



TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

Communicating conservation impacts effectively

Training civil societies in West Africa



The report of a Master Class organised by the Tropical Biology Association on Communicating conservation impacts for organisations working in the Guinean Forest of West Africa hotspot

January 2022 – March 2022

Funded by

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND

Rationale

“Effective and efficient communication enhances organisational visibility and promote ecosystem protection and community development”

Harrison Nnoko, Cameroon

Good communication skills are vital in increasing civil societies’ visibility. These skills help organisations to not only communicate their work more effectively and memorably, but also to persuade people that conservation is important. However, these skills are largely lacking among conservation civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Guinean Forest of West Africa (GFWA) hotspot. As such, their conservation successes are never reported nor appreciated.

This masterclass was therefore designed to tackle these weaknesses. When CSOs let the world know of the conservation impacts they are achieving, they attract more efforts and support needed to sustain conservation.



Participating learned fundamental principles of communication, as well as the techniques and tools they need to improve their own communication. The masterclass included a focus on communication for advocacy.

The course was funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), whose fundamental goal is to ensure that civil societies are effectively engaged in biodiversity conservation and deliver real return on investments.

Achieving great impacts in conservation but not communicating about it, is like smiling in the dark. No one will see that smile and yet smiles are contagious when they are seen.

The Course

“The course has helped us think outside the box on creative ways in which we could brand our organization”

Nyimale Grace Alawa, Nigeria

We organised three face-to-face masterclasses on communicating conservation impacts for CSOs in the GFWA Hotspot.

Masterclass 1: Calabar, Nigeria – January 2022

12 Nigerian CSOs including two women-led CSOs attended.

Masterclass 2: Douala, Cameroon – February 2022

17 Cameroonian CSOs including two women-led CSOs attended.

Masterclass 3: Accra, Ghana – March 2022

16 CSOs (9 from Ghana, 1 from Togo, and 2 women-led CSOs from each of Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) attended.

Participants of the masterclass constituted women leaders (for women-led CSOs), and two staff responsible for communication in their organisation.

The three modules of the masterclass:

- ❑ **Principles of Communication.** Reminded participants on the importance of thinking about audience first in communication messaging, and choosing communication tools carefully. Participants learnt how to write impactful headline messages, and developed a simple communication strategy for their organisation.
- ❑ **Sharing Conservation impacts.** Using real-life examples, participants learnt how to describe conservation impacts, and integrate appropriate evidence so as to maximise impact. They also learnt about visual communication and how they can use social media in their work.
- ❑ **Communication for advocacy.** This introduced communication for advocacy, and showed how the same skills and principles of communication can be applied in influencing decisions, practice and policy.

Teaching was engaging and interactive, led by TBA and its partners. Materials for the course were written in English, with French translation for CSOs on the Cameroon course.

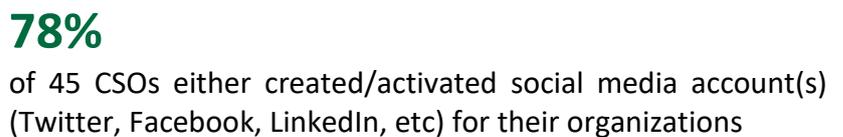
Impact

“We are utilizing the training on evidence-based policy advocacy, stakeholders’ engagement and effective communication of results”

Peter Bette, Nigeria



The CSOs responded with immediate actions. While on the course in Cameroon, Forest and Rural Development, and World Economy Skills and Agro Development produced publicity materials and branded items to share with the participants.



“The masterclass has given us additional skills on presentation and public speaking. One example is use of Menti.com for engaging stakeholders. Thank you”

Doreen Asumang-Yeboah, Ghana

Knowledge gained

Participants reported increased knowledge in effective sharing of conservation knowledge, application of communication skills in advocacy, using evidence in communication, and in developing communication strategy as the figure shows.

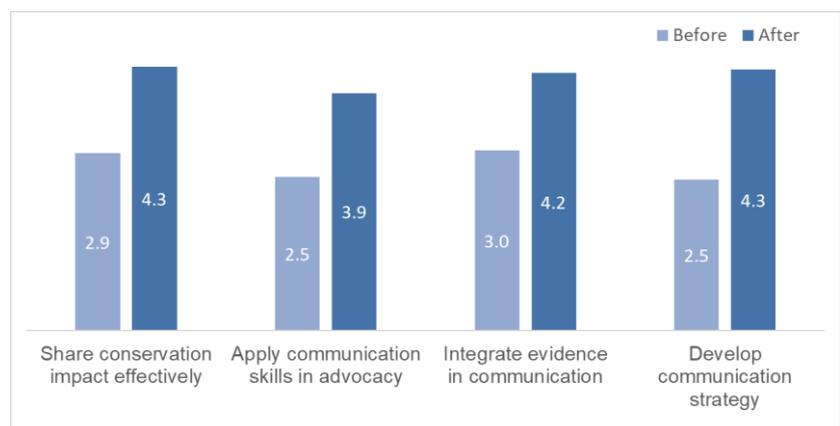


Figure showing participants knowledge levels before and after the masterclass.

Other outputs

Participants description of the masterclass.



Media engagement

We practiced what we had been preaching. Sharing using different avenues to reach out to various audience with the message of biodiversity conservation.

The masterclass gained great publicity by engaging national media in the three host countries. These included:

- a **radio talk**, showcasing the masterclass, and CSOs work in the Guinea Forest West Africa hotspot;
- One TV recording** aired on national TV (see [Canal 2 international TV news clips](#))
- YouTube videos** (see [Planet Rise show interview](#); [Ghana YouTube video](#); [Communicating Conservation Impacts Nigeria](#)).
- Online publication media**. An article was published about the masterclasses (see [Online News in Ghana](#))



MAIN STORIES TECHNOLOGY TRENDING STORIES

Conservation CSOs from West Africa participate in a masterclass workshop on communicating conservation impact

March 11, 2022 / ...

Report by: Ishmael Barfi

Participants

"I have learnt the best practices in communicating my projects impacts"

John Akinnuba, Nigeria

The 68 participants (40% females) on the masterclass were staff of the following 45 mentee (F=Female; M=Male).

CSO country	CSO full name	Female	Male	
Ghana (4F: 9M)	Biodiversity Alliance Ghana	1		
	Capacity For Sustainable Change - Ghana		1	
	Conservation Foundation		1	
	Daasgift Quality Foundation	1		
	HATOF Foundation	1		
	Hen Mpoano		1	
	Institute of Nature and Environmental Conservation		2	
	ResourceTrust Network		1	
	Rights and Advocacy Initiatives Network	1		
	Save Our Environment Foundation		2	
	Wild Fauna Foundation		1	
Liberia 2F	Foundation for Community Initiatives	1		
	Rural integrated centre for community Empowerment	1		
Sierra Leone 2F	Falaba District Women's Network	1		
	Muloma Women's Development Association	1		
Togo 1M	Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement		1	
Nigeria 10F: 14M	Agriculture Gender and Environment foundation	1		
	Biakwan Light	1	1	
	Biodiversity Preservation Center	1	1	
	Centre for Ecological and Community Development	1	1	
	Development Concern		3	
	Etara Eyeyeng Forest Concerns	2		
	Green Concern for Development		2	
	Integrated Mangrove Watch Association of Nigeria		2	
	Non-Governmental Organization Coalition for Environment	1	2	
	Organisation for Positive Sustainability Culture in Nigeria	1	1	
	Peace Point Development Foundation	1	1	
	Women in Nature Conservation Organization	1		
	Cameroon 9F:17M	Action pour le Respect et la Protection de l'Environnement	1	1
		African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization		2
Agriculture and Bio-conservation Organization for Youth Empowerment and Rural Development			1	
Ajemalebu Self Help		1	1	
Bagyeli's Cultural and Development Association		1	1	
Biodiversité-Environnement et Développement Durable			1	
Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch		1	1	
Centre des ressources Agroforestières, forestières et de Formation continue du Nord			2	
Community Assistance in Development			2	
Daraja Reube Mbororo Development Association		1		
Forest and Agroforestry Promoters			1	
Forest and Rural Development		2		
Resource Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development			1	
Sustainable Agricultural Technicians			1	
Tube AWU			2	
Twahnto Mixed Farming Common Initiative Group		1		
World Economy Skills and Agro Development		1		
TOTAL		27	41	

Thank you note

"I learnt useful tips for developing messages and choosing tools for different audience e.g. a brief captivating message packaged for the different audience."

Helvecia Takwe,
Cameroon

The Masterclass was an activity of the Tropical Biology Association under its CEPF-funded project: *Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation Capacity of Civil Society*.

We register special gratitude to the guest trainers;

- Dr. Babalola Folaranmi Dapo - Save Sahara Network, Nigeria
- Ms Ruth Akagu, CEPF – Regional Implementation Team for the GFWA Hotspot
- Mr Michael David, Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation
- Dr. Ibiwonke Olubamise - GEF-SGP Nigeria
- Dr. Joseph Onoja - Nigerian Conservation Foundation
- Dr. Francis Mbunya - Resource Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development
- Mrs. Mercy Abu - Division Delegate for Environment
- Regina Leke – Canal 2 International TV
- Javis Che - Resource Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development
- Hans Fonwebang – Ministry of environment and nature protection, Cameroon
- Ita Nawoe – communication strategist, Cameroon
- Mr Gilbert Adum – Save Ghana Frogs
- Ms Sandra Owusu - Save Ghana Frogs
- Dr Richard Gyimah - Forestry Commission of Ghana
- Albert Katako - Civic Response, Ghana

The masterclass was designed and coordinated by the Tropical Biology Association. In partnership with:



And with support from the CEPF Regional Implementing Team for the hotspot.

Funding

The masterclass was funded by



The **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund** is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

About TBA

The Tropical Biology Association helps safeguard natural resources in Africa and other tropical regions by delivering innovative training and support to the people responsible for conserving nature.

We run practical field, and tailor-made courses in Africa and south-east Asia. By sharing expert knowledge across different cultures, we help ensure that the conservation community has the essential skills and capacity to manage resources sustainably.

To make sure our training has maximum impact, we provide on-going support for our trainees. This helps cement relations and build confidence as well as ensures our trainees apply skills learned effectively, afterwards.

Our growing network of over 2600 alumni spans over 60 countries and is creating a potent international force for conserving precious habitats and threatened species.

Contact us

European office:

The Tropical Biology Association,
Department of Zoology,
Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EJ, UK.
tba@tropical-biology.org

African office:

The Tropical Biology Association,
P.O. BOX 44486,
00100 - Nairobi, Kenya.
tba-africa@tropical-biology.org

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