



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



G20 GLOBAL
LAND INITIATIVE



COMMUNICATING LAND RESTORATION

BRIEF WORKSHOP REPORT

July 2024

Participants' Feedback

“Despite the short time we had, there was a lot of information in this workshop that allowed me to see not only the future of comms and the power of partnerships, but also helpful tips I can apply immediately, and areas where I will need to dedicate more time to update my organization’s skills. The work and personal networking was amazing, truly heart-felt! Additionally, I hope to go back and replicate this with local grass-roots organizations with whom we partner on the ground. Absolutely fantastic workshop...”

“It was a wonderful opportunity to connect, hear and see the communication work and actions ongoing within key global processes. The possibilities to discuss and share ideas in the breakout sessions was a capacity building time for me for there was much sharing by persons of what was going on in their organizations. Overall, it showed what is possible and how it could be done and the presenters did their best to educate us.”

“Clear objectives before the workshop More time and hands-on practical for AI master class (Doing rather than observing).”

“Everything was great, i loved the people, the networking, the space we were in, but the timing every day was long, maybe we can do shorter sessions for more days for next time, and i’d like to get access on all the sessions shared for future reference.”

“The workshop was an incredibly insightful and invaluable experience that opened my mind to the world of land restoration communications even further. The insights shared and the networking opportunities fostered were invaluable, and I am so grateful to have taken part. I would like to extend a massive thank you to all organisers and workshop hosts. I have come home with new insights that I am sure will propel my organisations communications strategy and approach to new heights.”

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OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP

The UNCCD/G20 Global Land Initiative (GLI) Communications Workshop was held from July 15-18, 2024, in Bonn, Germany. It brought together 26 participants from 16 countries, representing all regions worldwide.

WORKSHOP ORGANIZATION AND OPENING

The sessions during the workshop were varied. They ranged from short presentations, Q&A sessions and practical hands-on exercises to lectures to introduce new tools and knowledge. Participants also went on a field visit to Germany's oldest coal mining regions to see what successful land restoration efforts look like.



Workshop Participants: Love Aplenty

BACKGROUND

The G20 Global Land Initiative (GLI) was established in 2020 but began its operations in late 2022. The inaugural communications workshop took place in September 2022, during the initial phase of defining the initiative's communication vision and strategy. The subsequent workshop in April 2023 expanded to include partners mandated by the G20, such as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UNDESR), the Ramsar Convention, and others. The 2024 workshop specifically targeted partners working on the Land Restoration Challenge, led by the GLI as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The workshop had three primary objectives:

- **Review Past Achievements:** To evaluate the communication successes of GLI and plan activities for the 2025-2026 biennium.
- **Collaborate with Key Partners:** To build a community with GLI partners to scale up communication efforts on land restoration.
- **Equip Participants with Knowledge and Tools:** To provide the latest communication tools and knowledge to increase productivity and effectiveness.

Dr. Muralee Thummarukudy, GLI Director, inaugurated the workshop, welcomed participants to Bonn and the UN Campus. He explained the significance of the restoration commitments made by G20 countries, highlighting the significant investments required.

Based on a pre-workshop survey that 50 percent of the participants responded to, Ms Wischniewski summarized participants levels of expertise and their expectations from the workshop:

- **Expertise:** Most participants had moderate experience with social media.
- **Top Priorities:** Learning new skills, gaining new knowledge, and enhancing resource mobilization.
- **Organizational Challenges:** Strategy development, defining the scope of communication, and strategic communications aimed at mobilizing resources.
- **Skills Transfer:** Participants intended to share the acquired skills within their organizations.



Energy Booster: Spelling Coconut with Nonverbally with Our Bodies

COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS

The partners at the session were drawn from the organizations involved in the Land Restoration Challenge of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Each presented their communication or organization strategy, focusing on their primary audiences and strategic approaches.

G20 Global Land Initiative (GLI)

Dr. Thummarukudy presented the GLI case. He described GLI's evolution, and emphasized the importance of effective communication to address issues of land degradation and restoration. He highlighted GLI's focus on reaching decision-makers, the younger generation, and various community sectors. Then he presented and led the discussion on GLI's communication performance, based on a survey of GLI subscribers, which received over 100 respondents (see report in the next section).

UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UN- DER)

Ms Lucia Gonzalez Martinez from UNDER discussed their collaborative efforts, and emphasized the importance of building political will and monitoring progress. UNDER's communication tools include murals, personal stories and multimedia resources. They focus on storytelling from the ground to mobilize resources effectively. Gonzalez Martinez also shared the activities planned for the rest of the year for joint action.

Greenpop, South Africa

Ms Jesse Leverencia presented Greenpop's mission to restore ecosystems and reconnect people with the environment through actions like the Reforest Restoration Festivals. Their communication strategy targets businesses, eco-conscious consumers and families, using a mix of digital marketing and in-person engagements.

Lebanon Reforestation Initiative

Ms Salwa Ghanimeh shared the initiative's vision of sustainable forest management through a connectivity

corridor strategy. Key activities include on fire prevention, job creation for youth, and mobilizing communities through social media and educational programs.

Caribbean Environmental Heritage Foundation, Colombia

Ms Cristal Ange discussed their work in nature conservation, emphasizing the importance of cultural relevance and community engagement. The foundation focuses on restoring degraded lands and uses innovative communication methods, like celebrity-designed products, to raise awareness and funds.

Global Shea Alliance, Ghana

Ms Emefa Ababio highlighted the alliance's efforts to restore Shea parklands and promote sustainable land use. Their communication strategy includes high-quality visuals and leveraging platforms like LinkedIn to reach association members and donors.

Center for Ecosystem Restoration, Kenya

Ms Quinter Peres described their multi-faceted approach to ecosystem restoration, which involves research, resource mobilization (seed and germplasm), community engagement and traditional ecological knowledge. Their communication efforts focus on simplifying scientific findings and promoting best practices.

MEPA TRUST, Antigua and Barbuda

Ms Ruth Spencer discussed the organization's work with local communities to protect coastal areas and promote sustainable development. Her organization helps communities to become visible in global forums and supports the creation of initiatives led by local groups, which are sustainable.

Global Landscapes Forum (GLF)

Ms Andrea Chavarri presented GLF's efforts to engage millions in land restoration through digital forums, social media and community-based communication initiatives. Their communication strategy includes sharing practical solutions and success stories from the ground.

FIELD TRIP

Participants visited the restored Halde Hoheward landscape park in Herten and the German Mining Museum in Bochum. These visits provided insights into successful land restoration projects and the importance of effective communication in garnering public support.



Listening keenly during the guided tour in the German Mining Museum coalmine

GLI COMMUNICATIONS: ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE PLANS

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Dr. Thummarukudy presented the results of a stakeholder survey on GLI communications.

Key findings included:

- A high approval rating of GLI's communication efforts.
- The need to engage younger audiences and enhance digital and social media presence.
- Recommendations for using digital forums, targeting practitioners, and leveraging partner organizations.
- GLI communications, he said, need to use heart, facts, examples, visuals, technology and scale.

He said the GLI team will take these results into account when planning its 2025/2026 biennial work program.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Ms Georgina Bwango discussed the internal assessment of GLI's 2023 communication plans, evaluating them against OECD principles of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Key points included

- The effectiveness and impact of current communication activities.
- The need for disaggregated data on respondents for better-targeted strategies.

COMMUNICATIONS MASTER CLASSES

The Future of Communications

Prof. Dr. Jens Schröter discussed the impact of AI/ML on communication, emphasizing its role in data analysis and process efficiency. The key points included the discussion between the “AI/ML Revolution” and a “Quantum Revolution.” He presented the:

- Different types of AI and their applications and
- the advances in AI/ML and their future implications, and
- progress in computer hardware and the constraints to its growth.

Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML)

Mr. Sunil Prabhakar conducted a hands-on session on integrating AI/ML into communications. Highlights included:

- Introducing and demonstrating various generative AI tools for creating communication products, and
- Training in structured
- prompting and verifying AI-generated content for accuracy.

Twitter (X)

Ms. Sarah Othman’s session covered the effective use of Twitter (X) for communication. Among the key concepts introduced are:

- Setting up and customizing profiles.
- Strategies for increasing engagement and visibility and
- Importance of responding to direct messages and engagement.



Sarah (l) and Daniela’s (r) first in-person meeting

Design and Visual Communication

Ms Daniela Cristofori, Mr KK Shibin, and Ms Lucia Gonzalez Martinez led a session on the power of visual tools in communication. They highlighted their approaches to design, and stressed that the sources of design inspiration are everywhere. Other key points included:

- The emphasis that good content is essential to complement visuals.
- How to identify exceptional visuals: they can be applied to a wide range of products, events and uses

Designing Social Media Campaigns

Ms Salwa Ghanime walked participants through the journey of creating impactful social media campaigns, drawing on her work in Lebanon. She stressed the need to:

- Setting clear, measurable goals.
- Identifying and targeting the right audience.
- Designing informative, inspirational, and interactive content.
- Assure engagement tactics and tools.
- Choosing the right time to launch a campaign
- Assessing performance

Videography Tips and Tricks

Ms Apoorva Bose and Mr Sunil Prabhakar shared tips on how to produce high-quality videos and to use AI tools for video creation. Key points included:

- Principles for taking and editing videos.
- Using video content effectively to engage audiences.
- Using inbuilt Instagram editing tools to post on the go

• Mr Prabhakar presented AI tools to enable participants to generate scripts from video or text and to turn text into short or long-form videos.

Crisis Communications

Ms. Cristal Ange emphasized the importance of mindful communication both in crisis situations, and in day-to-day communications with colleagues.

Key points included:

- the need for bilateral communication and understanding different perspectives;
- and role of compassion and introspection in effective communication.

Data Analytics

Dr. Lawrence Nderu introduced key social media concepts, including social data and data-driven social media. The presentation’s highlights included:

- Importance of social listening and customer-centric tools
- Key areas of data analytics: volume, variety, velocity, veracity, value, and variability
- Recognition that each social media tool is built on a unique social network structure

CLOSING & WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Dr. Thummarukudy also led the session on ideation, which focused on three ideas:

- The use of technology in communication, more specifically, AI/ML and WhatsApp
- The role of networking to scale reach.
- And possibilities for collaboration around UNCCD COP16 and CBD COP16.

During the closing session, Dr Thummarukudy awarded KK Shibin a certificate in recognition of his contribution in communication to the G20 GLI during its formative period.

In their closing remarks, participants shared the workshop highlights. They include:

- the networks created;
- the spirit of collaboration and support;
- the need to keep human-centered communication;
- the ability to meet and see what others are doing and to have face-to-face communication.
- Appreciation for what their organizations are doing for the Earth.
- The amount of learning gained from everyone and the ability to make great input.
- The clarity provided to understand the vision of G20 GLI more clearly, which would enable digging deeper about GLI and follow more activities, and
- The added value of the retreat for participants' career development.

The post-workshop survey received a 62% response rate from the participants, who assigned a 4.29 rating to catering, 4.63 to meeting participants' needs and expectations, and a five for logistics. `



Mr Shibin (left) receives a certificate from Dr Thummarukudy (right)



Cristal (l) shows they communicate through art



Shibin (l), Muralee (c) and Sunil (r) catch up during the break

ANNEX 1: PARTICIPANTS' LIST

Name	Organization
Abd Salam El Vilaly	G20 Global Land Initiative
Andrea Chavarri	Global Landscapes Forum
Andreea Becheru	G20 Global Land Initiative
Antonia Mendes	G20 Global Land Initiative
Apoorva Bose	G20 Global Land Initiative
Bettina Reinartz	G20 Global Land Initiative
Cristal Ange	Caribbean Environmental Heritage Foundation
Daniela Cristofori	G20 Global Land Initiative
Devashree Niraula	G20 Global Land Initiative
Dr Lawrence Nderu	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya
Emefa Ababio	Global Shea Alliance
Georgina Bwango	G20 Global Land Initiative
Jessie Leverzencie	Greenpop
Joann Lee	G20 Global Land Initiative
Koonam Kandyil Shibin	Trainer
Lucia Gonzalez Martinez	UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
Marijn Soede	G20 Global Land Initiative
Muralee Thummarukudy	G20 Global Land Initiative
Paula Padrino	G20 Global Land Initiative
Prof Dr. Jens Schröter	University of Bonn, Germany
Quinter Peres	Center for Ecosystem Restoration
Ruth Spencer	Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas Trust
Salma Alsayyad	G20 Global Land Initiative
Salwa Ghanime	Lebanon Reforestation Initiative
Sarah Othman	G20 Global Land Initiative
Sunil Prabhakar	Trainer
Wagaki Wischnewski	G20 Global Land Initiative

Our Land Our Future



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