



# WORKSHOP REPORT

## Introduction to environmental laws and citizenship in Seychelles

For leaders of community-based organisations (CBOs)

December 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, La Digue

### BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Like most countries Seychelles has a series of laws in place to ensure protection of the environment. Additionally, we have laws and policies guiding citizen participation in ensuring that these laws are upheld. The aim of this two-day workshop being held on La Digue was to familiarize CBO leaders with the range of environmental laws in place, and strategies for their groups to act as watchdogs to help ensure that the environment is protected as intended under these laws. The workshop was held on La Digue Island and open to CBO leaders from Mahe, Praslin and La Digue – with a maximum participation of 2 representatives from each group. CBOs were informed of the workshop by email, phone and SMS. The workshop was organised by the NGO Sustainability for Seychelles as part of their GEF SGP project to engage civil society in sustainable waste management and is being co-funded under the GEF mainstreaming biodiversity project.

### WORKSHOP COORDINATION AND FACILITATION

The workshop was organised by Sustainability for Seychelles using a workshop programme for school wildlife club leaders that had previously been developed by S4S for SIM/University of Seychelles in collaboration with Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles and the GEF/GOS/UNDP (Mainstreaming Biodiversity project). The workshop was facilitated by Michele Martin from Sustainability for Seychelles, assisted by Ginnie Laurencine, S4S project consultant. The booklet “Environmental Protection in Seychelles: know your rights and responsibilities” produced by WCS in 2013 was distributed to participants and used as reference throughout the workshop.

### WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The workshop was intended to help the participants:

- 1) Have a basic understanding of the environmental laws of Seychelles
- 2) Be familiar with the principles of environmental citizenship
- 3) Be inspired to become more active environmental citizens, playing their part to uphold the environmental laws of Seychelles.

## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Participants were mainly CBO leaders from Mahe, though one CBO participant was from La Digue. In addition, we were joined on day 1 by the PUC IWRM project coordinator for La Digue and the GEF SGP coordinator. A total of 12 CBO leaders attended the workshop – the list of participants can be found in Annex 1.

## WORKSHOP AGENDA

### Day 1 – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December – ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS IN SEYCHELLES

Timing	Topic
8:30	Introduction, overview of programme
9:00	How are environmental laws made?
9:30	Overview of Seychelles legal documents for protection of the environment
10	break
10:15	Groupwork: getting familiar with our environmental laws
12:30	Lunch break
1:30	Group presentations and discussion
2:30	Role play: upholding the law
3:30	Wrap up, day evaluation
	Homework: survey on environmental citizenship

### Day 2 – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December - ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

Timing	Topic
8:30	Overview of programme
8:45	Homework survey
9:15	Being an environmental citizen
9:30	Group work: exercising our right and responsibility to uphold the law
10	break
10:15	Group work cont'd then presentations
12:00	Conclusion and evaluation
12:30	Lunch

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The first day of the workshop was held at the dining hall of La Digue school – we had planned to hold it there for the two days, but we changed the venue to Maybelle's guesthouse for the Sunday morning session as it was more convenient. The workshop food was catered by Zerof Guesthouse and snacks by Marlene Ah-Kon. Participants stayed in three different locations: Zerof guesthouse, Zerof self-catering, and Ma Belle Amie (Maybelle's guesthouse). This proved to be somewhat awkward for socializing outside of the workshop hours as the guesthouses were spread out over a fairly large area of Anse La Reunion.

Each participant was given a copy of the WCS booklet on Environmental Protection in Seychelles: Know your Rights and Responsibilities. S4S had also printed out 6 sets of the main environmental acts currently in use in Seychelles:

- *Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles (1993)*
- *Wild Animals and Birds Protection Act (1961, rev.1991)*
- *Environmental Protection Act (1994)*
- *Fisheries Act (rev.1991)*

- *Breadfruit and other Trees Protection Act (1917)*
- *Town and Country Planning Act (1972)*
- *National Parks and Nature Conservancy Act (1969)*
- *State Land and River Reserves Act (1903, rev.1991)*

The program for Day 1 went according to the schedule, although we did not do the role play activity at the end of the day due to time constraints.

By the end of the first day all participants were familiar with the major acts and laws, and were able to peruse through the legal documents to find out about laws being broken in different scenarios and the consequences. It became clear that in many instances more than one environmental law is being broken and that these may pertain to more than one Act. The group work resulted in very fruitful discussions about different scenarios and also what CBOs can do in different situations. We agreed that it would have been more effective to have a representative from MEE present to comment on the different Acts and even the details of real life cases. However, the group of participants included people with diverse backgrounds, experience and knowledge related to environmental law that enriched our discussions significantly. When clarification was needed about some of the laws, we called Iris Carolus an environmental lawyer who has been involved in drafting several of Seychelles' environmental laws over the years. The feeling by the end of Day 1 was of general satisfaction with the discussions and collegial atmosphere. Veronique Bonnelame from GEF SGP topped off Day 1 by explaining to the group about how the GEF small grants programme works.

Everyone was given the homework task of interviewing someone on the street about their general knowledge and opinion of environmental laws and enforcement and a discussion of participant's findings started up the programme for Day 2. In general, people found that most of those they interviewed, who were mainly adults, had some very general knowledge of environmental laws, particularly those related to tree felling, poaching, noise pollution, other pollution and littering. However, most of the interviewees had little confidence in the enforcement aspect. They also pointed out that the population needed to be better sensitized about the laws through education and awareness programmes.

Following this discussion we went over some of the principles of environmental citizenship, discussing the different options CBOs have for helping to make sure that environmental laws are followed and justice is done when they are not. For this we used the WCS booklet as a reference. As we went through the strategies for action, we discussed real issues CBOs are facing now in their communities, including the proposal for a hotel development at Cap Ternay. We reviewed the EIA process and how/where CBOs can speak up most effectively when they are in support of or against a project. We agreed that EIA and other public meetings could be a good opportunity for practising environmental citizenship and making a difference, but that other forms of action such as petitions, or filling in EIA comment forms were also needed.

We finished up by going around the group to give everyone a chance to reflect on the workshop and what they learned or wanted to do next. The following points were raised in this session:

- CBO's need to be vigilant to stay aware of what is going on in our communities, particularly when it comes to development and ownership of land / natural sites
- CBOs need to play the role of watch dogs in their communities, as individuals our voices are not always heard – as a group we can be more effective. But we need a better word than WATCH DOG to describe our role – maybe COMMUNITY WATCH

- It's great to get CBOs together to learn and share – important that they all go now to share with their members and their communities
- We need to have follow up sessions so that CBOs can continue to learn and share and network
- Some of the information was new and built on knowledge participants already had.
- The workshop related to some people's work as well as their involvement with the community.
- CBOs should all have a hard and/or soft copy of all of Seychelles' environmental laws and be kept updated as changes occur with the development of the new Biodiversity Act.
- Environmental concerns need to be addressed by the government, and the laws enforced but the system will work much better if the community are more aware and involved.
- Education is the best way to move forward, and CBOs are in a good position to do this if they are given support and help with networking.
- CBOs need more training in advocacy and lobbying – recent workshop offered by CEPS/LUNGOS could be offered to CBOs especially.
- A new umbrella association to group all CBOs might be a useful way of keeping CBOs connected and facilitate collaboration towards important national causes when needed. It was agreed to have a meeting in January for all CBOs to further discuss this idea and how it relates to CEPS (LUNGOS).

**Photos of the workshop can be found in Annex 2**

## **WORKSHOP EVALUATION**

At the end of Day 2, 11 participants filled in an evaluation form. The following feedback was received:

<p>1. What did you learn that was new?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental laws and acts (7)</li> <li>• Consequences and enforcement of environmental laws</li> <li>• No reply</li> <li>• Respect for each other</li> <li>• Giving CBOs useful baggage to help them be more powerful and effective</li> <li>• About the power SFA officers have to arrest, search and seize illegal catch/goods on vessels</li> </ul>
<p>2. What did you like best about the workshop?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning about environmental laws and acts</li> <li>• Exchanging experiences among other colleagues</li> <li>• Working in groups (3)</li> <li>• Togetherness of colleagues / friendly participation (2)</li> <li>• Presentations (2)</li> <li>• Making new friends / meeting lovely like minded people</li> <li>• Sharing ideas</li> <li>• Learning more about the environment</li> <li>• Sharing ideas and respecting each other / open and free discussions (2)</li> <li>• Frankness</li> <li>• Everything</li> </ul>
<p>3. What didn't you like about the workshop?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reply (10)</li> <li>• All participants should have stayed in one accommodation</li> </ul>
<p>4. Recommendations for follow up workshops or activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More workshops to bring CBOs together and allow them to share knowledge (2)</li> <li>• Workshops more often</li> <li>• More professionals to participate alongside us / reps from Environmental Law (2)</li> <li>• A follow up workshop to see if participants have been able to put what they learned in practice or encountered constraints</li> <li>• Continue to work alongside each other</li> <li>• More people / participants</li> <li>• Regional CBO meetings and with other environmental organisations</li> <li>• Form a Green Party</li> <li>• Expand to cover more topics (2)</li> <li>• Change location indoor/ outdoor for the activities</li> <li>• Organise a meeting in 2015 to form a watch dog group (with a better name.....community watch etc.) to address environmental issues.</li> </ul>
<p>5. OTHER COMMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We should teach the public about environmental laws to help them be more aware</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW UP ACTION

- S4S should invite all CBOs to a meeting in January 2015 to discuss next steps for establishing a more formal kind of network association to facilitate collaboration, and training needs and interests.
- Consider strategies for helping CBOs to network and build their capacity e.g. a form of CBO network newsletter to keep groups posted on each others' activities and communicate with partner organisations
- Organise a follow up one day session on environmental laws with MEE specialized staff to learn more about specific incidents and the role CBOs could play as watch dogs and even with enforcement

## ANNEX 1 - WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS & FACILITATORS

ORGANISATION	NAME	TEL.	EMAIL
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Cascade Heritage Trust	Rita Cetoupe *	2521473	
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Grand Anse Mahe CBO	Sheereen Baker	2741403	
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Lasosyasyon Pour Promouvwar Latrankilite ek Respe	Patrick Amade	261-4686	patamade1960@gmail.com
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S4S	Michele Martin	251-9135	martinanzanlwi@gmail.com
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PUC IWRM project for La Digue	Sandra Folette *	271-3047	s.folette@gmail.com

\* Participated on Day 1 only

## ANNEX 2 - WORKSHOP PHOTOS

Breakfast Saturday morning at Zerof



Playing eco-bingo





Mix n match activity – which incidents and offences go with which environmental Act?





Group work on scenarios and the laws and consequences that apply











Lunch on the beach









Veronique from UNDP GEF SGP talking to the group



Sunday morning session at Maybelle's guesthouse

