

'Fundraising for conservation' training in the Eastern Afromontane hotspot is delivering results

- By Obaka Torto



Chyulu Hills (Photo: Peter Steward @Flickr)

Financial sustainability is like the Holy Grail for conservation NGOs. It is also one of the [four main Strategic Directions of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund \(CEPF\) investment strategy for the Eastern Afromontane biodiversity hotspot](#). Thus, in 2014, CEPF funded a range of fundraising training programmes which have already led to more money for the hotspot, a new conservation network, and increased self-reliance of marginalised communities – in short, to some tangible results.

In Kenya and Ethiopia: more money

A small grant of USD 20,000 was provided to the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) to train 6 local Civil Society Organisations working in the [Chyulu Hills Key Biodiversity Area](#) (KBA) in Kenya. Using the knowledge acquired during the CEPF-funded training project, one of these CSOs, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, already managed to raise USD 98,000, almost 5 times the cost of the training, from two other sources. Other training participants have also submitted proposals to various donors, but have not been successful yet – which only shows that resilience is a key requirement for fundraising. Never give up!

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Note: Some hyperlinks may no longer be active

In Ethiopia, Fauna & Flora International (FFI) delivered a project planning and fundraising workshop to 15 young conservationists, the first of a series of 3 such trainings across the hotspot (the other 2 are planned for Mozambique in 2015 and Rwanda in 2016). As a direct output of this workshop (which used [this fundraising manual](#)), Dessalegn Obsi Gemedra from Jimma University submitted a proposal to the Rufford Small Grants programme – and got it. His project entitled *Enhancing the conservation of the Vulnerable Black Crowned Crane in Limu districts of Jimma Zone. The case of Ethiopia* was approved for funding; hopefully the first of many more projects to come...



Group picture of training participants and facilitators in Ethiopia. "We had a productive week. Thanks to the organizers who helped us understand the issue of fundraising better and who guided us to be competitive to secure funds," said Kalkidan Esayas of Addis Ababa University. "I am now well informed on KBAs and their need for conservation. The training workshop was very informative that I gained knowledge and skills on project development and fund raising for conservation projects that can attract donors," Alemneh Amare of Wolkitie University added. (Photo: FFI)

A new network in Yemen

CEPF is highly committed to developing conservation capacity in Yemen, but first wanted to find out what was most urgently needed. It therefore asked Majdi Salameh of Enviromatics in Jordan to carry out a participatory capacity needs assessment among the conservationists of Yemen. This exercise was completed in July 2014, and was immediately followed up by a grant to the United Society for Developing Water Resources and Environment, also in Jordan, to provide a range of training programmes in Yemen based on the report's conclusions.

The first training was scheduled for November 2014 in Sana'a, but unfortunately by that time the political situation in Yemen had deteriorated to a point that it was deemed better to invite the 16 trainees to Jordan, rather than send the 4 facilitators to Yemen. The training, mainly in

Arabic, covered conservation management techniques, project design and fundraising, and the application of safeguards (especially Environmental Impact Assessments).

In addition to the success of the training itself, the project also spontaneously led to the creation of an active group of Yemeni conservationists, working together to identify and address conservation challenges in Yemen. This is the first such network in Yemen and it is expected that this enthusiastic group of people will be highly instrumental in protecting Yemen's unique biodiversity in the long term – in and outside of the Eastern Afromontane KBAs.



Group members discussing Environmental Impact Assessments in the field (Photo: Enviromatics)

Local empowerment in Rwanda and Uganda

CEPF also provided a small grant to the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) to build the fundraising capacity of 2 local network CBOs around the mountain gorilla parks in Rwanda ([Volcanoes National Park KBA](#)) and Uganda ([Bwindi Impenetrable National Park KBA](#)). This project started right at the beginning: identifying the needs of the 4 target villages around these Parks. Trainees gained a better understanding of participatory planning at the village level in order to address the real issues from the village perspective. They were involved in village 'profiling', problem analyses, and in identifying and prioritizing viable projects that responded to the communities' needs.

As a result of this project, the beneficiaries developed 12 proposals for funding and together with IGCP managed to raise enough money to implement some of the identified projects. In addition, through the participatory development of these proposals, the CBOs were also willing to fund some of the projects using funds available from revenue generated from tourism (i.e. through Park gate fees benefit sharing mechanisms). This shows that the project did not only build technical fundraising skills, but also allowed local community members to gain a better understanding of their situation, and to identify ways that they could take *their own measures* with resources at hand, to improve the situation toward their own collective vision.

[Read a related story [here](#) about how a parallel project aims to make the Park fees revenue sharing at Bwindi more equitable between men and women...]

So: training works!

Building on these promising results, CEPF will continue to support capacity building efforts across the Eastern Afromontane hotspot. A new 30-month, hotspot-wide programme is about to kick-off, with the sole aim to strengthen local civil society organisations to become more sustainable and more effective.

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To the trainees of the above-mentioned projects: thank you for your commitment to protecting the Eastern Afromontane Key Biodiversity Areas – and good luck with your continued fundraising efforts!

To other donors interested in funding projects in the Eastern Afromontane hotspot: please feel free to [get in touch with us](#), so we can share our portfolio of grants with you. Together we can even more effectively support local capacity development and community conservation [where it matters most](#).

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation. More information on CEPF can be found at www.cepf.net and on www.birdlife.org/africa/project/cepf-eastern-afromontane-hotspot

BirdLife International, together with IUCN and the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, form the Regional Implementation Team that supports CEPF with their investment in the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot.

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