



Training workshop on planning and implementing a communication strategy

Khartoum, Sudan, 7 to 10 May, 2018.

Synthesis of deliberations

The training workshop on planning and implementing a communication strategy was held from 7 to 10 May, 2018 in Khartoum, Sudan at Regency hotel. It was organized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in collaboration with the Permanent Inter-States Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), the World Bank and the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resource Management Project, with the support of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (IUCN - CEC).

The workshop was part of the implementation of the *"Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication and Knowledge Services"* (BRICKS) Project financed by the World Bank. It was aimed at helping SAWAP project communicators to develop and implement their communication strategies.

About forty participants came from the 12 SAWAP countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Chad and Togo) and from South Africa, including communication experts, journalists, representatives of the three BRICKS implementing agencies (IUCN, CILSS and OSS), representatives of TerrAfrica and of the Burkina Faso national coordinating unit of the Great Green Wall Initiative.

I. The Opening ceremony

Chaired by the Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Physical Development of Sudan, H.E Dr Hassan Hilal, Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project, the opening ceremony was marked by three addresses:

- Remarks by Madam Félicité Mangang of IUCN

Taking the floor on behalf of the Regional Director of IUCN and of the other BRICKS agencies (CILSS and OSS), Madam Mangang wished participants an excellent stay in Khartoum. She then briefly gave the history and objective of the BRICKS project which forms the backdrop of the current workshop, the role of each implementing agency in the execution of the said project and the various actions undertaken so far in the field of communication, in collaboration with the SAWAP project teams. Recalling the objectives of the present workshop, she urged the participants to take advantage of the meeting and have a better planning and implementation of their respective communication strategies. She mentioned the celebration of the 70 years of IUCN this year 2018, and used the opportunity to request all players to further engage in protecting our planet for the well-being of all. To conclude, she thanked the World Bank, CILSS and OSS and expressed her gratitude to the Government of Sudan and to the Sudan SAWAP project for the organization and smooth running of the workshop in Khartoum, and their financial contribution to the meeting.

- Address by Mr. Ibrahim Doka, Coordinator of the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project

Mr. Ibrahim Doka first welcomed all participants to Sudan. He then stated that the country is the 3rd largest African country and has sheer desert areas. Despite this, the Sudan SAWAP project is active in only three localities, namely Gezira, White Nile and Kassala, due to its limited financial

resources. For Mr. Doka, additional resources could facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management. He further mentioned the sound results achieved in the project intervention zones, notably the rehabilitation of 15,000 ha of forest and biodiversity by planting trees, producing nearly 610,000 seedlings from 2015 in 3 rehabilitated tree nurseries, establishing 5 community tree nurseries, training over 1700 persons in the field of sustainable land and water management, etc. He indicated that the actions of the Sudan SAWAP project have made it possible to reach a minimum 4,000 persons.

- Opening speech by the Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Physical Development, His Excellence Dr Hassan Hilal, Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Sudan SAWAP project.

Dr. Hassane Hilal first welcomed all participants and wished them a nice stay in Sudan, on behalf of the President of Sudan. Sudan being one of the African countries that is hard hit by the effects of desertification, the theme planned for this workshop is the main action that will allow all development projects to produce genuine impacts on the intervention zones and on the lives of the beneficiary people. Moreover, to combat desertification, the government and its development partners are working relentlessly to build people's resilience in a context of climate change. The Sudan SAWAP project has recorded laudable achievements in collaboration with the communities and the Government; and best practices of sustainable natural resources management have been widely disseminated. His Excellency Dr Hassan Hilal announced the extension of the project in coming years, to cover three more States and help communities to be spared of desertification effects. He finally wished full success in the deliberations.

II. Introductory activities

The workshop was facilitated by Mr. Peter Paul Van Kempen of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), assisted by Mr. Christophe Hien who is a consultant, and Mrs. Félicité Mangang of the IUCN Programme for Central and West Africa.

III. Roll out of the meeting

Each country team was composed of a pair (communicator and journalist). After their self-introductions, the participants voiced their expectations. The following daily rapporteurs were designated:

- Day 1: Mr. Achille Fatondji from Benin and Mr. Hassane Daouda from Niger;
- Day 2: Mrs. Doreen Ampofo and Mr. Emmanuel Yeboah from Ghana
- Day 3: Mr. Amara Moussa from Togo and Mr. Sidibe Amadou from Mali
- Day 4: Mr. Aliou Bassoum from Senegal and Mr. Idy Soumare from Mauritania.

1- Presentations, quizzes and discussions

Generally speaking, the workshop was based on the current experiences of the respective SAWAP projects. The deliberations were in the form of sessions that were mutually complementary. Each session included plenary presentations, quizzes and plenary feedback. Also, the field visit allowed sharing sustainable land and water management experiences gained by the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management, in collaboration with the communities.

During the workshop, the following points were addressed:

- A communication strategy;
- Communication objectives of the project;
- Communication messages;
- Communication channels, means and activities;
- Planning, budget and evaluation;
- Communication action plan;

- monitoring & evaluation of the BRICKS communication component;
- State of play of success stories & new stories to be planned.

The sessions related to a communication strategy were followed by practical exercises that enabled the participants to deepen their knowledge of a communication strategy.

At the end of the various presentations and exchanges, it appeared that an effective communication strategy is directed to the most important target that is capable of taking the project a step forward and bringing in positive change. In addition, it should be known that:

- a communication strategy is dynamic and focused on the target audience;
- a monitoring & evaluation system of communication activities should be put in place.
- a communication strategy without planning, budgeting and evaluation is not really a communication strategy;
- one should structure one's speech so as to touch the emotions of stakeholders and make them buy into the project;
- a good analysis of the target audience is indispensable in order to achieve a good structuring of one's message(s);
- the targets, objectives and messages should be well defined before thinking of communication channels;
- it is important to know the basic needs of the target audiences by listening to them and understanding their psychology;
- to convince a stakeholder, one should touch on his or her emotions so as to obtain his or her engagement; therefore, one should have facts to illustrate one's speech;
- one should discuss with the project team in order to design the messages, define communication activities and means to be used;

At the end of the deliberations, each SAWAP project developed their communication action plan which includes the target audiences, stakeholders, message for each target. These various plans were further elaborated to take account of the means, activities, channels, timeline of implementation, the person responsible, budget and evaluation method. The various communication plans prepared by the participants (Senegal, Mauritania, GGWI-BF, Togo, Mali, Niger, Sudan, Chad, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria and Ethiopia) were presented in a plenary session and enriched on the same occasion.

Mrs. Lilia Benzid of OSS gave the status of success stories since September 2017. In total, 9 were published and 4 are yet to be completed. She asked the participants to contribute during their stay in Khartoum to finalize the success stories of 2017 and to identify new themes to develop for 2018, in anticipation of the next SAWAP conference. She also called on communicators to visit www.frogleaps.org to complete their stories.

The presentation on monitoring & evaluation of communication activities made by Mr. Frédéric Dayamba of IUCN led to exchanges on the evaluation process of learning activities of the BRICKS project communication component implemented by IUCN since 2014. This was an opportunity to present evaluation tools prior to the planned evaluation of completed communication activities.

Mrs. Sandrine Ouattara of CILSS shared with participants some information pertaining to the use of the www.sawap.net Portal, notably with regard to the regular feeding into country sections for a better sharing of information and best practices.

IV. The field visit

The participants went on a field visit to a site of the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project in Gezira State. They were first welcomed to the University of Albutana by the project managers in the said State. A video film was shown so that they can learn about the various components of the project and impacts produced on the communities of the coverage area.

Led by Mr. Ibrahim Doka, Coordinator of Sudan Sustainable Resource Management Project, the participants went out to a forest rehabilitation site. They observed by themselves the extensively degraded state of the forest and soil. Following this visit, they moved on to visit the community garden of Taybeen village located at few kilometers from Wadbugul forest. The community leaders used the opportunity to request the extension of the project for five more years.

V. Next steps

- for next trainings, focus should be on community successes.
- envisage a training on graphic representation of interventions during workshops (graphic recording).
- organize a training for action workshop on photo taking and film shooting techniques.

VI. Recommendations

Several recommendations were made by the participants including the following:

- ensure the monitoring of the implementation of the communication plans developed by SAWAP projects during this workshop.
- continue building the capacities of the participants so as to enable them apply the knowledge acquired and share their experiences.
- organize a training session on monitoring and evaluation of communication plans.
- provide participants with a methodological guideline on how to draft a communication strategy
- strengthen the production and dissemination of SAWAP success stories (compilation)

The participants wish to thank the Government and People of Sudan as well as the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management for their warm welcome and all arrangements made for the excellent organization of the workshop.

Khartoum, 10 May, 2018

The participants