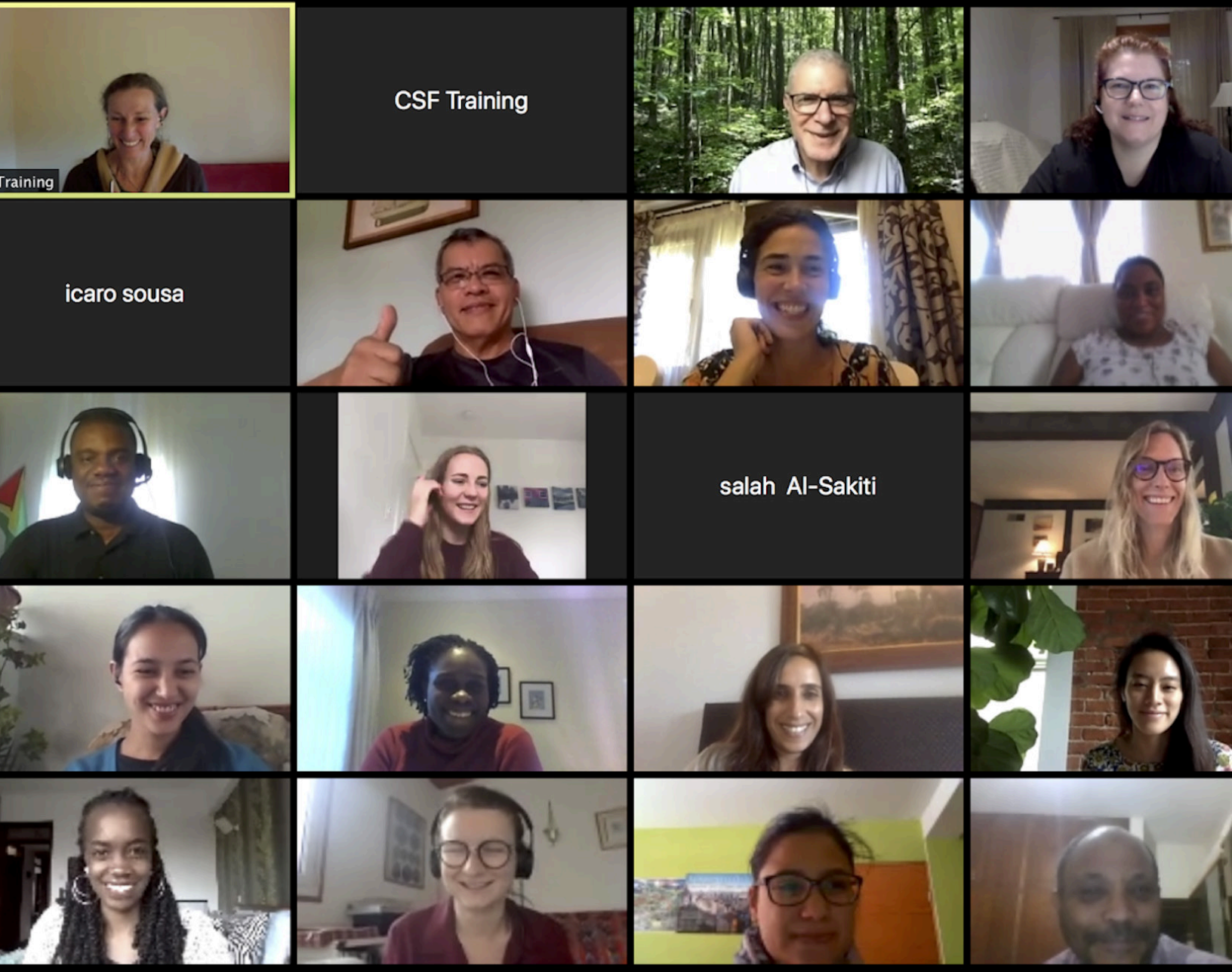




2020 Course Report
Economics & Finance for Environmental Leadership
Virtual and Online
July 13-24



COURSE REPORT

BACKGROUND

This year, Conservation Strategy Fund's annual international course, *Economics and Finance for Environmental Leadership*, went virtual for the first time ever. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the training team worked tirelessly to transition our two-week, in-person course into a virtual and online format across 18 different time zones. As a result, CSF was able to extend the reach of our annual flagship training—and equip even more people in more places with the knowledge of how economics can impact conservation efforts worldwide.

For more than 20 years, our annual international course has been regarded as the premier economics training event for environmental professionals from all over the world. Offering a two-week intensive boot camp in economics and finance, our course educates participants on how to use economic tools and concepts in their work to make a lasting difference in their home communities. During our training, course participants experience a transformational shift in how they approach conservation. Some of our 2020 course alumni are already applying what they've learned in the field.

“I've already had six countries request support with the implementation of forest landscape restoration initiatives. One of the key deliverables is financial and economic analysis. Because of this course, I will be able to help perform this task better.”

**-- Charles Karangwa, Regional Technical Coordinator,
International Union for Conservation of Nature, Rwanda**



“I am taking this course to understand how to better apply financial principles in conservation, and how this can then be communicated effectively to stakeholders of all background levels. I hope to learn from the course modules, but also from everyone's personal experiences - what worked, what didn't, and why.”

**-- Fairul Izmal Jamal Hisne, Vice-Chairperson & Co-Founder,
The MareCet Research Organization, Malaysia**

INSTRUCTORS

CSF's international course is taught by experts in environmental economics with extensive field experience and an in-depth understanding of real-world conservation challenges. Our instructors are drawn from CSF staff, as well as from leading academic and international institutions. In 2020, we had a diverse teaching staff of five core faculty members along with four guest speakers: Thaís Vilela (CSF senior economist), Tania Briceno (CSF lead economist), Katy Mathias (conservation finance project manager at Wildlife Conservation Society), and Aaron Bruner (former CSF staff member and current landscape and seascape economics fellow with Conservation International).



Kim Bonine, *Conservation Strategy Fund*

Kim leads CSF's Economics for Environmental Leadership training program, with activities in over 40 countries and five continents. Over the past 20 years, Kim has led the design and implementation of environmental economics courses and analysis projects in Africa, Asia and North and South America on themes such as wildlife conservation, infrastructure development, fisheries management, tourism economics and sustainable development scenarios.



Corbett Grainger, *University of Wisconsin*

Corbett is an Associate Professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he specializes in environmental and natural resource economics. His research studies the effects of environmental regulations on different demographic groups, the political economy of environmental policies, and market-based approaches to environmental management. He has a PhD in Economics from University of California, Santa Barbara.

INSTRUCTORS (CONTINUED)



David Johnson, *University of Wisconsin*

David is currently an Economics Lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to moving to UW-Madison, David taught Microeconomics and Macroeconomic analysis at Wellesley College, Harvard University, and Stanford University. He has received wide recognition for his teaching talent and animated style, and strives to make his courses interesting, important, and relevant. David has been teaching in CSF courses since 2004.



John Lynham, *University of Hawai'i*

John is an Associate Professor of Economics and a UHERO Research Fellow at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He is the Director of the Graduate Ocean Policy Certificate and an Affiliated Researcher at the Center for Ocean Solutions at Stanford University. John holds an MA and a PhD in Economics from the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB). He also holds an MS in Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology from UCSB.



David Meyers, *Conservation Finance Alliance*

David is an environmental finance expert and entrepreneur with more than 25 years of experience in sustainability, business strategy and management, environmental economics, and international conservation and development. He is currently the Executive Director of the Conservation Finance Alliance. He holds a PhD in Biological Anthropology and Anatomy from Duke University, and an MBA from the Yale School of Management.

PARTICIPANTS

CSF’s international economics course is designed for professionals at the forefront of global conservation issues. This year, participants came from a variety of backgrounds and roles, including project managers, researchers, consultants, analysts, program officers and specialists, and senior executives and directors. By hosting our course virtually and online, we had the unique opportunity to enroll more students than ever before, with 57 participants from 29 countries and 38 organizations.

The course brought together a huge diversity of organizations, including national and multi-lateral development agencies, international foundations and conservation organizations, universities and research centers, and national environmental agencies. CSF was able to extend nine full scholarships this year – triple the number we can typically offer. In addition, long-time collaborators at Conservation International and Wildlife Conservation Network each enrolled six participants in our course, offering us a great opportunity to expand our working relationships in several critical areas.

GET TO KNOW SOME 2020 COURSE PARTICIPANTS



“I took this course to learn more about economics in natural resource management. I believe that the incorporation of some economic concepts in the management of natural resources can provide good guidance in regulating development projects, especially in cases where the developments are likely to cause substantial change or damage to the environment.”

*-- Sarah Kawala, Environmental Assessment Officer,
National Environmental Management Authority, Uganda*



“I want to do a better job of arguing for marine conservation in Sri Lanka. I believe this requires me to speak the language of politicians, but also the private sector. I am really excited to gain the knowledge and confidence I need to take my conservation work to the next level!”

*-- Asha de Vos, Founder and Executive Director,
Oceanswell, Sri Lanka*



"I believe that economic and financial instruments are central for creating positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems, upscaling efforts, mainstreaming biodiversity, and triggering behavioral change. I hope to improve my understanding of economic tools and financial mechanisms for biodiversity conservation to apply this in my work, which is currently focused on coastal and marine ecosystem conservation."

*-- **Carola Kuklinski**, Technical Advisor,
GIZ, Brazil*



"I was trained as an ecologist and veterinarian, working in biodiversity conservation. Economics and social aspects of conservation are a key component to conservation problems. I want to learn about how to promote more complete and feasible conservation strategies where people and nature benefit together."

*-- **Maximilaino Sepulveda**, Senior Officer,
The Pew Charitable Trusts, Chile*



"I am taking this course to deepen my understanding of the practical applications of market-based solutions to environmental problems. By taking this course, I hope to apply these skills and knowledge to my day-to-day work."

*-- **Jane Kwenye**, Senior Lecturer and Head of Department
for Plant and Environmental Sciences,
Copperbelt University, Zambia*

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED

African Development Bank	Conservation International	GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)	The Nature Conservancy
Alem Ethiopia	Copperbelt University	Global Penguin Society and Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN)	The Pew Charitable Trusts
Andes Amazon Fund	David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	Universidad Científica del Sur
Baikal Buryat Center for Indigenous Cultures	EDF Mexico	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	University of Nairobi
Blue Ventures	Ewaso Lions	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	USAID
Center for Large Landscape Conservation	Federacion Costarricense de Pesca Turística y Deportiva (FECOP)	Nature Reserves Department (Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs)	
Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico	Fundaceo Kissama	Oceanswell	
Cheetah Conservation Botswana	Fundacion Natura Bolivia	Regeneracion Ecosistemas Peru	
Coastal Solutions Fellow Program, Cornell Lab of Ornithology	Future of Fish	San Diego Zoo Global	
Conservation Finance Alliance	GEF (Global Environment Facility)	The MareCet Research Organization	

CURRICULUM

Our international course gives participants a solid foundation in economic theory along with practical tools and case studies relevant to the challenges they face. This year’s course topics included economic fundamentals, natural resource economics and management, environmental policies, valuation of ecosystem services, cost-benefit analysis, and a new module on finance solutions for conservation.

The virtual and online format offered participants the opportunity to watch pre-recorded lectures, attend interactive office hours, webinars and live discussions, experience virtual learning games, and participate in online discussion boards—all combined with self-paced readings, exercises, and quizzes.

COURSE TOPICS

David Johnson University of Wisconsin, Madison	Microeconomics Key economic concepts; Market theory, including supply and demand, market equilibrium and competition; Market externalities and failures, property rights, and public goods
John Lynham University of Hawai'i at Manoa	Natural Resource Economics Capital theory; Behavior and incentives, including game theory, open access, and management of common resources; Economics of renewable resources, including forestry and fisheries economics, management and policy
Corbett Grainger University of Wisconsin, Madison	Environmental Policy Environmental policy instruments and evaluation criteria; Command and control regulation versus economic incentives and market-based instruments; Economics of illegal behavior, including wildlife poaching
Kim Bonine Conservation Strategy Fund	Valuation Links between ecosystems services and human benefits; Environmental values and valuation methods, including best practices and lessons learned; Case study examples of valuation studies that influence policy decisions
Kim Bonine Conservation Strategy Fund	Cost-Benefit Analysis Financial versus economic analysis, including the incorporation of externalities and sensitivity analysis; Case study examples evaluating the economic feasibility of small-scale and large-scale projects
David Meyers Conservation Finance Alliance	Conservation Finance Finance solutions framework and mechanisms; Public and private sector finance solutions; Scalable solutions and emerging tools and opportunities

COURSE EVALUATIONS

This year, our course participants rated the overall value of our course at 4.7 out of 5, and 86% said they would highly recommend our course to other colleagues interested in the intersection of conservation and economics. Below are the evaluation results, with each component rated on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest.

Overall value of the course	4.7
Course topics and content	4.8
Course facilitation, organization & communication	4.8
Course faculty	4.7

“I learned a lot in such a short time! I am clearer about the methodologies for valuing natural resources and financing. Now, I feel I am more prepared to do environmental impact studies and assess the value of all the ecosystem services that nature gives us. I am looking forward to developing environmental impact projects in the future.”

-- Milagros Estrada, Foresight Specialist,
National Center for Strategic Planning (CEPLAN), Peru

LESSONS LEARNED

Transforming our 2020 course into a virtual and online experience involved a lot of hard work and ingenuity from our training team. Fortunately, every challenge served as a learning experience, and our team now feels more prepared than ever to take our trainings online in the future.

In our increasingly digital age, we recognize that we need to meet our participants where they are – in their living rooms, home offices, or make-shift working spaces. And that means learning to navigate unfamiliar territory. From offering tutorials on virtual platforms to providing technical support during live sessions, our team learned to meet the needs of each course participant - all while facilitating large group-sessions, interactive games, and breakout rooms. Here’s a snapshot of what we learned:

- *95% of course respondents valued pre-recorded sessions they could watch any time*
- *86% of course respondents were very satisfied with our interactive platform: Canvas*
- *50% of course respondents struggled with technology issues from internet connectivity to learning to navigate online learning platforms and tools*
- *83% of course respondents valued interactive games for virtual learning*