



TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

Strengthening the fundraising capacity of civil societies in the Guinea Forest of West Africa



*The report of a Master Class organised by the Tropical Biology Association on Project
Development and Fundraising*

Oct 2020 – May 2021

Funded by

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND

Rationale

My capacity on proposal writing was enhanced.

Peter Oru Bette, Biakwan Light, Nigeria

Civil societies often face challenges in sustaining conservation impacts due to a lack of capacity to leverage resources. Related, is a lack of skills to develop quality projects to match what funders want while keeping to their strategic objectives.



“The course gave me better understanding of conservation project writing including the concepts of long, medium- and short-term impacts”

KUADJOVI-AYEDEU Efua Eve Manu, JVE Togo

This masterclass was packaged to address these weaknesses. Participating CSOs learned how to define and communicate conservation problems, and design logical projects that would deliver their desired impacts. They also learnt how to strategically plan their fundraising actions so as to increase chances for success, and ideas for diversifying sources of funding for long-term sustainability.

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.

The Course

The course has better positioned my organization especially in the area of community organizing and proposal writing. We were able to develop a proposal which was funded, using the skills gathered from this training.

Martins Richard Egot
Development Concern, Nigeria

We organised two online masterclasses to increase the fundraising success of CSOs across the Guinean Forest of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot. We designed to teach relevant and practical skills that are directly applicable in participants own work. Our materials use plain language and easy to follow ideas with examples and memorable tips. This makes the learning real-life rather than theoretical.

Masterclass 1: November 2020 – January 2021

The course involved 10 CSOs from Ghana and 10 from Nigeria, who constituted the initial target group under the project.

Masterclass 2: May - June 2021

This course was for a new cohort of 16 CSOs (15 from Cameroon, and 1 from Togo) under the "Cameroon" project extension.

Participating CSOs identified two suitably qualified staff to join the Masterclass.

Materials for the masterclass were in English. However, French translations were made available for French speaking CSOs on second course.

The five modules of the masterclass:

- Designing conservation projects.** Participants learnt how to design and structure conservation project that showed the impacts they wanted to achieve and how they would do it.
- Measuring impacts.** Gave participants the skills and confidence to measure the impact of their project, and showed them why measuring impacts is important.
- Unpacking Logframes.** Built a better understanding of logframes, and how to use one to plan and monitor projects.
- Writing a winning proposal.** Helped participants write good project proposals, and how to tailor them to a target funder, including the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). The module included a topic on **stakeholders** — and how you engage with them – as they are key to the success and sustainability of projects.
- Fundraising for sustainability.** Built understanding of how fund-raising works, and how you can think strategically about fundraising for the long term.

The approach

“The strategic fundraising plan that I wrote in this course helped me revive contact with my past funders. I have so far received fund from one of my old funders and one new funder.”

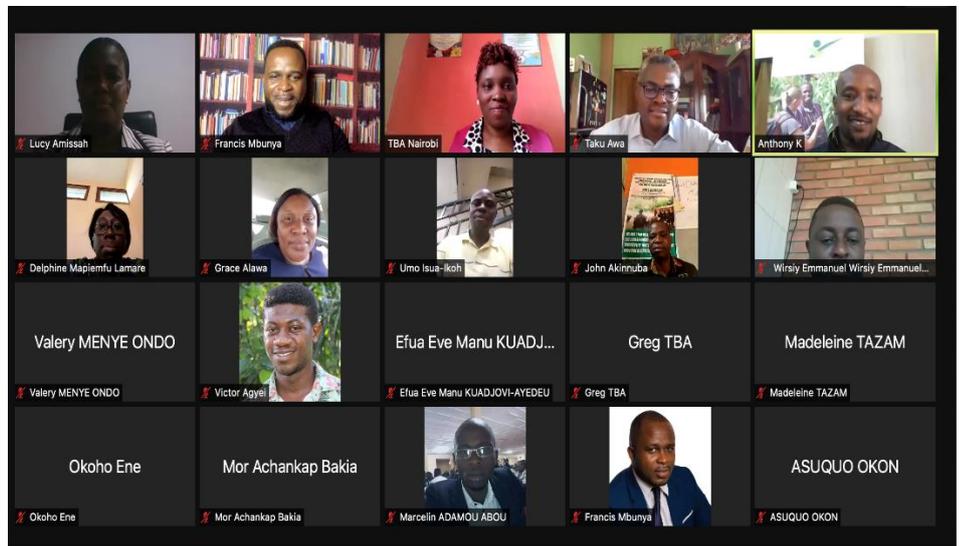
Jaff Francis Agiamntebom,
Forest and Agroforestry
Promoters, Cameroon

The masterclass followed the TBA flip learning approach where participants study course materials on their own, then come for taught classes, afterwards. By planning taught classes around materials participants will have interacted with, we make learning easier, and this leads to greater knowledge retention.

Course modules followed a step by step approach; each module build onto the next. We integrated module assignments to help cement the knowledge learnt, as participants apply what they learn immediately in their work.

Modules materials were shared via email, and participants allocated 1-2 weeks for self-learning. This was followed by a Zoom teaching session guided by trainers from TBA and the in-country partners, and where participants shared experiences.

A key output of the masterclasses was a project proposal that participants developed, and submitted for funding including to CEPF. Each participant worked closely with a trainer and received feedback on their proposals before submission.



“Zoom sessions were useful for clarifying the course content and interacting with other participants”

Victor Agyei, Capacity for Sustainable Change - Ghana

Impact

“This masterclass helped me to write more proposals. Because I understood how to identify and work with various stakeholders, BACUDA got local conservation partnerships with large infrastructure projects to give environmental mitigation advice in the indigenous Bagyeli people region.”

Valery Menye Ondo,
Bagyeli’s Cultural and
Development Association,
Cameroon

100%

of the CSOs developed Strategic fundraising plans

91%

said that the skills they gained from the masterclasses beneficial to their organizations

86% percentage of CSOs (out of 35) that submitted a full project proposal to CEPF by the end of the masterclass.

8 no of CSOs that won a CEPF small grant.

Knowledge gained

Participants reported increased knowledge in identifying conservation problems, writing good impact statements, and choosing appropriate indicators as shown in the figure below.

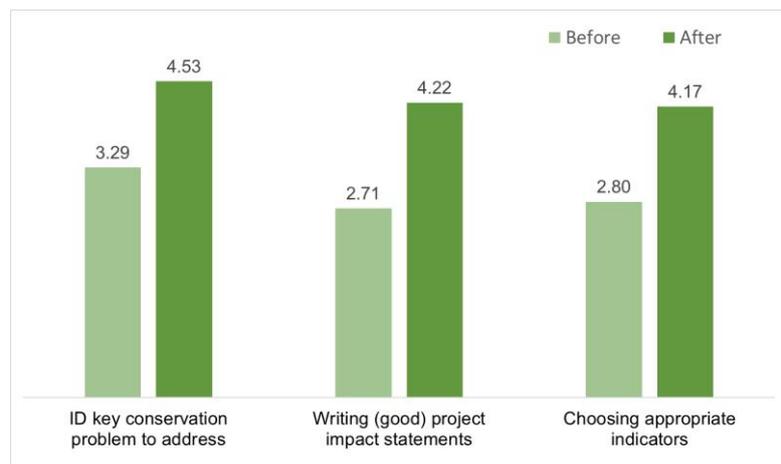


Figure showing participants knowledge levels before and after the masterclass.

Organisation for Positive Sustainability Culture in Nigeria (OPSCN) highlighted a transformational experience with the masterclass. After their technical officer left the organisation, Deborah (an admin office) took over the challenge. Even though she had never written a proposal before, she went through the masterclass materials, and working with feedback from the course trainers, and won a small grant from CEPF for her organisation.

Participants

“My organisation has written and won 5 conservation proposals since the Project development and fundraising masterclass”

Justice Camillus
Mensah, Hen Mpoano,
Ghana

The 70 participants on the masterclass (33% females) were staff of the following 35 CSOs:

Country	CSO full name	Female	Male
Cameroon	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	1
	Ajemalebu Self Help	1	1
	Bagyeli's Cultural and Development Association	1	1
	Biodiversité-Environnement et Développement Durable	1	1
	Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch	1	1
	Centre des ressources Agroforestières, forestières et de Formation continue du Nord	1	1
	Community Assistance In Development	1	1
	Forest and Agroforestry Promoters		1
	Forest and Rural Development	1	1
	Resource Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development	1	1
	Sustainable Agricultural Technicians		3
	Tube AWU		1
	Twahnto Mixed Farming Common Initiative Group	1	1
Ghana	Biodiversity Alliance Ghana	2	
	Capacity For Sustainable Change - Ghana		2
	Centre for Intercultural Learning, Talent and Development	1	2
	Conservation Foundation		1
	HATOF Foundation	1	1
	Hen Mpoano		2
	Institute of Nature and Environmental Conservation	1	1
	Resourcetrust Network		2
	Save Our Environment Foundation		2
	Wild Fauna Foundation	1	1
Nigeria	Biakwan Light	1	1
	Biodiversity Preservation Center	1	1
	Centre for Ecological and Community Development	1	1
	Development Concern		2
	Etara Eyeyeng Forest Concerns	1	1
	Green Concern for Development		2
	Integrated Mangrove Watch Association of Nigeria		2
	Non-Governmental Organization Coalition for Environment		2
	Organisation for Positive Sustainability Culture in Nigeria	1	
	Peace Point Development Foundation	1	1
Togo	Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement	1	1
Total		23	47

Looking Forward

Our own lesson learnt in implementing this online-offline masterclass led us to adapting a fully virtual approach with masterclasses taken in our Moodle learning platform. In this masterclass we shared materials and participants submitted assignments and received feedback on email.

The masterclasses that followed allowed the participants to study at own pace and submit assignments and receive feedback on the Moodle platform. We also had synchronised zoom learning sessions.

Acknowledgements

“We were able to develop strategies on how to get donors to fund some of our projects”

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

It was designed, taught and coordinated by the Tropical Biology Association.

In partnership with:

Loah Alvinus
Ajimsimbom,
Twahnto Mixed
Farming Common
Initiative Group,
Cameroon



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.

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