Towards a Conservation Learning Network

**Report of a Quick Scan
among
Young Professionals in Protected Area Management**

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Contents

Executive Summary

During the World Parks Congress (9 – 17 September) a quick scan to test the idea of a virtual university was conducted by CEC. The quick scan consisted of a questionnaire, and two focus groups. The method and the timing of the quick scan (Congress stress, last minute work) and the voluntary time available (20 days) make that the results cannot provide final and detailed facts or judgments. The results however provide interesting information to further develop the idea and for further needs analysis and target group research.

The questionnaire explored some general aspects of a virtual university. Almost all respondents have access to internet. The modalities of access differ in age groups and geography. A majority indicates that they use internet more than 5 days a week. Respondents indicate to have little experience with internet courses. Half of them indicate that their profession requires additional training. This is specifically the case in Africa and Europe. A majority indicates that their employers take care of the costs of additional courses for professional training. The maximum costs paid by the employer seems to differ.

Respondents indicate that it is important that courses have university accreditation: for 60% of the respondents this makes an impact on their decision. The impact differs from region to region. Reasons are e.g. PhD ; quality of the course; and credibility. An IUCN brand seems relatively unimportant for a number of respondents. For others it is a guarantee for specific reliable expertise, field experiences, practical examples, input from commissions and information from a neutral platform on global developments.

Both focus groups explored the idea of a virtual university more in depth. In general participants were very enthusiastic about the idea: "*you are on the right track", "This can be the answer to our daily challenges"*. Challenges they have to deal with are new developments, e.g. landscape approach, community involvement and modern organizational management. Participants indicated the wish to be kept informed, and stressed the need to develop the university in dialogue with the users. They asked to look seriously into challenges of language, duration, costs, and accessibility.

According to participants a virtual university could be successful if it differs from (normal) universities. It should be demand oriented, not be academic but practical. It should offer tutor guidance. Online courses should be combined with face to face meetings. The courses should link practical work with theory. The content of the courses should focus on fundraising, organizational management, participation and outreach and sustainable development. There were almost no expressions of need for biology conservation content!

One focus group came in their discussions to the concept of a virtual university as a learning center in partnership with various universities and other organizations. In the other it was seen as a virtual network improving resources in local universities, and building their capacity. The advice was to use the model of training of IT trainers. Other ideas offered include: start concentrating on those with access; start with local universities and focus on trainers & professionals; make it two way communication: offering from the global level generic modules to be adapted locally and offering from the local level feedback of local/traditional knowledge. Last advice: *start small and start with what is on the IUCN shelves*!

Chapter 1. Introduction

CEC
The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) is IUCN's knowledge network in communication, education, participation and public awareness. CEC advocates for participatory approaches in environmental management and sustainable development and helps to develop learning capacity to realize this.

Knowledge network
CEC connects IUCN to knowledge, resources and experiences to help environmental managers and policy makers to reach out effectively to key audiences needed to manage the various changes in environment and society they face. We are more than 700 experts in government, academia and in the field in over 90 countries, helping communities and institutions to find their own solutions for the many barriers towards most appropriate forms of participation in environmental management and sustainable development.

Leadership
As CEC members develop local capacity, they draw on CEC and its partners. At the same time they provide CEC with practical local knowledge and experiences from various parts of the world for its global advocacy and capacity development work for policymakers and environmental managers. This is the basis for the leadership of CEC in learning how to work with people and the environment.

UN Decade
Global leaders have pledged to implement the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. The CEC knowledge network brings more than 50 years of experience in environment and sustainable development education, social marketing and strategic communication to this worldwide effort in learning towards sustainability. CEC offers a portal to its knowledge network in: www.iucn.org/cec/

Priority
One of CEC main focus for the next intersessional period is to explore the possibility of a virtual university. During the World Parks Congress CEC experts and staffs[1] volunteered to do a quick scan among potential users in the category of young conservation professionals. This report contains the information generated through a questionnaire and two focus groups.

This report
Chapter 2 describes shortly the background and context of the idea of a virtual university. Chapter 3 gives an overview of the information generated by the questionnaire. Chapter 4 provides ideas from the discussions in the focus groups. Time constraints to realize this voluntary project within before the deadline of 1 November did not allow for a final English editing. Our apologies for the inconvenience. As the data and information generated seem relevant enough for further research, the annexes contain the data from the questionnaire and records of the discussions in the focus groups.

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[1] The team consisted of Frits Hesselink (team leader), Patricia Biermayer-Jenzano, Ana Puyol, Cecilia Nizzola and Wendy Goldstein.

Chapter 2. Background and context

A Virtual University

The idea of a virtual university is not new to CEC. It has been on the CEC agenda since 1999. The current new initiative can be placed in a wider perspective of previous discussions on how to make IUCN's knowledge more relevant to a wider constituency than the scientific conservation community that writes and reads the IUCN publications at the moment. This chapter touches on this history as a context for the current new initiative developed by CEC.

External review

In the 1999 external review[2] on the Commission, recommendations were made to the extent that in the future CEC should focus more on providing knowledge to IUCN to assist the organization to move beyond information management into the areas of organisational learning and remote learning. The review noticed that IUCN has been investing heavily in its Information Network with an emphasis on conservation and personal data and manuals. The review stated that CEC should take up the challenge to add – next to this codified knowledge, an element of personalized knowledge by exploring the possibility of a Virtual World Conservation University.

Knowledge management: first steps

Since then CEC has experimented with new forms of managing knowledge with the use of the word wide web[3]. During the second World Conservation Congress in Amman CEC organized a workshop[4] on knowledge management, bringing together various experiences[5] in how international organizations and networks consciously invest in improving the streaming of knowledge into, through and from their organization as a way to further the mission of the organization. The workshop made recommendations towards an IUCN knowledge management strategy in which the capturing and dissemination of learning from the myriad of IUCN projects and experiences would be realised in a demand driven way, servicing the users rather than just publishing books and reports.

Virtual University: first steps by CEC and trends in IUCN

As a follow-up to this workshop CEC brought together potential partners in exploring a Virtual University in a side event during the Congress. Afterwards CEC commissioned a study on the concept of an IUCN virtual university[6]. The study provides a blue print on how on a virtual IUCN campus on line courses, stakeholder dialogues and communities of practice could be put together and managed. Potential users and partners were not approached in this study. At the time the study may have been 'a bridge too far'. In the IUCN Secretariat there

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[2] Romijn, B., **Breaking barriers and bridging gaps, Review of the Commission on Education and Communication of IUCN,** AIDEnvironment, October 1999
[3] Hesselink, F., van Kempen, P.P. & Wals, A., editors, **ESDebate, International debate on education for sustainable development**, IUCN 2000; *BEPA Online* in: HECT Consultancy & AIDEnvironment, **Expert Meeting on Biodiversity, Education and Public Awareness: Towards global communities of practice**, Egmond aan Zee, the Netherlands, 10 – 14 October 2001, Conference Report.
[4] Goldstein, W. editor, **Mobilising Knowledge for Biodiversity**, Amman Congress 2000, Interactive Session report, IUCN 2001
[5] Introductions were given on knowledge management in IUCN, the World Bank, IISD, WRI, CIDA, WWF and the corporate sector.
[6] van Druten, L. & Romijn, B., **Learning and knowledge management to achieve a just world that values and conserves nature, an integrated approach for the IUCN**, Amsterdam 2000.

was no interest (and funds) to explore the idea further. In the CEC membership there was not enough relevant knowledge and experience. Other CEC priorities put the idea of a virtual university for the moment outside the main focus of the Commission. But the idea of a virtual university never really disappeared[7]. In 2003 the idea of a Virtual University also reappeared in the Report of the Consultative Group on Commissions[8], which made recommendations to IUCN to reconsider its knowledge management. Currently a study is commissioned by IUCN to follow up on this recommendation.

Virtual University: a new priority for CEC
In May 2003, during its retreat on planning for the next intersessional period, the CEC Steering Committee – at the initiative of Dr. Keith Wheeler, the CEC Chair for North America - made the idea of a Virtual University one of its three goals for the immediate future. In the draft CEC program the Virtual University features as one of the three CEC priority areas. The idea is to be worked out further during an expert meeting to be held in November 2003.

The opportunity of the World Parks Congress
Potential users of the Virtual University might be young professionals in conservation. And the World Parks Congress in Durban (9 – 17 September 2003) could be an opportunity to collect some information from this group of users and make contacts with other interested experts. Keith Wheeler and his colleagues provided a range of questions they liked to be answered. On the basis of these questions a questionnaire was developed and circulated during a session of around fifty young professionals. A total of 72 responses were collected, of which 20 from a mailing[9] after the Congress.

Focus Groups
On two evenings – Thursday 11 and Monday 15 September - during two and half hours focus groups were held with selected people. One with ten participants, another with six participants. The focus groups were managed in a way that a spontaneous dialogue was generated among the participants on the subject of a virtual university. Only when the discussion drifted away from the subject, a new provoking question was fed into the group. The participants in both cases were quite enthusiastic about the initiative and all wanted to be kept informed in the future about the next steps.

Quick Scan
The results of this quick scan through the questionnaire and focus groups only give some qualitative indications for the development of the idea of a virtual university. They are too limited in scope, method and time investment to provide final conclusions or judgements. However they do provide some interesting information for the discussions about a Virtual University. This report highlights the information and main ideas generated in Durban.

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[7] CEC was one of the lead organizations to help formulate the Work Program for Article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in which the idea of a web based learning campus again was articulated.
[8] Dublin, H., e.a., **Report of the Consultative Group on Commissions, convened at the request of the Director General of IUCN and the six Commission Chairs**, IUCN 2003.
[9] Mailing to the list of respondents to a Survey among young conservationists as preparation for the World Parks Congress: Kugler, Lisbet, **Young Conservationists and the Future of Protected Areas Worldwide, A call to Discussion at the Fifth Wold Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa**, **September 2003,** Yale July 2003 (www.yale.edu/environment/publications)

Chapter 3. Information from the questionnaire

Warning in advance
The number of respondents in this quick scan has been far too low to draw any substantive conclusions. The main conclusion one can draw is the need for a further target group research and needs analysis of the various user groups. The questionnaire and its response can serve as a starting point for formulating terms of reference for this research. Especially interesting to explore further seems the issue of additional training requirements and payment of training by employers, as well as the issue of accreditation and IUCN brand. Below the main figures are given. For detailed answers see the bar charts in annex 3.

Distribution questionnaire
During registration CEC volunteers distributed about twenty questionnaires to participants of the World Parks Congress who looked like 'young professionals'. The maximum age had been set at 35 years. During a special session of young professionals organized by the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies[10], a short presentation about the CEC quick scan was given and another 30 questionnaires were handed out. Finally all participants in the focus groups were asked to fill in the questionnaire. Including the response from the mailing after the Congress, a final total of 72 responses was collected. 51 under the age of 35 and 21 above the age of 35.

Profile respondents
The youngest respondent was 20, the oldest 49. The average age in the group under 35 was 30 years old. In the group over 35 the average age was 42.
North America was well represented with 19 respondents (15 from the USA)[11]; 10 came from Latin America; 20 from Africa; 4 from Asia; 15 from Europe; 3 from Oceania and 1 from West Asia..
Most respondents have a profession in the field of conservation, only a few seem to work (not even 10%) in or for protected areas.
Asked for their favourite website, most respondents could name a favourite website, some mentioned a search machine or web mail; some others specific (conservation) sites.

Access to internet (tendency 95%)
Out of 51 respondents under the age of 35 one (from Africa) indicated to have no access to internet. All others had access, 38 through a network, 12 through a modem or dial up connection. Out of 14 North American respondents 13 worked through a network. Out of the 10 African answers, 4 respondents worked through a network.
From the 21 respondents over the age of 35, 19 indicated to have access to internet, 2 (from Africa and Asia) did not. 10 respondents had access through a network, 9 through a modem. From the 5 North American respondents, 3 had access through a modem. From the 9 African respondents 5 had access through a modem.

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[10] Kugler, Lisbet, **Young Conservationists and the Future of Protected Areas Worldwide, A call to Discussion at the Fifth Wold Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa**, **September 2003,** Yale July 2003 (www.yale.edu/environment/publications)
[11] The distribution method may have to do with this large number as the survey was partly distributed at the Special meeting for Young Professionals organized by Yale University.

Frequency (tendency 70% more than 5 days a week)
Out of 14 North American respondents under the age of 35, 8 used the internet more than 5 days a week for professional purposes. In Europe out of 12 respondents in this category 8 indicated to use the internet more than 5 days a week. Out of 7 Latin American respondents under the age of 35, 5 indicated to use the internet more than 5 days a week. In Asia and Africa the use of internet was considerably less.
From the 21 respondents over the age of 35 with access to internet, 9 used the internet more than 5 days a week for professional purposes. The differences between continents seem to resemble the younger age group. Overall it seems that the younger group of respondents uses internet more.

Internet based training courses & distance learning (tendency 25%)
Out of 52 respondents under the age of 35, 15 respondents indicated that they had participated in an internet based training course. The 11 were spread over all continents (with the exception of West Asia and Oceania). The question about participation in a distance learning course gives almost the same picture.
From the 21 respondents over the age of 35, 5 indicated to have participated in an internet based training course, 16 indicated answered negative. The five respondents who answered affirmatively were equally spread over the continents. The question about participation in a distance learning course gives almost the same picture.

Additional training required (tendency 50%)
Respondents were asked whether their employer required additional training on an annual basis. Out of 52 respondents under the age of 35, 47 answered this question: 26 with yes, 21 with no. Out of 14 North American answers, 3 answered affirmative and 11 answered negative. Out of 9 European answers 5 were yes, 4 were no. Out of 11 African answers 10 were yes and 1 was no. In the other continents the yes seems dominant, but due to the small numbers no conclusions can be drawn here[12].
From the respondents over the age off 35, 14 answered this question affirmative, 7 negative (from North America and Latin America).

Payment by employer (tendency 60%)
Respondents were asked whether their employer would pay for additional training on an annual basis. Out of 52 respondents under the age of 35, 27 answered this question affirmatively, 19 answered negative. Out of 13 North American respondents 8 answered yes, 5 answered no. The 12 European answers were spread evenly over yes and no. The African answers have a tendency to no. For Asia and Latin America this has to be further investigated. From the group of respondents of the age of over 35, 13 responded affirmative, 6 negative (2 from North America and 4 from Africa).

Amount spent (> 500 US$)
Respondents were asked if their employer would pay for additional training what amount he would spend on an annual basis per person: US $ 100 – 500 or more. Out of 36 respondents under the age of 35, 26 answered this question, 16 indicated the figure of US $ 100 – 500, 10 indicated more. The American answers were divided equally, as were the European answers. The answers from Africa and two from Asia all indicated the figure of US $ 100 – 500.
From the group of respondents of the age of over 35, 7 indicated the figure of US $ 100 – 500; 7 indicated more.

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[12] Look for further exploration of this issue in the chapter on the results from the focus groups.

Number of courses followed a year
Respondents were asked how many courses they followed a year: one or two or more. Out of 52 respondents under the age of 35, 42 answered this question. 32 Respondents said they followed one course a year. 10 Respondents answered that they followed two or more course a year. Eight of them came from Africa and Europe.
From the 16 respondents of the age group above 35 who answered this question, 6 indicated one course a year and 10 indicated two or more courses a year (6 of them came from Africa).

Impact accreditation (tendency 60%)
Respondents were asked whether the fact that a course was accredited to a University would impact their decision to take the course. Out of 52 respondents under the age of 35, 51 answered this question. 33 Respondents indicated that accreditation would impact their decision; for 18 other it would not impact on their decision. The impact was largest in Europe (9 out of 12).
From the respondents of the age group above 35, 13 respondents gave an affirmative answer (6 from Africa), 8 respondents a negative answer.

Reasons for impact of accreditation
Asked what is the main reason that your decision is impacted by the fact that the course is accredited to a university, respondents from all regions answered that it would guarantee quality, credibility and validation of courses. Respondents from North America added that it would contribute to people in their pursuit of a PhD. Respondents from the South added that a (Northern) university would mean international recognition, a certificate leading to better employment or promotion.

Content
Asked what content areas are of most need and interest, that you would take additional training in, respondents from all regions gave answers relating to organizational management[13]:
- fund raising
- business planning
- communication planning
- participative management
- information management
- relation management

Some respondents from the South added other topics named such as community based natural resource management, web design, policy, environmental economics, tourism, issues of conflicts between wildlife and society, biology conservation.

Added Value of the IUCN brand
Asked what the added value of an IUCN Virtual university is, respondents gave the following answers: field experience, practical examples, global developments, reliable expertise, access to Commissions. There was no significant difference between respondents from the various regions.

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[13] This seems to be in line with the findings of the Survey among Delegates to the Vth World Parks Congress: to the question "which single most important key skill and training would you name", 33.2 % of the respondents answered fundraising, 31.6 % answered outreach and partnerships, 30.6% answered sustainable development.

Chapter 4.   Information from the focus groups

Introduction
Participants came to the focus groups just out of interest in the subject, not because of any remuneration (as in normal focus groups). The discussions were not recorded by audio or video, but by two people who recorded the discussion by hand and into the computer. Both sessions were held after 18.00 hrs. The first during the normal Congress session, the second during the excursion (and training workshop) days.

The original plan for the focus groups was to have a discussion first in a heterogeneous group of potential users, providers (universities and conservation organizations), intermediaries, partners and donors. This discussion could provide input for a second discussion in a homogeneous group of only potential users from the segment of 'young professionals'. The handling of the logistics led – due to time pressure - to the result of two heterogeneous groups. The sessions did suffer a bit from more last minute preparation and fatigue of participants as the Congress progressed. The second session had to be shortened, as participants indicated that they were too tired. Chosen was for a shorter period of icebreakers.

At the beginning of the session participants were informed that CEC was exploring the idea of a virtual university. The initiative had come from North American members but it was thought a good idea to profit from WPC to tap the creativity in thinking of young professionals from all parts of the world, as the virtual university was meant to be a global initiative. The results of the focus groups and the questionnaire would be input for a CEC expert meeting in November which would advise on technical and marketing aspects and would formulate a business plan.

After introductions - to break the ice - the participants were invited to exchange their experiences in the Congress so far and were encouraged to serve themselves from the drinks and buffet with snacks during the session. The participants were invited to talk among themselves about the idea of a virtual university. To avoid leading questions, the facilitator only intervened when the virtual university disappeared out of 'focus'.

First focus group, 11 September 2003
Analyzing the discussion of the first focus group one can make the following observations:

1. Participants talk with enthusiasm and genuine interest and are exploring ideas together on the issue. The 'psychology' of the discussion in itself seems to confirm the potential of the idea of a virtual university. At no point a remark is made to the extent that the idea makes no sense.

2. Participants have little to no experience with distance learning or internet courses, but they seem open for this new potential.

3. The trend in the discussion is that participants see a clear niche for a virtual university if courses for conservation professionals are
    a. demand oriented
    b. not academic but practical

      c. guided by a tutor
      d. combined with face to face meetings
      e. linking practical day to day work with theory and reflection

4. The discussion leads to the idea that the virtual university should be clearly different from what universities have to offer. For quite a few participants the IUCN brand was not important as IUCN was not well known.

5. An idea is to see the virtual university as a learning centre in partnership with various universities or other organizations.

6. The discussion on the content has a trend that courses should focus on the challenges a conservation professional faces in the day to day practice: landscape approach, community involvement, organizational management.

7. Issues coming up in the discussion that still have to be solved are language, duration, costs, accessibility, financing, corporate partnerships.

8. The advice is start small, learn by doing in a few countries first. 'Keep us informed' which can be interpreted: develop the idea together with us 'potential' users.

Second focus group, 15 September 2003
Analyzing the discussion of the second focus group one can make the following observations:

1. As in the first group, participants talk with enthusiasm and genuine interest and are exploring ideas together on the issue. The 'psychology' of the discussion in itself seems to confirm the potential of the idea of a virtual university. At no point a remark is made to the extent that the idea makes no sense.

2. Some participants have experience with distance learning or internet courses, and they all seem to be very open for this new potential.

3. As in the first group the trend in the discussion is that participants see a clear niche for a virtual university if courses for conservation professionals (staffs and 'trainers') are:
      a. demand oriented
      b. not academic but practical
      c. guided by a tutor
      d. combined with face to face meetings
      e. linking practical day to day work with theory and reflection

4. An idea is to think in terms of knowledge assistance and to see the virtual university as a virtual network improving the resources in local universities, sharing benefits and building capacity of those universities.

5. An idea developed through the discussion is to:
   - start from what is already on the IUCN shelves, but what is inaccessible at the moment in terms of language, presentation and methodology
   - develop modules using the local expertise and knowledge with support of the international level

- focus first on those professionals with access to computers: train trainers (and maybe key change agents among park staff) who would be certified to train people at the local level on various topics
- prepare materials which are generic, let the trainers then '*translate and localize*' the generic materials, and constantly up date the materials
- develop the virtual university together with the users and intermediaries
- do research to identify who are the best trainers, so they can become trainer of trainers; do together with potential users a training needs analysis.
- stimulate the codification of traditional knowledge as a contribution from the local level to the virtual network.

6. The demand side in some countries need to be further explored: in Africa many conservation professionals are employed on 4 years contracts, these can be renewed after four years when people have performed well, one performance criteria is continued education and training. More knowledge also leads to a higher salary for the next term. This in itself is seen as a potential market.

7. As in the first group, issues that still have to be solved are language, duration, costs, accessibility, financing, corporate and other partnerships.

8. As in the first group the advice is start small, learn by doing in a few countries first. 'Keep us informed' which can be interpreted: develop the idea together with us 'potential' users. This group also added be flexible and do not raise expectations.

Annex 1.   Questionnaire

Virtual University for Young Professionals **Quick Scan**	IUCN The World Conservation Union CEC Commission on Education and Communication

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication is conducting preliminary research to what extent a Virtual University on Environment and Development would benefit young professionals in protected areas. Please encircle your answers to questions 1 – 10, and give a short answer to the others.				
1) Do you have access to the internet on a regular basis?	Yes		No	
2) Do you have access to the WWW through a dial up modem or are you on a network?	Modem		Network	
3) How many times a week do you go to the internet to find information that you use in your job?	0	1 x	2 x	3 x
	4 x	5 x	More	
4) Did you ever take an internet based course or training?	Yes		No	
5) Did you ever participate in a distance learning course?	Yes		No	
6) Does your employer require additional development or training on an annual basis?	Yes		No	
7) Does your employer pay for such training?	Yes		No	
8) If so, what is the typical annual amount spent on each employee?	US $ 100– 500		US $ over 500	
9) How many courses or professional develop type trainings do you take in the course of a year?	1		2 or more	
10) Does the fact that a course is accredited to an University impact your decision to participate?	Yes		No	
11) What is the main reason that your decision is impacted by the fact that the course is accredited to a University?				
12) What content areas are of most need and interest, that you would take additional training in? 1. 2.				
13) For me the added value of an IUCN Virtual University is:				

Age		Country	
Profession		Favourite website	

Annex 2. Respondents Questionnaire

Respondents under 35

North America

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
25	conservationist	USA	
26	Communications officer	USA	
29	Conservation Economics	USA	
27	PhD student	USA	Yale webmail
27	Conservation planner	Virgin Islands	Lately the fao tex has been useful
27	Project Executive	Canada	Gnb.ca
35	Director, BVI National Parks Trust		www.nytimes.com
29	Aquatic Ecologist	USA	www.water.usgs.gov
34	Conservationist Manager	USA	
33	Research Associat e	USA	www.google.com
32	Technology consultant	USA	www.google.com
32	Programme officer	USA	
	Fundraising coordinator (NGO)	Canada	
33	Environmental Science consultant	USA	www.nps.org

South America

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
33	Biologist	Peru	
32	Economist	Paraguay	www.yahoo.com
29	Msc. Conservation, Pas, Indigenous people	Ecuador	Oxfam America, WWF
26	Social Science Analyst	Panama	www.google.com (helps you find everything you need !)
31	Natural areas Manager	Uruguay	www.guardaparques.com
31	PhD student in Germany	Brazil	www.google.com.br
29	Conservationist in charge of WWF-Peru's forest program	Peru	

Africa

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
30	Ecologist	Zimbabwe	www.cites.org
29	Social ecologist	South Africa	Parks
29	Manager	South Africa	
36	Tourism	South Africa	
21	National Diploma	South Africa	www.jobmail.com
26	Driver, Building droughting	South Africa	
34	Ranger	D.R. Congo	www.yahoo.com
29	Agronomical Engineer and Forester, PhD student	Rep of Benin	www.iucn.org www.ipgri.org www.google.com
31	Conservation Biologist	Cameroon	
33	Development studies (social ecologist)	Uganda	IUCN, WWF, uwa.or.ug, League of pastoral people
32	Ecologist	Uganda	No favourite

Asia

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
34		P. R. China	
34	Environment Education	India	Don't have a favourit though I like National Geographic very much
27	Research associate	Philippines	www.google.com

West Asia

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
31	Terrestrial PA Section Head	U.A.E.	www.unep-wcmc.org

Europe

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
34	Assistant Lecturer	Slovenia	www.google.com
30	NGO consultant	Italy	www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid www.parks.it
24	Information Center	Russia	Ecological
29	PhD student	Switzerland	Webmail
33	Economist	Switzerland	www.google.com
25	Office Assistant	UK	
29	Biologist	Slovenia	www.google.com
20	Student	Switzerland	

34	Geologist, ranger Chairman of the Danish Ranger Assoc.	Denmark	None in particular
33	Director	Latvia	www.daba.lv
29	Engineer – PhD student	Italy	www.parks.it
27	Director of a tourist and nature information centre	Bulgaria	www.cedefop.eu.int www.salto-youth.net www.bsbcp.org

Oceania

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
32	Conservation Planner	Australia	
29	Scientific Officer	Australia	
28	Media and publications officer, CRC Reef Research Centre	Australia	Google

Respondents over 35

Africa

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
42	Director of National Park	Algeria	IUCN (med) and UNESCO (MAB)
36	Environmentalist	Namibia	
38	University lecturer	Kenya	IUCN
38	Natural Resource Management	Uganda	IUCN
38	Environment/forestry	Uganda	GEF BSP.online
42	Forestry/Community developm	Uganda	Cnn.com
37	Local researcher	Congo	
38	Physiotherapist	Uganda	
42	Physical oceanographer	Tanzania	www.gpa.unep.org

North America

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
38	NGO Executive Director	Jamaica	
40	Executive	USA	www.wcs.org
45	Conservation NGO	USA	
49	Ecologist	USA	www.ice.ucdavis.edu/mab
42	Public Health	USA	

South America

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
45	Geographer	Brazil	Various
40	Environmental Policy	Peru	
39	Sociologist	Brazil	www.mma.gov.br

Asia

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
43	Marine Conservationist	Viet Nam	WWF, UNDP, FAO Google, Yahoo and Vietnam sites

Europe

Age	Profession	Country	Favourite website
43	Senior Advisor	Denmark	Many
41	Academic	UK	www.iucn.org
36	Environmental Manager-Forest	UK	www.ben-network.org.uk

Annex 3.   Bar charts Questionnaire

Annex 4.   Focus group[14]

A focus group is a non-directive type of interviewing a specific social group: a segment of consumers, voters or stakeholders in a policy issue. It is a technique in commercial and social marketing. It draws on group interaction to gain greater insight into why certain opinions are held. Focus groups are used to improve planning and design of new products or programs, provide means for evaluation and provide insights and qualitative data for communication and marketing strategies.

Normally a focus group consists out of six to ten people who are invited to spend a few hours with a skilled moderator to discuss a product, service, organization, policy measure or other marketing entity. The moderator needs to be objective, knowledgeable on the issue and well versed in group dynamics and consumer or stakeholder behaviour. The participants are reasonably homogenous and unfamiliar with each other. In focus groups for commercial purposes they are normally paid a small sum for attending the focus group. For non-commercial purposes the participants often receive a small present. The meeting is typically held in pleasant surroundings and refreshments are served throughout.

After an introduction and warm-up, the moderator normally starts with broad questions how people feel about the issue to be explored. Questions then move to how people regard different aspects of the issue. The moderator encourages free and easy discussion, hoping that group dynamics will reveal deep feelings, thoughts and motives. At the same time the moderator 'focuses' the discussion. The discussion recorded through note taking, audiotape or video tape is subsequently studied to understand better the consumers or stakeholders: their knowledge, attitudes, feelings and motives for change in practices.

Focus groups are a useful exploratory means before designing large-scale surveys or campaigns. Consumer good companies, newspapers, hospitals and other public service organizations have been using focus groups for years. Increasingly they are used in politics, policymaking and policy implementation. The results of focus groups must not be to easily generalized. for the whole market or the whole country, since the sample size is too small and the sample is not drawn randomly. However they produce a quick method for a first idea of the feasibility of a proposition or feedback on its implementation.

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[14] IUCN program staffs often use the word focus group for a large range of different sessions or workshops with stakeholders. In the marketing communication discipline though a focus group is a very specific instrument. The following description of a focus group is based on Kotler, Ph., **Marketing Management**, Prentice Hall International, 1997 and Groenendijk, J.N.A., Hazekamp, G.A.Th., & Mastenbroek, J., **Public Relations**, Samsom 1997. The text is taken from the English version of the CEC communication strategy developed between 2000 and 2002 for the Brazilean Minsitry of Environment: Ministério do Meio Ambiente, Secretaria de Qualidade Ambiental nos Assentamentos Humanos, **Em busca de uma estratégia de comunicação para a Agenda Marrom,** Documento Final, Brasilia 2002, p. 67.

Annex 5. Participants Focus Groups

Participants Focus group 11 September

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Participants Focus group 16 September

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Annex 6.   Recorded Discussion of Focus Groups

First focus group, 11 September 2003

Virtual university, first reactions
- receiving information by the web
- networking
- training
- who do I go to
- discussion groups
- accessibility (Slovenia)
- how many people have access to internet in the parks
- when you are in the field you don't have much access to information and internet may be a solution
- would this also be for Americans or also for Egyptians, for ex.
- Claudio tells his experienced about his exchanges via internet. He questions who will have access to this information. Will it get to Protected Areas people? Economic conditions are also important.
- Technology which could improve the capacity of people but it has to be accessible.
- Sanskriti asks if language has been discussed. 90% of people in India do not speak English.
- Claudio says that in PA, people in Brazil are lazy to read in Spanish, even though it's very similar than Spanish.
- Same in Egypt. Although people have knowledge of English, they ask if documents can be translated in Arabic. It might be an identity question.
- Internet is used in English.
- Sanskriti says that in India now they have software for this.

Potential Users
- PA managers (whether NGOs or governmental)
- Rangers
- Who wouldn't use it? Politicians
- environmental management.
- Farmers
- Students
- Volunteers
- Parents
- Prioritize the list. Some people mentioned above would not use it as it would depend how it is presented.

Iinternet is for everyone but who should we really target?
- Susan says that if it is IUCN launching this, it would then be directed to the environmental world. Professionals in the broad field of conservation.
- Training. Select the information. Too much information.
- Claudio suggests 2 or 3 meetings per year and then, go on with the training by internet.

- From 40 to 200 trained PA managers
- Strong network
- Virtual congress
- Susan says we are social beings and its still important to have 'physical'meetings.
- Sanskriti says that most of the pre-congress preparations were already virtual.
- What would be failure – People who don't complete the course
- Sanskriti: university would only manage it but each person would find its guru. That might be also a solution for the language.
- who has already taken a distance learning course? None of the attendees.
- Andrea has done a 6-month course because he knew the teachers. He paid USD300 for 6 months. Would money be a problem? Some fee should be requested otherwise people would not interested.
- Important to have a diploma; USD200 is too expensive for Brazil. Agreement between the university and the organization would work.
- Attract sponsors with win-win situations. At the end of the course a student could pay back by doing something for the organisation.
- Jana says that as organisations benefit from the education of people, they should pay for it or at least facilitate their participation.
- Virtual university: cost effectiveness (no air fare, hotel, per diem, etc.).
- What would be a good duration for a course in virtual university.
- 2 years
- 3 months
- modules which could be selected
- deal withy a university would be important for IUCN to attract students.
- Although there are other institutions which are not univ. and have recognition. Why not IUCN.
- IUCN as a main focus and attracting several universities
- IUCN could also function through institutions and don't give the courses themselves. IUCN being the centre.
- Associate IUCN with certain quality

Content?
- Post graduate courses 1 or 2 years. Universities are offering modules but are very academic oriented. IUCN would have contents that could be more practical oriented. Plan and implement and then report on that. You would get help in every stage and then you develop your plan.
- Claudio supports the above. Now is too much academic. We need practical things. We are now talking about diff ecol processes. People come from different backgrounds.
- Financial management< human resource management. Leadership, motivation on training.
- Professional short course. You learn a lot. You go back to your institution but have no time to practice it because its another world. With virtual university you can come back and forth from one realm to another.
- Tailor cases on what you re doing. I would prefer to go to virtual university than a real one. In Slovenia, when you go back to university you re dependent on teachers and often they are not reliable.

- Divide students into groups so they can tackle certain issues together. Young people have lots of ideas, ie in this WPC she would have liked to discuss several topics before t hey were presented.
- Delegates in the audience may have vast experience but have all resolved. No possibility to give input.
- Park managers to communicate with local people and sometimes they don't know how to do it.
- World Bank supported project.
- The result should be seen in the ground. The government would then find it worthwhile. GEF projects are all different, and they are all struggling. Small grants from embassies (Dutch, UK, Danish) could be perfect for this type of project.

IUCN?
- Claudio says it would be effective as the present modus operandi is not helping one to change situation in the field.
- General courses could be a good way to start. Within the framework of IUCN's work. Related to their work.
- Be more precise of what's really needed. Something that's not offered in the web already.
- The real difference it has to be directed to youth real management, state of Sao Paulo. They go to the parks and were not trained before, apart of being biologist. People in parks learn only after years.
- Local communities think different. They are not prepared for that.
- Two courses: 1 main and 1 cutting edge.
- The moment that the courses go to landscape approach, the official decision making unit thinks this is not for the present but for the future. A conservation manager is still working in limited ways. Not empowering communities.
- IUCN could offer these programs accessible to everyone. Methodology.
- Some people in the field might be resisting.
- The demand is crucial. If people are interested in the virtual university this means they would like to study and practice.
- Universities are offering courses on a variety of subjects in ecology. Maybe IUCN should offer something different.
- Its not a university. You are going to study to understand what is happening in the field but only at the end you could.
- Creating a center where IUCN would be the anchor point. Learning Centre. Maybe training is not the good word but capacity building. Practical ways. Different perspectives.

Have we forgotten something?
- A person says, this is what I would like to learn and IUCN would propose the 'guru'.
- Maybe an email is then enough? No, because that is just a discussion.
- Claudio mentions also radio for Latin America and Africa. Not only the information is important but also the organization around it.
- there are different levels of knowledge that in a virtual university could be offered. What would be the best way to organise it. IUCN could propose a variety of options. What are the needs, how can we get the channels of information.
- Start small and then extend from there. Maybe start only with Brazil, India, Indonesia, etc. and not the whole world.

Second focus group, 15 September 2003

Virtual University for young professionals?
- My first concern is what is the age range, position what are you trying to teach.
- My concern is the infrastructure and Internet access.
- It is tricky, why young professionals? What about old professionals, the old need to keep track of those changes.
- It´s a good idea, it means continuing learning.
- In Africa it is very difficult to access Internet.
- It should be inclusive. Continued education is an on-going process, I like that.
- I think the idea of a virtual university is good. Why not locally based? To respond to specific needs? It could exist because you know where the knowledge is.
- From exchange of information to knowledge assistance, this should come up. Internet may not be accessible, even telephones sometimes. You can develop modules, using the local expertise with support of the international level.
- We need this to enhance skills, so the idea is very good.
- Even with the difficulty of Internet access, the other option there is quite a number of staff that they go to the library, there can use the computer there, it could be useful if we can handle a specific web site, only one.

Demand?
- You could not have hands-on training. The Virtual University could not cover everything.
- There is an opportunity for indigenous peoples. They have a small university, and in general they could go by the river to the main city. It would facilitate information access. The best way is to have a blocked time, so they could go to training institutions. These should be used. They come, get skills and go back to the field.
- Would it require a tutor?
- Yes, they would need that, but they also already have courses.
- Who would be users?
- There could be two categories. Having the trainers and then the people like the protected areas staff.
- I hope it can be directed to a broader spectrum and not only young professionals, but for practitioners also.
- In most countries, communities also need skills. They could also be other users: people from communities. They need skills to manage resources. This would be critical for them.
- But who would pay? Is the community expected to pay this? How would be the cost sharing? Who pays for the service?
- I see this as a long term initiative. Of course people from local governments should also be included. There are also people that could go to a training centre every two months. Other courses could be directly for people who are not so well informed. For the Amazon, you need the infrastructure, computers and the networks also.
- The private sector could pay, NGOs, IUCN should support this, we are thinking about the local level but the benefits are global.
- It should not aim only at universities, but also local park authorities, it should provide a service to all people.

What should be the content?
- Learning more about Protected Areas related to environmental education.
- Collective rights.
- Systems management.
- One recommendation is that it should be as relevant as possible, things that would be meaningful for the NGOs, it should be relevant and useful. Maybe it should be virtual during the first year, but then you move to something else.
- In relation to communities, we should think of a system that is sustainable. Local governments should feel compromised. Successful long distance learning used to pay for it, but now there is the whole process of decentralisation, and local governments are supporting many things now.
- Key are the financial resources. Local governments should support these courses.
- It should be on best practices. A lot of that information stays in the shelves. It could be for Protected Areas staff. The communities who are involved in various aspects of management also, so those best practices could be popularly accessed.
- Training trainers at first and then those people have to train the communities. Trainers can obtain certificate to train on different topics. At first it should be directed for someone who already has a computer.
- If you prepare materials which are generic, then you need to put this on the ground. The trainers should translate the generic materials, but country driven, very localised, it would be more adaptive this way, you would have a more systematic approach. You would need to constantly up date the materials.
- The workshop should be at the national level, with NGOs, training institutions, and you should see what is established there already.
- Perhaps while looking for partners, maybe the traditional NGOs, but maybe others like "Cannon", big multinational companies, or smaller ones, but this could be part of their support to poverty alleviation. Even Bill Gates could be interested.
- In Ecuador, it has to be in Spanish. Be very didactic. A local trainer would be the knowledge source for adapting the materials.
- I would start with the IUCN materials, look at some of those things and see if they can be transformed to Manuals, there is dense information, it should be broken down to a friendly format.
- The UNESCO desk in my country is in the Ministry of Education. We could get support from UNESCO. They have a line of work. But there is also the broader UNESCO education programme. I think that is another area to focus. In some countries the curricula changes very slow.
- The advantage of a virtual network is that it should be easy to adapt.
- One additional advantage of a virtual university is that if you can improve the resources in the local university, so it would enrich universities. You could share the benefits. You would build up the capacity of those universities.
- I think the advantage is that you can distinguish yourself, but it is very far from reality, it´s about techniques. There is a wonderful opportunity which can adapt very fast. A virtual network can update the information very easily.
- We should have a system for an open dialogue, and for people to exchange, but there is also a need for discussions and those people can disseminate information on the ground. They have to be able to exchange information.
- Some research should take place to identify the most pressing needs.

- The research should also show who has the state of knowledge, there are the local sources of information, so the modules can be adapted and up dated.
- A virtual learning network could support non-traditional education. Parks people need to exchange knowledge. The research should also identify who are the best trainers, so the become trainer of trainers.

What would motivate people to participate?
- It would enhance their own skills. But the employer has to know, it has to be acknowledged by the employer. It should be clear what you are going to be able to do in the organisation, or else the participants could be left out.
- Community linkages. We have to compete for resources so the local planning units should benefit, so the skills are needed. There should always be and aspect of promotion.
- A computer certification system: the more you are trained, the better job you do, the more money you can get.
- The structure should have increasing levels of training, and there should be platforms to progress.
- It depends of the area. Either be in terms of salary of the type of job. But at the same time there are salary increments. If you win a contract, you must be trained. Our emphasis is for keeping the job, there are only 4 years contracts. That is why I was also worried about the old people. Many struggle to stay with the job.
- A grant recognising that it is an IUCN grant, would this be enough? Using the IUCN stamp, would that be enough?
- Training by itself should improve the work, the performance should change somehow. It must be linked to the job performance, and people should go for that.
- It will be important that is it IUCN, but many people don't know IUCN.
- Perhaps the research for content is looking where the greatest needs are. Lots of different modules, but if they are meant for communities, they should start to see that the participants are respected by the people of the Park. That would go beyond monetary benefits.
- Some form of recognition should motivate people. But it should be clear the idea of who has the greatest needs.
- You should create specific programmes for regions, with specific topics, long-term programmes. They should be transboundary programmes.
- Communities should be the priority, most of those people miss opportunities of education. The recognition they could get is important, but what types of jobs would they get? For many years, when you work with the communities they always ask for a certificate but they also ask for a job.

What would be the content of this learning?
- Education outreach, children education.
- Exposure to Parks and National Reserve areas.
- For South America, we would need to protect the Amazon, we need to emphasise on regions, the program should be regionally based.
- Training analysis: the study could be done with the users.
- Even in the US, the urban populations don't care, there are also ethnic groups, how do you teach an approach to nature?
- I don't really know if you can use a common approach for all.

- The programme should not be imposed. There is a need for a participatory process to define the programme.
- Start from the basics and then go tot specific skills.
- There are big differences from region to region. There should be middle courses and then you can move to advanced ones. Then the countries or regions can pick it up from there.
- A sequence of courses, different regions can go through different courses.
- There is a need for political support at the local level.
- Traditional knowledge: is there room for TK? Knowledge should come from interactive learning.
- There is a lot of traditional knowledge which is not published, it needs to be systematised. The students should be able to make a contribution too.
- Good modules must have that in place, examples actually should be given by the local trainers.
- I am still worried about who pays and does all the work.
- It should get started.
- IUCN can coordinate and has the right expertise, and so do the regions, so this commission should take it up.

What to avoid?
- One size fits all.
- Limited resources.
- Raise expectations.
- Something that takes too long to do. It should be something that has to be short but that can be adapted.
- The information flow which would not be two ways. Silly to think that this is available and not know about it.

Last good advice?
- It should be continued.
- Keep us posted.
- Start small and keep it simple.