

NO Faith in False Solutions YES to a Just Energy Transition



Doringbaai - Spirit of Endeavour





Doringbaai

Doringbaai - the small, peaceful and remote fishing village along the rugged West Coast of South Africa, 250 km north of Cape Town - developed around its harbour and the lighthouse, which was built in 1896.

Doringbaai has given birth to many generations of fishermen and fisherwomen. Fish and seafood have been Doringbaai's livelihood. Yet, the dependence on the sea has also made life harsh. The remoteness of the village adds its own challenges. Doringbaai was known for its crayfish factory until it closed in 1970.

Since the bigger fish factories left, small-scale fisherfolk fight for the survival of their families. The old crayfish factory at the harbour is now home to a wine cellar and a community restaurant, and abalone farming has been introduced. The decrease in fish stocks and the pending oil and gas exploration put further strain on the community.

Doringbaai does not have its own school. The children go to school in Vredendal, which is a 45-minute drive, and daily transport is difficult logistically and financially.

During a recent workshop, faith leaders, fisherfolk and members of the "Spirit of Endeavour Fisherfolk Women" community group shared their views on the meaning of fish and the ocean in their lives, and how they feel about offshore oil and gas exploration.

Young Voices



I am **Misha Love** from Doringbaai. I was born in Vredendal, but when I opened my eyes, all I saw was Doringbaai. So I claim Doringbaai as my birthplace. My father and grandfather were both fishermen. I take pride in the ocean because it has taught me about my history, cultural roots and heritage.

The burning issue now concerns the young people, who must be involved in this struggle to protect the sea. Our biggest problem is climate change. I tried to start a home garden, but the lack of water made this impossible. We now see how climate change affects the ocean, and this is affecting my spiritual and physical health. We must fight for our ocean, just as we fought for our freedom.





I am **Johan Le Gransie**. Doringbaai is my birthplace. I left a few years ago because I did not really have an interest in the ocean. I was away for three years and almost forgot about the sea. What I found in the Bo-Kaap, in Cape Town, was bad smells and pollution. This made me miss Doringbaai.

There came a time when I was really destitute, and I had to come back and answer the call of the ocean to make my living. This decision became my livelihood and shaped who I am today. Those of you who are here and have not yet developed a love for the ocean must do so quickly, before it's too late to restore it. With or without you, I will fight oil and gas exploration.



Fisherfolk

I am **Chris Tieperins**. I was born in Doringbaai. When I was growing up, there was no money for education. I started working at sea when I was 15 years old. I am now 66 years old, and I have been a fisherman for 51 years. I'm officially retired due to my age and health challenges. The sea broke me.

My father was a boat captain, and his earnings were our only income. During those years, fish and crayfish were abundant, but the money was only enough to sustain the household. It was not enough to afford education. Sea life is the only life I know. The ocean means putting bread on the table. I'm not a skilled labourer, I cannot work with a pickaxe or spade, so the sea is my life, it's my heartbeat.

Over the years, I have taught many children how to catch fish and how to survive at sea. All the children who know respect and thank me for my guidance and leadership. I taught them how to bait hooks and fish properly. Many times, I had to caution them not to break the line, or the school of fish would disappear. Most kids had to choose the ocean over education, and people like me taught them our culture and traditions.



I experienced many accidents at sea. When I worked in Doringgat, not far from here to the north, I had a harrowing experience while trying to raise an anchor that was caught under a rock. As my fishing partner and I were struggling to get the anchor out, waves were rocking the boat, and I went overboard. He followed, and then the boat capsized.

In that moment, my only thought was not to panic. I tried to follow the movement of the boat to avoid being trapped underneath it. My partner could not swim, and I encouraged him to hold onto my legs. By God's grace, the anchor held, and we were able to reach the shore. There have been many accidents at sea, but this was one of the most dangerous.

On another occasion, we went out to sea on a calm day. Suddenly, the mist rolled in and we could not see anything. We only had a phone to call for help and inform others that we were lost at sea. The engine also failed, and we couldn't go further. We had no choice but to wait. While we waited, we saw a whale approaching. We thought it would harm us when it opened its mouth. We started to pray "Our Father". But nothing happened. When we heard a rescue boat approaching, the whale swam away. It had come to protect and not to harm us.

Oil and gas companies come to take our livelihoods. As long as I live, I will never agree with the proposed drilling of oil by Shell and TotalEnergies. We will fight until the end to preserve this way of life for future generations. There is no income on land, the sea is our provider.





I am **Laurencia Stevens** from Doringbaai. The ocean means everything to me: it is my income, my life and my heritage. Historically, fisherwomen in Doringbaai were excluded from fishing licences for many years. After a long struggle, we have finally succeeded. We fought to be recognised as women, homeowners, and breadwinners. Today, 80% of the women in Doringbaai have small-scale fishing rights.

Now that we have recognition, we must also fight within our community for respect and equality. Many men still do not accept us as fisherwomen. They believe their role is to fish, while ours is to raise children and maintain the home. Gender inequality and discrimination continue to violate our rights.

In the past, a fisherman was not only responsible for his family but also for the whole community. When the snoek came, we shared food, raised the children together, and lived by the belief that my child is your child.

Today, many women are single parents and breadwinners. For two years, we could not even provide basic school supplies for our children because we were excluded by our own community. In the past, we did not understand our rights or issues like financial abuse. We accepted that men were heads of households, while we were the managers and bookkeepers.

This is what we are changing. Women must stand up and claim what is theirs. We have equal rights. We must fight for our children and their future. We will not allow what belongs to us to be taken away. AMANDLA!"

Ludwick Africana has lived in Doringbaai for 42 years and attended school there. He says: "The ocean is our nature and our livelihood. When it is taken away, there is nothing left."

He shared how the fishing industry has shaped the community. He worked at the Oceana Group fish factory as a fish picker and lobster picker. The factory's closure in 2007 was devastating, leading to job losses and poverty.



Ludwick adds: "When Oceana closed, the community was left with nothing, no pensions, no retrenchment packages, nothing. They gave no shares to the trust to benefit the community. They moved to Hout Bay and Cape Town and left us without resources."

Today, Ludwick is part of the Doringbaai Lighthouse Fishing Primary Cooperative, which has 108 members. The cooperative is part of the small-scale fishing community and is working to create jobs now and for the future. He says: "Job creation is a struggle for West Coast communities."

Today, Ludwick also recalls the harm after the MV Galaxy oil spill, which ran aground close to Doringbaai about 16 kilometres offshore in 2024.

"We could not go to sea for four to six months. The fish and crabs died. All the sea life was severely affected. People wanted to collect the dead fish and crayfish, but we had to warn them that it was contaminated and could cause illnesses." He adds: "We all know that the drilling will harm the ocean, marine life and the community."



Faith Leaders



I am **Deborah de Wee, Christian**. I am an indigenous woman of Doringbaai. I grew up in a fishing family. We were raised through the ocean. The ocean is part of my heartbeat. I have soul ties and a spiritual connection with it because I was baptised in the ocean.

I am a founding member of Spirit of Endeavour Fisher Folk Women. We are all environmental activists. We are here to protect our culture and heritage. Many companies are coming, and they want to take our resources. We are here to protect what is ours. The ocean is our livelihood. If we allow big capitalist mining companies to come and explore oil and gas, they are going to destroy our food, heritage and culture for generations to come. They are going to rob us of being able to go freely to the ocean any time of the day because they are going to own the ocean.

“Offshore drilling and nuclear expansion could harm our environment and our health. For coastal people, climate change and pollution are already real. Government must support clean energy that protects our oceans and sustains our way of life.”



I am **Priscilla Arsa, Christian**. I was born in Doringbaai and have lived here my whole life. My father was a fisherman. I married here, and my husband is from the same church. I am a faith leader. The ocean is the community's food source. About 80% of the people living in Doringbaai depend on the sea for their livelihood. In the past, there were a lot of fish and crayfish, and people made a good living, but the environment and the seasons have changed and catching has declined.

Now life is a struggle. We are worried that oil and gas will make it worse. The community desperately needs work. We have experienced the closure of factories and the detrimental impacts on our lives. If oil and gas were to come, we want a true partnership and an unrestricted ocean. Without a true partnership, the oil and gas companies will make millions and leave Doringbaai with destruction. In five years, it could become a ghost town.

She says: "We as faith leaders and the community need to stand, work, and pray together so that God can help us protect the sea. We pray that the Lord will guide us and protect our children's futures."



I am **Serita Dorn, Christian** from Doringbaai. I was born here, grew up here and went to school in Vredendal. My father was a fisherman and captain of a boat. Sadly, he passed away when I was very little, 2 or 3 years old. After I finished school, I moved to Cape Town, got married there, also to a fisherman and then came back to Doringbaai. The sea has been our income since childhood. I make my income from the sea. I am a license holder for crayfish, which means I have to be out on the sea and fish with the guys. If I can't go, I need to get a medical certificate so that they can still go out and fish without me.

I belong to the Defiant Gospel Mission Church. We try to make a difference in people's lives by guiding them to make the right choices. The ocean is a gift from God, intended to provide for humanity. As spiritual leaders, we seek divine help to protect our way of life. God has given us the authority to look over the ocean. We ask for his support so that the ocean can continue to provide for the community's basic needs, such as food and clothing. For us to go forward, we need to stand, work and pray together to protect our ocean.

Community Voices



My name is **Cecelia Van Der Phall**. I was born and raised here in Doringbaai. In the old days, when the boats used to come in, we used to rush to pack the fish and crayfish in the ice crates. Crayfish were in abundance. The crates were also used to hold the snoek heads, and we could have as many as we wanted for our homes. In difficult times, when I had more fish than my neighbour, we would share our food. In the past, we worked in the factory with full shifts.

Oil and gas will not work for us. If oil and gas drilling takes place, we will not have a life anymore. What we built over the years will be destroyed.

With oil and gas, the already depleted fishing catches will decline further. There will be no livelihoods in this community. The sea is not only a source of life, but also has medicinal healing properties. Old tales say that the sea can heal scratches or afflictions. Many religious groups use it for baptisms. Oil and gas will destroy this sacred practice. We must fight for our existence, our livelihoods, and we must protect our heritage.



"I'm **Lee-Ann Love**, and I live here in Doringbaai. My parents used to work in the crayfish factory. As children, we could not wait for the school bell to ring on Fridays, when we would all rush to the factory on payday! I have fond childhood memories of that time and a great love for the ocean. Oil and gas exploration will restrict access to the ocean, and we will no longer enjoy the sea. It will destroy the ocean, and it will destroy us. Let us fight together to preserve it."



Join Doringbaai's Call: No faith in false solutions

We must fight against oil, gas, and pollution together. The ocean belongs to us. It is our livelihood, even though it provides less than it used to. We fight for women's rights and equal opportunities in fishing. We want development, but not at all costs. We are losing our community spirit.

We asked the oil companies, "What is in it for us?" The companies don't have answers for us.

For us: "Climate change is happening, and we must stand up and unite to protect the older generation's legacy. It would be sad if they saw their legacy die with them. They were young once and fought for their existence. We who are here today will have to make a change. I came to love the ocean. Doringbaai is a beautiful place. Let us stand together and fight!"

"I have a great love for the ocean. It is my daily existence. If I pray or feel depressed, I go to the beach. Here on the beach, we have family reunions, church gatherings, and holy baptisms. So if the big companies come to look for oil and gas, where will we go? We don't have money, the sea is our everything. It is a place of meditation, reflection, and relaxation."

"The drilling for oil and gas will kill the ocean. The sea is our life and existence. There is no money for education. The youth have no choice but to go work on the sea. Oil is a poison; we must not allow exploration here."



SAFCEI's campaign against false solutions to the Just Energy Transition

South Africa is transitioning from polluting fossil fuels to clean, affordable, sustainable, and renewable energy sources. This shift is called the Just Energy Transition (JET). The goal is to ensure the process is fair, equitable, and justice is achieved for everyone, especially the poor and vulnerable.

The Problem: False Solutions Hurt Communities

In the push to address climate change, some powerful groups promote what we call false solutions, such as nuclear power, oil, and gas. They market these as clean energy sources, but actually do the opposite: they hurt people, damage the environment, and steal money and time away from people and the urgent switch to true renewable energy.

Oil and Gas Exploration

Oil and gas exploration and extraction are often promoted as vital to our energy future, but they are simply a continuation of the fossil fuel problem.

- **Environmental & Climate Risk:** Adding new fossil fuel projects, like offshore drilling, directly contradicts South Africa's climate commitments and increases global warming. Exploration activities, including seismic surveys, threaten to disorient marine mammals, destroy fish breeding grounds, and risk irreversible, long-term damage from unavoidable oil spills.
- **Economic & Social Catastrophe:** Drilling activities threaten the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and hurt the West Coast's tourism sector. This increases poverty and food insecurity for families who rely on the ocean for survival.
- **Undermining Justice:** These projects often violate environmental justice principles by moving forward without meaningful community consultation with affected fisherfolk and coastal communities, denying them their constitutional right to a safe, clean environment.



Your Power - Mobilising for a Real Just Transition

Demand Justice: People come before profit. Corporations and the government must be held accountable for historical and current economic, environmental, and social damages experienced by coastal communities. The transition must prioritise bottom-up, local, sustainable, lived experiences of coastal communities over top-down, technical corporate agendas. The transition must remedy the climate impacts experienced by coastal communities that they did not cause.

Demand Inclusion: Vulnerable groups, including youth and women, are central to a just transition. Community voices must be included in decision-making processes on the JET for inclusive, people-centred energy policies rooted in justice. The deep, historical, and cultural connection that communities have with the ocean must be protected.

Demand Information: Communities have the power to request access to information and demand meaningful consultation throughout the transition process.

By mobilising together, we can reject false solutions and move South Africa towards a truly just, clean, and sustainable energy future.





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