

Conservation Society of Sierra Leone

Connecting people to nature...



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From the Executive Director, CSSL

Dear Readers,



Sheku Kamara (PhD)
Executive Director, CSSL

The first half of the year 2021 has been particularly challenging due to the global covid19 pandemic. In spite of that, CSSL continues to undertake its conservation actions by working with coastal and forest-edge communities to enhance environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. We remain true to our readership by keeping you updated on interventions in the last quarter. In this edition, we present our audience with inspiring stories ranging from oil and gas pollution, awareness creation on forest conservation actions in Gola communities as well as institutional capacity building support by the West Africa Civil Society Initiative (WACSI) and more. We hope that this would at least keep our esteemed readership abreast with the strides we're making as an institution in these challenging times. We are grateful for the unflinching support of our partners: BirdLife International (BLI), The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Bread for the World (BftW).

Happy reading!

We for Nature, Nature for us.

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WACSI Strengthens CSOs' Capacities for Effective Stakeholder Engagement in Biodiversity Conservation.



Dr. David Sidikie Yambasu, National Resource Person for WACSI during his first coaching engagement with CSSL staff in Freetown.

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) organised a series of trainings to strengthen the capacities of environmental civil society organizations (CSOs) in Sierra Leone. These interventions came up as a result of funding support received by WACSI in 2020 from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). WACSI is a Ghana based international organization that seeks to enhance the effectiveness and performance of other civil society groups. It aims at strengthening the legitimacy, transparency, accountability and resilience of these groups through training, shared-learning, mentoring and coaching programmes among others.

The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) was among several other CSOs in Sierra Leone that benefitted from those interventions.

The Institute began by assessing the operational needs of the targeted local CSOs, action plans outlined how the respective institutions intended to implement such plans. Training modules were then developed and tailored to meet those specific needs of the organizations. The trainings were conducted using virtual and face-to-face platforms, with the first set conducted through zoom in November, 2020 and covered topics like Resource Mobilisation and

covered topics like Resource Mobilisation and Sustainability, Organisational Governance, Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Project Management.

In order to ensure efficiency in effecting the desired functional changes in CSOs, WACSI contracted Dr. David Sidikie Yambasu as a National Resource Person to support partners with the implementation of their respective action plans. Dr. Yambasu is a civil society activist and development professional who, until his contract ended in May 2021, engaged individual organizations both remotely and face-to-face at their office facilities and provided the required mentorship and guidance to ensure organizational effectiveness in operations. This service was indeed invaluable to CSSL, as gaps were identified and strengthened during this period. The Programme Manager at CSSL, Mr. Edward Momodu Sesay said, *"...we feel fulfilled by the mentorship provided to our staff by Dr. Yambasu over this short period. This has tremendously helped us reshape our operations as an organization"*.

The virtual sessions also led to the development and submission of small grant project proposals to CEPF for funding. Technical support was jointly provided by the WACSI team and Dr. Yambasu to ensure that the proposals were written in accordance with the prescribed CEPF criteria, and against the organised shared learning virtual sessions for partners in order to further strengthen their skills in project proposal writing.

WACSI Strengthens CSOs' Capacities for Effective Stakeholder Engagement in Biodiversity Conservation. Contd.

Over five environmental CSOs who benefitted from these trainings saw WACSI's intervention as timely and helpful especially when there are growing environmental problems in the country that require sustained advocacy. Building the capacities of such institutions to step up environmental advocacy work was hugely embraced by participants.

*Text: A. K. Dumbuya/CSSL
Photos: A. K. Dumbuya/CSSL & Christopher/CSSL*



Dr. David Sidikie Yambasu, providing mentorship for CSSL staff in Freetown.

Darwin Initiative Increases Forest Conservation Awareness among Gola Communities in Malema Chiefdom.



An elderly woman explaining the messages through visual aids in Dukor community

In its continued drive to promote conservation work in the Gola landscape, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), in collaboration with Gola Rainforest Conservation Limited by Guarantee (GRC LG) through funding from Darwin Initiative conducted a second set of roadshow sessions in the project communities in Malema chiefdom, Kailahun district, covering fourteen communities placed in two clusters. The activity spanned from 13th to 15th February 2021, and aimed at increasing the awareness of people in 14 forest edge communities on the benefits of forests and biodiversity conservation.

At the beginning of the session, the project's Community Development Facilitator, Bobson Kobba stated that, the purpose of the roadshow was to help participants understand the key

Darwin Initiative Increases Forest Conservation Awareness among Gola Communities in Malema Chiefdom. Contd.



messages and then convey them to their respective communities.

The CSSL Communications Officer, Abdul K. Dumbuya, took participants through the different components that the roadshows were meant to cover. In the process, he explained how various components were linked to each other, relative to forest conservation and protection. Mr. Dumbuya also informed communities that CSSL and GRC are working collaboratively to promote conservation in the Darwin Initiative supported project communities and the entire Gola landscape in Sierra Leone. He added that, they were conscious about the challenges communities faced relating to conservation and forest protection, which according to him, prompted both institutions to seek funding support from the Darwin Initiative for the implementation of this project in the 14 selected communities. He therefore encouraged everyone to fully support the implementation process by first passing on the messages to those absent during the roadshows.

Mariama Kargbo, the CSSL Environmental Education Officer, explained the importance and role of women in land-use planning and co-management. She encouraged women to actively participate in decision-making processes relative to co-management and land-use planning. She emphasized that such involvement was required to ensure gender sensitivity in the sustainability of the forest management. Mariama later led a session in helping participants outline key challenges that women face in forest conservation and community resources mobilization. At the end of the discussion, participants acknowledged that men should give priority to or support women to strategically position themselves in communities and increase their forest conservation efforts.

Community women expressed appreciation for recognizing their efforts in forest conservation. According to them, they had indeed realized the importance of their role if forest conservation should be successful. Madam Iye Fomba, the Chairlady of Mayengema community said, quality water

alone could be one of the benefits that they enjoy from their forest. *"We should conserve the forest; we should avoid any human activity that tend to destroy or reduce the quality of the forest"*, she pleaded with her community folks. Participants however appealed for timely support to boost their agriculture or livelihood activities.

School Nature Club (SNC) children also provided immense contribution to the activity. They helped deliver specific predetermined messages through drama. Such messages which included forest conservation and the need for community forestry, were delivered in both English and the predominant local dialect, Mende for proper understanding of communities.



CSSL Community Development Facilitator, Bobson Kobba, giving an overview of the project while welcoming participants from other communities during the show @ Tagboima.

Text: A. K. Dumbuya/CSSL & Bobson/CSSL
Photos: A. K. Dumbuya/CSSL &

COGaPE-SL Reviews Mandate and Gears Up to Support Coastal Communities.



CSSL's Communications Officer and the project focal person, Abdul K. Dumbuya, taking participants through the ToR/mandate document, and leading the review process @ the meeting in Freetown.

In collaboration with the Environment Protection Agency in Sierra Leone (EPA-SL), the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) organised a meeting for the membership of the Coalition on Oil and Gas Pollution on the Environment in Sierra Leone (COGaPE-SL), who are key stakeholders in the oil and gas sector in the country to review the coalition's mandate and also develop a work plan for 2021 – 2022. The meeting was held in Freetown on 25th March, 2021 and it was well attended.

COGaPE-SL is a national platform consisting of state and non-state actors in the oil and gas sector in Sierra Leone. It was formed in 2019 by the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) with support from MAVA Foundation through the Regional Programme for Conservation of the Coastal and Marine Zone (PRCM) to support the people of Sierra Leone in raising public awareness about the hazards of oil and gas pollution on marine environment.

Mr. Charles Showers, President of CSSL's Board of Trustees welcomed participants, and underscored the relevance of the formation of COGaPE as a formidable platform through which the general public could be easily reached with key messages to reduce the hazards of oil and gas pollution on the environment in Sierra Leone. He requested all to show strong commitment towards their membership with the coalition.

COGaPE-SL Reviews Mandate and Gears up to Support Coastal Communities. Contd.

Abdul K. Dumbuya, Communications Officer of CSSL briefed participants about the purpose of the meeting, and took them through the methodology to employ in reviewing COGaPE's mandate and the development of a work plan for its operations in 2021 and 2022. He presented the existing mandate and terms of reference (ToR) of the coalition to participants and allowed them to objectively look at it and make amendments if deemed necessary. Participants confirmed the relevance of all three (3) objectives, but indicated the need for SMART indicators that can be easily monitored over time. They also made other significant suggestions including getting the coalition registered with the relevant government ministry. Alhaji Malikie Siaka of Wetlands International noted that, member organizations and MDAs

should have strong commitment in supporting the coalition's objectives. *"There should be space for affiliate membership, and financial contributions by members should be prioritized"*, he suggested.

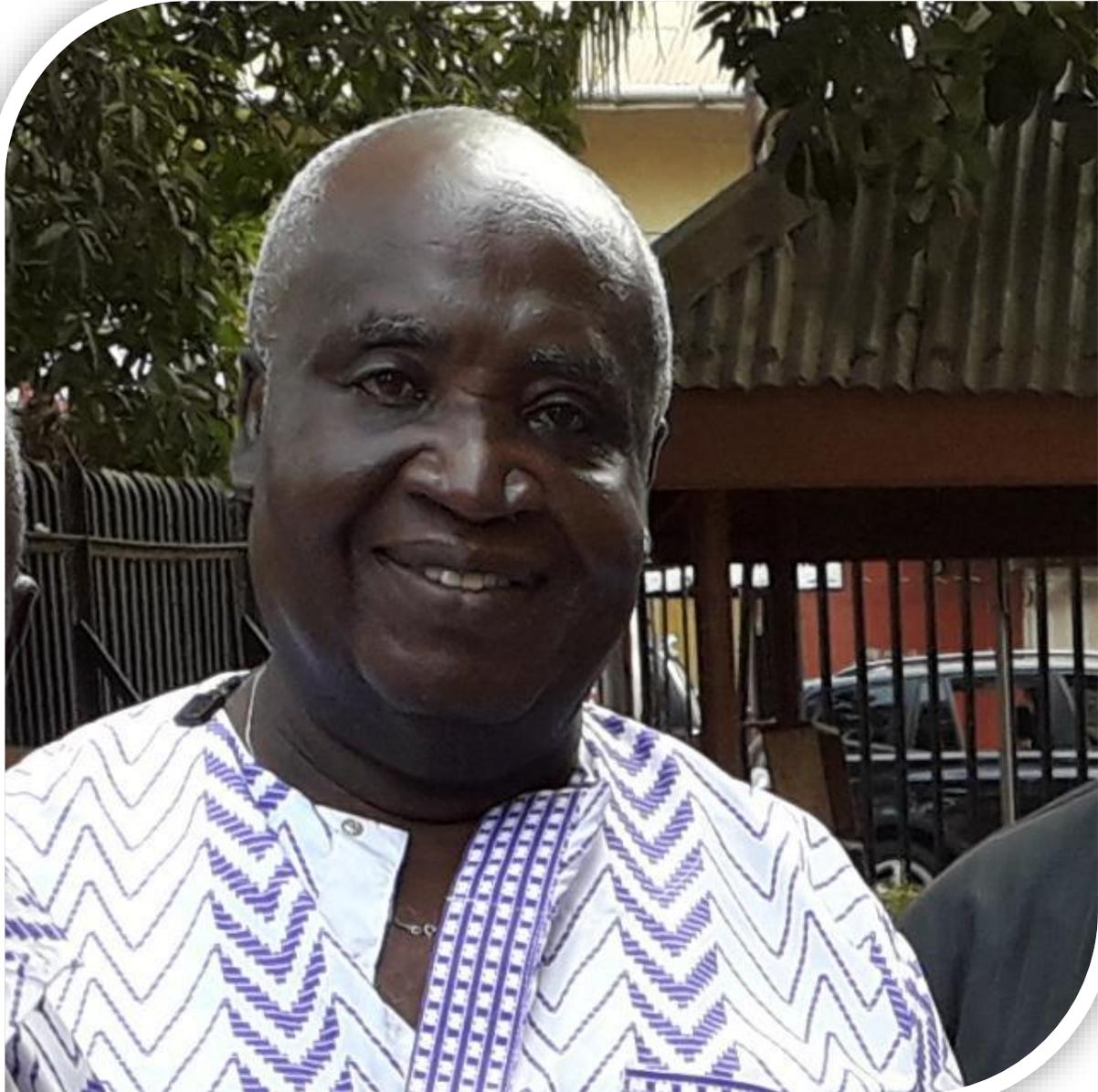
A session to develop the coalition's work plan for 2021 – 2022 was co-moderated by Mrs. Aminata Finda Massaquoi, Station Manager at Culture Radio and Alhaji Malikie Siaka. They did this by generating varied inputs from participants through discussions and suggestions. At the end, all members expressed enthusiasm to quickly commence the implementation of the work plan, but this depends on availability of funds.



One of the facilitators, Alhajie Malikie Siaka, explaining key issues during the development of the Coalition's work plan for 2021 – 2022

Text: A. K. Dumbuya/CSSL
Photos: A. K. Dumbuya/CSSL & Christopher/CSSL

CSSL Loses a Gem



Late George Patrick Ganda, aged 72 years

George Patrick Ganda was a very passionate conservationist who joined the CSSL membership in 2012. He served in the Society's Board as Treasurer in 2017 and later resigned to take up appointment as Project Manager of the A.V Jensen project implemented in the Kambui Hills Forest Reserve in Kenema district. Towards the end of that project in 2020, CSSL received funding support from the European Union through IUCN for the implementation of a new project called BIOPAMA in order to consolidate the gains made in the previous one. George briefly managed the BIOPAMA project until he passed on in March 6, 2021.

The former Project Manager was a true icon of intelligence and true friendship, and would always be missed by the staff and membership of CSSL. May his gentle soul continue to rest in perfect peace.



Thanks to our partners for all their support!

- BirdLife International
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Bread for the World
- PRCM
- IUCN
- EU
- Environmental Protection Agency of Sierra Leone
- Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry
- Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary
- Wetlands International
- Ministry of Lands...
- Ministry of Environment
- Family Kingdom, Freetown, Sierra Leone
- Hotel Africanus, Freetown, Sierra Leone
- MAVA Foundation



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