

Mobile: +27 (0)83 443 2988**Email:** leonie@leoniejoubert.co.za**Web:** www.leoniejoubert.co.za**Date of Birth:** 27 October 1972**Nationality:** South African**Language:** Excellent English language skills**Instagram:** @science_scribe**LinkedIn:** www.linkedin.com/in/leonie-joubert

I. AREAS OF EXPERTISE

1. Writing - science writer and journalist:

- *Content specialist*

Leonie is a Cape Town-based science writer and journalist grappling with many of today's tough environmental and social justice issues from the perspective of the Global South: climate collapse, environmental change, cities as development hubs, why today's food system leaves many hungry, heavy, and sick (the hunger-obesity poverty-paradox), and plastics pollution.

She applies a political-economy lens to pollution: how 50 years of aggressive neo-liberal Capitalism allows carbon pollution of the atmosphere that's driving climate collapse; how highly-processed food-like products are able to pollute the nutritional landscape and our bodies, leading to hunger, obesity, and diabetes (reframing these so-called 'lifestyle' diseases as signs of a polluted food environment); how plastic pollution is able to find its way into the snow falling on the top of Mount Everest, and into the breastmilk and placenta of pregnant women.

She has spent 20 years exploring these topics through books, journalism, science communication training with academics and civil society organisations, podcasting, and public speaking.

- *Style specialist*

Long-form journalistic storytelling, which weaves together 'person', 'place' and 'scene' with the complex science and politics of the issue at hand. Also opinion writing, hard news, analysis, books, podcasting.

2. **Content editing and editorial support:** editing and assistance with content development for scientific and research institutes, non-governmental and civil society organisations.

3. **Science writing/communication training:** for scientists, researchers, development practitioners, and journalists.

4. **Policy development:** environmental management plan.

5. **Public speaking:** climate and environmental change, food security.

II. EDUCATION

1. **Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)** certification through the University of Cape Town's English Language Centre (Nov - Dec 2018).

2. **MPhil. Journalism:** Stellenbosch University; Science & Technology specialisation (Jan 2003 - April 2006).

3. **B. Journalism & Media Studies:** Rhodes University (Jan 1995 - Nov 1998).

III. FELLOWSHIPS

1. **2007 Ruth First Fellow** (Wits Journalism School/Ruth First Trust): research fellowship, presented as public memorial lecture on 17 August 2007; published in several formats (newspapers and two books).

IV. AWARDS & ACCOLADES

1. **Vodacom South African Journalist of the Year 2023** (sustainability category) for *A Perfect Storm* (team entry)
2. **Africa Science Journalist of the Year 2023** for *A Perfect Storm* (team entry)
3. **Vodacom South African Journalist of the Year 2023 - Gauteng regional winner** (sustainability category) for *A Perfect Storm* (team entry)
4. [*Distanced herself* from the Standard Bank **Sikuvile Journalist of the Year Award 2023** (feature category), given to the team behind *A Perfect Storm*, owing to Standard Bank's suppression of journalists and climate activists in the same month as the award was announced.]
5. **Distinguished Alumni Award 2022** from the School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University.
6. Shortlisted for the **City Press Tafelberg Nonfiction Award** in 2016 for the proposal for the 'myth busting' book idea *Cheap Junk*.
7. **Honorary mention in the 2010 Sunday Times Alan Paton Non-Fiction Awards** for *Invaded: the biological invasion of South Africa*. Judges felt it didn't strictly fit the criteria of the competition, but nevertheless needed singling out.
8. **2009 SAB Environmental Journalist of the Year** (print and internet category) for *Boiling Point: People in a changing climate* and *Invaded: The biological invasion of South Africa*.
9. Listed by the *Mail & Guardian* in its 2008 supplement **200 Young South Africans you must take to lunch**.
10. **Honorary mention in the 2007 Sunday Times Alan Paton Non-Fiction Awards**, for *Scorched: South Africa's changing climate*, 'for breaking into the new territory of science journalism, and its skill in popularising this often inaccessible field'.
11. **Merit Awards (2006, 2007, 2008 & 2016)** at the **SAB Environmental Journalists of the Year Awards**, print media category, 'in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the field of environmental journalism'.
12. Two-time recipient of in-house **Editorial Excellence Award** for articles written during employment at *Wine* magazine.

V. CAREER OVERVIEW

JOURNALISM & FREELANCE WRITING

Leonie's freelance journalism has been published widely in the South African press, and occasionally abroad.

The most recent highlights include assignments for *National Geographic* magazine and its digital platform. She contributes to *Mongabay*, *Nature Africa*, and *Daily Maverick*'s climate reporting desk, *Our Burning Planet*.

She has contributed to, amongst others, the following titles: *Sunday Independent*, *Mail & Guardian*, *Sunday Argus*, *Sunday Tribune*, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *Runner's World*, *The Big Issue*, *Africa Geographic*, *Harper's*, *Getaway*, *Readers*

Digest, SA 4x4, Wils, Mind Shift, Mindspace, Rhodes Journalism Review, Progress, EarthYear, Blue Chip, Farmers Weekly, Wineland, African Decisions, Rhodos, Engineering News and Cape Times, among others.

For a more complete list of recent publications, please visit her [website](#).

BOOKS

1. ***Realising Just Cities*** (African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, March 2020).
2. ***Tomatoes & Taxi Ranks*** (African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, October 2018).
3. ***The Psychonauts***: a serialised audio-book delivered on a podcast platform (self-published, 2017 and ongoing).
4. ***Oranjezicht City Farm: Food, Community, Connection*** (OCF NPC, 2016).
5. ***Burning the Karoo*** (self-published, 2015).
6. ***Science Writing 101: Tips from the Newsroom for Effective Science Communication*** (self-published, 2015).
7. ***The Hungry Season: Feeding Southern Africa's Cities*** (Picador Africa/Pan MacMillan, 2012).
8. ***The Future of Water in Africa*** (Pearson Education, 2010).
9. ***Invaded: the Biological Invasion of South Africa*** (Wits University Press, 2009), honorary mention in the ***2010 Sunday Times Alan Paton Non-Fiction Awards***.
10. ***Boiling Point: People in a Changing Climate*** (Wits University Press; 2008).
11. ***Boiling Point: 2007 Ruth First Memorial Lecture*** (Heinrich Böll Foundation; Feb 2008).
12. ***Scorched: South Africa's Changing Climate*** (Wits University Press, 2006), honorary mention in the ***2007 Sunday Times Alan Paton Non-Fiction Awards***.

BOOK COLLABORATIONS & CHAPTERS

1. ***Day Zero: One City's Response to a Record Breaking Drought***: written in collaboration with Associate Professor Gina Ziervogel, documenting Ziervogel's research into how the city of Cape Town responded when a three-year drought brought on a water emergency that nearly resulted in the city's taps running dry in the summer of 2018.
2. ***FLOW: Fostering Local Wellbeing***: a collection of stories that capture the work of a team of development practitioners, academics, and youth participants. FLOW was a two-year research project hosted at the University of Cape Town African's Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI), which worked with out-of-work, out-of-school youth in two municipalities near Cape Town, to 'build individual and community capacity to thrive and innovate in the face of the growing challenges of climate change, resource depletion and inequality'.
3. ***Opinion Pieces by South African Thought Leaders*** (Penguin, 2011), edited by Max du Preez, chapter on the state of the SA environment.
4. ***Shuters Geography Grade 11/Aardryksunde Grade 11 Learner*** (Shuter & Shooter Publishers, 2009).
5. ***Bending the Curve*** (Africa Geographic, 2009), edited by Robert Zipplies, chapter entitled *Climate Change - Our most pressing environmental issue*.
6. ***2007 John Platter Wine Guide***, contributing author (2007).

7. **Icons South Africa's Champion Wines** (Wine magazine, 2003).

SPECIAL PROJECTS

1. **Voices from the Frontlines, African Climate Mobility Initiative** (assist with writing, developing or editing text and captions) and **African Shifts** (helped develop and edit the scientific report and supporting material).
2. **Energy Transition**: column for the Heinrich Boll Foundation on cleaner energy developments in southern Africa.
3. Six-part series on the impact of climate change on semi-arid environments in southern Africa with the University of Cape Town's African Climate & Development Initiative (**ACDI**) and the Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions (**ASSAR**) project.
4. **At the Bottom of the Food Chain - Small Operators Versus Multinational Corporations in the Food Systems of South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, India and China**: contributing author to the report, published by the Economic Justice Network of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa and the NRF-DST Centre of Excellence on Food Security at the School of Public Health (University of the Western Cape), 2014. The study looks at the market dominance of multinational corporations in the food system in several developing world economies, and how this drives public health trends associated with hunger and nutrition, as well as the implications for poverty and inequality.
5. **City Desired**: contributed long-form writing pieces to an exhibition by the University of Cape Town's African Centre for Cities (2014). **The Farmer** and **The Entrepreneur**.
6. **The Food Dialogues**: rapporteur for a lecture series looking at urban food farming and the urban food system that was written up as *The Food Dialogues* report, hosted by the Cape Town Partnership and the Oranjezicht City Farm (2014).
7. **Untold Stories**: a long-form series of stories capturing the development work of the Environmental Monitoring Groups (EMG).
8. **The Hungry Season** animated videos: script writing and project managing an animated video on food security for the University of Cape Town's **Centre of Criminology**, in **English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, and Zulu** (2011).
9. **Cape of Storms** ebook and **Rising Waters: working together on Cape Town's flooding**: conceptualised, researched and wrote up the research relating to inland flooding and sea level rise in the City of Cape Town, for the University of Cape Town's African Centre for Cities (2013).
10. **Choice 2012**: end-of-project report in 40-page magazine format for Marie Stopes South Africa (MSSA), as commissioned by Creative Consulting & Development Works. The magazine looked at work done by the MSSA in the field of supporting women's sexual and reproductive health rights, during a European Union-funded project around the country (May - July 2012).
11. **Life: the State of South Africa's Biodiversity**: an adaptation of the South African National Biodiversity Institute's (SANBI's) 2012 National Biodiversity Assessment. This is a 60-page publication for a wider, non-scientific audience (Sep 2012 - Feb 2013).
12. **Better Production for a Living Planet**: for the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) South Africa. This 34-page book regionalises the organisation's international publication by the same name (Nov 2012 - Feb 2013).

13. **TV script writing and editing:** script writer on episodes 1 and 4 of *A Vision of Paradise: Global Warming and Religion* by Hooper Productions; the four-part series was screened on SABC2 in August 2009. Script editing on *Astronomers of Timbuktu*, by Dogged Films.

JOURNALS & GREY LITERATURE

1. Joubert, L. 2007. Spinning straw men: when science writing goes wrong. *Rhodes Journalism Review*. 27: 19-20.
2. Joubert, L. 2010. When deadlines don't loom. *Rhodes Journalism Review*. 29: 73.
3. Joubert, L. 2011. South Africa's changing climate. *Current Allergy & Clinical Immunology*. Vol 24(2): 62-64.
4. Davies SJ., Chown, SL & Joubert, LS. 2007. Renewed management system and provisions for South Africa's Sub-Antarctic Islands. *Paper and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*. Vol 141(1): 115-120.
5. Joubert, L. 2013. Food security: The optimal diet for people and the planet. *South African Medical Journal*. Vol 103(11): 809-810.
6. Joubert, LS. 2023. *Hit Me(n), Protest Art as a Communications Tool to Reframe the Hunger-Obesity Poverty-Paradox in the Global South*. *Matatu - Journal of African Culture & Society*, Volume 54 (Nov 2023): Issue 1: Special Issue: South African Food Studies: 125–134.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT & SPECIALIST EDITING

1. **Environmental Policy Research Unit (EPRU)** and the **Environment for Development (EfD)** initiative: communications support, assisting researchers to communicate their findings to policymakers and the public. EPRU is based at the University of Cape Town's School of Economics, and is part of the *Environmental for Development (EfD)* initiative at Gothenburg University in Sweden. EfD is a network of environmental economists in the developing world who aim to bring evidence-based ideas to inform sustainable development. Includes training and mentoring academics in writing using news formats for a popular and non-scientific audience (January 2015 until present).
2. *Building a Capable State: Service Delivery in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2018): content and language editor on the book produced for team at the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town.
3. **Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG)**: communications post. Project managing and producing content for the *Untold Stories* series, training staff in storytelling techniques, and generating press releases, news and feature articles for dissemination on websites and social media platforms (April 2013 to March 2014).
4. **Energy Research Centre (ERC)** at the University of Cape Town to assist researchers with writing and communicating the outcomes of the five-country Mitigation Action Plans and Scenarios (MAPS) teams outputs. MAPS includes South Africa, Peru, Colombia, Chile and Brazil and is described as: 'a collaboration amongst developing countries to establish the evidence base for long term transition to robust economies that are carbon efficient. In this way MAPS contributes to ambitious climate change mitigation that aligns economic development with poverty alleviation' (2015).
5. **South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)**: ongoing communications support on various projects, including *Life: the State of South Africa's Biodiversity*, and *Making the Case for Biodiversity* series.

6. **Climate & Development Knowledge Network** (CDKN): with SouthSouthNorth: writing, editing and proof reading support on various projects, including the *Future Climate for Africa* report and the **FONERWA Climate Risk Screening Tool** (2018).
7. **MAPS** (Mitigation and Adaptation Plans & Scenarios): editorial support on certain blogs and briefs (± 2012 to 2014).
8. **New Voices in Science**: writing communication training and mentoring with post-graduate science students at Stellenbosch University for **2014** and **2015** competitions and resulting magazines.
9. **Climate Change Handbook for African Journalists**, Heinrich Böll Foundation & Inter Press Service (IPS) (2009).

TRAINING & MENTORING

1. **Internews/Earth Journalism Network** mentoring support for African journalist grantees on the *Net Zero — Strengthening climate-related reporting in India and South Africa* project (April - October 2023).
2. **Future Climate for Africa journalism training** (workshop and one-on-one mentoring), by South South North (2020).
3. **Journalism training on climate change and sustainable development**, GIZ-funded training hosted by the SA Department of Environmental Affairs and offered by The Green House (Prof Brett Cohen) (2019).
4. **Climate change reporting training with journalists (international)**: trained developing-world journalists in climate change reporting on two-week course, hosted by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Danish International Development Agency (Danida), with the Nordic Agency for Development and Ecology (Nordeco) (August 2010).
5. **Climate change reporting with journalists (South Africa)**: WWF-funded training programme with community newspaper journalists in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town, how to report effectively on climate change, ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Congress of the Parties (COP) in Durban, South Africa, in December 2010.
6. **Guest lecturer**: presented a course on environmental journalism to third year writing and editing students in the Department of Journalism & Media Studies, Rhodes University (July/August 2008).
7. **Specialist science communications training**: regular lectures and workshops for scientists and journalists on science journalism and climate change reporting, including with researchers in the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), the Environmental Policy Research Unit (EPRU) at the University of Cape Town, and Environment for Development (EfD) initiative researchers based at EfD centres in China, Chile, Colombia, India, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sweden (ongoing).
8. **African Science Desk (Academy of Sciences)**: capacity building through mentoring African journalists as they develop science-based stories from their regions (Dec 2017 - present).
9. **Tutor**: magazine writing (online course), South African Writers College (2008 - 2010).

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1. Contracted by Stellenbosch University's Centre for Invasion Biology (CIB) in 2005 to co-author the new **Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Prince Edward Islands (PEI) Special Nature Reserve**. DST-NRF Centre of Excel-

lence for Invasion Biology 2010 (2014). Prince Edward Islands Management Plan Version 0.2 (Department of Environmental Affairs).

PREVIOUS FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT 1995 - 2002

1. **1999 - 2002:** Journalist, *Wine* magazine (Ramsay, Son & Parker).
2. **Nov 1998 - Mar 1999:** Media liaison for National Festival of Science, Engineering and Technology, Sasol SciFest (now Scifest Africa).
3. **Student reporter:** *SciCue*, reporting on SciFest for Rhodes University Journalism Department's festival newspaper, Mar 1998.
4. **Journalism internships** at the Durban-based daily newspaper, *The Mercury*, Dec 1995 - Jan 1996; Dec 1996 - Jan 1997.

CONFERENCES, PUBLIC SPEAKING & MEDIA APPEARANCES

Leonie regularly delivers talks and lectures on topics including climate change, food security, narrative journalism methods, and effective science communication, and regularly appears in the media. The **highlights** include:

Lectures & Talks

1. Ruth First Memorial Lecture (August 2007).
2. Berlin International Literature Festival (2008).
3. **TEDxCapeTown: Amazing People, Crazy Places** (September 2013).
4. **TEDxCapeTownWomen** (November 2019).
5. **EthicsXchange** (November 2013).
6. **TwoOceans Aquarium** (August 2023).

Media Appearances

7. Live appearance on Al Jazeera, **Is sugar killing us?** (2 Dec 2015).
8. **Cape Talk**, the Science & Technology slot with Pippa Hudson, speaking about the podcast **The Psychonauts** (13 November 2018).
9. **The Money Show** with Bruce Whitfield on CapeTalk/702 (5 February 2013, see **Our Future Cities**).
10. **Cape Talk** with Pippa Hudson, speaking on cities, hunger, and malnutrition, for the Open Book Festival (September 2017).
11. **Cape Talk** with Mike Wills hosting for John Maytham, talking about the launch of *The Psychonauts* (August 2017).

Conferences

12. **'Tools for Storytelling' Narrative Journalism Conference:** hosted by Fray Intermedia and Wits University School of Journalism in **2008** and 2011.
13. **'Power Reporting':** conference hosted by Wits University School of Journalism in **2010**.

14. **African Science Communication Conference:** *Scorched: South Africa's changing climate* presented as example of accessible science communication, Port Elizabeth; 4-7 Dec 2006.

VI. PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

1. **South African Science Journalists' Association (SASJA):** one of the founding members.

VII. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. **Former advisor to Project 90x2030:** climate change-related initiative of the Goedgeacht Trust and The Goedgeacht Forum for Social Reflection. See www.project90x2030.org.za.

2. **Volunteer Wildfire Service:** completed training in preparation for 2013 fire season; completed one season. See www.capefires.com.

VIII. REFERENCES

For a full list of references, please email [Leonie Joubert](mailto:Leonie.Joubert).