

Milestone

Island Conservation Society celebrates its 20th anniversary

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Island Conservation Society (ICS), Professor Rolf Payet, one of its founders, recounts its birth and some of its successes.

Contributed by Professor Rolf Payet; One of the Founders of ICS

Whilst Seychelles has had a rich conservation history spanning decades, it was only until the nineties that an all-Seychellois conservationist team took ownership and leadership in the management of strict nature reserves in Seychelles.

I remember very well, my first landing on Aride, an island chock-full of vegetation right to the coastal fringe, it had indeed barely survived the 100 years or so of sooty tern egg (dizef zwazo) extraction which ended in 1967 when it was transformed into a reserve by the owners. Following its purchase by the late Christopher Cadbury, an avid conservationist and co-heir to the wealthy Cadbury chocolate empire, the island was subsequently handed over to be managed by the UK-based Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC) and declared a Special Nature Reserve in 1975 by Seychelles.

I selected this bit of history to highlight two key observations which would heavily influence the expansion and development of biodiversity conservation in Seychelles. First, the deep realisation of the owners of the biodiversity importance of the island, and secondly the vision of Mr Cadbury in transforming the island to its former natural glory through investments in conservation, restoration and recovery action.

On reflection, Aride was set aside as a reserve before I was born, and today it stands as one of the most significant accomplishments in conservation history in Seychelles. More than 25



Aride Island - the flagship of ICS

years later, a group of Seychellois founded the Island Conservation Society (ICS) and made an offer to the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (formerly known as RSNC) to assume management of Aride Island. Despite the initial scepticisms, and rightly so, RSWT agreed to hand over Aride island to ICS for an initial period of 3 years, and the rest is history as they say. Today ICS is the full custodian and manager of Aride island - a proud Seychellois achievement! Whilst many challenges remain, no one can deny that Aride stands at the top of the most successful conservation triumph in our history, thanks to the many Seychellois conservationists and rangers who work hard to maintain Aride as a conservation masterpiece.

Indeed, such an achievement, created the opportunity for ICS to seek to extend its conservation work to the outer islands of the Seychelles and after negotiations with the Government of Seychelles and the Islands Development Company, ICS was given conservation management responsibility for many of the outer islands of the Seychelles. Thus was born the idea of the develop-

ment of a network of protected areas which would span the entire EEZ, including Aldabra and all the outer island groups of the Seychelles. This saw the establishment of important conservation and restoration work on the islands of D'Arros and St Joseph (managed by Save our Seas Foundation), Alphonse, Desroches, and Cosmoledo (where I

did my PhD field research, part of which involved terrestrial habitat mapping under the expert supervision of no other than Dr. Victorin Laboudallon and establishing the first coral reef monitoring sites on the atoll). The work of ICS on Alphonse and Desroches has greatly influenced my research on sustainable tourism and conservation, especially whether or not carefully planned tourism can be the driving force behind conservation and restoration of degraded habitats on the outer islands, and some inner islands including Fregate, North Island, Silhouette and Cousine demonstrate this possibility.

Personally, Silhouette; where ICS has also established its conservation centre; remains the most exceptional mountainous island - my grandfather and father grew up on the plantation there. Moreover, this is where I also did my first research project



Betty and Christopher Cadbury

while completing my A-levels, and to be in a position of influence to have it declared by the Government of Seychelles as a national park in 2010; and to be married there, tops my conservation story.

Indeed, many challenges for conservation remain but I see

a much brighter future, as I am comforted by the many young people taking up conservation as a career, the success of the University of Seychelles' own home-grown Degree in Environmental Sciences, the growing body of scientific research, the continuous eradication of invasive species and conservation awareness of the population. Nevertheless, I remain cognizant of our need to continue to provide the best for our people in terms of economic and social development, however, I am comforted by the fact that we have established the foundations on which to further develop Seychelles in the most sustainable manner whilst preserving our God-given natural heritage. This is indeed reflected on our stance on fisheries and tourism pressures. I am grateful and privileged to have been part of this 20 year old legacy of the ICS. Congratulations ICS, and a big thank you to all the founding trustees, current trustees, staff and all supporters of the ICS. My conservation story does not end here though; I will be back!



One of the ICS meetings held in 2002 (Rolf Payet on the left)



Aerial view of Grand Barbe, Silhouette



One of the oldest establishments on an outer island



EELA - Private Sector Support Expressions of Interest for Technical Assistance and Co-financing Facility



The Seychelles Energy Commission (SEC) works in close collaboration with SACREE, the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in the implementation of Energy Efficient Lighting and Appliances in East and Southern Africa (EELA) project. The (EELA) project aims to support the development of vibrant markets for Energy Efficient appliances across the region. The SEC is pleased to present the following opportunity:

The EELA Project is inviting energy users and energy service providers to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) for technical and financial support to develop and implement energy efficient lighting and appliances projects in the East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member State(s).

The assistance is available under three categories as follows:

1. Technical assistance for the design of Energy Service Business Models
2. Co-financing to support the upfront costs of equipment purchase
3. Technology transition support from the manufacturers.

This opportunity can be availed by Public or Private Energy Users, ESCOs (even as consortiums) based in SADC member states. The first phase of the EOI shall be valid until 31 December 2021.

Detailed information package can be accessed via following the link UNIDO website: <https://www.unido.org/resources-procurement/procurement-opportunities>. Applicants should submit their EOI to the designated mailbox: eela-facility@unido.org.

For additional information/clarification please email to calexander@sec.sc or call 4610825 during office hours.