



TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

Strengthening civil societies conservation impact

TBA Mentoring Program in West Africa

July 2021 – June 2022



A component of the “Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation Capacity of Civil Society Organizations” project by TBA for CEPF grantees in the Guinea Forest of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot

Funded by

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND

Rationale

“The mentorship exposed us to new ideas, tools and techniques useful for organizational performance”

Harrison Nnoko

Low capacity is a major obstacle hampering civil society organizations (CSOs) in West Africa, - and across the continent - from delivering conservation impact. Yet, these organisations are largely responsible for managing biodiversity in community areas across the Guinea Forest of West Africa (GFWA) Biodiversity Hotspot. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) recognises this role and invested in building the CSOs capacity as key change agents in the hotspot.

The entire project implemented by Tropical Biology Association (TBA) was anchored on mentoring. However, this report focuses on the organisational mentoring which was designed to build sustainable organizational capacity by tackling capacity gaps that individual CSOs identified as a priority. It targeted presidents, directors and senior managers of the 45 CSOs (mentee CSOs) in Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot extends across the southern part of West Africa and into Central Africa north of the Congo Wilderness Area. The (CEPF) is actively engaged in conservation across the hotspot working with local and national CSOs in 11 hotspot countries in the region. These organisations were the target of the mentoring program.

Mentoring civil society organizations is vital for sustainability.

TBA theory of change is that more effective civil society organizations will lead to improved biodiversity conservation in GFWA hotspot.

TBA recognises mentoring as an effective approach to building sustainable organisations.

CEPF’s anchors mentoring of CSOs in its Strategic Direction 4: *Capacity of local civil society organizations, including Indigenous People’s, women’s and youth groups built to conserve and manage globally important biodiversity*

The approach

“The mentoring sessions I had with my mentor Dr Rosie (TBA) were very empowering.”

Dominic Fomengia,
Cameroon

We applied the following approaches to mentoring:

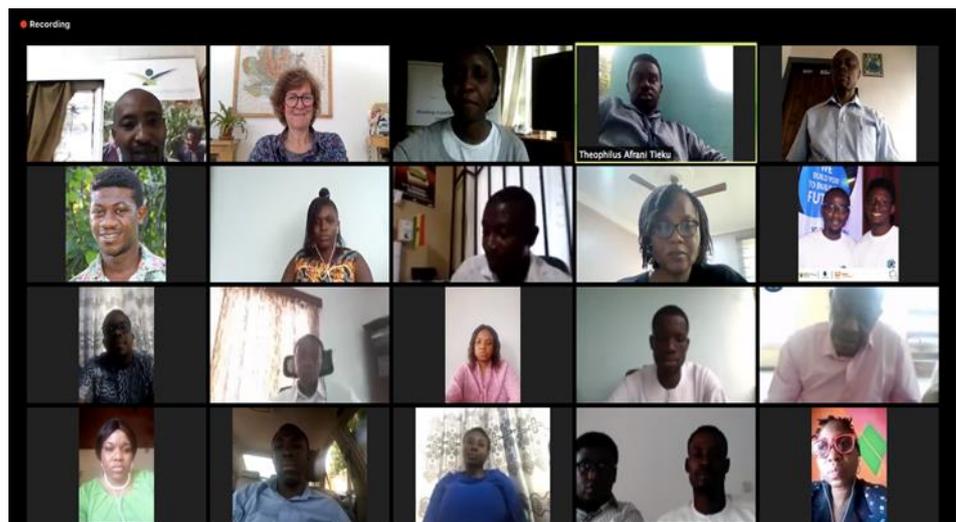
- ❑ **One-on-one mentor-mentee engagement;** we matched individual CSO with a mentor with knowledge and expertise in the CSO’s capacity needs. The pair developed mentoring targets, to guide their engagements that happened virtually (due to Covid-19 restrictions), and where possible face-to-face.
- ❑ **Groups mentoring;** online sessions (moderated by 1 or 2 mentors) provided mentoring for small groups of CSOs around common areas of capacity need. This was also an opportunity for the CSOs to learn from each other as they shared their experience.
- ❑ **Mentoring visits;** These benefitted women-led CSOs as Covid-19 restrictions eased in the first half of 2022. Mentors visited mentee CSOs for one-on-one sessions around mentoring targets the CSOs identified in advance as a priority. Emphasis for the women-led CSOs was on gender issues in conservation, and on women networking, as key pillars in achieving sustainable organisations.

Key topics for the groups mentoring

We organised one group mentoring session for each of the following cross-cutting topics.

- ❖ Strategic communications for small CSOs
- ❖ CSO sustainability – (focusing on financial sustainability)
- ❖ Strategic networking and partnership for CSOs
- ❖ Stakeholder engagement
- ❖ Effective organizational and team management

The topics were selected by analysing the mentoring targets the CSOs and their mentors developed, and filed with TBA.



Screen shot of a group mentoring session on Zoom

The mentors

Sixteen established conservation practitioners (10 Female:6male) were recruited as mentors. Eleven (5F:6M) mentored an initial cohort of 35 mentee CSOs (15 Cameroonian, 10 Nigerian, and 10 Ghanaian), while 5 (all women) supported a new cohort of 10 women-led CSOs. Each mentor worked with 2-3 mentee CSOs over a period of 6 months.

The mentors and mentee CSOs signed a tripartite contract with TBA that entrenched mutual respect, and professional engagement.

Tropical Biology Association and its partners, provided program coordination, and engaged the CSOs in overall mentoring especially where mentors lacked the needed expertise.

Some of women leaders and their women mentors at a delegates' workshop organised by the project in Ghana in mar 2022



Where the mentors came from

Country	Mentor (*women mentor)	Gender	Institution of affiliation
Cameroon	Fombu Christel Ya Nicole*	F	Resource Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development
	Francis Mbunya	M	
	Mapiemfu-Lamare Delphine	F	University of Buea
	Taku Awa II	M	University of Dschang
	Estelle Karyn Mandeng Ntsimi	F	World Wildlife Fund, Cameroon
	Mor Bakia Achankap	M	
Ghana	Sheila Nana Akua	F	Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana
	Lucy Amissah	F	Forestry Research Institute of Ghana
	Adjei Betty*	F	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
	Jones Kpakpa Quartey	M	University of Ghana
Liberia	Randa Norah Moore*	F	Green Globe Consultancy
Nigeria	Ibironke Olubamise	F	GEF-Small Grant Programme Nigeria
	Michael David Terungwa	M	Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation
	Leton Benita*	F	Sustainable Actions for Nature
	Alade Adekele	M	Urban Agriculture and Wildlife Sanctuary Initiative
Sierra Leone	Wongo Ellen Sia*	F	United Nations Liberia Secretariat

Impact

“COMAID was able to secure a project from CEPF as a result of the mentorship”

Kenneth Tah, COMAID

Did the mentoring make a difference?

The mentoring:

- ❑ **Set up CSOs with continued support.**
 Mentee CSOs have continued to engage their mentors – and peers - for advice and potential collaboration.
- ❑ **Opened opportunities for collaboration.**
 CSOs that did not know each other before are now working together on local conservation activities.
- ❑ **Expanded knowledge and contacts.**
 Mentees and mentors said they benefited from each other and build contacts for future collaborations.

92%

of the mentee CSOs said the mentoring program was useful to them.

73%

Percentage of mentoring targets achieved over the six months mentoring period.

60%

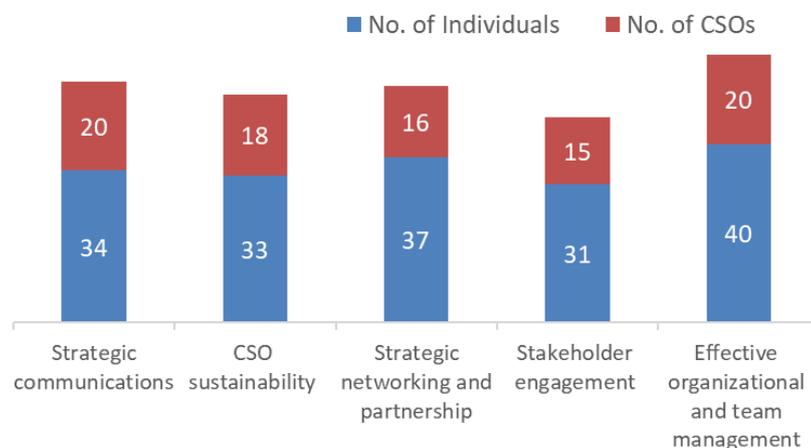
of fundraising success CSOs attribute to the mentoring programme.

Response to the mentoring

The demand for mentoring was overwhelming considering it was voluntary. All the 45 mentee CSOs actively participated in a one-on-one mentor-mentee or mentoring visit.

31 CSOs (out of 35 CSOs available for the group mentoring) and 58 CSO staff attended one of five group mentoring sessions. Also 43% of the 35 mentee CSOs – and more than 30 individuals attended every session as shown in the figure below. The CSO staff were engaging by sharing experience and asking questions.

Attendance during group mentoring sessions



Beneficiary CSOs

“The best outcome of the mentoring was the strategic management skills that our team obtained.”

Benedicta Yaa Pokuaa
Sarpong, Wild Fauna
Foundation

The following CSOs benefitted from the project’s mentoring actions.

Country	Organization	Language	
Cameroon	Agriculture and Bio-conservation Organization for Youth Empowerment and Rural Development	English	
	Ajemalebu Self Help		
	Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch		
	Community Assistance In Development		
	Daraja Reube Mbororo Development Association		
	Forest and Agroforestry Promoters		
	MIFACIG Training and Resource Center		
	Resource Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development		
	Sustainable Agricultural Technicians Kejom Keku		
	World Economy Skills and Agro Development		
	Action for the Respect and Protection of the Environment		French
	African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization		
	Agroforestry, Forestry and Northern Training Resource Centre for the North.		
	Bagylis Cultural and Development Association		
Biodiversity-Environment & Sustainable Development			
Forest and Rural Development			
Tube Awu			
Ghana	Biodiversity Alliance, Ghana	English	
	Capacity For Sustainable Change - Ghana		
	Conservation Foundation		
	Daasgift Quality Foundation		
	HATOF Founation		
	Hen Mpoano		
	Institute of Nature and Environmental Conservation		
	Resourcestrust Network		
	Rights and Advocacy Initiatives Network		
	Save Our Environment Foundation		
Wild Fauna Foundation			
Nigeria	Agriculture Gender and Environment foundation	English	
	Biakwan Light		
	Biodiversity Preservation Center		
	Centre for Ecological and Community Development		
	Development Concern		
	Etara Eyeyeng Forests Concerns		
	Green Concern for Development		
	Integrated Mangrove Watch Association of Nigeria (IMWAN)		
	Non—Governmental Organization Coalition for Environment		
	Organization for Positive Sustainability Culture in Nigeria		
	Peace Point Development Foundation		
	Women in Nature Conservation Organization		
Togo	Young Volunteers for the Environment	French	

Liberia	Foundation for Community Initiatives	English
	Rural integrated centre for community Empowerment	
Sierra Leone	Falaba District Women's Network	English
	Muloma Women's Development Association	

Acknowledgements

“The mentoring program was mutually beneficial. Thank you for bringing such a resourceful team together. It opens opportunities for learning”

Mor Bakia, Cameroon

We thank the **16 individuals – and their organisations** - for the invaluable mentoring they offered during this project.

The mentoring program was partnership lead by the **Tropical Biology Association**, and involving:



Funding

The Mentoring Program - activity of the TBA-grant *“Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation Capacity of Civil Society Organizations”* - was funded by the:



The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) 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. Their shared interest and objective is the conservation of biodiversity hotspots – Earth’s most biologically rich yet threatened areas.

CEPF’s fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

For more information, visit www.cepf.net

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

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