

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	The Canal Studio Association
Project Title:	Songs & Stories of Biodiversity
Date of Report:	31 st January 2016
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CEPF Region: East Melanesian Islands

Strategic Direction: Empower local communities to protect and manage globally significant biodiversity at priority Key Biodiversity Areas under-served by current conservation efforts

Grant Amount: \$19,800

Project Dates: October 2014 – October 2015

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

The project stakeholders are:

- the local communities of Hokua, Penaoru, and Pesena
- the Espiritu Santo community
- the Luganville Municipal Council
- the SANMA provincial government

The project partners involved in the delivery of the project are:

Further Arts

Vanuatu Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

This project has focused on the key biodiversity area of Santo Mountain Chain on Espiritu Santo island in Vanuatu, and conservation efforts for the following species: Vanuatu Flying-fox, Vanuatu Megapode, Santo Mountain Starling, Palm Lorikeet, Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon, Royal Parrotfinch, Santa Cruz Ground-dove, and Voutmélé Palm.

Through undertaking participatory, awareness and educational activities with the communities of Hokua, Penaoru, and Pesena, as well as with students and stakeholders based in Luganville (urban area of Santo Island), the SSB project team has contributed to the increased value and understanding of local biodiversity and the nature of threats and drivers among the local communities at the priority sites. Additionally, the activities

provided training and capacity building for local communities and Canal Studio staff and volunteers to conduct baseline studies, workshops and awareness presentations.

The project also aimed to identify specific stories, songs, dances or other traditional cultural expressions relevant to the threatened species to promote these as a way of educating others and engaging young people especially in bio-cultural development and maintenance. These traditional cultural expressions were featured in short videos produced through the project and at the annual Lukaotem Gud Santo Festival held in Luganville and facilitated by Canal Studio.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Short term impacts of the project:

- increased awareness of the species which are threatened;
- greater understanding of the links between traditional resource management and the contemporary concept of biodiversity;
- more awareness of the links between cultural heritage and conservation;
- and, local and provincial awareness and support for conservation and biodiversity through the promotion of the endemic species as part of the ecology of Espiritu Santo.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

This project has made significant progress in achieving the short-term impacts as stated above. In particular, the three targeted communities in the Santo Mountain Chain (SMC) have increased awareness of the species which are threatened and a greater understanding of the links between traditional resource management and the concept of biodiversity through a collaborative research and discursive process and the delivery of presentations and information by the SSB team. Furthermore, school students and stakeholders in Luganville have also benefited in similar ways through Luganville based events organized through the project. By involving the Luganville Municipality and Provincial Government, the project has contributed to building support and improving general awareness of the importance of conservation and biodiversity in Espiritu Santo.

During visits to SMC communities, the SSB team also documented cultural expressions emphasizing conservation and resource management. In some cases, this was well done whereas in others it was more difficult to access this, mainly due to the sacred nature of some cultural expressions and willingness of community members to share them.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected:

Species Conserved: Vanuatu Flying-fox, Vanuatu Megapode, Santo Mountain Starling, Palm Lorikeet, Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon, Royal Parrotfinch, Santa Cruz Ground-dove, and Voutmélé Palm.

Corridors Created:

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The project was successful in its approach of visiting and spending time in the three target communities of Santo Mountain Chain: Pesena, Penaoru and Hokuia, to explore with the communities the concept of biodiversity, species conservation and the cultural heritage associated with these. The SSB team provided important information to the communities, which they had not received previously. This location is very remote and therefore does not receive visitors often, especially those with local environmental expertise and information. It is clear that the project initiated important groundwork in these areas that will need to be continued – to provide information and facilitate dialogue between urban and rural communities is crucial.

Of particular note is the engagement of the Hokuia community in understanding the threatened species status – the Chief has now strengthened existing by-laws towards the conservation and management of seven of the threatened species, including Vanuatu Flying-fox as it was considered a pest to the local community.

The key challenges of achieving the short-term impacts reflect the general challenges faced in bridging urban and rural – predominantly the challenges of weather and communication. Despite our best efforts to communicate ahead of time and reach community representatives, it was often beyond our control and sometimes communities were unaware of our planned visit. Additionally, the SSB team was not aware of the need for approval to be sought from the Provincial Government and the DEPC Officer based in Sanma Province to be able to undertake audiovisual production at the Penaoru Conservation Area. Adverse weather conditions also caused delays to the project.

Another challenge, which became an opportunity for the SSB team, was the Pesena community's lack of understanding and knowledge of contemporary concepts of biodiversity and how and why threatened species should be conserved and protected.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

One unexpected impact was that some communities are unaware that the Vanuatu Flying-fox is classified as a vulnerable species. According to the villagers, the flying-fox is a pest, since they are competing with flying-foxes over fruit trees. However after the participatory activities the SSB team facilitated, they became aware of the fact that flying-fox is under threat, and therefore conservation management practices need to be enforced.

The SSB team decided to create an activity for Biodiversity Day targeting school age students in Luganville. Since this was not a planned activity for the project the outcome was that students were more equipped with knowledge regarding biodiversity and species in SMC and Espiritu Santo island, and they also improved their debating and presentation skills through their participation in activities on the day.

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):
Engagement of the Environmental Officer

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

The Environmental Officer (EO) was a professional previously external to Canal Studio Association, acquired for the purpose of providing expertise to strengthen Canal Studio's environmental work. The EO successfully engaged and assisted Canal Studio members through the project, in particular the EO built the capacity of the Youth Environmental Assistant of Canal Studio to undertake research, awareness and advocacy activities. This has meant that the Youth Unit of Canal Studio has been strengthened through improved knowledge of biodiversity, and improved skills in community collaboration and delivery of activities.

In the months prior to the start of the project, an important unit of Canal Studio, Traditional Entertainment and Kastom Support Unit disbanded from Canal Studio and therefore could no longer play its intended pivotal role to facilitate the enquiry and promotion of traditional cultural expressions surrounding biodiversity and conservation. Therefore, the EO had the increased pressure of finding ways to address this objective of the project with other CS members, which proved difficult at times.

Component 2 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal): Engagement of local counterparts

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

The three communities of SMC: Pesena, Penaoru and Hokua were engaged prior to and during the activities/programs at the three communities. In each village, Canal Studio presented a kastom ceremony to the Chief and his community, which enabled a theoretical pathway into the village. The community chiefs were the focal point of contact, and assisted to identify 'counterparts' for the team to work closely with. One counterpart was identified from each village, all of whom are male:

1. Metar Jen from Pesena, a local craftsman displaying arts that express themes about the culture and environment
2. Chief Remo from Penaoru, a storyteller and leader of the success story of a community-led initiative on conservation, which led to the government recognizing their efforts.
3. Community Chief from Hokua, a storyteller and leader of the bans on threatened species in this community, and a performer of folk songs on local species

Unfortunately the Hokua Mini Arts Festival was cancelled, and it became impossible to organize inter-village 'storians' and events for the counterparts and communities to come together. It was very difficult traveling between communities due to their remoteness and distance from one another.

Furthermore, the SSB project team failed in their attempts to bring the local counterparts to Luganville for the provincial workshops and events organized. The main reason for this was due to poor communication with the communities, lack of understanding about the project and purpose of travel to Luganville, and the timing of the team's visit to bring them back (refer to Component 4).

Component 3 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal): Biodiversity awareness participatory activities – local and provincial

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

There were trips made to the three communities – Pesena, Penaoru and Hokua. During the visits, biodiversity awareness participatory activities were conducted including research enquiry, presentation and discussion of threatened species and local resource management and

conservation, and exploration of local cultural heritage assets. These activities were evidenced through the video production of the three trips to the three communities.

Unfortunately, as previously stated, it became impossible to conduct inter-village stories and activities.

The Provincial level workshops and events in Luganville had great success through the activities organized on Biodiversity Day, and then again during the Lukaotem Gud Santo Festival. On Biodiversity Day, the SSB team collaborated with several schools in and around the urban area of Luganville, with over 400 students participating in activities such as presentations, talks, video viewing, quizzes and a debate session. The Provincial Government also participated in the event. This was an immense effort and was very successful in educating and engaging young people, many of whom are connected to SMC communities through family, in issues of biodiversity and threatened species conservation.

**Component 4 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):
Selection and presentation of specific traditional cultural expressions**

Component 4 Actual at Completion:

Apparently it was difficult to capture accurate traditional expressions of the threatened and vulnerable species as most the cultural expressions are verbally passed on hence, quite difficult to gather. There are few reasons why this is difficult; (1) the traditional songs, performances and stories are lost as there is no form of record; (2) the elders who knew the songs and stories have passed away; and, (3) only few vulnerable species have songs or stories while for other species either they too have been lost or not known. Additionally, the often sacred nature of some bio-cultural practices and knowledge is a hindrance to being about to document and share with others.

The few cultural expressions that were collected and documented included:

- traditional resource management knowledge and songs including harvesting of taro and other local crops
- stories and songs on the vulnerable species, particularly the Flying Fox and the Santa Cruz Dove

The SSB team were able to document community knowledge and practices, not necessarily as traditional cultural expressions, but important information nonetheless.

The presentation of these traditional cultural expressions, knowledge and practices was limited by the failure of the team to bring the local counterparts to Luganville for the Lukaotem Gud Santo Festival (LGSF). A combination of problems meant that this activity could not be realized: changed dates of the festival meant uncertainty in the lead up and inability to communicate in a timely manner with the SMC communities. The team made attempts to communicate with communities via telephone but in the end the EO had to visit SMC to invite them the week prior to LGSF. However, the EO could only get to Pesena due to transport limitations (boat service not operating to Hokua and Penaoru). In Pesena, EO discovered that a family member was recently deceased and local customs dictated that they would not be able to participate in the upcoming festival and events in Luganville.

The team had arranged for counterparts from Hokua and Penaoru to make their way to South Santo to be picked up by vehicle, however they did not come.

In an effort to have rural community representation for the project activities at LGSF, the SSB team invited elders with relevant cultural knowledge from local South Santo communities to

participate, but we discovered that only a few elders knew stories and songs of the vulnerable species and were not available (working in the farms) at the time of the team's visit to the villages. In spite of having no SMC community representation for LGSF, the SSB team went ahead with its scheduled programming during the festival with a full day (Saturday 14th November) focused on biodiversity and conservation in Santo. In particular, the team emphasized the threatened species of SMC. The SSB team invited several different stakeholders around Santo to work with them on delivering this day, but only the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) and a local NGO working in permaculture participated. SSB team also invited schools around Luganville to participate.

SSB and DEPC set up a tent booth to provide information and answer any questions people had about biodiversity in Santo and the threatened species. They made presentations and awareness speeches at the festival site in the centre of town where many people passed through.

Short videos exhibiting aspects of the project were produced and partially produced and shown during the Luganville based events including Biodiversity Day celebrations and the Lukaotem Gud Santo Festival (LGSF).

During the second half of the project, the youth multimedia production team contracted to undertake the video production work did not complete their task in time as there was a failure of the project hard drive due to misuse (wrongly used on an incompatible computer). Therefore, the footage and edited videos were unable to be accessed. This was a huge error on the part of the production team to not back up their work, but a common issue our media teams face due to lack of funding and hardware to be able to manage digital files properly. As this report is written, the SSB team is still trying to recuperate the files on the hard drive with local IT expertise. It is uncertain whether they will be successful.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

Component 4 was not fully realised due communication and logistical limitations. As a result, counterparts from the SMC were not part of the LGSF. In terms of achieving significant public awareness towards the vulnerability status of the targeted species, there is still a large information gap. Having the SMC counterparts participation during the festival would have elevated the vulnerability and significance of the listed species through their experiences of conservation in their communities. This would most likely enable urban communities to have increased awareness and be able to discuss the issues, realizing they have a role to play in conservation efforts, therefore having a sense of responsibility towards the cause.

As mentioned above, the videos are not complete due to technical issue, and therefore are not yet broadcast on local and online media. Once the files are recuperated, we will finalise the video products and release them via our media channels.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

Videos will be submitted once completed – hopefully by end of first quarter of 2016.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Engaging an environmental specialist who also worked closely with a young person on a local NGO was a very beneficial exercise in building local civil society capacity, particularly for the young people. Since Canal Studio is mainly lead by young people, partnering with professionals in a multitude of sectors is important to contribute to organizational development and sustainability. The hope is now for Canal Studio to continue its activities addressing the environment and biodiversity given their improved capacity to work in these areas.

The disbanding of an existing unit of Canal Studio that was initially designed to be a significant part of the project meant that the initial project plan was not fully realized. There was little that Canal Studio could do to ameliorate this situation.

The partnership between Canal Studio based in Luganville and Further Arts based in Port Vila was beneficial as it was important to have Further Arts' support in financial accounting processes, report writing and directorial communication between organisations, staff and the donor. The challenge, however, was due to the physical distance between the two organisations and often delayed communication and exchange of information from Canal Studio regarding progress on activities.

At the community level, the project contributed to the development of baseline data for the three SMC communities, and identified the existing 'taboos' as local conservation measures put in place by community chiefs. These measures have also been strengthened through the project via the dispersal of information from the SSB team. The communities now have a greater understanding how their community exists and fits into the SMC ecosystem, which inevitably improves the way they perceive, act and relate to the larger environment.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

- The project design was theoretically sound, however as conditions within Canal Studio changed, some aspects were unable to be realized resulting in some of the project objectives only partially completed. In this case, it was unfortunate this happened, but really it is unlikely to be able to predict and plan for these kind of circumstances in the future.
- Despite the aforementioned, the design actually allowed for some flexibility for new or varied activities to occur such as the Biodiversity Day celebrations.
- Perhaps the aspect that needed to be better coordinated was communication with communities to ensure that whole of community is aware of the project and project team's intentions.
- The selection of target communities and target species was good and efforts during the project to make aware the status of the identified vulnerable species were well received during the trips to the three SMC communities.
- The budget allocated for traveling to the project sites was inadequate.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

- Communication with SMC communities proved difficult throughout the project, and perhaps was too ambitious to have continuous participation of the local counterparts since it did not happen.
- Partnerships were sought with the DEPC and Provincial Government Council but these need to be strengthened through lobbying for support towards civil society and local communities.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

- For the SMC communities, access to information on strategies to protect or conserve their environment is inadequate.
- Human resources within the community and the even within the Provincial Government is inadequate.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

****Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:***

- A*** *Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B*** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- C*** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

The challenge of replicating this project or continuing with its activities is determined by the probability of Canal Studio Association accessing further CEPF or other grants. It would be important for future work to collaborate closely with DEPC, the Provincial Government and the SMC communities and counterparts, especially the Penaoru Community since there have an existing Conservation Management Plan.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Canal Studio Association is planning to apply for further CEPF grants to sustain and continue an awareness program on the Santo Mountain Chain, as this current project has shown the great need and demand for it.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

As Canal Studio is an indigenous organization, with indigenous membership of both the Board and normal members, we are well placed to work with local community groups. In working with the SMC communities targeted in the project, the team drew on existing linkages with these communities and ensured to follow correct cultural and social practices to gain entrance to the community and engage with the local people. The team was always welcomed into the community, and at times was asked to justify why they were there requiring further explanation from the team. This is not uncommon in remote parts of Vanuatu that rarely see visitors, especially from local government and non-government organisations.

The SSB team ensured that it did not impose upon the community and encouraged the community to direct discussion and share only what they felt comfortable sharing.

Considering that the project called for enquiry into traditional cultural expressions, the SSB team had to identify who the appropriate person was to speak to about these. In some cases, some knowledge and cultural expressions could not be shared with the team for customary reasons.

The SSB team provided the option and encouragement for SMC communities to participate in Luganville based project activities, however we respected their decision to not take part due to whatever reason they did or did not give us.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name:
Organization name:
Mailing address:
Tel:
Fax:
E-mail:

*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets				
(Enter Grant Term)				
Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant. Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.				
Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2013 to May 30, 2014. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.				Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?				Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.				

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table

