

NEWS FROM PROTECTED AREAS IN AFRICA

NAPA 182

Conserving nature in Africa



THIS MONTH IN THE NAPA

**THE TIME FOR
CHANGE IS
NOW!**

»»» P.2 - EDITO

This month, we asked a simple question to Chat GPT: “Why training or educating about nature conservation in Africa, today?”. Read the response in this editorial...

P.3 TO 5 - OUR ONLINE COURSES <<<

Learn about our online training courses, MOOCs, Tutos and Essentials as we publish our annual report for 2023 and we are launching a brand new platform...

**MOOCs, TUTOS
AND ESSENTIALS**

YOUTH CONSERVATION

»»» P.6 TO 11 - ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Discover our platform for kids! Results and testimonies from 2023, projects for 2024, and an interview from an expert on the ground. Read more...



EDITO

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR CONSERVATION

By ChatGPT

»»» This month, we asked a simple question to Chat GPT (Artificial Intelligence Software): “Why training or educating about nature conservation in Africa today?”

Hereafter is what ChatGPT answered:

Training and educating about nature conservation in Africa today is crucial for a variety of reasons that highlight the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the continent. Here are several key reasons for prioritizing training and education in nature conservation in Africa:

The rich and Vulnerable Biodiversity: Africa is home to incredibly diverse and unique ecosystems, along with a wide variety of plant and animal species. However, this biodiversity is under threat due to issues such as habitat loss, poaching, and climate change. Training and education help raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and equip individuals with the knowledge to protect it.

The community Involvement: Many local communities in Africa depend directly on natural resources for their livelihoods. Training programs can empower these communities to participate actively in sustainable resource management, ensuring that conservation efforts align with local needs and realities.

The fight against poaching: Poaching remains a significant threat to iconic species such as elephants and rhinoceroses. Training law enforcement, park rangers, and local communities in effective anti-poaching strategies is essential to protect these species from illegal hunting.

Find the PAPACO online

[facebook/IUCNpapaco](https://www.facebook.com/IUCNpapaco)

[Groupe FB MOOC \(English\)](https://www.facebook.com/GroupeFBMOOC)

[@mooconconservation \(Instagram\)](https://www.instagram.com/mooconconservation)

[@Papaco IUCN \(X\)](https://twitter.com/Papaco_IUCN)

[Website of the Papaco](http://www.papaco.org)

The preservation of Critical Ecosystems: Africa's diverse ecosystems, including rainforests, wetlands, and savannas, are essential for global ecological balance. Training conservation professionals in the science and techniques of preserving these ecosystems is vital for maintaining biodiversity and ecological services.

Environmental Education: Incorporating environmental education into formal and informal education systems helps instill a conservation ethic among young generations. This creates a foundation for sustainable practices and responsible environmental stewardship from an early age.

The Sustainable Development: Training individuals in sustainable development practices ensures that economic growth is achieved without compromising the health of ecosystems. Balancing development with conservation is crucial for the long-term well-being of both people and nature.

The Climate Change Adaptation: Training in climate change adaptation strategies is necessary to help communities and conservation professionals address the impacts of climate change on African ecosystems. This includes developing resilience and sustainable practices in the face of changing environmental conditions.

Global Collaboration: Education and training foster collaboration on a global scale. Well-informed conservation professionals can engage with international partners, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to share knowledge, best practices, and resources.

Empowering Future Leaders: Training programs create a cadre of skilled individuals who can become leaders in the field of conservation. These leaders can advocate for policies that support conservation, drive community engagement, and contribute to innovative solutions for sustainable development.

In summary, training and educating about nature conservation in Africa today are essential for building a knowledgeable and empowered community of individuals who can address the complex challenges facing the continent's biodiversity. This approach not only protects Africa's natural heritage but also contributes to global efforts to achieve sustainable and equitable development.

Guess what? This is exactly what this NAPA is all about!

OUR ONLINE COURSES: MOOCS AND ESSENTIALS



MOOC Conservation

Free online training courses for amateurs and professionals in conservation and protected areas

Start learning →

To follow the ESSENTIAL MOOCs and Courses, you will need an Internet connection and access to a computer, tablet or smartphone.



MOOC Conservation is the platform that hosts IUCN-Papaco's online training courses, developed in partnership with the Senghor University, in Alexandria. **Our brand new platform is now online** and all courses are accessible now.



OUR MOOCS THEME-BASED TRAINING

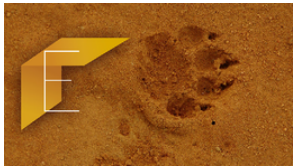
Registration have open on the 5th of February

Registrations have open on the 5th of February!

OUR ESSENTIALS PROFILE-BASED TRAINING



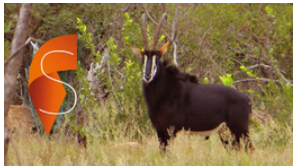
MOOC PA management
Goal: understand the essence and goals of protected areas. Through this MOOC, students will be able to grasp the importance of protected areas, their role and the different management aspects.



MOOC Ecological monitoring
Goal: understand the different techniques used in protected areas to assess the impact of management by monitoring the ecosystem.



MOOC Law enforcement
Goal: understand the different legal contexts in Africa, their strengths and weaknesses as well as the techniques used to effectively enforce rules in parks.



MOOC Species conservation
Goal: understand the techniques developed to conserve species in PAs, in situ and ex situ. The MOOC covers the main threats, as well as solutions that can help face these threats.



MOOC Valorisation of resources
Goal: knowing how the valorisation of different protected area resources can take place, and understanding protected area valorisation through tourism.



MOOC New technologies
Goal: knowing the context of new technologies applied to conservation, existing techniques, prerequisites for their implementation, their opportunities and limitations, their uses in the field...



MOOC Marine protected areas
Goal: understanding as the design and creation of MPA networks, governance, ecological monitoring, but also surrounding economic activities, and how to include all this to MPA management.

RANGER Essential

For protected area (PA) professionals who apply decisions and ensure the implementation of activities inside or around the PA.

ESSENTIALS

RANGER

ESSENTIALS

MANAGER

LOI · LAW

MANAGER Essential
These two courses are for protected area professionals who need to plan, manage and assess the work carried out by field agents.

ESSENTIALS

MANAGER

R · RESEARCH · R

MANAGER LAW focuses on law enforcement and the valorisation of the PA and its natural resources.

MANAGER RESEARCH focuses on research activities, monitoring-evaluation and ecological monitoring.

LEADER Essential
For managers working in central management of parks or large NGOs, they elaborate national and regional policies, they proceed to cross-sectoral

ESSENTIALS

LEADER

coordination and manage complex plans and programmes. This course focuses on more general skills to enable a better understanding of the stakes of biodiversity conservation, all for better decision-making.

All our courses are available for free on

MOOC-CONSERVATION.ORG



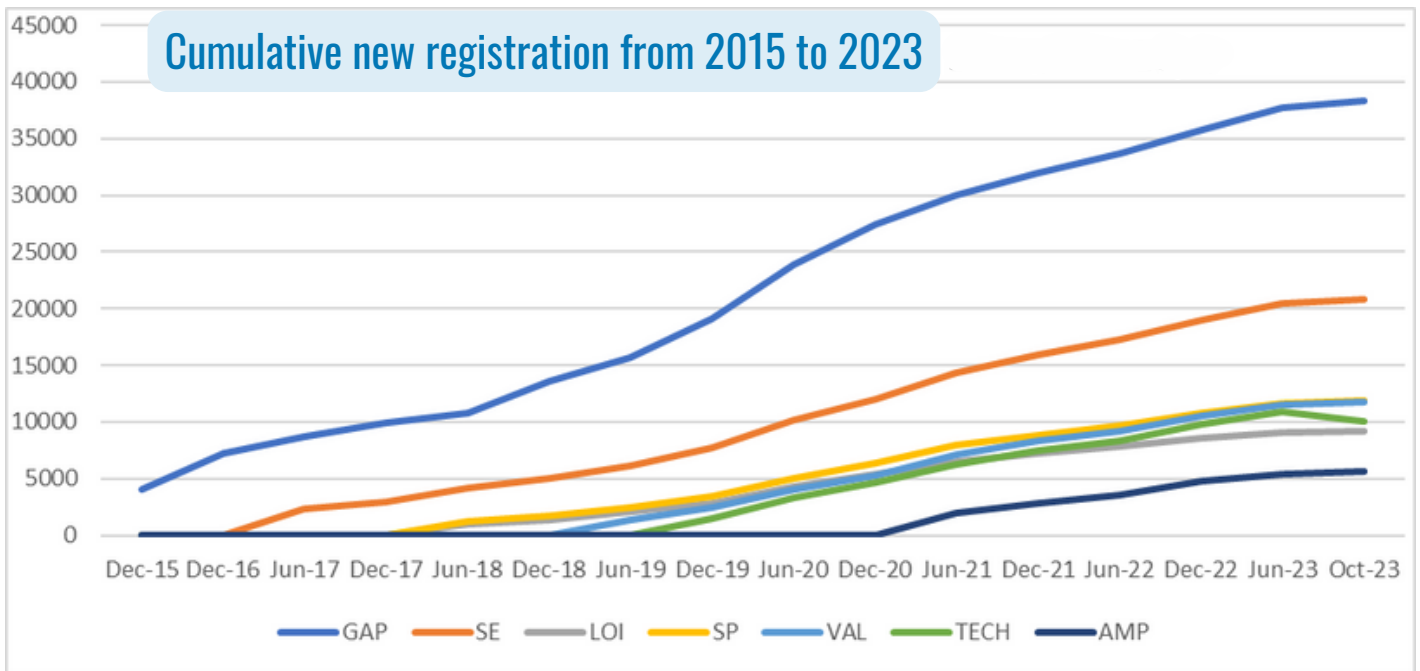
ALL COURSES ARE ACCESSIBLE. JOIN NOW!



2023 report (1/2)

➔ Total participation in all MOOCs

The cumulative number of individual registrations since the launch of the MOOCs at the end of 2015 is **108,889 learners**. **7,410 new students** joined us in the first session (January to June) and **2,270 new students** in the second session (July to October), giving a total of **9,680 new registrations** for 2023. However, **more than 16,000 students were active in 2023**, including those enrolled in previous sessions who wished to repeat and finish their course..



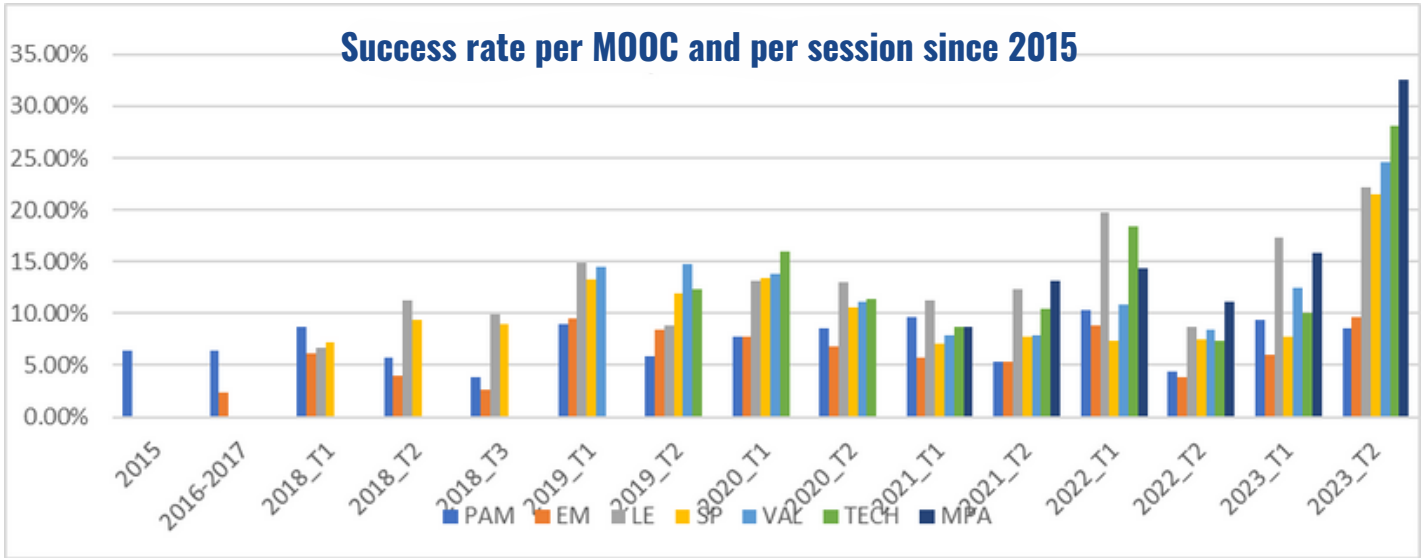
The timing of the sessions in 2023 was different from previous years: a session was held from January to June, followed by a short session from July to October, in order to support the changeover to a new platform in February 2024, necessitating the complete closure of the platform at the end of the year.

During 2023, **1,165 certificates of achievement** (a certificate issued when a student passes all the exams in a MOC with more than 75% success) were issued, including **413** in the second session. The percentage of certificates of achievement issued rose sharply in session 2, due to the high number of students returning to the course and to motivation linked to the online certificate. The latter requires students to have completed 7 MOOCs before taking the exam, and four exam sessions were organised at the end of 2023, which encouraged students to finish the courses, particularly the AMP MOOC, in order to be able to take the exam.

In total, **9,720 certificates of achievement** have been awarded since the launch of the MOOCs.



2023 report (2/2)

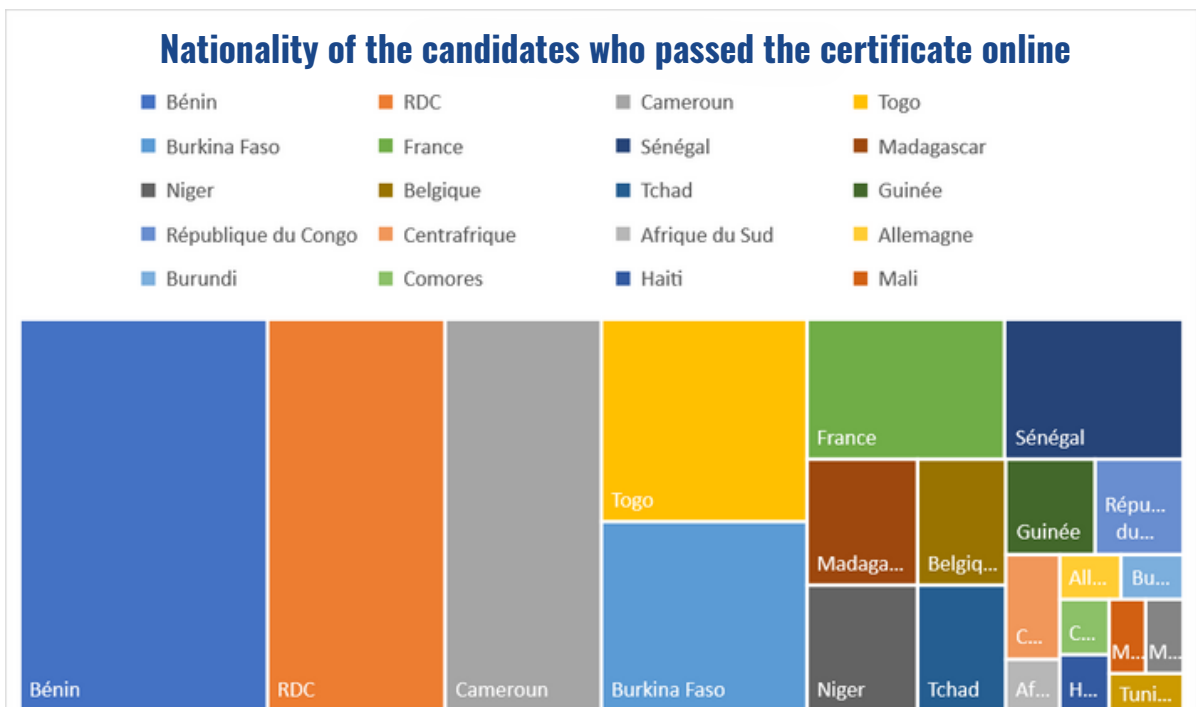


Since the launch of the MOOC on PA management on Coursera in 2015, we have changed platforms five times, increased the number of MOOCs, translated and recorded all the content in English and reviewed the arrangements for organising the sessions. These changes must be taken into account when comparing the data obtained from one session to the next.

Online Certificate

The online Certificate in Conservation of Protected Areas was launched in June 2021. The conditions for taking the online exam are as follows: completion of 6 MOOCs (GAP, SE, LE, SP, VAL, TECH) and a choice between the MOOC MPA (Papaco), and MOOCs from partners: Sustainable Development (IFDD), Environmental Law and Protection (IFDD) or Economics and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources (IFDD).

In all, 9 examination sessions were organised for French-speaking candidates. At the end of 2023, 2 sessions were organised to open up the exam to English speakers. 224 candidates took the exams in both languages, with 171 passing (76%). The countries with the most successful candidates were Benin (35), DRC (25) and Cameroon (22).





2023 in a nutshell

Genesis of the project

In November 2022, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, through its African Protected Areas & Conservation Programme (IUCN-Papaco), developed and put online a platform for children's environmental education: www.youth-conservation.org. The aim is to provide young people and their teachers with free, unlimited and permanent access to materials that make it easy to explain

1. the concept of nature = DISCOVER
2. why nature is important = UNDERSTANDING
3. what to do to conserve it = ACT

The themes covered at the moment are: terrestrial biodiversity, marine biodiversity, climate change, threats to nature, nature and health, and finally the future of nature conservation.



Quantitative outcome

→ ONLINE

Website

- More than **11 000 visits** since the launch, in November 2022
- A broad coverage in French-speaking African countries such as: Congo Kinshasa, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Senegal, Benin, Guinea, Ivory Coast and Congo Brazzaville amongst top users
- A **mobile connection** for the most part (80% of users use their smartphone to browse Youth Conservation)



Social network

- Facebook: more than **1 000 followers** in Decembre 2023
- Instagram: approximatively **300 followers**
- LinkedIn: more than **3 100** people follow us everyday on the professional network
- Facebook private group: **315 teachers and trainers in environmental education** have already joined the private Facebook group to exchange and share best practice in environmental education.

Newsletter

- 3 quarterly newsletters were sent during 2023 to a base of over **1,670 contacts**.

→ IN THE FIELD

Partnerships

We can rely on the support and commitment of **around a hundred schools and NGO partners** who use Youth Conservation resources to carry out awareness-raising and training activities for children and their educators (teachers, nature club leaders, parents, etc.).

Certification

59 teachers have passed their "Attestation of environmental education ability". They are teachers, researchers and environmental club leaders, and live in Benin, Madagascar, Chad, Senegal, Mali, etc.

Webinars

In an effort to help build the capacity of trainers, we have organised and run around **ten webinars**, each attended by between 25 and 100 participants, on different themes relating to environmental education: how to encourage people to take action to protect the environment, the different teaching approaches, etc. These webinars are an opportunity for teachers and NGO managers to **talk about their experiences in the field and share best practice in environmental education**.

Qualitative outcome

The resources made available free of charge on the Youth Conservation website are much appreciated by teachers and trainers in the field, who particularly appreciate the fun and educational nature of the modules. The posters are often printed out by the trainers and used to run the training sessions. Some testimonials from partner NGOs:

“Today we can say that thanks to Youth Conservation's support through the guides and advice we have received, we have been able to reach more children because the resources make it easier for us to pass on the messages, thanks to the images and diagrams that can be explained in a direct way.”

Amadou Bailo Balde, President of the NGO “Education in Environnement and Sustainable Development” in Guinea

“We would also like to thank you for the additional resources you have made available to us (posters and guides), which have enabled us to develop our project and reach more people. Thanks to you, we have been able to strengthen our impact and bring a ray of hope in terms of environmental education, for our Youth Club for Nature and Peace initiative.”

Moise Bumba Sylvain, Coordinator -RHF, NGO Renewed Hope for the Future (RDC)

“We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to you for the trust you have placed in us over the past year. Your collaboration has been essential to our success, and we are grateful to be able to count on such strong relationships.”

National Coordinator of the NGO Burkina Djigui (Burkina)

We would like to thank all our local contacts for their confidence and their commitment to working in the field of environmental education: Gorilla Ambassadors Program (RDC), Burkina Djigui (Burkina Faso), Let's do it Madagascar (Madagascar), TeerraAfrica, Mama Afrika (Bénin), GYBN Africa, Association Tiipaalga (Burkina Faso), GYBN Sénégal, Nebeday (Sénégal), African Wildlife Foundation, Nature Plurielle (Bénin), ONG O déchet Sénégal, Jeunes Voix du Sahel, Education Environnement et Développement Durable (Guinée), Luciole, Réseau Africain pour la Promotion de l'Education à l'Environnement RAPEE, Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement, Lyrec, African Environmental Network (Cameroun), réseau INADES, Women Environmental Programme Burkina Faso (WEP BF), ONG Renewed Hope for the Future (RDC), ONG Sentinelle de la Nature (Burkina), ONG ESADEVCI (Côte d'Ivoire), ONG Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (Burkina), etc ...



Projects for 2024

We will actively pursue our development on www.youth-conservation.org around 2 major axes:

- **Widely distribute our resources to children and their educators:**
 1. New website : new design and seamless navigation. Scheduled to go live: in February 2024.
 2. Translation of all our educational resources (courses, infographics, animation guide, etc.) and launch of the bilingual website. Scheduled to go online at the end of February 2024.
 3. Production of audios to ease the access of our 6 courses and e plus accessibles nos 6 modules et promote their diffusion. Availability scheduled for March 2024.
- **Contribute to the training of teachers and educators working with young people:**
 1. Development and online publication of a tutorial on “Educating people about nature conservation”. Scheduled for release in March 2024.
 2. Continuation of monthly webinars. Every month from January 2024.
 3. Development of additional resources for educators. During 2024.

THE VIEWPOINT OF ... INTERVIEW WITH MR FIRMIN TAPE, ENVIRONMENTALIST, ECOLOGICAL ACTIVIST, WRITER, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT AND FORMER RESIDENT OF SENGHOR UNIVERSITY IN ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT, FOR THE DAILY NEWSPAPER BURKINA DEMAIN



“IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, YOU DON'T GENERALISE APPROACHES AND METHODS...”

Burkina Demain: How did you get involved in environmental education?

Firmin Tapé: My childhood was marked by a natural disaster. When I was in the fourth grade, my parents had a vast agricultural estate (around 100 hectares) sown with cereals and cotton. Unfortunately, it didn't rain when the ears were forming. That year, we didn't get a good yield and then we suffered an unforgettable famine before the other season. That really touched me. So I asked my Life and Earth Sciences teacher for an explanation. He told me that it was linked to climate variations, that there was nothing we could do about it, that it was also one of the consequences of pollution caused by industry...



So that's where your interest in environmental education came from...

Exactly. From that answer from my teacher, I understood that I had to get ready to fight for and protect the environment, which is also a source of inspiration for my literary works. To prepare myself for this challenge, I later went on to do four years' training in forestry at the Lycée Agricole Médji de Sékou (LAMS), followed by a bachelor's degree in the management of green spaces at the National University of Agriculture and a master's degree in the management of protected areas and biodiversity at Senghor University in Alexandria, Egypt.

And you've really armed yourself with environmental knowledge...

Absolutely! During this process, I was studying the best ways of finding solutions to environmental problems. I quickly realised that the quality of the education people receive about the environment determines their relationship with nature. I realised that the best solution is to make every citizen an eco-responsible eco-citizen. So it was from here that I began to campaign, to initiate and support civil society organisations and dynamic states in this area. My commitment was renewed through my collaboration with IUCN PAPACO, which developed the Youth-conservation platform for environmental education for young people, and then there was my membership of the Nature Sentinel association, which also helped to strengthen and anchor my commitment to environmental education.

What exactly is environmental education and what are its aims?

Environmental education aims to produce citizens who are aware, responsible and respectful of others and their environment, and who are capable of taking part in collective action and decision-making. In other words, environmental education aims to create a world population that is aware of environmental problems and concerned about finding solutions; a population that has the knowledge, skills, mindset, motivation, ambition and sense of commitment to work individually and collectively to solve current environmental problems and prevent new ones from arising. In short, it's the process of getting people to become eco-citizens.

Does this process have a history?

Of course it does. And when we talk about environmental education, we generally think of 1975, the year in which UNESCO organised the Belgrade Conference, which marked the formal starting point for what is known as environmental education. This was followed in 1977 by the Tbilisi conference, which adopted the principle of environmental education.

Is environmental education synonymous with education for sustainable development?

No. They are two different things, but they have to coexist. However, these terms have many more points of convergence than of divergence.

So what is education for sustainable development and how does it relate to environmental education?

Sustainable Development is a term coined in 1980 to designate a form of economic development that respects the environment, the renewal of resources and their rational exploitation, in such a way as to preserve raw materials. This mode of development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Since the Rio Conference (1992), sustainable development has been recognised as an objective by the international community. Environmental education therefore evolved into education for the environment and sustainable development at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. They are based on a compromise between the economic, social, environmental and cultural spheres; balanced development.

In short, environmental education teaches people to respect the environment, while education for sustainable development asks us to develop without hindering the ability of future generations to develop too.

But how do you educate people about the environment?

To educate people about the environment, you need to take into account the methodological and pedagogical approaches in force in your country. It's true that each country tries to define approaches that are favourable to the conditions of its people and their environment, but environmental education doesn't work with a lecture-based approach where knowledge is simply delivered to those concerned. Since the aim is to bring about a change in behaviour, it's a good idea to consider these three principles: knowledge, i.e. having an objective knowledge of the systems and processes involved; know-how, having the techniques and methodology to approach the problem; knowing how to behave, behaving with respect for oneself, one's environment and society. Talking about approaches, I can mention: sensory, playful, creative, interdisciplinary, scientific, cognitive, pragmatic, project-based, affective and problem-solving approaches.... There are various activities that can be undertaken in this direction: Training teachers, parents, religious leaders, community leaders and others; youth camps or seminars; awareness-raising panels; TV or radio programmes; environmental films; environmental cafés; content and dissemination on social networks (Facebook and others); tourist, recreational and educational outings; the arts; planting; training in compost production and waste management; games and competitions; webinars; ... practical eco-citizen actions ... As advice ..: vary initiatives according to age, culture, psychology and customs; always motivate young people, create a challenge; adapt activities according to the seasons and the necessary channels; exploit local resources...

What is the state of environmental education in a country like Burkina Faso?

The state of environmental education in Burkina Faso is clear. We know about the commitment of the various players and their efforts.

NGOs and associations are very active and committed. They are initiating a number of activities in the field. Their numbers are growing by the day, which is proof of the growing awareness among young people and the general public;



Scientists are more concerned with creating sectors that meet the need for knowledge that is useful to other players, and with developing research topics whose results are beneficial to activists; At government level, there has been a great deal of progress.

In 2001, the government had already put in place the national strategy for environmental education (SNEE). Since then, the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) has instructed the Directorate General for the Improvement of the Living Environment (DGACV) to promote environmental education by helping to incorporate it into school curricula. With the support of the Pana-Danida project, a team made up of experts from the MEDD and the Ministries of Secondary and Higher Education, National Education and Literacy, Social Action and National Solidarity, and the Institute for the Application and Popularisation of Science (IAVS), has drawn up a minimum environmental education programme for the country's pre-school, primary and secondary cycles.

This document was validated at a national workshop on 21 July 2011 in Ouagadougou. The Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) then provided the ministries responsible for education and secondary education with teaching materials on environmental education in Burkina Faso. These documents were officially handed over on 17 December 2013 in Ouagadougou and have already been tested in various post-primary and secondary classes in Burkina Faso. Three environmental education documents have been produced. The minimum environmental education programme for sustainable development, the environmental education guide for sustainable development in post-primary education and the environmental education guide for secondary education. In 2017, the interministerial order 2017-0323 MEEVCC/MENA on the creation of environmental clubs in Burkina Faso's high schools and colleges was signed. Teachers' guides to environmental education are currently being tested in several schools.

It should be remembered that Burkina Faso has always taken part in major regional and international meetings on environmental issues, and has ratified the relevant agreements (conventions, declarations, protocols, etc.). These efforts are to be welcomed, although we know that the challenge is great and will require considerable resources. The government is taking active steps to mobilise the necessary resources.

What priority actions should be taken to strengthen or generalise environmental education in our countries?

When it comes to environmental education, I don't think we should generalise approaches and methods. Instead, we need to ask each country to draw up its own environmental education programme based on the customs and traditions of its people, their cultures and habits, the ecosystems available and the specific environmental realities; because the aim is to encourage citizens to be respectful of the environment. Each country, for its part, could undertake actions such as: issuing decrees, passing laws on environmental education, seeking funding, supporting and/or collaborating with CSOs and the media, disseminating its strategies, etc. integrating environmental education as a subject in secondary schools into the education system, etc.



What role does climate change play in environmental education around the world today?

All the world's efforts in the field of environmental education are for the good of the climate. Everything revolves around the climate. Climate means humidity, atmospheric pressure, sunshine, temperature, rainfall and wind. These weather conditions, on which all living things depend, change when we talk about climate change; above all, the consequence of global warming caused by the increase in the earth's average temperature. Indirectly or directly, environmental education on climate change should be at the forefront of the world's efforts. But since it is not the only issue to be addressed, it becomes one element in a whole.



What contribution can the media make to environmental education?

The media have a crucial role to play in providing information to raise awareness.

When it comes to environmental education, the media must inform people about the issues at stake and the risks involved. Many people do not understand, or are not informed of, environmental situations in their true depth. Some people live with the consequences without knowing the real causes and solutions. Today, we have many solutions for both mitigation and adaptation, but we need to inform people and victims or vulnerable people. The media must be involved in disseminating this information.

I would suggest that the media take part in all environmental events to relay information about what has been achieved. The media can also help to disseminate the results of research in this field. Many environmental education activities take place without the general public being informed. We live in a world where, if we don't make noise, those involved don't understand the urgency of the situation. I call on the media to make a noise about the solutions that are available and to keep a watchful eye on information for the benefit of the people.

That's the end of our interview... would you like to add anything?

I like to tell my friends that if we want to improve the climate on earth for sustainable development, we have to improve our relationship with our living environment; we have to improve our habits and adopt eco-citizen behaviours. My encouragement to those involved in EEDD. In any case, as far as I'm concerned, if it's nature, I always put my signature to it.

**Interview by Philippe Martin & Bernard Bazié -
Burkina Demain**



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"A tree that falls makes much noise; a forest that sprouts is not heard."

Gandhi

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[Website of the Papaco](https://www.papaco.org)

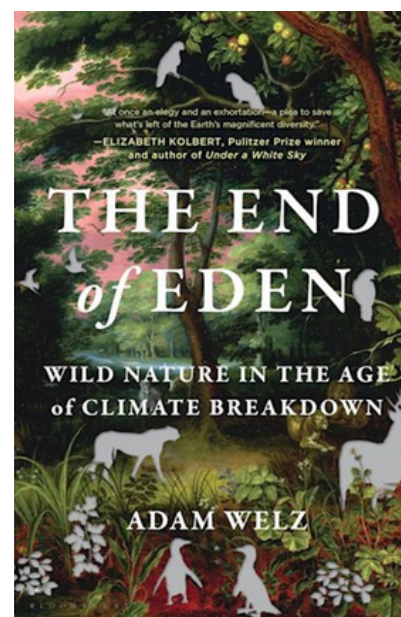
Some reading!

»»» NOVEL - THE END OF EDEN, WILD NATURE IN THE AGE OF CLIMATE BREAKDOWN BY ADAM WELZ

According to journalist Maeva Dewas, "The End of Eden" is a moving and chilling elegy on biodiversity as we know it. Adam Welz is a South African writer, photographer and film-maker specialising in the environment. He was born and raised in Pretoria, South Africa. He has since lived, worked and travelled on six continents, including the United States. A passionate naturalist and experienced ornithologist, he is also a consultant for conservation projects.

In this book, the fruit of his travels around the world, he paints a picture of climate change not as a gigantic abstract threat, but rather as a growing network of sometimes surprising, sometimes hard-to-see fractures or ruptures in the natural world. Species by species. Biome after biome. Continent after continent, Adam Welz's research has convinced him that many of the world's wild ecosystems will not survive the present day. This is the darkest part of his story.

Combining classic natural history, first-hand reporting and cutting-edge research, Adam Welz brings us up close and personal with dangerously endangered creatures, such as the iguana, a green parrot from Puerto Rico, as they struggle to survive. More than ever, "The End of Eden" calls on us to take action to defend the natural world before it's too late, and that means setting up projects all over the world to put ecosystems on the road to recovery.



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Consider publishing in the NAPA (article, stories, pictures on protected areas in Africa, job offers, etc.), contact us at moocs@papaco.org.

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