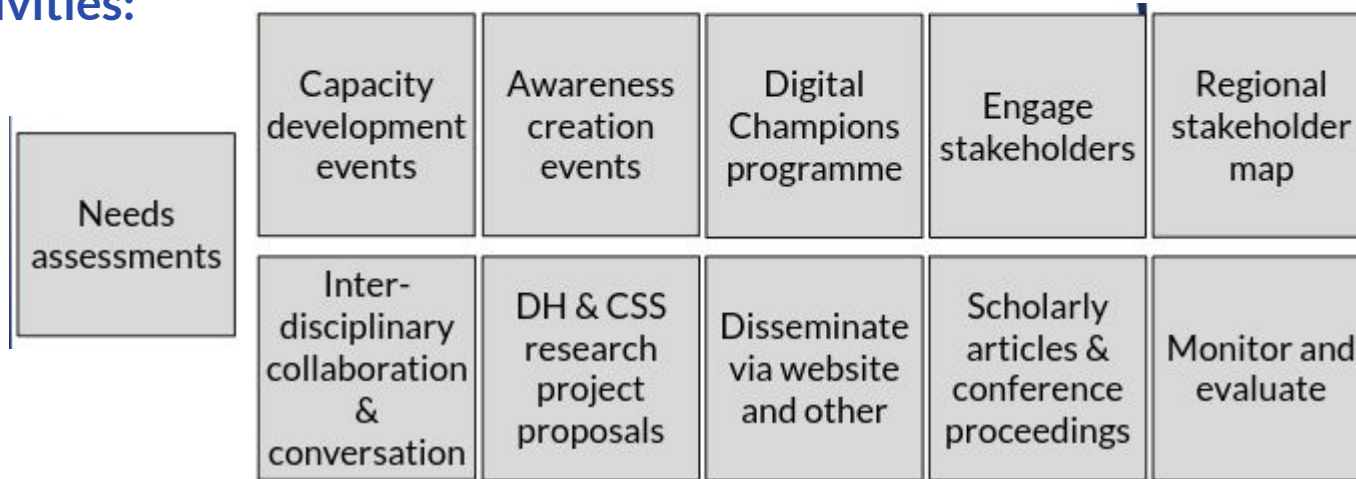# New training programme

To resolve these issues SADiLaR develops a new training programme

- **Training events**
  - Related to each other/building on each other
  - Material using South African languages and cultures
- **Focus on interdisciplinarity**
  - Collaboration between participants
- **…**
- **Comprehensive programme (versus ad hoc events)**

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The ESCALATOR Programme (2020 - 2023)

- **Aim:** Support development of inclusive & active community of practice in Digital Humanities & Computational Social Sciences in South Africa
- **Documents**: Theory of Change & Logical Framework (all on Zenodo)
- **Activities:**

| Needs assessments | Capacity development events | Awareness creation events | Digital Champions programme | Engage stakeholders | Regional stakeholder map |
| | Inter-disciplinary collaboration & conversation | DH & CSS research project proposals | Disseminate via website and other | Scholarly articles & conference proceedings | Monitor and evaluate |

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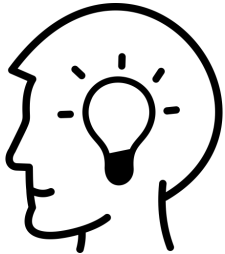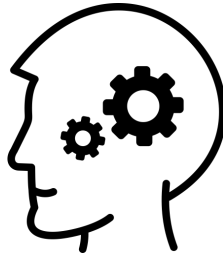
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Digital Champions Initiative

- Mentorship programme that forms the cornerstone of ESCALATOR

- Build on lessons learned from existing mentorship programmes

- Customised to local contexts

- Extended support (not one-off workshops) for selected individuals to grow:

Awareness　　　　**Skills**　　　　**Network**　　　　**Role in community**

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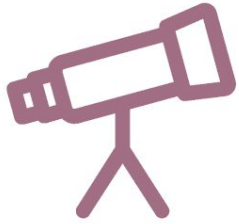
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Digital Champions Tracks

Different tracks to address various needs in community and grow variety of skills

Explorer
Not quite sure what digital scholarship entails

Embarker
Minimal prior exposure to digital research practices

Enhancer
Involved in projects applying digital research practices

Enabler
Growing and supporting local communities of practice

Educator
Developing contextualised training materials

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Learning from existing mentorship programmes
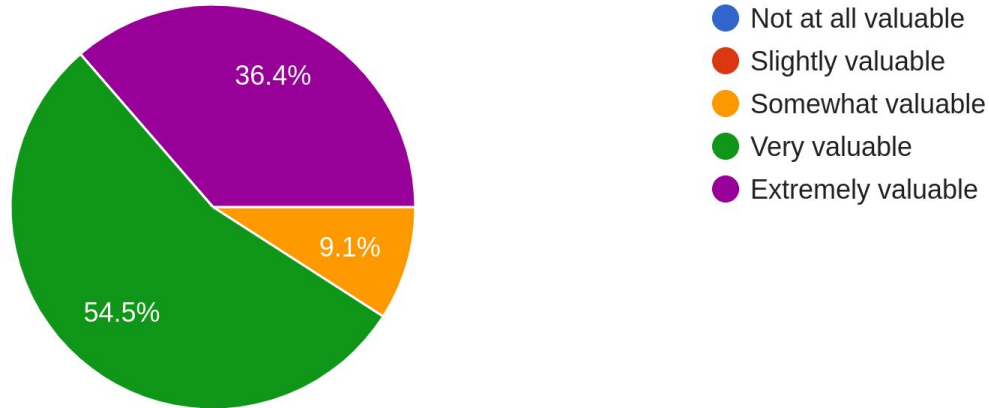
- Mentorship Indaba: 15 April 2021

- 8 programmes participated
  - Open Life Science
  - Zindi Mentorship Programme
  - CORE Africa Research Mentorship Scheme (CARMS)
  - She Code Africa Community Mentorship Project
  - WanaData
  - Deep Learning Indaba Mentorship Programme
  - Open Education for a Better World Online Mentoring Programme
  - Youthmappers (Mentorship information will be online soon)

- Blog post with links to resources at
  https://escalator.sadilar.org/post/2021/05/2021-05-03-mentorship-indaba/

Feedback from Mentorship Indaba

How valuable did you find the mentorship indaba for your own programme?

11 responses

- 🔵 Not at all valuable
- 🔴 Slightly valuable
- 🟠 Somewhat valuable
- 🟢 Very valuable
- 🟣 Extremely valuable

36.4%

9.1%

54.5%

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We'd love to hear from you…

- What programmes/initiatives should we partner with?

- Would you like to be involved?

- Have you solved any of the challenges already?

- Are there opportunities that we're not aware of?

- Are there any existing projects that we can collaborate with?

- Would you like to list your organisation, training opportunities or resources on our website?

- Follow us on Twitter @DHCSSza and let us know

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Thank you!

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