FIFTY THOUSAND

Fifty thousand participants since 2015. The M in MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) takes on its full meaning. So many people who fully and freely received training in protected area management. Fifty thousand people who know the basics required to run a PA, and, with a little experience, could become true experts.

Among them, a majority of working protected area practitioners who want to receive formal training (which they may not have received due to lack of opportunity in their organisation, in their country, lack of time) or make use of the MOOCs to update their skills. Here, we are considering levels 1 to 4 of practitioners identified by the WCPA (skilled workers, middle and senior managers and executives) (Appleton, 2016), as well as those whose expertise is key to good protected area management, in Africa and around the globe.

Beyond Papaco’s ‘traditional’ target, thousands of other participants who do not fall under those four categories were reached and able to receive training, information or simply increase their awareness on the topic. Job seekers and retired practitioners from other fields and continents, students and professors, amateur conservationists... These profiles who have an interest in conservation and who feel the need to receive training aren’t the main targets of Papaco’s onsite trainings, but their participation to MOOCs is more than welcome. This is what MOOCs are about: adding to the MOOC catalogue so that any person interested in a topic can learn. Motivation takes precedence over age, diploma, job or origin.

Among these fifty thousand, some students stand out. Their motivation has them investing time beyond their respective courses as they encourage other students to enrol. They share stories with Papaco and work alongside us to help others when needed.

Anyone who has completed an online course knows how lonely this experience can be. While we do try to keep our MOOCs alive through forums, emails or Facebook groups, it is impossible for our small team to follow each of our 50 000 learners individually. But through these motivated and enthusiastic students acting as official or informal MOOC ambassadors, an official network was created. A group gathering people sharing a common interest, and who wish for conservation awareness to grow in their respective regions.

This momentum is beyond positive, it is contagious. MOOCs have become a tool available to all. Local conservation actors seize the opportunity to enrol, they adapt it, they promote it and use it as they wish, while still benefitting from our team’s support. Mobilising conservation actors and enabling cooperation to promote capacity development is, after all, a central role of our Union. ●
ERRATUM

In the last month’s NAPA, we shared a couple of excerpts from a series of informative sheets produced by the French Foundation for Biodiversity and Research. We mistakenly shared incorrect links to access said sheets. So click here to access the page with all the information.

The major public health, economic and social crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic raises many questions as to its origin, its dynamics and the mechanisms that explain it. This pandemic also raises questions about the future: on the implication of environmental issues in this type of phenomenon, and on the conditions that would have allowed to, if not prevent, then at least better anticipate this crisis and reduce its impact, in order to be better prepared in the future. Decision-making structures, governments and ministries confronted with widely divergent views and opinions, particularly on the link between Covid-19 and the biodiversity crisis, have turned to research organizations for answers to the following questions:

- How is the current health crisis related to wildlife? What role did wild species play in the emergence of this pandemic?
- What is the link between this type of crisis, biodiversity loss and the destruction of natural habitats? Can we draw a parallel between the damage done to biodiversity and the increase in zoonotic diseases, which are a source of epidemics and even pandemics?
- What is the link between this type of crisis, food production and transportation systems (for humans, livestock, agricultural products)? Can certain agricultural and food production systems, or the increasing rate of international transport, directly or indirectly facilitate the evolution of an emerging infectious disease into an epidemic and ultimately into a pandemic?

The relevant ministries and research institutions of the All Envi alliance (The National Alliance for Environmental Research) have entrusted the FRB (The French Foundation for Biodiversity Research) and its Scientific Council with the task of giving the biodiversity science community’s perspective on the current crisis, and on the relationship between zoonotic diseases, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

This report had three objectives:

- identify the issues for which there is consensus in the scientific community (including regarding the questions raised by the different departments);
- outline the issues that remain open to question, because of dissensus within the research community or gaps in the scientific knowledge;
- deliver messages to decision makers; make science-based recommendations for actions or options of measures that could be taken, in order to assist public decision-making.

PROTECTED AREA GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT
FINALLY AVAILABLE IN FRENCH

All 28 chapters are now available in French. The development of this book was led by Graeme L. Worboys, Michael Lockwood, Ashish Kothari, Sue Feary and Ian Pulsford. The English version was launched in 2015, five years later the French-speaking world have access to this resource.

Translation was made possible by Papaco, but also by Biopama thanks to European Union funding. Download the full document here. For the English version, click here.
Our courses

MOOCS
- 7000 already! -

Another record broken at the launch of the session in September. You were over 4000 on the day the session started, and the last week of September you were very close to 7000. As usual, it’s not too late to start, as you have until 1 December to enrol.

Remember to request your certificate of completion by sending an email at moocs@papaco.org.

MORE DETAILS: mooc-conservation.org

MOOC conservation

ONSITE COURSE
- University Diploma -

[In French only] We have a date! The 17th edition of the U.D. will take place from 15 February to 3 April 2021 in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

The goal of this course is to equip protected area managers in West Africa (and their partners) with tools, as well as with technical and scientific tools to improve their ways of managing parks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: click here
OFFICIAL APPLICATION: click here

FIND PAPACO ONLINE
facebook/IUCNpapaco
MOOC Private Group (English)
@moocconservation (Instagram)
@Papaco_IUCN (Twitter)
Papaco.org
GPAP newsletter (IUCN Programme of PAs)
Ambassadors

MOOC INFORMATION MEETINGS
For more details, contact the relevant ambassador.

DRC
TWO MEETINGS IN @ KINSHASA
- When? 10 and 24 October 2020 at 10:00
- Where? Bomengo Cultural Center
- Which ambassador? Emmanuel

CÔTE D’IVOIRE
@ABIDJAN
- When? 10 October 2020 à 9:00
- Which ambassador? Bernadette

AMBASSADOR? An ambassador is a designated Papaco MOOC student who volunteered to help students in his city or region.

Contact us to get in touch with your ambassador, or click on the relevant name in the column to your right.

List of ambassadors (click on the name to send them an email):

- Benin, Kévin
- Bouaké, Bernadette
- Burkina Faso, Valéry
- Burundi, Léonidas
- Comoros, Humblot
- Côte d’Ivoire, Mamadou
- Douala (Cameroon), Mathias
- Gabon, Brice
- Guinea (Conakry), Moussa
- Haiti, Talot
- Kara (Togo), Jean
- Kenya, James
- Kindu (DRC), Ohm
- Kinshasa (DRC), Emmanuel
- Kisangani (DRC), Richard
- Mali, Seydou
- Lomé (Togo), Samuel
- Lubumbashi (DRC), Albert
- Madagascar (Tana), Raymond
- Morocco, Rachid
- Mauritania, Fall
- Niger, Oumarou
- Nigeria, Michael
- Pointe Noire, Charmand
- Rwanda, Leonard
- Senegal, Thiam
- Chad, Seid
- Tunisia, Moadh
- Yaoundé (Cameroon), Pascale
- Zambia, Chewa

HEAR FROM OUR AMBASSADORS:
TWO MEETINGS WERE HELD IN YAOUNDE IN SEPTEMBER

Last month, Pascale and Mathias, our ambassadors from Cameroun organised an information meeting, as well as an outing to the ecology museum.

“Saturday 12 September 2020, MOOC students from Yaoundé and their ambassadors (Pascale and Mathias), visited the Ecology museum which was created and inaugurated in 2006. Its goal is to preserve biodiversity in Cameroun and in the Congo Basin for future generations. Through this activity, we were able to discover the 1500 animal and plant species showcased in this place, but also to observe the forest around.

Thank you to everyone who participated and made the event possible.” - Pascale
This month: MOOC Audit

A TECHNICAL REVIEW ON OUR MOOCS

This year we reached an important milestone: 50 000 enrolments to our MOOCs, all sessions included. The MOOC-PAM remains the hero, but little by little, other MOOCs are progressing (number of enrolments per session). These 50 000 represent 94 different countries: Africans, of course, Benin being at the top, but also Cypriots, Lebanese, Brazilians, Sri Lankans, and even a certified Saudi woman. We have some momentum, since as shown by the graph below, the figure keeps on growing.

In order to assess future prospects, we reached out to a third party to audit the MOOCs. We wanted to assess effectiveness and identify aspects to develop. In this NAPA, we are sharing the summary of this audit which was carried out by COTA, more specifically by Ms Stéphanie Cabantous.

![Total Inscriptions Graph]

MOOC AUDITS

Context, goals and methodology of the audit

Context

In 2015, in order to take up existing training for Protected Area (PA) practitioners to a new level, Papaco created and launched its first MOOC on PA Management (MOOC-PAM). Of course, the ultimate goal was (and is) to improve management practices in African PAs.

The following was observed:

• Capacity for onsite training is limited, and demand for it is high,

• Logistical and financial constraints limit access to onsite training,

• For practicing professionals, the need is to focus on more practical and operational aspects of PA management.

Goals

During the first semester of 2020 and since 2015, PAPACO recorded over 30,000 registrations over the different sessions. At the beginning of the 2020 session, over 2,000 learners have successfully completed exams and obtained their certificate of completion (hereafter referred to as ‘attestation’).

The general goal of the audit is to know what learners do with knowledge acquired through MOOCs.

We want to assess whether or not MOOCs reach their
priority targets – practicing professionals – and if they contribute to the improvement of management practices in African PAs.

Methodology

This audit was carried out in two phases. The first phase consisted in analysing course contents, and monitoring and analysing data. The rough data came from MOOC platforms and analyses carried out by the PAPACO team:

- Content analysis,
- Monitoring and analysis of assessment data:
  - (i) analysis of data collection systems: indicators provided by platform, other systems implemented by Papaco team (surveys before session), sustainability and comparability of methods,
  - (ii) comparative analysis of teachings based on data collected.

A second phase of in-depth study, based on an online survey and semi-structured interviews.

Detail of activities:

- Design, dissemination and analysis of results from an online survey, based on a random sample representing 10% of all registrations to 2017-2020 sessions,
- Cross analysis of semi-structured interviews carried out with a defined representative sample of student profiles.

Data control and comparative analysis of learning materials

Improve collection mechanisms, mainly since they rely on the limitations of distribution platforms

The Papaco team has frequently changed MOOC management and distribution platforms, with a stabilization on Courseware since 2017’s second session.

The Papaco team is relatively dependent on platform managers in defining indicators and obtaining data, including surveys at the beginning and end of the session.

In this context of impermanence of collection mechanisms, analysis was only partial, and was concentrated on 2018-2019.

Data-collection mechanisms limited by the platforms

In general, MOOC completion rates appear to be low as they fall between 2 and 10%. In 2018 and 2019, Papaco MOOC completions rates fell between 6 and 14%, which is the higher end. This high rate does however play down the number of active MOOC learners.

The comparison of geographic origins of certified students and students who responded to the initial surveys show little recovery rate: not all students with certificates of completion answered the initial survey.

Learner profiles

African learners, especially West African ones (the majority)

MOOC Goal: provide training resources to a wider public of practitioners, as an improvement of skills could improve protected area management activities in Africa.

Main channels (especially social networks) favour enrolment of the target-audience. Learners from West Africa, Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa represent 75% of learners having responded to the initial survey between 2018 and 2019.

Let us also remember that word-of-mouth between learners plays an undeniable influential role, thanks to which learners remain active during sessions. Ambassadors effectively carry out this aspect.
The ‘concerned’ audience, a diverse and particularly present category

The involved = protected area managers.

The concerned = not directly involved in PA management, but they do have a direct interest therein.

The interested = wider and more general MOOC audience, between students adding on to their formal training, and people who are merely interested in the topic.

Questionnaires and interviews have allowed us to distinguish between several types of “concerned”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Protected area agents whose function or job does not directly have to do with management (support functions)</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs or employees whose activity depends directly on resource access and/or the good management of protected areas (ecotourism, valorisation of agricultural or non-agricultural products)</th>
<th>Volunteers from educational, sustainable development or environment protection associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They look for practical illustrations for their classes or wish to maintain/renew/improve their knowledge</td>
<td>Specialists in their own fields of expertise, they wish to better understand their work environment to be more efficient in their own job</td>
<td>They wish to understand the stakes and share a common language with their contact persons in protected areas to find out how to better work together</td>
<td>Nature conservation is not their job, they want to combine personal commitment and professionalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This category is very active in the MOOC environment, but it is not the main profile after the attestation. However, they do make use of the skills they acquired. Thus, nearly 25% of learners affirm using their newly acquired skills in their job, in other words more than the percentage of learners employed by a PA when they followed their first MOOC.

**Learners with an already well-developed academic background**

60% of respondents already had training or practical experience in a PA when they followed the MOOC.

Surveys and interviews confirm that learners – especially those who are committed to the programme and finish the course – have continuous self-training habits, alternating between distance and in-person learning, thereby responding to the need to update their skills or to “recycle” themselves.

**Profiles that are more likely to take fully advantage of MOOCs**

- People set in the practical reality of protected area management (or environment management) and who are likely to ensure synergy between theory and practice. They generally already have professional experience or substantial volunteering experience.
- People with good academic background and/or with a critical mind with the ability to take a step back, who are likely to easily understand content and concepts. They usually followed some sort of tertiary academic training.
- Autonomous people who are able to self-assess their needs and to identify parts of the MOOC(s) that can help them respond to these needs. They are teachers or practicing practitioners, they look for precise illustrations or wish to maintain their level and stay up to date with new trends.
- People who are able to work within a network. They know how to make use of it to better understand the
course, and will use what they learn for their own professional integration and practices.

**Learner goals and behaviours**

**Learner goals: multiple goals**

- To expand and consolidate their knowledge

Here, MOOCs are seen as an opportunity to access training that is both advanced and organised, it is mediated, and proposes easy access to relevant resources, it is also provided by a recognised organisation.

M. T., veterinary in a Park: “In my last year of studies, the class on wildlife wasn’t detailed enough, this is why I chose to follow the MOOC.”

Ms B., employee of a company that valorises non-timber products - “I wanted to learn about topics that weren’t covered in my Master’s degree, but also access more detailed and advanced courses. […] Environmental management can be a very vague concept, so when there is an opportunity to go deeper into topics, you must take it.”

- Understanding your work environment

The MOOCs focuses on people working with PA management actors, without necessarily holding a position directly related to such management. For these people, the idea is not to change jobs, but to do their own better, and to understand the stakes and missions of their employment structure better.

For Ms D., in charge of communication and raising awareness in a public institution dedicated to nature conservation, following the MOOCs meant she could acquire a suitable vocabulary and, thus, better transpose her how skills.

- Having access to practical illustrations, thereby linking theory and practice

Students, practicing professionals and teachers all mention how important it is for them to have access to a selection of different practical illustrations (especially from different countries).

- Developing your network

For a majority of respondents, developing a network thanks to MOOCs is a goal that is at least as important as acquiring or strengthening knowledge - whether this goal is eventually reached or not.

**Succeeding means…**

For 55% of respondents, succeeding means acquiring, reinforcing or corroborate knowledge.

**Intention and behaviour: evolution during the session**

43% did not have the intention to receive the attestation. 11% thought they would study everything, without necessarily doing the exams.

**Real behaviour**

In the end, “only” 45% of learners wanted to get the attestation.

Note that if 1% announced to only follow a couple of classes,
34% ended up not following everything.

36% of those who had the intention of following everything, to pass the exam and receive the attestation did not follow every class.

However, 20% of learners who followed every class and passed exams to get the attestation did not have the intention of doing all that initially.

The online survey and interviews bring light to the last figure: the quality of courses, the commitment required to succeed and IUCN’s reputation all encourage learners to push through to the end. It is thus just as much about rewarding the effort put in to finish the courses (some have mention these MOOCs require much more effort than other MOOCs they know), thereby to endorse their diligence, their knowledge, and, of course, to valorise what they learnt by receiving an attestation from a recognised institution, in a competitive environment.

Results and teachings

Teacher expertise, the clarity of presentations and structure, the possibility given to learners to go deeper into the teachings and to choose their own pace, the wide selection of topics, all contribute to the quality of courses.

MOOCs enable:
- transmission of knowledge
- transmission of shared norms and vocabulary among PA actors
- networking of PA actors
- strengthening the brand image of IUCN
- developing positive perception of Pas, including by non-professionals and people outside PAs (a majority among learners)
- capacity development of actors involved in PA management, namely in avoiding certain mistakes.

After the study of survey and interview results, we note the following:
- Personal and professional paths are connected and contribute to interest given to MOOCs and to the ability to implement what was learnt
- The intensity of MOOC life outside sessions through:
  - Frequent revision of courses (thanks to downloads)
  - The development of physical and virtual networks
  - Promotion and advertisement of MOOCs (including to valorise their own successes)
  - The use of part of the courses in teachings
  - A sense of legitimacy, increased confidence thanks to MOOCs leading “to daring more”, and opening up one’s window of opportunity.

Practically speaking, they allow learners to position themselves in a competitive environment, to become vital in their organisation, to make progress therein and to prepare their career development.

Examples

- Confidence to better carry out a mission and to take it further.

M. T., veterinary in a National Park: “Some colleagues from the research and monitoring department have asked me to assist in monitoring, and others from the anti-poaching department asked me to help setting up monitoring collars.”

- Getting a promotion, increasing areas of activity and developing the field of work.

M. Y., consultant and teacher in a technical highschool: “since I followed the MOOC GAP and EM, I’ve been in charge of new courses on fauna at the technical agricultural highschool I teach at.”

- Implementing new activities in the context of their function or evolution of practices.

M. T., Univeristy professor/researcher: “I use MOOC content in my own classes, especially illustrations.”

- Employability (getting an internship or a job) in the field of protected area management and in relation to aspirations.

M. Y., a student, is currently doing an internship within an NGO while volunteering within another association: “These organisations intervene in areas near protected areas, and I can use classes knowledge related to governance.”

Surprisingly, MOOCs are alive in between sessions.

As a result of the clear expectation of using MOOCs as a
means to develop one’s network (just as it helps gaining knowledge), student involvement remains steady beyond sessions. This multi-dimensional aspect of implication leads to:

- Advertisement of MOOCs among friends and colleagues
- The information relay and networking through channels implemented by Papaco (Facebook groups, ambassadors) or by students themselves (WhatsApp groups, informal exchanges, and now, a union of ambassadors).

**Recommendations**

**On data collection**

**Recommendation n°1: Develop the profile of enrolled students and define generic terms.**

The terms used can be confusing. We suggest choosing a more detailed profiling that will ease report reading.

We encourage the following use of words:

- “enrolments” instead of participants.
- “learners” when referring to people with a minimum level (to define) of interaction with the website.

Along with this, a definition of “completion rate” must be given to the reader. In Papaco lingo, this refers to the number of people who completed exams and requested their attestation, proportional to the number of registrations. This difference will help promote more relevant information by carrying out the ration according to the number of learners instead of enrolments.

**Recommendation n°2: Detail initial and final surveys**

Initial and final MOOC surveys remain the main source of information to identify profile users, despite the activity monitoring indicators and few active learners respond to initial and final surveys.

To optimise them, we suggest the following:

- Avoid multiple choice questions and add the word “mainly” if questions can have several possible answers.
- To increase the sample size, put the final survey before the submission button for the final exam.
- In the first survey, detail questions related to (1) intentions with MOOCs, (2) intentions on how they intend to use what they learnt in the MOOCs, (3) their motivations, (4) their level of familiarity with the topic, (5) how they intend to follow the MOOC, (6) their professional status to distinguish between those working in or around PAs.
- The final survey should somehow be the counterpart of the first survey, by asking questions on (1) the correlation between their initial intention and their real activity, (2) the correlation between their objectives and results.

**Recommendation n°3: using more reliable indicators**

We recommend, as much as possible, to negotiate with the platform host the installation of indicators that provide the following information:

- at least the number of registrations, the active ones who completed at least one exam, those who completed all exams, those who requested their attestation to assess the completion rate, the passive retention rate and the active retention rate
- the viewing rate
- the engagement rate
- persistance (time spent on a course to compare it to the effort suggested by Papaco)
- attrition rate.

**On content and class organisation**

**Recommendation n°4 : have a level test when the courses starts**

Together with the profiling data, the results of such a test would help better grasp the initial level of active students in order to understand skill growth upon course completion. The test could possibly be linked to module recommendations and the amount effort to put in.

**Recommendation n°5 : develop the idea of diversifying options (CORE courses)**

The CORE courses would help learners identify the modules from different MOOCs that would cover their core basics for PA practitioners.

Considering that several learners already create their own MOOC selection from the different existing topics, we could diversify this by suggesting a couple of key job categories (ex: for a communications manager and fund-raisers, follow module X of the MOOC VAL, and module Y of the MOOC...
Recommendation n°6: stagger the different MOOC sessions

Currently, all courses are open at the same time. Given the considerable effort and organisation needed (especially for practitioners) to follow a MOOC, staggering sessions could have a positive effect on motivation and results.

Recommendation n°7: promote tutoring

All learners mentioned the intensive effort required to complete a MOOC. Many learners already have some form of academic background. Several mentioned that lack of help could be a hindrance. Thereby, there is a risk of missing a wider target, especially an audience further away from tertiary education. Following the ambassador example, we encourage the implementation of a tutoring system during MOOC sessions, giving seasoned students the responsibility of following the progression of willing learners, for example by having frequent check ins.

On accompanying the use of skills

Recommendation n°6: proposing “project” type exercises, possibly in groups.

To promote developing both hard and soft skill, we recommend to diversify exercises given to learners, by offering peer reviewed project approaches, alone or in groups.

Recommendation n°7: developing the feedback format

Practical illustrations are widely acclaimed by learners. However, students from countries with lower levels of awareness lament the lack of historical data. Thereby, we encourage the development of a “feedback” format that could rely on the experience from different situations.

Recommendation n°8: creating a community of practice

Beyond knowledge-sharing networks, and with the idea in mind to facilitate the passage from theory to practice, based on experience, these communities would be an organised “continuity” to MOOCs. Networks are already being created, which allow the sharing of opinions among peers. The goal here is to create a framework that promotes the sharing of good practices for example, a trimestral meeting on a set topic suggested by a member (e.g. a problem encountered in his park) and thereby create exchanges between the different members based on experience.

Recommendation n°9: develop partnerships with training centres to enable the recognition of attestations and a mix between theory and practice

Participation from MOOC teachers is quite substantial, which shows a desire to stay up to date, to renew their own practice, to research practical illustrations.

All these teachers valorise MOOC among their students, sometimes directly in their classes mixing their teachings with MOOC resources.

If IUCN is perceived as a passport for many, an intensified collaboration with training centres through practicing teachers would enable the assimilation of courses by younger students. ● By Stéphanie Cabantous.

Enrol in PAPACO MOOCs here: mooc-conservation.org
Payment for Water Ecosystem Service at Kikuyu Escarpment Forest, Kenya.

The Kikuyu Escarpment Forest Reserve covers an area of 37,000 hectares. The forests provide important ecosystems service among them a critical watershed. However, the catchment faces serious threat of environmental degradation occasioned by encroachment into water catchments leading to water stress. To ensure sustainable financing for the protection of the forest catchment, the Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) in partnership with stakeholders from businesses, government, learning institutions and community institutions initiated payment for water ecosystem (PES) scheme. The water PES sought to address catchment degradation, poor land management, cultivation on riverbanks, increased water pollution and receding water levels on dams. The solution presents payment of water ecosystems services scheme at the catchment spanning over 3 years at Kikuyu Escarpment financed by Critical Ecosystem Partnership (CEPF).

Full article: here.
More info on Panorama: here.

Stakeholders identifying areas for conservation intervention © Kijabe Environment Volunteers

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Graeme L. Worboys was a reference in the world of protected areas but also an avid NAPA reader and Papaco friend. Our most heartfelt condolences to his family and close ones.

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THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF IUCN