

# IMPACT REPORT

A 2021 IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT OF CSE AFRICA

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## ABOUT CSE AFRICA

The Centre of Social Excellence (CSE) is a strategic initiative of Earthworm Foundation. CSE's mission is to create an enabling environment for social harmony and realised human rights by equipping companies, civil society, and governments with well-trained social practitioners from the regions where they operate. Diverse social experts who have real-world experience addressing social issues are mobilised to design and teach both long and short courses to participants on the front lines of company-community interactions in Africa, Asia and Latin America. CSE's Africa training centre is based in Yaoundé, Cameroon. For more on CSE, please see [here](#).

## ABOUT EARTHWORM FOUNDATION

Earthworm Foundation is a non-profit organisation that currently has a presence in 20 countries including Cameroon, the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, India, and several locations within Europe. It employs more than 200 people worldwide and works with big and small companies, communities and producers of raw materials to create compelling cases of social and environmental transformation. With an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, the foundation works on the ground with people to create inspiring transformation stories. The focus is on creating value, engaging without judging and carrying hope and a positive vision of the future.

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# PREFACE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This impact study of the Centre of Social Excellence (CSE) Africa was carried out by a five-person team led by Dr Tanya Murphy in 2021. It incorporates feedback and input from 174 surveys and interview responses, conducted online and during a field visit to Cameroon and the Ivory Coast.

### Key findings

#### 1) Transformed professionals

Students graduating from both CSE's short and long courses report a great impact on their personal and professional development. They benefit from personal growth, greater intercultural tolerance, and soft skill development in communication and problem-solving. Students graduate with excellent technical know-how in social management and a thirst for bringing change to their workplaces. Studying at CSE has a positive impact on their career progression and job security, with a thriving network of alumni offering peer-to-peer support.

#### 2) Strengthened companies

CSE alumni have demonstrably supported companies to develop better social management systems, especially regarding community relations. The approach of CSE alumni brings about a positive culture shift in companies, with a greater focus on workers' rights and sustainable practice. However, despite being highly valued by their employers, CSE alumni often still face significant barriers to impact from within the companies where they work, especially in securing adequate budgets and buy-in from leadership. Many alumni go on to spread CSE approaches and methodologies in the public sector and civil society.

#### 3) Supported communities

CSE alumni are now responsible for social management across extensive regions in Africa. The companies and organisations that CSE alumni work for manage millions of hectares of land, ranging typically from 4,000 to 400,000 HA per company. Moreover, thanks to the efforts of 14 CSE alumni, 28,000 community members have now benefited from conflict resolution processes. Communities across Africa report experiencing positive changes in communications with companies after CSE alumni were in post. Though creating long-term change at a local level requires far-reaching planning and can't be rushed, this report evidences the remarkable impact CSE Africa has had over the past 12 years.

Alongside this report, 5 separate case studies offer a more intimate look into the impact across professionals, companies and communities.

### Looking forward

The report concludes with four reflections which it considers important as CSE develops going forward. These key areas include:

1. Developing new and improved short courses and consultancy services for companies;
2. Investing further in approaches to bring about systemic change in Africa together with Earthworm Foundation;
3. Developing further post-course networks and continuing learning and visibility;
4. Exploring a new funding model for CSE Africa.

More detailed recommendations are found in a separate Learning Report.

## PREFACE

# IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**94%**

of long course alumni continue to work in social management



**97%**

Rate of completion for students enrolled in CSE courses



**82%**

Percentage of alumni rated the CSE courses they followed as 'important' or 'very important' to their work

\*Based on survey results from a May 2021 alumni survey (long courses)



Figure based on CSE's monitoring of 2009-2018 long course alumni's employment.



**4,000 - 400,000**

typical range of hectares of land managed by companies where CSE alumni work\*



**5,000 to 1 million**

Typically range of community members impacted per company



**110**

students have graduated from the CSE short courses

**103**

students have graduated from the CSE long courses



**97%**



of CSE alumni continue to network with fellow alumni and trainers

**59%**



of CSE alumni found employment within one year of completing the long course

**80%**



of long course alumni have organised training for colleagues



**95**

organisations impacted in

**16**

countries across Africa with

**45%**

alumni in the private sector

## PREFACE

# METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

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This impact evaluation study was carried out by a five-person team led by Dr Tanya Murphy (Switzerland) with Jacob Warn (UK), Dr Glenn O'Neil (Switzerland), Gilbert Fokou (the Ivory Coast) and Julien Seka (Cameroon).

As the first external evaluation since the inception of the CSE Africa in 2008 and commissioned by Earthworm, this study aimed to assess the impact of the CSE on its alumni, the companies and other workplaces at which alumni went on to work, and on the environment and communities affected. In addition, the study sought to draw out learning about CSE's best practices and how these can be optimised for maximum impact.

The research was carried out combining qualitative and quantitative methods including:

- A survey carried out by CSE in June 2021 of CSE alumni that have participated in the long courses; 57 responses were received with a 63% completion rate; therefore the number of responses to each question varies.
- A survey carried out by CSE in May 2021 of CSE alumni that have participated in the short courses: 24 responses were received with a 38% completion rate; therefore the number of responses to each question varies.
- A survey of CSE trainers in May 2021 with 11 responses received with a 100% completion rate.



- A field visit to Cameroon and the Ivory Coast in June 2021 carried out by Tanya Murphy where interviews and discussions were held with 16 CSE alumni, of which 5 were short course and 11 long course, 12 employers and colleagues in 6 companies that employ alumni, 3 employers and colleagues from 2 non-governmental organisations, 10 community stakeholders of alumni's work, including 2 NGOs, 3 local chiefs, 2 local government representatives, 3 community association representatives, and 1 trainer and 4 Earthworm staff who are also trainers. In sum, as well as 6 community meetings of between 12 and 25 participants each, 46 persons were interviewed during the visit [see acknowledgements].
- 30 Semi-structured interviews conducted remotely between May and July 2021 with 16 CSE alumni, of which 2 short course alumni, 2 company staff employing CSE alumni, 1 employer from a non-governmental organisation, 4 donors from 3 organisations, 2 trainers, and 5 Earthworm staff, who are also trainers [see appendix].
- A desk review of available documentation, reporting, registration and monitoring data since the beginning of CSE's operations.



# CSE AFRICA

## ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

CSE Africa occupies a unique place in the social management ecosystem in Africa. Trainers, students, companies and donors recognise its clearly defined and differentiating impact and its track record for transforming company practice and bringing about long-term social good. We have identified 3 key factors to its success: quality training, student calibre, and timely intervention.

### Quality training

The CSE programmes are clearly defined in the market of natural resource social management courses, filling a market gap with a quality and innovative product. It offers both long and short courses.

The 10-month 'Social Manager Long Course' serves recent university graduates and early career professionals from across sub-Saharan Africa. This course consists of 4 months of theoretical and practical training in Yaoundé, Cameroon, followed by a 5-6 month internship with companies, NGOs and governments while still under the coaching of CSE trainers. This long course finishes with a 1-month session in which students document and share their internship projects.

The CSE Africa 'Short Courses' are offered to professionals who are already employed but need to build key skills or learn new social management methods. These courses can be customised based on the needs and requests of the companies, organisations and governments.

CSE offers top-quality training modules on Community Relations, Conflict Resolution, Workers' Rights, Respect for Indigenous Peoples, and Social Management Systems. These modules are not just theoretical but build practical skills. The training is 'solution-oriented', a component often missing in formal education and in-house company training.\*

Many of the expert trainers who deliver courses with CSE substantiate this, reflecting on how the majority of courses available in Central and Western Africa are either university-based and far too academic, or on the other extreme, are 1-2 day workshops that offer little sustained value.

"The special relationship with the companies is what CSE brings and the practical problem-orientated teaching", one trainer opines. As another trainer reports, "The quality of education in West Africa is generally very low. What they are able to teach is limited. Sociology degrees are old fashioned - and don't focus on practical skills. In comparison, CSE is very much a problem-solving programme and that makes it very unique." Students also recognise this differentiation: as one alumnus reports, "At university, we study concepts, but in CSE, we make them concrete and learn how to use them in the sector."

Students also frequently point to the different nature of CSE training, from being asked to wear casual clothes at the initial interview, to creating maps on the ground with stones, and being asked to draw their emotions. Students speak in the warmest terms about their "inspiring" trainers, even from ten years previously. They recall their trainers' passion and their value-driven approaches, espousing commitments to issues such as feminism or community rights.

Feedback surveys of students report consistently high ratings of trainers; 100% (15/15) of students of the 2020 long course found that the training met their expectations with all recommending highly the course (14 rating 10/10 and one rating 9/10 on their intention to recommend the training). CSE alumni also highlighted that several modules proved to be key to their work, referring to their course notes years later.

Surveyed alumni report the impact CSE training had on their ability to influence their jobs in the workplace. 88% of long course alumni reported that CSE's training in Free and prior informed consent (FPIC) was of great use, while 84% reported that community conflict resolution training was useful. A majority of alumni also reported positively on the utility of courses in workers' rights (51%) and workers' conflict resolution (69%).\*\*

\*See sections 1.1 and 1.2 for the impact of this approach on alumni and their careers.

\*\*All survey results cited are from the May 2021 alumni survey (long courses) unless otherwise stated.



## The calibre of CSE students

Prospective students face a rigorous selection process, with face-to-face interviews lasting a full day. As one trainer outlines, “We look for students with the go-get and a less passive approach.” The result is, once accepted, an extremely low drop-out rate, with a 97% completion rate over the past 12 years.

The high calibre of the student intake bears fruit at the internship stage, where employers see a difference between CSE interns, and standard interns, not only by virtue of their training but also thanks to the calibre of the students themselves, ensured by the rigorous selection process. “Usually interns are good at doing what you ask them to do”, reports one HR manager in an Ivorian palm oil company, “CSE interns identify problems and come up with solutions themselves.”

Another employer from a palm oil company in the Ivory Coast reports, “There is a lack of vision among others who have not been trained at the CSE. Indeed, former CSE students propose solutions that are often appropriate, validate them and implement them, whereas others wait for guidance from the management, and sometimes do not implement them effectively.”

**To find our students,  
we seek out the pearls.**

-- CSE staff

This passion for change is evidenced by students themselves. In the recent Phoenix course (see appendix) held in 2020, one student promises to “develop all possible strategies to convince my hierarchy to adhere to good practices in the sustainable management of natural resources.”

Another resolutely states, “My commitment to social change is to go above and beyond to ensure that local relevant communities within a project concession have a socio-economic impact to their livelihoods when a project is implemented on their land.”

**There is a lack of vision among other interns  
who have not been trained at the CSE.**

-- Employer

These bold aspirations are common to many CSE trainees, as discussed in-depth in the case studies of Tatiana Eboua and Victor Yuh Tamanjong (see appendix), demonstrating a keen appetite for learning and social justice.



### Long course graduates



# 103

professionals have graduated  
from CSE's long courses  
since 2009

### Short course graduates

# 110

professionals have graduated  
from CSE's short courses  
since 2009



CSE has intervened at a critical moment.

-- Alumni

## A timely response

Over the past decade, CSE Africa's programmes have been a timely response to growing international and local attention to the social perspectives of natural resource management. The founders of CSE identified a lack of qualified young African professionals who could work within companies to implement social management programmes at the grassroots community level, bringing about change in a "bottom-up" approach.

CSE has been a leader in helping communities and companies negotiate a transition towards just and sustainable societies. This transition has seen increasing numbers of companies seek certification for their operations. As an example, in the forestry sector alone, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification in Africa has [gone from](#) covering just over 2 million hectares in 2004, to 9 million hectares by 2020, more than a four-fold increase.

With the expectation that companies embed sustainable practices in their work and meet internationally recognised standards on the management of natural resources and social practices, CSE-trained staff are able to support companies in transitioning thanks to their expertise in participatory processes and sustainable development.

"CSE has intervened at a critical moment", reports one long course alumni, "when forest certification began to gain momentum and where there was strong pressure from NGOs at the international level." To this end, CSE alumni have a vital role to play. Similarly, another alumnus suggests that "the motivation of the company is really the certification and pressure from governments and buyers to have this. That is what is persuading the company to carry out the social actions."

Together, CSE's quality training, the calibre of its students, and its timely intervention in the early 21st century have created positive conditions of success for the impacts explored herein.

## MINI CASE STUDY 1

# DISCOVER THE 2020 PHOENIX CLASS

In 2020, CSE launched a new class for 15 professionals and recent graduates from 7 African countries to strengthen their capacity in the management of natural resources. The 'Phoenix' class equipped the students with critical new theoretic and practical tools.

### Deeply motivated learners

As with all CSE courses, the selected trainees demonstrated outstanding motivation. One student expressed her desire "to drive change while taking into account the concerned populations". Another wanted "to contribute to sustainable management and help guarantee the needs of all generations."

Certain trainees with prior experience in the sector had very specific learning aspirations. "I was animated by a spirit of problem solving at CSE", said one trainee, "and I believed this could only be achieved through training which would provide me with the necessary skills to facilitate cohabitation between my company, which holds the mining titles, and the communities, which hold the land titles."

### Broadening horizons

During the course, the trainees developed a greater awareness of cultural perspectives, from their fellow students and communities visited. "There was so much to learn from everyone that sometimes it feels like I have been to all six countries of my fellow students just by having listened to their experiences," one trainee stated. "The field visit in Dja Biosphere reserve remains engraved in my mind," another trainee recalls. "The women of this village welcomed us like 'little princes' to the point where the fear of first contact vanished and we were easily integrated."

Equipped with this broader social understanding, the trainees are motivated to set about creating social change for good. "I intend to make my superiors understand the importance of social aspects within our structure by showing them the advantages of integrating it into the company's activities," resolves one trainee. "I will use the training acquired in the identification of stakeholders in the activities of my company, the choice of community projects, and especially in understanding the perception of the community to work with it and bring it to join and support my company in the exercise of its activities", states another, committing to more inclusive and participatory processes.

### Putting learning into practice

The Phoenix class were, at the time of writing in August 2021, completing their internships across many sectors. Eight were working in palm oil, with the others working in sectors including coconut, cassava, rubber, oil & gas, and gold mining. They are spread throughout central and western Africa, with four in the Congo, one each in Gabon and Zambia, two each in Cameroon, Nigeria and Liberia, and three in the Ivory Coast.

### Taking flight

The Phoenix class graduate with renewed purpose, energy and technical know-how. "I am committed to ensuring an improvement in the recognition of indigenous and local population rights in business development in a win-win situation, for both companies and local populations", concludes one trainee. Another, reflecting the entrepreneurial spirit of many CSE graduates, says, "My commitment to social change is to go above and beyond to ensure that local relevant communities within a project concession have a socio-economic impact to their livelihoods when a project is implemented on their land."

Overcoming the difficulties of a global pandemic, the Phoenix class demonstrates that for a whole generation of young professionals, the fight for just and sustainable social management across Africa is as strong as ever.



# **1 TRANSFORMED PROFESSIONALS**

How CSE programmes create lifelong change

# IMPACT 1 INTRODUCTION

CSE programmes evidence a wide range of impacts on students graduating from the long courses and short courses. This impact is observed across 5 key areas: personal development, professional soft skills, technical know-how, big picture thinking and career progression.

## Key Takeaways

- Young professionals benefit from personal growth, including greater intercultural tolerance, and soft skill development in communication and problem-solving
- Alumni graduate with excellent technical know-how in social management and a thirst for bringing change to their workplaces
- Studying at CSE has a positive impact on career progression and job security
- CSE Africa has a thriving network of alumni offering peer-to-peer support
- While not as unanimous, short course alumni also develop their soft and hard skills and put this into practice at their places of work

**CSE gave me the professional platform to start but I think the greatest lessons are the personal ones**

-- CSE alumni

## Impact 1.1

### Enhanced personal development

Students graduating from both CSE's short and long courses report a great impact on their personal development. This includes changed attitudes and intercultural cooperation.

In the words of one alumnus, the CSE training "makes you grow, it makes you evolve and maybe even it reorients your career." Alumni report that the trainers "opened our eyes to the world, and opened our minds." Through innovative and interactive learning methodologies and inspiring trainers, students report deep, personal learning.

Every single student from the 2020 cohort expressed satisfaction or great satisfaction with the course and its trainers. "At CSE", says one alumnus, "you try to find your place in a world which is diverse and varied, to develop a spirit of tolerance and a managerial spirit, since there were practices which consisted in managing our lives a little bit during the training. We forged ourselves personally."

Developing intercultural tolerance and cooperation is also a pronounced impact. One alumna recalls the significance of the intensive and shared learning experience with colleagues at the training centre. "We ate as a group; we had to adapt; I remember one morning one colleague went to buy bread, which was really hard, and it hurt my throat! I was so angry! But the policy of eating as a group really helped me; we had to blend into a professional community of people from different countries."

Another alumnus makes the same point, "[the courses] bring everyone together from different backgrounds and countries and after class, you are forced to be together." Since beginning, 104 students have undergone similar learning experiences through long courses at the CSE training centre. One alumna concludes, "with CSE, I feel we have a second family."

## Impact 1.2

### Developed professional soft skills

Through the training and internships at CSE, it is clear that alumni develop a set of professional soft skills, including problem-solving and communication.

“There has been a change in the way I analyse problems, conflicts and the context of any environment”, states one alumnus.” Many alumni fondly recall elements of their training and how they apply this in their daily work. “Certain key take-home messages remain with you”, recalls one alumnus. “You draw from different modules, from qualitative research and understanding power dynamics in companies, to using all five senses when interacting with communities”.

These skills are noticed even by community members. As one village chief commented, “You feel that she studied. She has a way to talk with the community members. I think that she has a way to communicate that works.”

Through learning methodologies at CSE, one third of surveyed alumni who joined CSE’s long courses reported an increased capacity to speak in public. “Sometimes [our trainer] would give you a book and you’d have to read the whole book and prepare a presentation in just 1 day. It changed my mentality completely!” Another graduate reports, “We had to prepare presentations in just 15 minutes, so I have learned to think twice as fast.”



# 82%

Percentage of alumni rated the CSE courses they followed as 'important' or 'very important' to their work

\*Based on survey results from a May 2021 alumni survey (long courses)

## Impact 1.3

### Increased technical know-how

Evidence demonstrates that students of CSE programmes graduate with excellent technical know-how in social management practices. During the programme, students cover 11 core modules. As one alumnus states, “the training boosted my performance in community engagement, conflict management, participatory mapping, stakeholder engagement [and] adherence to company standards.” Another reports that “the training has helped me to apply my knowledge and skills by developing new ideas and techniques working with communities as well as various stakeholders.”

82% of alumni rate the usefulness of CSE long courses as important or very important to their work. One short course graduate said, “I already had notions of social management prior to this course, but everything about law and rights was interesting and new for me.” Another short course student reported, “I had state-level experience, but now I also have experience in local government and when I discuss with other sectors, I have a better understanding.”

“You learn to hear what is not said”, reflects one short course alumna. The focus on tools such as FPIC (Free and Prior Informed Consent) set CSE alumni apart, enabling graduates to engage with communities holistically - not just with the elites - and obtain their full consent.

#### CSE long course modules (in 2018)

- Contribution to local development
- Preparation to internship
- Preparation to professional life
- Companies and workers
- Community and Indigenous People Relations
- Concession management
- Anthropology & Social Methodologies
- Embedding Social Approach in Companies
- Conflict management
- Social Aspects of Forest Conservation
- Free Prior Informed Consent



## MINI CASE STUDY 2

# THE PITFALLS AND LEARNINGS OF ENGAGING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

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*A short course alumna based in an NGO in the Ivory Coast recalls the challenges of embedding Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) into her community work during a recent reforestation project. Even after receiving CSE's expert training, putting it into practice can still sometimes be hard!*

"Recently, we were planning a reforestation project with a community of cocoa planters. When I spoke with them, they told me they had 'no problem' with us planting the new trees. But then, before we knew it, there was sabotage! They poured pesticide on the seedlings in the nursery we created."

I realised that behind their 'yes' to our reforestation project, there were clearly concerns from certain community members that had not been expressed. We needed them to see the nurseries not as a threat but as an enabler for their plantations in terms of both land rights and soil quality.

I clearly did not apply FPIC so well in this instance! Not all village members had put their trust in the process. In hindsight, we should have gotten more involvement from the start, even in the little jobs like transporting the seedlings. We did not give enough time for the community to take on ownership. It needed to be their nursery, not ours."

## Impact 1.4

### Bigger picture thinking

Alumni state that CSE fosters a 'bigger picture' understanding of social and environmental issues. The breadth of the courses introduced new concepts and equipped graduates with the ability to work in multiple contexts and scenarios. Of interviewed alumni, 100% agreed that CSE had a positive impact on their world view and workplace perspectives.

"The CSE training opened my mind to the sustainable management of natural resources", responded one alumnus. "Before I was so focused on mining, with a focus on extraction and the earnings the company can make. But the training allowed me to broaden the scope of the focus on other natural resources, and especially by adding a focus on what the impacted communities get from the management of natural resources."



Another alumna recalls, "we came to CSE with our respective academic and professional backgrounds: foresters, anthropologists, sociologists, etc. However, when you arrive at CSE, you redefine your vision of community support, your vision of human resources management. I had previously been much more focused on money, and to be more precise, on timber... Once I moved to CSE, the training really redefined things. It really impacted me personally because when I look at an offer, I always wonder about what the community is gaining from it."

Long course alumni also evidence an ambition to go one step further: to generate social impact that is above and beyond their immediate place of work. Understanding the social issues are more than just a job, alumni try to take their findings on a community level and act as agents for social change in places of greater influence.

Alumni report that this self-driven, entrepreneurial spirit is something fostered at CSE. "It's true that I work with communities, but what's interesting is that I take the results of this work and I try to influence at a higher level for example by participating in discussions on new national policies for example. I think that fits into the entrepreneurial spirit."

**The training allowed me to  
broaden the scope of the focus**

-- CSE alumni



## Impact 1.5

### Fast-tracked career progression

Alumni report that their career opportunities were improved following training at CSE. The courses support young professionals to deepen and refine their competencies, setting them apart from colleagues.

“The biggest impact of the CSE on me was to get a job very quickly. The fact that I came from an academic structure that trains specifically on social aspects brought a plus on me compared to some of my colleagues who were trained internally.”

Overall, 59% of CSE alumni found employment within one year after completing the long course, with 45% saying their job search was not difficult. Based on the CSE monitoring data, half of CSE graduates of long courses work in the private sector, with virtually 100% of graduates working in a field related to social management.

**CSE boosted my audacity to look for a job with a lot of optimism and self-confidence.**

-- CSE alumnus

“Professionally, the training at CSE has already produced fruits because I was able to get a new job”, reports one alumna. “At CSE”, says another, “we learned new things that will help us sell ourselves in the labour market, with new skills and knowledge.” One short course alumni reported that “due to my high level of performance, I have been promoted two different times since the training in 2018.”

Career advancement is set off in the early days through the programme’s internship requirement, from which many graduates immediately find jobs. “Before the end of our training”, one alumna relates, “nearly half of the students were already employed by the companies where they had completed their internship”. Indeed, nearly half of all long course alumni acquire their first job during their internship, or from a network with the CSE community.

**I have been promoted two different times since the training in 2018**

-- CSE alumna

This CSE network is a powerful benefit, evidenced by 97% of long course alumni stating they have continued networking with trainers, classmates or staff through social media, WhatsApp and face-to-face. “It was a CSE trainer who helped me to get my first job, and this is the case for several other CSE students”, states one alumnus.

Another alumna reports how “the training at CSE served indirectly to my career because it made it possible for me to get some contacts that I subsequently used for the development of my career.” At the same time, many alumni highlighted that the potential of the alumni network was not being fully optimised.

With a supportive structure and network of like-minded professionals, career growth comes through a culture of confidence. As one alumna quite simply states, “CSE boosted my audacity to look for a job with a lot of optimism and self-confidence.”

## MINI CASE STUDY 3

# THE IMPACT OF THE CSE SHORT COURSE

The impact of CSE short courses is significant, however on the whole, this impact is not as far-reaching as that of the long courses. Of 24 surveyed short course alumni and 7 interviewed alumni, overall they reported on the positive impact that the short courses had on their personal and professional lives and in their workplace. However, the extent of this positive impact was less than that expressed by long course alumni.

When asked how useful CSE training was for their current work, 60% rated it very important (5/5) or important (4/5) compared to 82% for the long courses. 81% said that they had influenced top management decision-making in their companies or organisations (rating 5/5 or 4/5) which is comparable to the long courses. 29% of short courses alumni had organised training for people in their organisations following the CSE training, compared to 40% for long course alumni. Networking with fellow CSE alumni was also less effective for shorter course alumni: 78% for short course alumni compared to 97% for long course alumni.\*

Here's what short course alumni say, in their own words.

### Developing soft skills and professional know-how

*"There was even a project management class and, though I already had experience in this, it was lovely how the trainer approached this topic. I learned a lot about listening skills. I really liked all the tutors and I learned a bit from each one of them."*

*"The course is practical and really well adapted to the world of work as the issues covered are those of the business [I'm in]."*

*"The course taught me a better way to manage community relations. Before CSE, I had an approach of fear, and I thought I should give the communities minimum information. I realised that this is wrong. Rather give them all the information and be transparent. That way, everyone becomes more responsible."*

### Putting learning into practice

*"I was able to put my learning into practice immediately in Liberia. This practice was key."*

*"I put participatory social mapping to use immediately. It is important for the community to know itself even better and in terms of buy-in for the social projects we do together."*

*"The training has helped me to apply the knowledge and skills acquired at CSE by developing new ideas and techniques working with communities as well as various stakeholders. Due to my high level of performance, I have been promoted two different times since the training in 2018."*

### A community of peers

*"We have a WhatsApp group for our cohort which is still active after 4 years. We share friendship and our work concerns sometimes. We even raised money together for 2 mills, one for manioc and one for maize, and for the village where we did our fieldwork."*

\*For the short survey results featured (using percentages), only 10 responses were received out of the 24 alumni who responded to the survey (considerable drop-out from start to end of survey - only 38% responded to all questions).



# **2 STRENGTHENED COMPANIES**

The added value CSE Africa alumni bring to their workplaces

## IMPACT 2 INTRODUCTION

The CSE Africa programmes have responded in a timely manner to a local and international shift that places an increasing importance on social management practices. As a result of CSE's training programmes, companies have benefited in 4 key areas: social management systems, workers' rights, company culture and community relations. A 5th associated impact is greater influence across other sectors, including government and civil society.

Despite these benefits, there remain significant barriers to having an impact in companies, especially regarding leadership buy-in and having adequate resources to bring about change.

### Key Takeaways

- CSE alumni have demonstrably supported companies to develop better social management systems, especially regarding community relations
- The approach of CSE alumni brings about a positive culture shift in companies, with a greater focus on workers' rights and sustainable practice
- 80% of alumni go on to train their peers within their places of work
- Alumni face significant barriers from within companies, especially in securing adequate budgets and buy-in from leadership

## Impact 2.1

### Stronger company culture

All stakeholders report that CSE alumni contribute towards a shift in culture away from a purely profit-driven focus to one of increased social and environmental concern. As one alumnus reflects, "when you arrive in a company after CSE, you have a different state of mind, you no longer have the spirit of just an economist or an industrialist."

In contentious issues such as land rights, CSE staff put an emphasis on bringing about concrete change as opposed to merely window-dressing "redressing wrongs from the past and engaging with communities that feel that land was grabbed from them, over and beyond just waving a land rights document."

This culture shift stems from a bottom-up approach pioneered by CSE alumni, though this can still be challenging. As one newly appointed social manager reflects, "It is hard to work when you want to make change with people who have been here for 20 years." CSE alumni permeate the companies in which they work by disseminating learnings, best practice and value-based approaches on the ground and upwards through the organisation and outwards.

After a group of his staff graduated from short and long courses from CSE, one general manager from a Cameroonian palm oil company noted, "It is the attitude they bring back, a new consciousness of what should be part of their job, about the way of relating with and responding to stakeholders: even I've been sensitised by all this!" Another manager from the same company, who has had at least 4 CSE alumni staff, says simply: "CSE produces students that take us forward."

**CSE produces students  
that take us forward**

-- Employer





## MINI CASE STUDY 4

# CHANGING COMPANY CULTURE IN A FORESTRY COMPANY IN CAMEROON

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Creating positive culture change also includes embedding better in-company socialisation and cooperation, drawing on the culture of learning and community experienced during the CSE training.

One alumna recalls how “I realised that the social life of the company was a bit icy. Everyone had their own small committee. With the help of a colleague, we were able to galvanise things by encouraging management to take initiatives like celebrating the Labour Day, International Women’s Day, organising round tables to talk about certain subjects like the development of the gender policy of the company.”

She reflects that this stemmed from her time at CSE . “It’s a way of life that was instilled in us from the onset of the training. We had a system where people from different origins and horizons are gathered in a house and you spend months and months in the same house so I think it forges this social side there. This forces people to accept each other because we are from several countries; several nationalities, several ethnic groups, several religions.”

## Impact 2.2

### Better social management systems

CSE alumni self-reported having a 'very positive' or 'positive' influence on social management within their workplace. This influence is largely focused on improved community relations, with a less prevalent improvement on worker relations.

A majority of CSE alumni report making company improvements in conflict management, FPIC, community engagement, and external grievance mechanisms. A significant percentage (25%-50%) also report having a tangible impact in social impact assessment, internal grievance mechanisms, recruitment practices, and health & safety.

**“With a CSE alumnus, you know the job will be well done.”**

*-- Employer*

All the employers surveyed and interviewed rated the contribution of CSE students to their companies highly. The SIPEF-CI case study demonstrates the cumulative impact of CSE students on a company's social management policies and practices over time. The following report from the manager of a timber company in Cameroon is illustrative of the feedback received about alumni productivity.

“CSE graduates suggested adapting procedures of managing conflicts with communities and it was approved by our HQ. Also, they introduced a new policy for recruitment for the local workers: how to publicise openings, receive applications and ensure that all communities are represented: it was also adapted. And when we do audits for the certificates, it is these staff that accompany the auditors. They also look at the results of audits and see what changes are needed.”

In practice, CSE alumni have carried out numerous internal training on social management and stakeholder engagement, including specialised training in these areas for relevant departments.

This further dissemination of CSE's approaches widens the impact of CSE's social management training. 4 out of 5 graduates of long courses have offered coaching and training internally to staff. Nearly half of all graduates have also run external training or coaching. As one field staff in an Ivorian palm oil company comments “I learn from them [the CSE alumni] - on environmental issues, biodiversity and on managing social issues. Once they explain the new procedures to me, I can better explain to the producers.”

In a few cases, alumni have even been able to influence organisational structure as a means of elevating the importance of social practice and increasing the number of staff with a social responsibility focus. For instance, one alumna in Gabon reports successfully securing a monthly budget for social management in each site, including a focal point from the company. An extended example of influencing organisational structure is available in the case study on Tatiana Eboua.

As one employer from a timber company in Cameroon reports, “They have an integrated approach; towards employees and communities. And they have very good tools to put in place.” Another from the palm sector in the Ivory Coast states: “Without CSE, we would have gone forward, but with less expertise. We would have had less mastery on managing environmental and community issues and our progress would have been considerably less.”

In many instances, these new practices have been a determining factor for companies to acquire highly-coveted RSPO certification, and other international quality labels in sustainable resource and social management. As discussed in-depth in the case study on SIPEF-CI (see appendix), with the support of CSE alumni, SIPEF-CI became the first of just two companies to obtain RSPO certification in Ivory Coast.

**80%**   
long course alumni have organised training for colleagues

## Impact 2.3

### Improved workers' rights

CSE alumni have positively contributed to workers' rights. A quarter of alumni of long courses have contributed to improved grievance mechanisms, health and safety, workers' benefits and pay, recruitment processes (especially in regards ethics), and contracts.

In the following instance, an alumnus was able to support a worker to receive a rightful pay rise. "A worker came to me complaining that he has new responsibilities but is not being paid more," recalls the alumnus. "He was a driver of a tractor and had recently been upgraded to a truck. I said he had to follow the official procedures. He submitted his grievance and his situation was reviewed and his pay grade was increased. Before he would have been on his own."

**"He plays the role of internal mediator, for housing conditions for staff for example"**

*-- Employer*

Most employers are appreciative of such alumni efforts. As the manager from the Cameroonian timber company states "He [CSE alumnus] plays the role of internal mediator, for housing conditions for staff for example." Another from the Ivorian palm sector describes concrete changes for staff that the CSE alumnus spearheaded, such as workers' protective equipment and changing rooms for workers, and describes how "all grievances are now put in a register which go straight to the leadership."

Transportation conditions have also been improved by many alumni, which previously saw workers travelling alongside machetes and produce. This is often swiftly improved, with separated trucks mitigating safety concerns.

## Impact 2.4

### Greater influence in public & civil sectors

Outside of companies, CSE alumni are also transforming other sectors. As an Earthworm staff member recognises, "You still have an overwhelming number of people going not only into business but also into government and civil society who are barely trained on how to engage with locals on collaborative decision making and how to respect the rights of local people."

CSE alumni are able to operate across a number of levels, including within NGOs, governments and academic institutions. One alumna reports how in her current position with the government, the techniques she learnt at CSE, especially around FPIC and community engagement remain highly relevant. On the university level, another alumnus has succeeded in expanding the university's forestry courses to include a stronger emphasis on social forestry management. "I am proud of this", he says, "as most of the next generation of foresters will have this social side introduced - which was not the case before."

Even in NGOs that specialise in relations with communities, CSE alumni bring a novel approach that is much appreciated by their employers. One employer explains how his CSE-trained staff member "improved our ability to engage with communities in the field. She brings an approach that opens doors for us in the villages, with a perfect sense of how to communicate and gain trust. She knows, for example, the right time to hold a meeting and she always seeks out voices beyond the elite. Once she sought out a widow whose voice was not heard at the formal village meeting, but who had an important contribution to make about burial sites, which impacted the resulting policy."

**"An overwhelming number of people going into government, business and civil society are barely trained"**

*-- EF Staff*



## MINI CASE STUDY 5

# CROSS-SECTOR TRAINING IN GUINEA

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Current students from Guinea from the 2021 CSE long course demonstrate how an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach to training is positively influencing regional efforts in sustainable mining practices.

Participants from local government, the mining industry and civil society organisations were looking for knowledge to strengthen the collaboration between mining companies and local populations, with the aim to serve the communities in a better way. The choice of CSE was motivated by its strength to build local capacity on the ground and foster long-term collaboration and good relationships between companies and local stakeholders.

The 4 participants interviewed during their CSE internships were all highly pleased with the training in Yaoundé, especially by the quality of the modules and trainers, and the general organisation of the course. As social practitioners, the interviewees felt that the knowledge acquired during the training will contribute to bring a substantial change in the attitudes, behaviours and practices of stakeholders from various sectors.

This will be achieved by encouraging compliance with standards and good practices and collaboration with communities, contributing to a change of behaviour of companies, authorities and civil society towards the community, and using their newly-gained knowledge for the benefit of communities.

“I am already implementing the knowledge acquired from CSE in the annual planning I have been asked to do. The first recommendation when I came was to do participatory mapping of the municipality where I am,” reported one participant from the local government, “I have to include this mapping in my annual planning to highlight HCVs (high conservation value) for communities.”

Another participant says, “We have a lot of NGOs operating in our area that were not even recognised. Today we call on them to come and sit with us and share good practices as – and this I learned during the training – we all have the same goals. We used to look at each other like enemies while we are all fighting for the same objective, that is, the well-being of the community.”



## Impact 2.5

### Improved community relations

Companies working with CSE-trained staff benefit from more open communication with local communities. One Cameroonian NGO employer reports how their CSE intern “improved our ability to engage with communities in the field. This approach has opened doors for us in the villages, and enabled us to communicate and gain trust.” Another employer, from the Ivorian palm sector states “it is really good to have trained people to avoid conflicts and to establish friendships with the communities. It is helpful to all of us.”

Beyond trust, in many cases, CSE alumni have formalised relations with local communities. With their help, companies have developed formal structures to deal with all layers of society, not just the chiefs or those with ‘the loudest voice’.

The benefits of this goes both ways: the company better understands the community’s aspirations and needs, and the community better understands the constraints felt by the companies and what is realistic to expect from a corporate body. With CSE staff who are able to frame arguments in the most constructive ways, the company can better represent its interests to the community.

This approach has opened doors for us in the villages

-- CSE Employer

Many communities now have established regular channels of communication between the company, civil society, local administration and themselves, as well as newly created social development plans and grievance mechanisms. As one employer from a Cameroonian palm oil company quite simply puts it, referring to their dealings with communities, “we now have processes.”

One palm oil company reports how their CSE intern “improved our ability to engage with communities in the field. This approach has opened doors for us in the villages, enabled us to communicate and gain trust.” In turn, a community member recalls how a CSE-trained staff “helped [me] with how to put forward problems to the company. Now they keep their promises when we go to them. Now it is in writing.”

Ultimately, improved communication opens doors for companies. As one alumna reports, “I was able to make interventions and sign 9 memoranda of understanding with communities.”





## MINI CASE STUDY 6

# PLAYING THE LONG GAME

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*One alumna describes her approach to working in a high-tension environment, where relations between a large sugar plantation in Cameroon and the surrounding communities had broken down.*

"There were tensions everywhere. Broken promises around wells, schools, and recruitment within the business; too much fertilisation by aeroplane which had damaged smallholders' crops. Meanwhile, the company said that the smallholders planted purposely too close to the plantations [to get the compensation]!"

At the start, it was hard. When I held meetings, people just came to disrupt and not engage. Eventually, though, we created a local development plan, identifying the needs and prioritising them. We needed to engage everyone. At first, we only had about 10 out of 50 people showing up and they just saw our meetings as a waste of time. We had to really work hard to negotiate, to explain to the chief and to the others the logic of our work and how it could be beneficial. Bit by bit, they saw that my language was different to what they were used to. I learned that you must not give promises, this leads to expectations. Eventually, we created a 5 year plan for community engagement."



## MINI CASE STUDY 7

# SIX CHALLENGES TO COMPANY IMPACT

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### Absent budgets: a lack of investment

Often, companies do not have - or do not choose to invest - adequate financial resources for social management. Just 18% of surveyed alumni rated funding in companies as adequate. As one alumna recalls, "when I arrived, we did not have a budget. When we finally secured one, this was a real victory!"

Companies do not always immediately recognise the possible return on the investment of making socially-oriented changes. Companies perceive social issues as expensive and, in the words of one alumna, as 'expenditure departments, not revenue-producing ones.' "That's difficult to overcome", remarks a CSE trainer with a CSE alumni adding 'I'm allowed to make changes, but I don't always have the resources to do so, such as even a vehicle.'

### High turnover of staff

Alumni also report that creating a long-term impact is challenged by the high-turnover of staff in their companies. This drains organisational know-how and expertise on social procedures and frustrates efforts to train staff on an ongoing basis.

### Lack of support from company leaders

There is a striking gap in the perception of alumni regarding the importance of social management to companies as a whole, and to the extent to which this importance is felt by company leadership. Though 80% of alumni reported social management to be 'very important' to the companies in which they work, just 37% of alumni felt that social management practice was 'very important' to company leadership.

As one alumnus reports, the big challenge was to leverage top management to transition from 'doing business as usual' to buy-in, believing in the work of good sustainability practices.

Even if successful, alumni also struggle to ensure this buy-in is more than surface-level interest. As one alumnus reports, "There have been times when we have not been able to defend our position and demands from communities that we have not been able to meet ... Sometimes, whether in companies or in NGOs, there is a will on the surface, but deep down, people do not want things to change until they see a direct benefit from this change."

## Mini case study 7, continued

### The need to tread carefully

Though CSE alumni are often quick to put social issues on the agenda, many alumni report on the necessity of moving slowly and with care. If not, they risk alienating management.

As one alumnus reports, “The risk is coming with a somewhat closed mind like, ‘I will apply everything that I have learned.’ In applying what you have learned at CSE, you must also negotiate with your managers, if you are too rigid, you can easily lose your job.”

“It is a real challenge not to position oneself as a defender of the rights of local communities”, another alumni advises, “but rather as an actor who tries to promote a different vision of sustainable management, which takes into account both the interests of companies and the interests of local communities.” In doing so, alumni are better able to secure the buy-in of companies.

CSE alumni must be careful not to enter the workplace too optimistically and want things to change rapidly. In this regard, one employee in the timber sector reports, “the CSE course doesn't prepare them sufficiently for the realities of the workforce.”

### Over-qualification of alumni

In many instances, the jobs taken up by CSE alumni are in remote regions, supporting communities far away from cities and families, and the salary can be relatively low. As alumni gain more experience, they often move to jobs in more central locations. This makes staff retention difficult and causes a turnover, jeopardising community relations and the possible long-term impact CSE approaches can have in companies. One employer lamented the loss of his CSE-trained staff and commented whistfully that he would not have been able to afford to match his former employee's new salary in Yaoundé.

### Not having a seat at the table

Going forward, companies need to integrate social management into their daily business operations. “Companies need to let social managers into executive meetings”, reports one trainer. Otherwise, business operations and social management practices will not be seen as complementary.

At present, many CSE alumni fulfil technical and operations roles. They can have a more powerful impact when they move into more strategic positions, as seen in the case of Tatiana Eboua (see case study in appendix).

# **3 SUPPORTED COMMUNITIES**

Towards invested communities and sustainable land management

## IMPACT 3 INTRODUCTION

Since 2009, CSE alumni have played an important role in supporting local communities and preserving the environment. This has been accomplished by encouraging shifting priorities in companies, bringing to the field new skills in conflict resolution and mediation, and formalising relationships between communities and companies.

### Key Takeaways

- CSE alumni are now responsible for social management across extensive regions in Africa
- 28,000 community members benefited from conflict resolution thanks to the efforts of the 14 CSE alumni who responded to the 2021 alumni survey
- Creating long-term change at a local level requires far-reaching planning and can't be rushed
- CSE alumni are introducing new innovations to support long-term community development



### Impact 3.1

#### Increased protection of key land areas

With CSE input, sustainable land management is on the rise. Collectively, the companies and organisations that CSE alumni work manage millions of hectares of land across Africa, ranging typically from 4,000 to 400,000 ha per company.\* During the same period, alumni made an impact across 16 countries, up from 10 in 2018.

Of the companies where CSE alumni work, according to the 2021 survey, almost half are working towards official certification, leading to improved environmental practices. 63% are working on sustainable management of natural resources, and 56% are focusing on management of High conservation Values.

CSE approaches have also seen improvements in locally-run land management and a sense of ownership over these social practices. In one site, an alumnus gives the example of stealing wood. "If people are stealing wood, they are denounced by their own villagers; it is their forest and they know it better than us."

On another site, a CSE alumnus working in local government pushed for the creation of a communal forest on community land. He explains, "at first, the local population thought that the idea of the municipal forest was aimed at restricting their access to grazing land." In response, and inspired by the training received through CSE, he conducted sensitisation activities to raise awareness in the community on the social benefits of the project. One alumnus is working hand in hand with local communities to restore a region of central Cameroon, as evidenced in the Rainforest Alliance case study (see appendix).

\*Based on the 2021 alumni survey (long courses) of average land (181,000 ha on average from 16 responses that provided details) managed by companies/organisations that employ CSE alumni (an estimated 75% of alumni are employed by companies/organisations that manage land). In addition, nine responses from the alumni short survey indicated land managed ranging from 19 ha to 1 million.



## Impact 3.2

### Better mediation between communities and companies

CSE alumni are playing a critical role in mediating on behalf of communities and companies. In cases where land rights are under dispute, alumni are able to step in using processes such as FPIC to find common solutions. When alumni engage in resolution processes, anything between 300 to 3,000 or more community members benefit.\*

Simply put, one community member stated “Before [the CSE alumnus came], after 6 months, we still had no answer [to a request or grievance]. And now we get answers within 2 weeks.” Others point to the democratisation of knowledge on pertinent issues and communications. “Before we had to go to the company to get info, now [the CSE alumna] brings information here to us. Also, they only used to deal with the elite from the village, so you had to be watchful.”

Embedded in at least 95 companies and organisations, up from 41 in 2018, alumni are in a position to have a similar influence to the case above at scale, with each company typically impacting between 5000 and 1 million people.\*\* Using best practices in conflict resolution, graduates know best how to frame arguments and issues, where the interests of all parties are heard. In one instance, local communities expressed frustration at the lack of local employment opportunities.



**5,000 to 1 million**

Typically impacted by companies where CSE alumni work

In response, the alumnus introduced a new policy for recruitment of local workers and ensured the recruitment process was open and fair. Community members often speak highly of CSE alumni, even while cognisant of corporate realities: “Since she arrived, there have been a lot of changes. Relations are better now. She listens to our problems and takes them to her boss. But she needs to have her hands free.” Such conflict resolution is evidenced in the SOCFIN case study.

CSE alumni are in a unique position to advocate on behalf of communities they work with. “In meetings with miners, they know that I am among the strongest advocates for the interests of the local communities”, one alumnus states, “and as such, topics affecting the interests of the communities are discussed with particular attention and often my views significantly influence decisions”.

**Often my views significantly influence decisions**

-- CSE alumni

With these careful and thought out methods of engagement, alumni and employers alike point to the tangible social development initiatives that alumni spearhead within their companies, whether around investing in physical infrastructure, social services such as schools and health centres, and in supporting economic development.

As demonstrated in the SOCFIN and Rainforest Alliance case studies, such community development work takes time. Indeed, it is a hallmark of CSE alumni that they do not barge into communities with ready-made solutions, but using FPIC and other inclusive listening-based tools, they create solutions with the communities involved.

\*Based on estimations provided by the CSE alumni in the 2021 alumni survey (long courses), 28,000 community members benefited from conflict resolution thanks to the efforts of the 14 alumni who responded

\*\*Based on estimations provided by the CSE alumni (17 responses that provided details) in the 2021 alumni survey (long courses).



## MINI CASE STUDY 7 ENSURING COMMUNITIES A SEAT AT THE TABLE

*One alumnus working with an international NGO in Cameroon explains how knowledge acquired at CSE strengthened his interventions in the field when working with a small village on a borehole project, and ultimately created a stronger impact .*

“CSE-trained staff are best placed to mediate between communities and companies, to protect often strained or fragile relationships. Central to this is the approach of informed consent and participatory project planning.

I take the example of a project that the municipality is setting up in a village for the construction of a borehole in the community. You cannot just step into the village and start implementing the project without seeking the consent of people. There should be a first preliminary step to discuss with the villagers about their necessary needs. They may tell you that they don't need the borehole you are bringing. They prefer a classroom for students.

Therefore, free consent will allow me to approach the mayor when he takes a decision to carry out such a project and recommend that he speak with the communities first and see what their priority needs are. From my intervention, the mayor understands the need to consult the communities before implementing the project. This is the essence of the new dynamic I was able to drive”.

### Impact 3.3

#### Stricter formalisation of company-community relations

Using the CSE-pioneered approach to community engagement, alumni are able to work for the community's benefit, at the same time as representing the interests of the company. Key to this is setting clear expectations and formalising commitments in written documents.

In one instance, a CSE alumna updated the procedures on conflict management. This included bringing in new mediation techniques learnt at the CSE training and ensuring recruitment quotas from the local community. Another alumni formalised the community leadership structure and with improved working relationships, she could host meetings to identify community projects.

Common frustrations that arise from broken promises are also addressed by CSE graduates. As one alumna reports, "there were tensions about broken promises around wells, schools and recruitment within the business. At the start, it was hard... People just came to disrupt and not engage... I learned that you must not give promises, this leads to expectations. Eventually, we created a 5-year plan for community engagement" (see highlight box 1.5 for further information on this example).

### Impact 3.4

#### Greater innovation at a local level

With entrepreneurial mindsets encouraged through CSE programmes, local communities have benefitted from small-scale initiatives sponsored by companies and facilitated by CSE alumni that support the economic development of communities. This impact is discussed further in the Rainforest Alliance case study (see appendix).

Alumni have helped pioneer new agricultural techniques, such as transforming agricultural waste into organic charcoal and fertiliser and supported in the construction of small mills and produce preparation facilities that allow remote villages to prepare produce for home consumption and diversify revenue streams.

Additionally, CSE alumni are also developing innovations to issues around cash payments, working on versatile banking systems that allow villagers to save money, and to receive more immediate payments through mobile banking, rather than waiting for infrequent cash payouts, as evidenced in the SIPEF-CI case study.

**“At the start, it was hard. People just came to disrupt and not engage.”**

*-- CSE alumna*



# **THE FUTURE OF CSE AFRICA**

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4 key areas of action for the future of CSE

# THE FUTURE

## FOUR KEY AREAS FOR CSE AFRICA

Looking to the future, CSE Africa is in a position to build on its expertise and track record across Western and Central Africa in delivering high-impact trainings that benefit students, companies, communities and the environment. While the evaluation team has summarised learning and recommendations in a separate report, below are 4 reflections which it considers important as CSE develops going forward:

### 1) Short courses and consultancy services New and improved

Short courses represent the single biggest untapped source of impact growth. Employers specifically and repeatedly expressed an appetite for tailored training services, delivered on-site at their companies by CSE, and with thorough ongoing support. On-site training with an integrated consultancy approach could also open up substantial new sources of revenue.

At present, CSE's primary service model is in-person training. CSE can diversify this operational model to include e-learning and/or blended learning approaches. This will help with reaching new audiences, especially senior executives whose ability to attend in-person training is limited.

### 2) Developing post-course networks Continuing learning and visibility

CSE alumni are, unsurprisingly, the biggest champions of the CSE's work. They want to be empowered to shout louder and spread learning. Yet many trainers and alumni expressed a need for reinforced follow-up during their internships and especially after graduation.

Investing in coaching and mentoring, peer-to-peer support mechanisms and network exchanges will catalyse continuous learning among the CSE alumni community. It will also boost CSE's visibility across Africa, the impact of which will be boosted further still if CSE individualised 'brand' is enabled to shine as distinct from Earthworm.

### 3) Systemic change in Africa Together with Earthworm Foundation

CSE Africa is in reach of system-wide change across Africa. To achieve this, it must respond to challenges of power relations, limited leadership capacity and company resources. Together with Earthworm, CSE could build a stronger network of high-level relations with companies, mobilising senior level management to accelerate the pace of social change within the private sector. In parallel, CSE can strengthen its inroads with high-level government and multilateral agencies throughout Africa.

Another approach is to integrate further with existing education systems, such as universities or existing in-company training programmes. In doing so, CSE positions itself at the forefront of new innovations in sustainable development education and becomes a test bed of creative solutions to contemporary challenges for natural resources. CSE can also position itself more confidently as a thought-leader in Africa in the social management of natural resources within a corporate context in particular and acquire greater gravitas, and hence greater impact. In this respect CSE needs to develop a common approach with Earthworm in developing opportunities through events, research and advocacy to accelerate this role of thought-leader using its unique insights from the grassroots level.

### 4) Funding models Diversified revenue streams

CSE Africa should adopt a blended funding model based on company contributions and international donors. Over the coming years, CSE can increase financial contributions from companies. In doing so, it will create a stable model not reliant on the changing priorities of donors.

On the other hand, CSE trainers and founders believe that western donors have a "moral obligation" as "end-users" of Africa and should continue to support CSE's training. Employers also complain of the high cost of training. Nevertheless, funding sources have proven unstable and further diversification is needed.

It is also worth noting that many of CSE's most impactful alumni are those that came as recent graduates before full employment, and would not otherwise have considered the private sector, and any funding model needs to enable access to CSE to these candidates without a corporate sponsor.

Clearly new funding models need to be developed, the current exploration of development agencies and multilateral bodies will hopefully bear fruit, and new models such as fees modelled on recruitment agencies, student loans and individual student scholarships.



# **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX 1

# CASE STUDIES

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### **A new chapter in palm oil production**

How the Centre for Social Excellence alumni are building deep communication between companies and communities and earning new social licenses to operate: the case of Safacam and Socapalm

### **Social Practice in an Ivorian Palm Oil Company: towards full certification**

How CSE alumni are helping one company to achieve a new standard in corporate social responsibility

### **Victor Yuh Tamanjong: Childhood environmentalist to international certification practitioner**

How one CSE alumnus has gone from impacting one company to palm oil production throughout Africa

### **Putting community at the heart of conservation**

How one CSE alumnus is helping communities regenerate land in Western Cameroon with the Rainforest Alliance

### **Tatiana Eboua: an ally to the company, community and environment**

How one CSE alumna is creating real positive change for the environment, company, and community

## APPENDIX 2

# SOURCES

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Documentation: the impact report drew on the available internal and external documentation and data of CSE and Earthworm Foundation, including:

- Concept notes of CSE;
- Progress and final reports for CSE donors;
- Presentations, videos and news articles on CSE;
- CSE course curriculums and descriptions;
- Student registration and monitoring data;
- Student satisfaction survey results.



## APPENDIX 3

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**CSE Long Course alumni and interns:** Téodyl Nkuintchua (World Resources Institute), Victor Tamanjong (RSPO), Elie Tamekou (Earthworm Foundation), Gwekam Mariette (Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement), Desouza Feujio (Service d'Appui aux Initiatives Locales de Développement), Bonné Guisata (FODER), Hermine Tuekam Kouam (Independent), Jacques Waouo (Rainforest Alliance), Emmanuella Ngoh Kona (Safacam), Emmanuel Gang (Socapalm), Raphael Tsanga (CIFOR), Itzak Rabin (GIZ), Julien Seka (National Forestry School), Florence Bianen (Nature +), Prosper Pelo (Sud Kivu Governor's Office), Tatiana Prudence Eboua (Olam Gabon), James Mulbah (Earthworm Foundation), Aissata Sylla (Compagnie des bauxites de Guinée), Boubacar Diallo (Commune Rurale de Sangaredi), Nfaly Fofana (ANAFIC - Dabiss), Sory Kourouma (Action Mines Guinée), Carmen Wandja (SIPEF-CI), Meité Maïmouna (Government), Armand Anamou (SIPEF-CI), Martine Djieba (SIPEF-CI), Solange Wankwi Lumwile.

**CSE Short Course alumni:** Barthelemy Nguessan (SIFCA), Patience Djengue Ekoule (Socapalm), Marcelin Ngonpong (Socapalm), Jacques Pierre Ndoumbock (Socapalm), Wenceslas Noubi (Sosucam), Djomou Poka Brice (Vicwood thanry), Eleonora N'Gbesso (Earthworm Foundation).

**Company employers:** Jean-François Pajot (SAFACAM), Dominique Cornet (Socapalm), Sebastien Rondeau (Socapalm), Jean Bosco (Socapalm), Céline Schmitz (Socapalm), Ferdinand Saha (Vicwood thanry), Sarah Baleme (Safacam), Ralph Erdmann (Pro fair trade), M Noufe (SIFCA), Moussa Bouali (SIPEF-CI), Ziad Assy (SIPEF-CI), Mireille Tano (SIPEF-CI), Yaya Bamba (SIPEF-CI), Eric de foresta (SOCFIN).

**Public and NGO employers:** M. Yong (CED), Lydienne Kala Epee (CED), Aimee Balkissou Soyam (Rainforest Alliance), Elikplim Agbitor Dziwornu (RSPO).

**Community Stakeholders:** Village Chief (Chief (Safacam), Koungue Somsè (Community (Safacam), L'association Jeune Mamans de Babadjou (Community association), Marthe Feudjio Touyem (Community Association), Madeleine Nguestsop (Growers Association GIC), Neba Akume (IRAD), Ntsama Nanfack (Mayor), Awe Central (Ministry of of Forests and Fauna), Secretary General of Sa majesté Fon Fozo'o II (Sec. to local Chief), Sa majesté Kenfack Tanga Fouotsop II (Village Chief), Martial Djinang (Brainforest), Inoussa Dabre (community association, SIPEF-CI)

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