WORKSHOP TOOLKIT

Based on a case study of sustainable uses and protection of native tree species in Ghana

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

B4TREES

CRES

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Based on a case study of sustainable uses and protection
of native tree species in Ghana

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DATA SHEET

Report from Aarhus University, B4Trees & CRES

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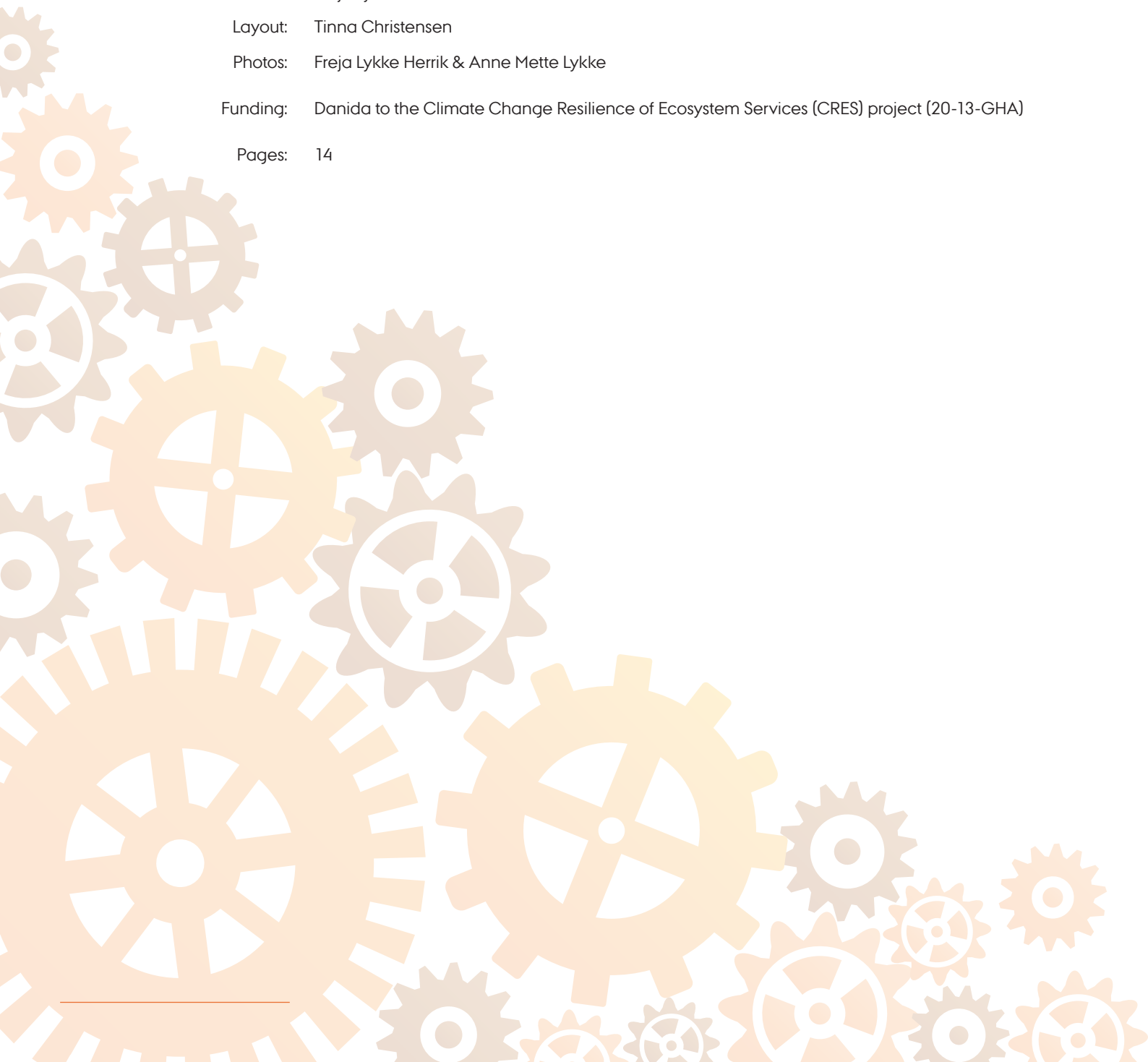Based on a case study of sustainable uses and protection of native tree species in Ghana

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INTRODUCTION

AIM

This report is a methodological toolkit, building on the workshops held in four communities in the Kumbungu area, Ghana. The aim of this toolkit is to present a step-by-step guide on how to facilitate a similar workshop in the future and describe the methodological considerations based on the four workshops in Ghana. This report is part of a series of two reports: (1) Case: Sustainable usage and protection of native trees in Kumbungu, and (2) Workshop toolkit. For more thorough description of the outcomes of the workshops, read report (1).

In the following paragraphs a step-by-step guide will be presented, that can be used to replicate the workshops in other areas or with another target group. The workshops can also be scaled up/down or used with other themes and questions.

CONTEXT AND COLLABORATION

This toolkit is based on data from four workshops that were held in the period from 2-8 February 2023 in communities located within the district of Kumbungu, in the Northern region of Ghana. The workshops were facilitated in the following communities: Giza Gundaa, Jakpahi, Gbullung, and Kpalga. Furthermore, women groups from Cheyohi and Sanga were participating in Kpalga as one group. In total around 120 women took part in the workshops.

The workshops were held as part of a multi-partner research project called CRES; Climate Change Resilience of Ecosystem Services, in collaboration with a private forestry company called B4Trees, aiming to combat the loss of biodiversity and help forward sustainable development in local communities (Climate Change Resilience of Ecosystem Services, 2023).

CRES is focusing on planting six native multipurpose tree species. However, the workshops were focusing only on four of these tree species, since the two other species were not present in the selected area of the workshops. The workshops were focusing on the following four species:

- Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*)
  — Dagbani name: Towa

- Parkia (*Parkia biglobosa*)
  — Dagbani name: Doo

- Lannea (*Lannea* spp)
  — Dagbani name: Sinsagba

- Bombax (*Bombax costatum*)
  — Dagbani name: Wabga

B4Trees aims to work in a socially sustainable way and include local communities in decision-making and production. Diversity and inclusion are important; therefore, the workshops' main aim has been to listen to the women groups' points of view. The women had a lot of knowledge about the native tree species and were interested in participating in sustainable production.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOPS

The workshops were designed with focus on two main objectives:

1. **Knowledge sharing** between CRES, B4Trees, and people in the local communities. On the one hand, we wanted to collect local knowledge about the four species and the usage of them. The collected knowledge is used by CRES, B4Trees as well as other partners in their further work in the communities. The knowledge can be used for the possibility of developing new sustainable products and improving tree planting and protection processes in collaboration with local women groups. On the other hand, we want to raise awareness in the communities about the importance of nature and native tree species and how the project and the communities can learn from each other in knowledge sharing.

2. **Idea generation** as a way of creating active residentship among the local women by encouraging them to discuss ideas and solutions to current challenges. The workshops worked as a network for the women to meet, connect, discuss challenges and solutions – and be listened to. It also gave them the chance to take the first step towards carrying out their ideas in collaboration with CRES and B4Trees, for example to plant and protect more trees and use the fruits, leaves and nuts for sustainable production.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
TO DESIGNING AND FACILITATING SIMILAR WORKSHOPS

1. TARGET GROUPS

Identify target groups
The first important step of designing a workshop plan is to identify the target group. Consider gender, age, location, culture, religion, social and economic class etcetera. All these factors play a big role in deciding how to design and facilitate the workshops. In the workshop, I chose to work with women, mostly elders, in rural areas in Kumbungu, so I will go more into detail on what to consider when working with women as the target group.

Choosing to work with women
We choose to work exclusively with women groups in the workshops, because we wanted to include the most marginalized groups of society. Women in the communities are marginalized in different ways. Therefore, including women in production and policymaking in the area was crucial for sustainable transmission. Integrating gender-related issues within a workshop requires addressing the differences in gender roles. Women are often relegated to the background when it comes to participation in community development and decision-making (Gyan et. al, 2022), therefore the workshops evolved around creating a safe space for women to try and undertake a leading position and partake in generating ideas without men. The traditional roles between men and women are present in everyday life, where the women's significant contribution is to provide food and the general well-being of families, where the man is usually seen as the provider. The gender gap in farming and ownership of land (Kaunza-Nu-Dem et al, 2016) is crucial to be aware of to find solutions that will contribute to the women groups.

The workshop was facilitated through a binary gender approach since taking a more non-binary approach to gender would not mirror the current ideologies within the Kumbungu District, where gender discourses are generally binary. This is an example of making background, ideologies, and values of yourself and the target group match.

Working with women groups

When designing the workshops, there were many considerations in deciding whether to be working with women in groups or as individuals. We decided to work with the women in groups, because we wanted to create a common space for idea generation among the women and hoped that this could work as a starting point to continue discussing the workshop themes with the rest of the communities. When working in groups, one should be aware that less confident women might be less engaged, but if placed right within a group this can act as a counterbalance.

We also worked with the women in groups as an attempt to work within the frames of the already existing norms about who and where the women will meet, which is often in groups. Furthermore,

it gave us access to interesting conversations and interactions and made it possible to discover not only what they said, but also how they interacted as a group, which is important in connection to decision-making. Collecting data in groups can serve the risk of overseeing details or overseeing the more reserved or shy women. In this connection, the data from the fieldwork carried out in the same communities works well to also include their point of view.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Workshop timetable

Before starting the workshops, you will have to plan the facilitation. Hereunder, are the timetable we used for each of the workshops in Kumbungu. When making the timetable, it is especially important to make time for welcoming everyone, presenting the project and workshop purpose thoroughly, and furthermore it is important to give good time for discussions. This timetable can be used as template and edited to fit the purpose of the workshop.

TIME	DESCRIPTION	ACTIVITY
10.00-10.15	• Welcome and thank you • Presentation of the workshop • Presentation of Dzigbodi, Anne Mette, Freja, and Hadjara • Presentation of CRES and B4Trees • Framework of the workshop, competition, and prize	
10.15-10.30	**Themes:** • Sustainability, the four species: Bombax, Baobab, Parkia, Lannea • Framework for the ideas, example of an idea – concretization	Freja will make the presentation, and Hadjara will translate
10.30-10.45	• Dividing into around 4 groups (6 persons in every group) • Group discussion from question: map out challenges of using the four local species in a sustainable way	
10.45-11.00	Break and informal conversations	
11.00-11.45	• Group discussion and developing of ideas from question: solution of the challenges	Freja will walk around and help the groups in their work and discussion Freja will collect data and take notes from the discussions Hadjara will translate to Freja from the different groups
11.45-12.00	• Presentation of the different ideas • Joint discussion and feedback • Vote or come to agreement on which idea will be chosen • Ending of workshop and collection of data • Distribution of certificates and thank you	Snacks and water will be handed out

Central questions: Solutions in focus

The next thing to consider in making the research design is what central questions to explore. What data do you want to collect? What kind of knowledge/information do you want to share?

The following scheme is the main questions we used in the workshops in Kumbungu. Furthermore, many sub questions were also used to get more elaborated answers. The idea behind the structure of the questions is to create a discussion about solutions and in that way spur active residentship by making the participants come up with or vocalize the best solutions to their challenges from their point of view. This is meant to create a sense of responsibility around the discussed challenges among the participants. Additionally, this is also meant to create another story than the classic "development work" discourse, where Western countries provide the solutions within the projects. The local participants are experts in their own lives and community; therefore, it makes sense to create room for them to develop their ideas, rather than giving them a specific set of solutions.

Main questions of the workshops in Kumbungu

As part of the workshops, a discussion was initiated and divided into two main themes; challenges and solutions, hereafter several questions were elaborated. The following shows the overall questions related to the two themes:

Challenges
• What are the challenges of protecting or planting Baobab, Parkia, Lannea, and Bombax?
• What are the challenges of using these four local species in a sustainable way to make a livelihood?
• What are the challenges for the women being included in using these species?

Solutions
• What solutions do you see to the presented challenges?
  — Is the solution ecologically sustainable?
  — Is the solution helping empower women in the community?
  — Is it a long-term solution?
  — Is the solution realistic to carry out?

The questions can be used as inspiration on how to design an interview guide. If working with another theme, the questions can be used as a starting point, and from here the themes can be changed.

Knowledge sharing as key concept

As described in the introduction, knowledge sharing and idea generation are the central purpose of this method. These two concepts are important to integrate when creating a timetable and interview guide.

Working with a translator

Very few people in the communities in Kumgungu speak English and therefore we used a local translator to translate from Dagbani to English. We choose to use a female translator to keep the workshops a safe room for women to discuss their thoughts. Overall, she translated in a very well and thorough way, but there will always be nuances in the way different people translate, and that has to be taken into account when analysing the data. For example, there is not one specific word for "sustainability" in the Dagbani language, but there are words such as *biansung*, which is a broader description of the idea meaning that what you do now will benefit you in the future.

3. ACCESS

To get access to a target group, a place to hold the workshops, and the local authorities is very important in order successfully facilitate the workshops. In this regard it is important to collaborate with locals who know the area, target group, and norms very well. In the communities in Kumbungu, an important part of getting access to the communities consisted of presenting ourselves and the workshops for the local chiefs. We also collaborated with the University in Tamale about getting in contact with the communities. Before facilitating the workshops, I visited all the communities and met with the local contacts. I did a small fieldwork to analyze if there are some important factors in the area that should be considered. This is important for creating the best circumstances for the workshops and collaboration with the area.

4. WORKSHOP FORMAT: COMPETITION-BASED METHODS

The workshops are framed as a competition (inspired by Dreamtown's Theory of Change (Dreamtown, 2021, p. 56-58)). In each of the workshops in the different communities the participants worked towards proposing a common solution for the community. Together with the facilitators, they will work on making the solution realistic and sustainable, and in the follow-up visit they will be awarded a small economic price to carry out the solution if the solution is realistic.

The competition format is chosen for several reasons. First, it is to work as a motivating factor to attract more participants. Former experience with this format in Sierra Leone (Urban Space Challenge 2019), showed it was a great motivational factor for getting the participants to engage in working with their ideas. Giving the participants the responsibility to come up and work on their ideas with the help of the facilitator is a way to spur active residentship (ibid.). In other words, it is to give the participants the tools to take part in decision-making and to advocate for changes in the community.

Secondly, the competition format is a way of ensuring that the money is used most effectively, because it will go to the group who are most motivated and have the best and most realistic ideas.

Thirdly, the format tells another story than the classic "development work" discourse, where Western countries provide the solutions within the projects, as mentioned earlier.

When using competition-based methods it is important to consider if it will align with the target group you are working with. This method works best when working in an area were there are small local businesses, project, or activist groups. It also works well with motivating young people. When working with target groups that does not have any prior knowledge or experience with the theme, it can be harder for the target group to come up with new solutions. That was one of the major challenges we were facing when facilitating the workshops in Kumbungu.

5. FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING

The workshops are followed by following-up workshops, where the communities' ideas from last time are summarized and a prize is given to the community who created the best idea. Furthermore, all the groups get a small prize to carry out their ideas if they are realistic.

In designing the workshops, we have tried to combine and balance the results of the workshops between immediate interest and more long-term solutions. The prize worked as an immediate motivation factor, whereas their ideas hopefully can be a part of long-term solutions, for example by bringing more trees back to the area or making the first step towards starting a sustainable production or earning money on carbon credits.

When using this method, it is important that the competition and winner are not the central part of the experience. The competition framing should rather work as a method to give space for the participants' ideas, encourage them, and give them the tools to carry out these ideas.

After giving the prices, monitoring and help with carrying out the sustainable solutions are very important. It is advantageous to work together

with locals who can help with the monitoring. Sustainability is key. Consider how the solution can be carried out in a way, so it will last also after the project is done.

Examples of solutions

The following is examples of what solutions can look like from the workshops in the four communities in Kumbungu.

Giza Gundaa

- They want to plant more trees - Lannea, Parkia, and Baobab – with fencing around to protect them from bushfires and animals
- They also wish to buy a water tank, so it's easy to water the trees in the dry season
- If they have more money left, they would also like to buy some tools for collecting the fruits and processing shea nuts

Jakpahi

- They want to plant more trees - all four species - with fencing around to protect the trees from animals
- Bush fires are also a big challenge, therefor they want to make a clearing around the planted trees to prevent bushfires
- The trees should be planted close to a water source – they have a space close to the reservoir, where they can ask the chief for permission to plant

Gbullung

- They want to make a watering system for the planted trees and for the new trees that will be planted – a reservoir closer to the houses to collect rainwater
- They have a reservoir, but it is far from their houses and the trees – they pointed out that a watering system would make it easier to water the trees
- They also want to plant more trees - all four species
- They underlined that fencing of the trees is also important to prevent animals eating them and bush fires

Kpalga, Tonjung, and Sanga

- They want to plant more trees - all four species - and make a water system with holes at each tree that will collect more rainwater, furthermore a drip water system with the use of big bottles that collect more rainwater and water the trees
- They will make a clearing around the trees in the dry season to prevent bushfires

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Facilitating the workshops necessitate careful ethical considerations. Many things are important when facilitating workshops and analysing data in a field that is culturally different from one's own background. The anthropologist Katarina Schramm describes that both the anthropologist and the people studied carry their 'home' with them in the form of their racial, educational, economic, and social backgrounds (2005: 173). In the field I have been working in, it has therefore been very important to avoid reproducing colonial discourses or Western stereotypes of African women. This can be challenging because dominant discourses and structures can sometimes be imprinted on how we see the world. This is very important to keep in mind throughout the entire process of the fieldwork for the facilitation of the workshops, involving reflections on the facilitating role as a white woman from Denmark. When gaining access to the communities, we have been aware that being from a Western country, and having different economical positions, can have an impact on the data. Therefore, it is considered that the expectation of gaining something economically from the project, can have influenced the answers that the participants have been giving. Ethical considerations of which culture you are working in and your own role in relation to this, is very important no matter which field or target groups, you are working with.

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CONTACT

For further information or questions about this workshop format, you are welcome to contact me.

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