

NEWS FROM AFRICAN PROTECTED AREAS

# NAPA 195

CONSERVING NATURE IN AFRICA



## THIS MONTH IN THE NAPA

**COMMUNITIES,  
GUARDIANS OF  
BIODIVERSITY**

**P.2 EDITORIAL**

The crucial role of local communities and indigenous peoples in biodiversity conservation.

**MOOC, TUTORIALS  
AND ESSENTIALS**

**P.3 & 4 OUR ONLINE COURSES**

Find out all the latest news about our MOOCs, Tutorials and Essentials and join the mooc-conservation.org platform.

**YOUTH  
CONSERVATION**

**P.5 TO 8 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Testimonials from Burkina Faso and Chad by our volunteer mentors: raising awareness among young people for a sustainable future...

**OUR PROJECTS  
IN THE FIELD**

**P. 9 TO 11 ACTING FOR NATURE CONSERVATION**

Launch of around 40+ educational projects in five countries to empower children and young people as agents of change!

# EDITO

## Communities, Guardians of Biodiversity

By Jean-Christophe BOKIKA  
NGAWOLO, President of the  
Executive Committee of the  
congolese NGO, Mbou Mon Tour



For a long time, nature conservation in Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), was exclusively managed by the state and international organizations. These initiatives, focused on the creation of protected areas, often overlooked the rights and role of local communities and Indigenous peoples. Many were excluded from their ancestral lands, sometimes humiliated and displaced without compensation. This harsh approach left them feeling sacrificed for the benefit of wildlife.

In response to the limitations of this model and the human rights violations it has caused, the NGO Mbou-Mon-Tour (MMT) has developed an innovative approach based on a delicate balance between ecosystem preservation and the needs of local populations. This true pact of peaceful coexistence relies on active community participation: through participatory mapping,

communities themselves have delineated areas dedicated to bonobo conservation and those reserved for human activities. Work that was once decided in air-conditioned offices and then imposed on villagers is now co-created with them.

The support of traditional chiefs and local inhabitants has been a key driver of this initiative's success. MMT established a folkloric group, Bonobo Folk, which raises awareness through popular songs rooted in Teke traditions. Among the Batéké people of northern Maï-Ndombe province, bonobo conservation is deeply tied to ancestral beliefs: according to tradition, the bonobo is a distant relative who fled into the forest to escape creditors. In the past, an insolvent debtor would become the slave of their creditor. Since consuming bonobo meat was thus considered a dietary taboo, MMT successfully revived this custom, turning it into a powerful force for conservation.

The results speak for themselves: in 2006, six villages voluntarily set aside part of their forest for the protection of bonobos and their habitat. This process led to the creation of six Community Forest Concessions (CFCL), which are managed autonomously based on traditions, existing laws, ecological knowledge, and participatory monitoring.

## EDITO

The proximity of this region to Kinshasa also offers unique opportunities for scientific research and tourism development. Today, these sites regularly welcome researchers, students, and tourists from around the world who come to observe bonobos in their natural habitat. Visitors can now approach them within 15 meters and observe them for over five hours at a time.

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The model developed by MMT demonstrates that it is possible to reconcile conservation, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development. By fully integrating local communities into project governance, it improves their living conditions while protecting their natural heritage. Unlike other initiatives where community involvement often remains theoretical, here, it is a tangible reality.

This innovative model has earned MMT international recognition through several prestigious awards: the Alexander Abraham Prize in 2009 and the Ashden Award in 2021 ; The model also earned the Equator Prize in 2022 and the International EcoWorld Environmental Award in 2024.

It has been the subject of numerous media reports, both in the DRC and internationally.

Thus, once a debtor, the bonobo has now become a major scientific, ecological, and economic asset for the region. Its debt has not only been erased, but it has become a creditor to whom local communities are now indebted.

We firmly believe that no conservation initiative can succeed without the close and sincere involvement of local communities. They are not obstacles but rather the primary guardians of biodiversity.

# OUR ONLINE COURSES: MOOCS, TUTORIALS AND ESSENTIALS

Our 7 MOOCs, 4 Essentials and 3 Tutorialsa are open and available right now!



## 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.

See you on:

[www.mooc-conservation.org](http://www.mooc-conservation.org)

## THE MOOCS THEME-BASED TRAINING



**MOOC PA management**  
**Goal:** understand the essence and goals of PAs. Students will be able to grasp the importance of PAs, 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:** 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.

## ESSENTIALS PROFILE-BASED TRAINING



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



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



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

MOOC CONSERVATION IS FUNDED BY THE FONDS FRANÇAIS POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT MONDIAL



IN 2025:

**NEW MOOCS AND TUTORIALS COMING SOON****TWO NEW MOOCS**  
THEMATIC COURSES**MOOC GOVERNANCE**

This MOOC explores the principles, types and best practices of governance according to IUCN standards, with a focus on equity, participation and effectiveness. Through case studies and innovative approaches, discover how to strengthen PA management for sustainable and inclusive conservation.

**MOOC HEALTH AND CONSERVATION**

The links between human, animal and environmental health are at the heart of conservation issues. This MOOC explores the One Health approach, showing how ecosystem degradation influences emerging diseases and global health.

**FOUR NEW TUTORIALS**  
TARGETTED TRAININGS**TUTORIAL: FUNDING PAS**

This tutorial guides you through funding mechanisms, from innovative economic models to strategic partnerships. Using practical tools and case studies, learn how to mobilise and manage resources to ensure the sustainability of conservation.

**TUTORIAL: HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT**

Interactions between human populations and wildlife pose major challenges for conservation and local communities. This tutorial explores the causes of conflict, prevention approaches and mitigation strategies.

**TUTORIAL: LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND PAS**

Local communities play a central role in the sustainable management of PAs. This tutorial explores participatory approaches, community rights and responsibilities, and tools for inclusive and equitable management.

**TUTO: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION**

Faced with the degradation of natural environments, ecological restoration plays a key role in the resilience of ecosystems. This tutorial guides you through the principles, stages and techniques of restoration, based on scientific approaches and case studies.

**CALL FOR TESTIMONIES!**

**Do you have expertise in one of these six topics that you'd like to share to illustrate the courses (video or text)? Feel free to contact us at [moocs@papaco.org](mailto:moocs@papaco.org)!**

**2025**  
MOOC CONSERVATION  
CALENDAR

**22 April:** Youtube Live on Health and conservation (French)

**20 May:** PAs in Haiti (French)

**20 June:** Q&A with the MOOC team.

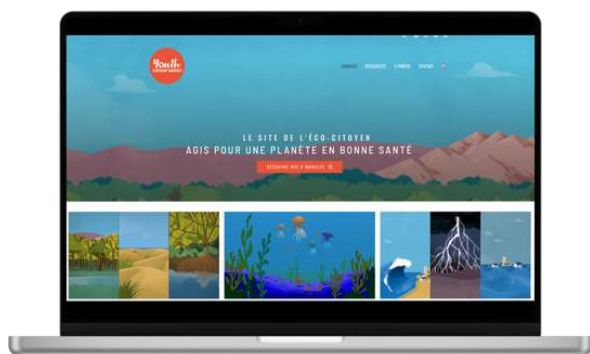
**24 June:** exam for the Online Certificate in PA Conservation - French-speakers

**25 June:** exam for the Online Certificate in PA Conservation - English-speakers

*The registrations link to the Youtube Lives will be available on MOOC Conservation under [Live Sessions](#).*

## YOUTH CONSERVATION

## DISCOVER, UNDERSTAND AND ACT FOR THE PLANET



Online platform, 100% free of charge, brings together dedicated resources:

- For children and young people: 6 didactic and interactive courses on the major themes of nature conservation: terrestrial and marine biodiversity, climate change, nature and health, etc.
- For educators: downloadable teaching resources to facilitate learning and the running of educational sessions (posters, guides, etc.).

VISIT [WWW.YOUTH-CONSERVATION.ORG](http://WWW.YOUTH-CONSERVATION.ORG)!

## AND ON THE GROUND? STORIES FROM PASSIONATE STAKEHOLDERS

## RAISING AWARENESS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: A LOOK BACK AT A COMMITTED ACTION IN BURKINA FASO

**BY DIDIER ARISTIDE BATIONO**, VOLUNTEER MENTOR IN BURKINA FASO AND FOUNDER OF THE OLY-AGRI NGO

As part of the project "Eco-Engagement: Young Guardians of Nature for a Sustainable Future," the NGO Oly-agri recently carried out an awareness campaign at Teeg-wendé School in Ouahigouya, located in Yatenga province, northern Burkina Faso. This initiative aimed to teach students the basics of biodiversity and help them understand the importance of interactions between different elements of nature.

During this session, students had the opportunity to explore the richness of their local environment and become aware of the positive and negative impacts that certain human actions can have on nature. By drawing a connection between harmful elements and those that protect the ecosystem, this awareness campaign strengthened their commitment to caring for their school garden—an educational space that allows them to concretely experiment with the principles of agroecology and natural resource conservation.

This awareness program was made possible thanks to the technical support of Youth Conservation, a platform established by IUCN-PAPACO. This partnership aims to encourage young people to adopt responsible environmental behaviors and become agents of change for a more sustainable future.



This initiative was made possible thanks to the involvement and support of many local stakeholders. A special thanks to the Ministry of Education, the regional and provincial departments of preschool, primary, and non-formal education, as well as to the director of Teeg-wendé School, Safiatou Ouédraogo, and the entire teaching staff for their dedication and support in implementing this project.

Now more than ever, it is crucial to involve young people in the preservation of our planet. Initiatives like this not only raise awareness but also equip future generations with the tools they need to sustainably protect their environment.

*Kudos to Didier Aristide for his volunteer commitment within the Youth Conservation mentor network!*

*If you too want to get involved in environmental education, contact Hélène at [info@youth-conservation](mailto:info@youth-conservation) for more information on how to proceed!*



## LAUNCH OF THE CLIMATE ACTION CLUB AT COMPLEXE SCOLAIRE ESPÉRANCE IN WALIA, N'DJAMENA

BY OLIVIER BERE, VOLUNTEER MENTOR IN CHAD AND FOUNDER OF THE GREEN TEAM CHAD NGO

On February 28, 2025, the Complexe Scolaire Espérance de Walia, located in N'Djamena's 9th district, hosted the launch of the Climate Action Club (CAC), an initiative within the program "Eco-Citizenship at School for a Healthy Mind in a Healthy Environment." This ambitious program aims to actively engage students from 20 schools (primary schools, middle schools, and high schools) in the 7th and 9th districts of the Chadian capital in climate action and sustainable practices.

As the future leaders and decision-makers, young people must be equipped with the knowledge and practical skills necessary to combat climate change and promote responsible environmental stewardship. Through a participatory approach, the CAC offers weekly educational workshops led by volunteers, along with hands-on activities such as:

🌱 School gardens - A way for students to experiment with sustainable farming and understand the importance of ecosystems.

🌳 Tree planting - Collaborative events bringing together students, teachers, and volunteers to green designated areas.

🧠 Leadership Development - Training young people in leadership, advocacy, and communication skills to empower them as agents of change.

🎨 School Competitions - Encouraging creativity and awareness through educational and artistic projects focused on the environment.





This program is part of a broader effort to raise awareness about the environment and the fight against climate change, equipping students with the tools to become active advocates for sustainability in their schools and communities. By fostering a culture of environmental commitment, it encourages young people to play a key role in protecting their surroundings and promoting concrete climate actions.



Together, let's build a greener and more sustainable future!

*Kudos to Olivier for his volunteer commitment within the Youth Conservation mentor network!*



***If you'd like to learn more, you can contact Olivier directly through his association's [Facebook](#) page.***

## LAUNCH OF THE PROJECT

# ACTING FOR NATURE CONSERVATION: TRAINING AND INSPIRING FUTURE ECO-CITIZENS IN AFRICA



We are delighted to announce the launch of an ambitious project led by the Fondation Audemars-Watkins, Play for Nature, and Youth Conservation: "Acting for Nature Conservation: Training and Empowering Future Eco-Citizens in Africa." This initiative supports 10 NGOs in Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Senegal, and Madagascar, all committed to raising youth awareness about environmental preservation through concrete and innovative activities. **Each NGO will implement between 3 and 5 projects in schools and/or environmental clubs between April and August 2025.**

## WHAT PROJECTS ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED BY THE NGOS ON THE GROUND?

### NGO 1 - Burkina Djigui (Burkina Faso)

Training of teachers, awareness-raising for children, sanitation day, and provision of trash bins in 4 schools (a total of 1,986 children impacted).



### NGO 2 - BEES (Benin)

Support for the creation of an ecological garden in 4 schools, including the planting of native and medicinal species. Trees planted by students will be sponsored to encourage their responsibility in maintenance (a total of 180 children).



### NGO 3 - Health and Conservation (Cameroon)

Waste management and recycling activities, wildlife and flora discovery activities, climate change awareness actions, and natural resource production and valorization initiatives (a total of 1,020 children impacted).



### NGO 4 - Recikit (Senegal)

Awareness-raising and hands-on workshops (composting and recycling, waste mural and eco-responsibility, plastic reduction awareness, storytelling and interactive theater (Wantan), Cré'Art Green eco-friendly drawing and coloring, educational games) in 5 schools (a total of 1,000 children impacted).



### NGO 5 - Association Lamoty (Madagascar)

Reforestation, creation of a playground for after-school children, awareness-raising and training for children and teachers, and training for parents to establish a vegetable garden (a total of 2,040 children impacted).



### NGO 6 - Sentina (Burkina Faso)

Tree planting, environmental challenge, sanitation day, botany session and excursion, agroecological practices, awareness-raising and compost bin creation, as well as awareness and installation of trash bins in 5 schools (a total of 950 students impacted).



### NGO 7 - Réseau des Jeunes Solidaires Pour la Protection de l'Environnement (Benin)

Environmental education, creation of a school nursery, awareness sessions and educational outings on waste management, and the planting of 1,000 trees (a total of 500 children impacted).



### NGO 8 - Tropical Forest and Rural Development (Cameroon)

Awareness and education on deforestation as a cause of climate change, training in compost making, creation of a vegetable garden with fruit tree planting, training in beetle farming as a sustainable solution to poaching, and public awareness through an artistic approach (a total of 370 children impacted).



**🌿 NGO 9 - Poumon Vert (Senegal)**

Drawing contest, basketball match, ecological outing and waste collection, and a 4-day ecological summer camp (a total of 240 children impacted).



**🌿 NGO 10 - Impact Madagascar (Madagascar)**

Awareness of climate issues, hands-on workshops (reforestation, recycling, composting, etc.), educational outings (green classes), creation of a vegetable garden (a total of 400 children impacted).



**A LASTING IMPACT FOR AN ENGAGED YOUTH**

These projects directly impact 41 schools and will raise awareness among more than 8,500 children and young people about environmental challenges. By supporting them, we are planting the seeds of a more conscious and engaged generation for nature.

♥ We sincerely thank all these NGOs for their trust, commitment, and action on the ground!

📺 Follow the progress of these projects on Youth Conservation’s social media (Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn) and on this blog. Exciting initiatives ahead to train Africa’s young eco-citizens!



## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The fate of Africa belongs to Africans, but she is our mother to all.  
Let's care for her together..."

*Maxime Blondeau, French teacher, speaker, and entrepreneur.*

## READING OF THE MONTH

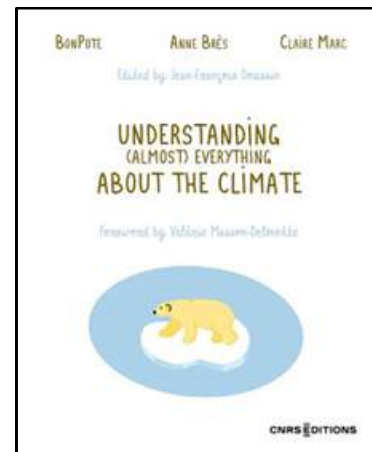
**UNDERSTANDING (ALMOST) EVERYTHING ABOUT THE CLIMATE**

BON POTE, ANNE BIÈS AND CLAIRE MARC

This comic book project explores 20 key questions about climate change, drawing on current scientific knowledge. It covers topics such as human influence, climate models, scientific consensus, and extreme weather events.

Through a modern and accessible approach, the goal is to reach a broader audience, including those who may not typically seek out scientific information.

This comic book is part of a broader strategy for awareness and knowledge dissemination. It aims to enhance understanding of climate change and debunk climate skepticism.



## COP 16 REGARDING BIODIVERSITY

**PROGRESS ON FINANCING MECHANISMS**

The meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Rome at the end of February resulted in an agreement on the resource mobilization strategy to finance biodiversity protection. This breakthrough helps overcome the deadlock from COP 16 in Colombia regarding the \$200 billion per year needed by 2030.

A compromise was reached between Global South countries, which advocated for a new financial instrument, and Western nations, which favored existing mechanisms, particularly the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF). **The agreement includes improving current instruments and establishing a roadmap for COP 17, 18, and 19.**

The text also **broadens the donor base, encouraging emerging economies to contribute more. It introduces a monitoring mechanism for the Global Biodiversity Framework's objectives, with an initial review set for COP 17 in Armenia in 2026.**

Finally, the Cali Fund for the benefit-sharing of digital sequence information on genetic resources has been officially launched, with private sector contributions aimed at supporting Indigenous peoples and local communities.

## CONTACTS - PAPACO

. Dr Geoffroy Mauvais, coordinator of the Programme on African Protected Areas and Conservation - PAPACO  
geoffroy.mauvais@iucn.org

. Madeleine Coetzer-Vosloo, Programme Officer PAPACO - Communications  
madeleine.coetzer@iucn.org

. Hélène Magdelain, Youth Conservation focal point  
info@youth-conservation.org

To contribute to a NAPA (article or publication on protected areas, cover photo, job offer, etc.), contact us at [moocs@papaco.org](mailto:moocs@papaco.org).

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