

Newsletter from African protected areas

#127, February 2019 — www.papaco.org



Editorial

Geoffroy MAUVAIS
PAPACO Coordinator

A very short editorial for a very important topic that we have often talked about: the training of conservation stakeholders in Africa.

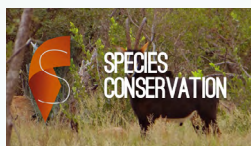
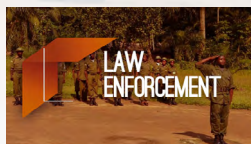
Here's an entire NAPA to give you an overview of what we are doing on this matter, while this month, the 15th University Diploma on Protected Areas Management (PAM) starts in Ouagadougou, we open the selection process for the 6th Master PAM (classes to start in September) and the launch of the new session of our MOOCs is announced for 4 March (five courses now including the all-new and long-awaited MOOC-VAL which focuses on valorisation of protected areas, including sustainable tourism).

This is an opportunity to celebrate our partners

without whom none of this would have been possible, especially the Senghor University of "La Francophonie" and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne (EPFL), the MAVA Foundation and of course the France-IUCN partnership (AfD) who has been with us from the beginning.

One major goal this year: the launch of our PAM online certificate!

Our MOOCs



Next session :
4 March 2019

>> **Registrations:** mooc-conservation.org/en <<

In addition to the usual MOOCs, we will also be launching a brand new MOOC on the Valorisation of resources in protected areas (MOOC-VAL).

Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/papaco) to be sure you don't miss the latest news regarding our online and onsite courses.

Other courses

MOOC Sustainable development (French only)

Senghor University and the IFDD's MOOC on Sustainable development is part of our selection of MOOCs that you need to pass in order to receive the Online Certificate of protected area management (to be launched in 2019).

Next session:
4 February to 31 March 2019
>> [Register here](#) <<
(if you are comfortable in French)

#UNIVERSITÉSENGHOR
université internationale de langue française
au service du développement africain



University Diploma on Protected area management

We talked about it last month – the students that will form the 16th group undergoing classes to obtain the University diploma on protected area management have been selected. Classes will start this month.

If you are interested in the course, make sure you don't miss one of our NAPAs and follow us on Facebook to receive the latest information. For more details related to the course, [click here](#).

Master's in Protected area management

Senghor University and PAPACO have opened the registration process to select the 17th group of students that will take part in the Master's on Protected area management.

Where? Alexandria, Egypt.

When? September 2019.

Who can apply? French speakers meeting the following requirements:

- Hold a Bachelor's degree of equivalent diploma,
- Must have relevant professional experience of at least a year,
- Must be under 36 years old in September 2019 (in order to be eligible to the University's scholarship).

How to apply? Submit your application online on the [University's website](#).

Application deadline: 24 February 2019 at midnight GMT.

>> For more information: [click here](#). <<



#UNIVERSITÉSENGHOR
université internationale de langue française
au service du développement africain



Find PAPACO on:

@Papaco_IUCN

facebook /IUCNpapaco

LinkedIn

Also read: monthly [Protecting the Planet newsletter](#) (GPAP).



In addition to PAPACO's page, join the 5,000 members on the [Facebook group](#) dedicated to MOOCs.

All links and useful information is on papaco.org.

Featuring this month

Overview of the online (MOOCs) and onsite (University Diploma and Master's degree) trainings on protected areas conservation

1 – Onsite courses: Master's degree & University Diploma on protected areas management

The Master's degree (Master) in Protected Areas Management (Master PAM) is a two-year long onsite course that was launched in 2009 and is conducted at the Senghor University, Alexandria, in Egypt (U-Senghor is the university of the Francophonie). Each promotion of the Master PAM is made of an average of 15 students, from West or Central Africa.



Master PAM, 2017-2019

The University Diploma in Protected Areas Management (UD PAM) was launched in 2011 and is an 8 week long onsite course (held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and Lopé National Park, Gabon), organised with Senghor University and IUCN-PACO (IUCN West and Central Africa Regional Office). On average, 20 students participate in each session.

By the end of 2018 a total of 5 Masters and 14 DUs had already been organised.

The participants are selected based on their academic background (academic prerequisites), their professional experience, their motivation, their line of business (e.g. administration, NGO), their nationality, their gender etc., in order to create representative and diversified promotions, conducive to the mutual

enrichment of learners.

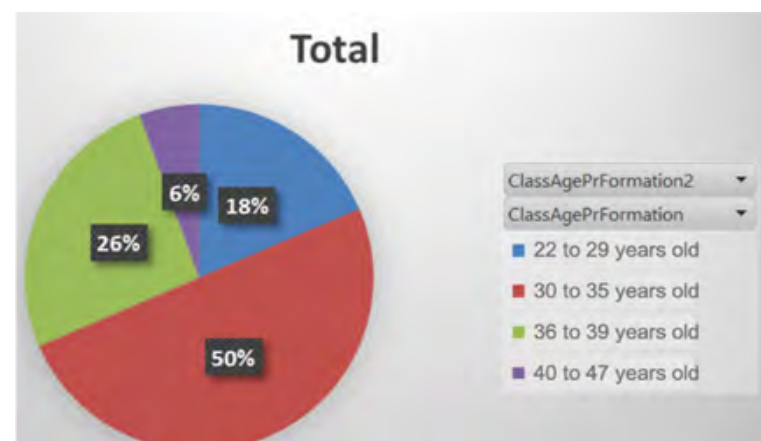
Assessing the UD and Master courses

The survey was carried out between January and June 2018 through a sampling of the five most recent UD promotions (between 2014 and 2018, West Africa only) and the last three Master classes, i.e. a total of 154 students, 108 of which answered the survey exhaustively (70%) and their responses are therefore used here.

Some of the results

The sample comprises 108 individuals, 14% of which are women and 86% men mainly from West Africa. 69% of respondents live in urban and suburban areas and 31% live in or around a PA.

81% of the students were paid employees before starting the UD and the Master, 8% were self-employed, 10% were students. Most of the PAM students were employed by natural resource management administrations or NGOs working in this field.



50% of the respondents were between 30 to 35 years old when they began their training, and 94% of all the students were under 40.

UD training are meant for working professionals and therefore exceptionally include individuals over 40

years old in order to get participants from different countries and/or organizations.

The two main reasons why participants chose to enrol in these courses are their desire to improve their professional skills in PA management (98% of respondents) and the reputation of the training institutions (80%).

In most cases, UD and Master students found the courses through the internet or social networks (40% of the respondents), or via former students (28%) or friends and acquaintances who recommended the courses (25%).

More than 90% of respondents are satisfied with the quality of training. They find that:

- The course content was interesting (98%),
- The progression of the training was adapted (93%),
- The training material (manuals, handouts, illustrations) was appropriate (95%),
- The teaching staff was competent and committed (92%).

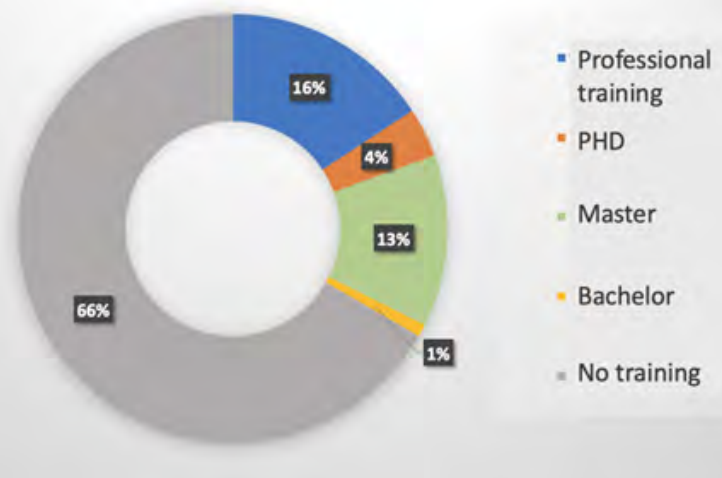
65% of the UD respondents and 89% for the Master think that the duration the training is ideal. 35% of UD auditors found the training too short and mention that the training program was too broad compared to the duration allocated to the training (2 months).

86% of respondents positively answered the question: «In retrospect, would you choose the same training again?» All UD and Master' respondents would recommend these courses and the institutions that organize them.

Public sector institutions in natural resources management are the main employers of graduates. The non-profit sector also accounts for a significant share of employment opportunities and this share continues growing over time.

34% of the students of the UD and Master's degree started a continuous education training after graduating. UD students are usually interested in more advanced university training (21% go to university while 13% start a professional training).

Training after the UD/Master



On the other hand, and quite logically, Master's students prefer more practical training (25%) rather than other courses within a university (7%).

90% of the UD students and 75% of the Master's students believe that the theoretical skills acquired during their training are important for their current work and that they responded to their expectation before joining the courses.

74% of respondents use the acquired practical knowledge in their current work.

The 5% who say they do not use the acquired knowledge at all are working in a sector which is not related to nature conservation.

86% of graduates say they have passed on their knowledge to others after they returned from their training.

56% of graduates experienced an income increase after graduation (from a few dozens to several thousand euros per month), 34% kept the same salary and 2% saw a decrease in their income.

Among the two individuals who experienced a slight decrease in their incomes, one is self-employed and the other is an employee who is now studying in university with a scholarship.

A few comments

The high response rate of the survey reflects the learners' attachment to the training provided: 70% of the students responded to all the questions.

The majority of learners are men (86%), which is representative of a sector still largely dominated by men (particularly in paramilitary PA management systems in French-speaking Africa). More than 80% of the UD/ Master' graduates had a job in the environmental sector before the training. This mainly reflects the way in which information was shared about these courses (unlike MOOCs that reach the general public) but also the selection criteria that consider professional experience.

Many applicants to the UD and Master are older than 35 but two thirds of the selected candidates are under 35 years old. The selection criteria tend to favour young learners (age limit, academic prerequisites...), except in the particular case of certain countries or profiles (6% of UD participants were over 40 years old) in order to ensure the participation of all. Women, whose involvement in the sector is fairly recent, are generally younger.

Regarding the choice of the training: almost all the respondents say that they meant to improve their professional skills in PA management. Furthermore, 80% of the respondents chose the UD or Master because of the reputation of the training and the institutions that organize it. These courses, which have a unique situation in the French-speaking conservation world in Africa, are increasingly known and recognized. 99% of the UD and Master students would recommend the training and 95% would recommend the teaching institutions; the reputation and reliability of these institutions is therefore valued.

The vast majority of respondents are satisfied with the quality of the courses according to the various criteria studied (content and format: 97%, motivated teachers: 93%, material and logistics: 91%, progression of courses: 93%, etc.). This is a testament to the current maturity of training courses that have successfully built a proven program, a committed team and effective training conditions, even though they have always sought to control costs in order to maintain their sustainability.

35% of UD students believe that the training program is too dense over 2 months and that more time is

needed to go deeper into some topics. The question of the duration of the courses has been largely debated since the launch of the UD and the solution probably involves the use of MOOCs to prepare students before the onsite training and therefore to allow more time for practical work.

The role of the courses in the employability of learners is more difficult to measure because the vast majority (80%) of UD and Master respondents are people that were employed before their training (in NGOs or public administrations) and this often allows them to get their job back after the training. Most of the UD learners who were not initially employed quickly found a job as a result of the training, but mentioned the need to join a network of practitioners and make contacts, which the training does not fully allow.

It is worth noting that around 25% of graduates work in the non-profit sector (NGOs), which reflects the method of selection giving more room to students from outside the public sector (which is nevertheless where the majority of the students come from), but also reflects the emergence of this sector of employment.



Master PAM, 2015

90% of the UD students and 75% of the Master students believe that the theoretical knowledge gained during their training is important in their profession, which shows the adequacy between the syllabus and future needs of the learners. In fact, 86% say they have passed on some of this knowledge on to their colleagues. This «snowball effect», difficult to quantify, is however important to consider in order to measure the overall potential impact of these

trainings.

Finally, 70% of the graduates experience an improvement in their living conditions after graduation. Among them, 56% see their income increase after graduation (sometimes very significantly) which shows that this degree can be valued professionally. Without necessarily being able to establish a direct causality, it should be noted that many of the managers of parks or networks in West Africa, some with very high functions in these structures, are alumni of the UD and Master.

Conclusion

It has been observed, during onsite training, that students who have previously followed one or more MOOCs on PA management have better grades than those who came unprepared. The possibility of coupling online and onsite training in order to optimize the time spent on site is therefore an option and is a promising way to reduce training costs or maintain them while improving their implementation conditions.

The translation of knowledge acquired during training into actions to improve the management and governance of protected areas remains difficult to measure, especially considering that some people complain that they cannot totally use the skills acquired in their current professional environment.

The current state of conservation in Francophone Africa, which greatly needs capacity building but lacks the means to finance training initiatives or even jobs poses a serious problem. While it is almost impossible to influence governmental institutions (yet the main provider of current jobs), it can be noted that the non-profit sector (and, to a lesser extent, the private sector) is increasingly important and could certainly help increase graduates' employment opportunities. Provided that this sector is professionalised and uses local skills and not imported (from outside of Africa) as it often does.

The graduates who have a job really felt the improvement brought by the diploma, both in terms of career progression (some reached important positions requiring this type of diploma) and wages, or general

improvement of living conditions. It would therefore be possible to target only this type of audience for training (thus essentially the public sector) until other opportunities are created for «unemployed» students (who may use the MOOCs to improve their chances). However, this presents the risk of not contributing to the emergence of new jobs and decreasing the quality of training, which is currently promoting the exchange of experiences and therefore relies on the diversity of profiles.

Gender is another particular aspect to consider. By voluntarily giving priority to women applying to the training (even if they remain largely a minority), the trainings have increased their potential place in the world of conservation in Africa.



25% of women in the UD's 13th edition

The ultimate decision to be made is therefore whether to «follow the market» (and essentially train paramilitary male public servants) or continue to try to transform this market by promoting other profiles (including women) even if this means that graduates may not immediately find a job in this sector. Building on the hope that the global environmental awareness that is currently taking place, including in Africa (and that the MOOCs are modestly strengthening) will help change the mentalities and therefore the political choices and the sectors of economic activity, it seems legitimate to continue to favour the diversity of learners who may be the precursors of these new sectors.

2 – Online courses: MOOCs on protected area management

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) started to take off in 2012 and there are now more than 7,000 of them, mainly from European and North American universities. They represent a revolutionary opportunity for everyone in the world with Internet access to follow free courses and eventually to receive a statement of accomplishment or academic credits.

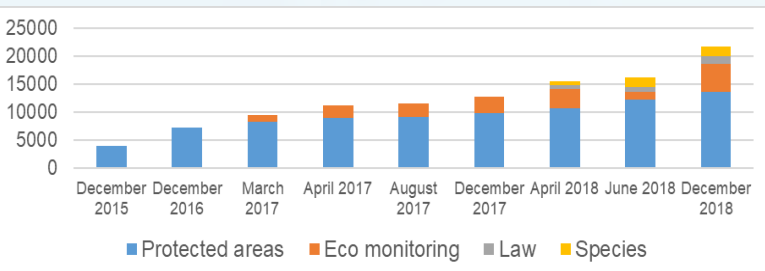
Creating MOOCs on protected areas seemed particularly relevant; first because there are not enough training opportunities offered on protected areas in Africa compared to the demand.

Secondly, because many of the staff members working in African protected areas are located in remote places from where they could hardly go to a university every day but can follow online courses if they have a proper Internet connection, either through a cell phone or a computer.

It is in this context that the first MOOC on Protected areas management was launched in October 2015 by IUCN-Papaco and EPFL and then three other courses on Ecological monitoring, Law enforcement and Species conservation were developed.

Design of the assessment

The data presented in this report comes from three main sources: the MOOC platforms (about 1200 respondents), the questionnaires filled by the students (about 1600) and, more informally, the exchanges between the teaching team and the learners on the MOOC platforms and social networks (more than 5000 registered in the MOOC groups on Facebook).



Registrations' progression from 2015 to 2018

Some of the results

By definition, a MOOC is open to all and whoever is interested in the topic can register. But through the topics of the courses themselves and through the advertising choices, the MOOC team targets African conservationists in particular.

These includes students or young professional but also school/university professors and professionals working on conservation projects. Part of the MOOCs' public also work on other PA-related topics such as tourism, sustainable development and natural resources management.

The IUCN-Papaco communication strategy has evolved since its first campaign in 2015. Originally based on a list of professional contacts and more «traditional» methods of communication such as NAPA monthly letters, it has gradually diversified through social networks.

The total participation registered since October 2015 is 21,370 registrations. With 13,000 registrations, the MOOC-GAP is by far the most popular of the four courses.

The median age of MOOC participants is 31 years, which is relatively high for MOOCs and may come with difficulties related to learner abilities. And indeed, younger participants are more likely to validate the MOOCs while the people over 40, although constituting a significant part of the participants (13%), rarely validate the MOOCs (only 3%).

Participants of the MOOCs are mainly employed in protected areas (59%), usually in Africa, and seek to increase their knowledge thanks to these courses. Students are also an important audience of the MOOCs (16% of participants), particularly among those who validate courses (22.5%).

The vast majority of participants are men (80%). This come with no surprise and should not raise concerns since many PAs within Africa are managed by military or para-military organisations, mostly constituted of men.

The MOOCs in French mainly reach African students (80% of the participants), particularly in a few countries: Cameroon, DRC, Burkina Faso and Senegal. As for

the English version of the MOOCs, they reach a more international audience with «only» 62% of Africans. A share of the participants is based outside of Africa, including in France (and are sometimes of African origin).

These differences can certainly be explained by Papaco’s well-established network in French-speaking Africa and by the larger offer of courses already available in English-speaking Africa (although mostly onsite courses). It should also be noted that these courses are followed in more than 120 different countries.

With an average success rate of 6.2%, the PA conservation MOOCs are slightly above the average of MOOCs globally. Thanks to the MOOCs, 829 people have received a certificate of completion in PA management, 139 in Ecological monitoring, 95 in Law enforcement and 136 in Species conservation, bringing the total number of certificates of completion issued to 1,199.

A dozen students have already validated all the MOOCs and received the 4 certificates of completion, constituting an ideal target audience for the future certificate that will be created in partnership with Senghor University. Some even took the exams in both languages to improve their chances in the job market.

Satisfaction of learners

Participants are generally happy with the courses: 97% agree or strongly agree to say that they met their expectations and 92% think they will use what

they learnt in their activities related to conservation.

They are also very satisfied with the videos: 96% agree or strongly agree that the videos’ content is interesting, 93% that they are clearly understandable, 95% and 88% that the quality of the image and sound is good or excellent.

Finally, and although it is difficult to quantify, MOOC students regularly express their satisfaction and gratitude to the team directly (see testimonials) by email, Facebook or in person.

It should be noted that the geographical location of MOOC students (in Africa and, often, in remote protected areas) comes with connectivity issues related to irregular Internet and electricity access. To address this issue, download links for videos in very low definition were made available to students and the exam format was adapted. BOOCs (pdf course support for each MOOC, in both languages) are also available. Finally, online support by the Papaco team is always available to help students in difficulty.



The main technical partners of the different courses are: the EPFL and Senghor University.



The main financial partners are the EPFL, the France-IUCN partnership and the MAVA Foundation.



Announcements

PANORAMA

SOLUTIONS FOR A HEALTHY PLANET

Engaging business to boost sustainability in African agriculture

Growth corridors are regions where natural resource-based industries, such as agriculture and mining, are being developed to boost economic growth. SUSTAIN (Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors), an IUCN-led initiative, aims to shape the investment and design of these corridors so that they are environmentally and socially sustainable.

Located in a vast floodplain, Tanzania's Kilombero district hosts wetlands, waterfalls and iconic wildlife species, such as elephant, hippo, antelope and lion. The mountain rainforests are a vital water source for the surrounding area and its economy. As part of SUSTAIN, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is working with one of Tanzania's biggest rice producers, valley farmers and mountain villages in Kilombero to increase agricultural productivity while conserving forests,



water sources and wildlife at a coordinated landscape level. A pillar of the programme is a payment for ecosystems services (PES) scheme.

Read full article [here](#).

More informations on Panorama, [here](#).

>> Director of Finance & Administration<<

Where? Bangui, Central African Republic

Wildlife Conservation Society



This position is responsible for management of the financial systems and staff, reporting to Sudano Sahel regional and New York offices and donors, country budgetary reporting and controls, monitoring and compliance of internal controls, conduct/coordinate operation reviews of project sites, cash management.

For more information on this position : [click here](#).

CONTACTS — PAPACO

geoffroy.mauvais@iucn.org
beatrice.chataigner@iucn.org
marion.langrand@papaco.org
youssouph.diedhiou@iucn.org
madeleine.coetzer@iucn.org

// Programme on African Protected Areas & Conservation - PAPACO
// PAPACO Programme officer - Green List
// PAPACO Programme officer - MOOCs
// PAPACO Programme officer - Green List and World Heritage
// PAPACO Programme officer - Communications