



Biodiversity and Renewable Energy Learning Centre

“The Learning Centre”



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About Environmental Foundation for Africa

Who we are

Environmental Foundation for Africa (EFA) was established in 1992 as a not-for-profit organization with headquarters in Freetown and an international Board of Trustees in UK/Ireland. EFA's Mission Statement is shown below and highlights the organization's overriding commitment to social and environmental improvement through educational initiatives. EFA was founded with the intent of integrating environment and education into the policy framework of the government, development, corporate and community agendas in Sierra Leone.

Mission Statement

Through educational and interactive exhibits, BRELC strives to inform, inspire and empower individuals to protect and restore the environment for the benefit of future generations'

For over 15 years

We have aimed to protect and restore the environment in West Africa by:

- Leading environmental awareness raising and capacity building at the national, regional and international levels
- Restoring degraded lands and conserving pristine forests
- Minimizing the impacts of civil war on the environment and its inhabitants
- Equipping thousands of people with sustainable livelihood skills such as agro-forestry
- Working as a trusted advisor of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

Our stakeholders

EFA has a proven history of successful stakeholder engagement, having developed links and partnerships with a number of local, national and international agencies and organisations including Conservation International, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), European Union, Cambridge University Program for Sustainability Leadership (CPSL), Government of Sierra Leone, Government of Liberia, Television Trust for the Environment (TVE) and many more.

Biodiversity and Renewable Energy Learning Centre

“The Learning Centre”

Imagine a centre to endow Freetown with a place where its citizens and visitors to the city can learn about the environmental challenges from across the region in meaningful ways to various audiences: primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, community groups, tourists, NGOs, corporate companies and the public.

Based on research and EFA’s expertise it will present solutions to environmental challenges with a focus on **learning by doing and experiencing**. As a renewable energy resource it will provide up to date information and training on relevant renewable energy technologies.

The centre will benefit all Sierra Leoneans for generations to come. By supporting us, you are contributing to future generations understanding and power to efficiently harness the abundant resources Sierra Leone has to offer.

The Learning Centre’s unique architectural design is open, inviting and a flagship example of ‘green architecture’. Situated in Sussex along the peninsula, the Learning Centre has access to a variety of natural habitats including **10 acres of forested area** in the **Western Area Peninsula Forest** (a Forest Reserve and National Park), the surrounding deforested area, overlooking the **sandy Sussex beach** and **mangroves**.



The centre will include the following main features:

- *An interactive walk-in centre with a conference / exhibition hall to accommodate school children, university students, community groups, NGO personnel, eco-tourists, the local community people and the general public.*
- *Providing school / university workday facilities, audio and visual equipment for workshops, training programmes, conservation symposiums and related seminars.*
- *Permanent tree nursery, with a focus on indigenous tree species, a fruit orchard and properly maintained garden for medicinal and ornamental plants.*
- *Interactive educational walking trails to promote knowledge about the forest and its biodiversity.*

The Learning Centre has been under construction since August 2011. We have achieved complete construction of the main building and some renewable energy features, through CEPF, PBNF, EPA-SL and EFA funding, as well as pro bono donations from volunteers and various parties including Architects Without Borders Denmark and Environmental Resources Management Foundation (ERM- UK).



Our aim is to officially open the Learning Centre in **June 2014**. Once the centre opens the following services will be available:

- ▶ Guided forest walks
- ▶ Exhibitions and Films (collaborating with other NGOs and companies)
- ▶ Conservation Symposiums and Seminars
- ▶ Workshops (incl. hosting workshops for different parties)
- ▶ Conference Hall
- ▶ Tree Nursery & Medicinal Plant Garden
- ▶ Renewable Energy and Examples of Best Practice
- ▶ Community Outreach and training (Western Area and the Provinces)
- ▶ School Education Programme
- ▶ Library & Resource centre
- ▶ Internet Hub
- ▶ Juice bar & Cafeteria



Key themes at the Learning Centre

1. Biodiversity & Conservation



The special theme of the permanent exhibitions will be '**Protection of the Western Area Peninsula Forest (WAPF) and other nature reserves**, using a wide range of photographs and video material to create awareness about the current status of and threats to these reserves including sand mining, deforestation and poaching.

The centre will also showcase **environmental, economic and social issues affecting West Africa's Upper Guinean Rainforest**, stretching south from Guinea through Sierra Leone to Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana and western Togo including all of the region's protected areas.



2. Environmental Sustainability

The Learning Centre will help facilitate the **Millennium Development Goal 7 – To ensure environmental sustainability by 2015**, through regular workshops, exhibitions, films and talks available to young people, schools, the public and local communities - promoting sustainable development and management of natural resources.



3. Renewable Energy

Demonstration facilities of proven renewable energy powered technology that are appropriate for the Sierra Leonean context including **solar lighting and energy, water heating, composting toilets, a grey water filtration system, rainwater harvesting, food dryers and biogas digester**.



Presently

The centre is constructing the final features including:

- ▶ Tree nursery with indigenous plants (GEF Project)
- ▶ Medicinal Garden
- ▶ Permaculture garden
- ▶ Ornamental garden
- ▶ Urban low cost garden
- ▶ Horticulture training for students
- ▶ Training of forest guards



As well as an educational facility, the Learning Centre will host 10 **Eco-lodges** promoting responsible tourism and encouraging sustainable employment within the local communities. Once complete, the eco-lodges will be fitted with renewable energy facilities including composting toilets, a grey water filtration system and utilise solar generated power. The local community will be closely associated with the project and a percentage of the profit will be returned to them and invested in projects to improve living standards, the environment, education etc.

Being the first, we aspire to develop similar Learning Centres in other suitable locations in the Provinces to establish and communicate the need for educational initiatives and opportunities for sustainable management of natural resources and eco-tourism.

The **provisional education programme** and **visitors leaflet** are included in this information pack for your perusal.

The Facts!

THE WESTERN AREA PENINSULAR FOREST

Valuable but Vulnerable

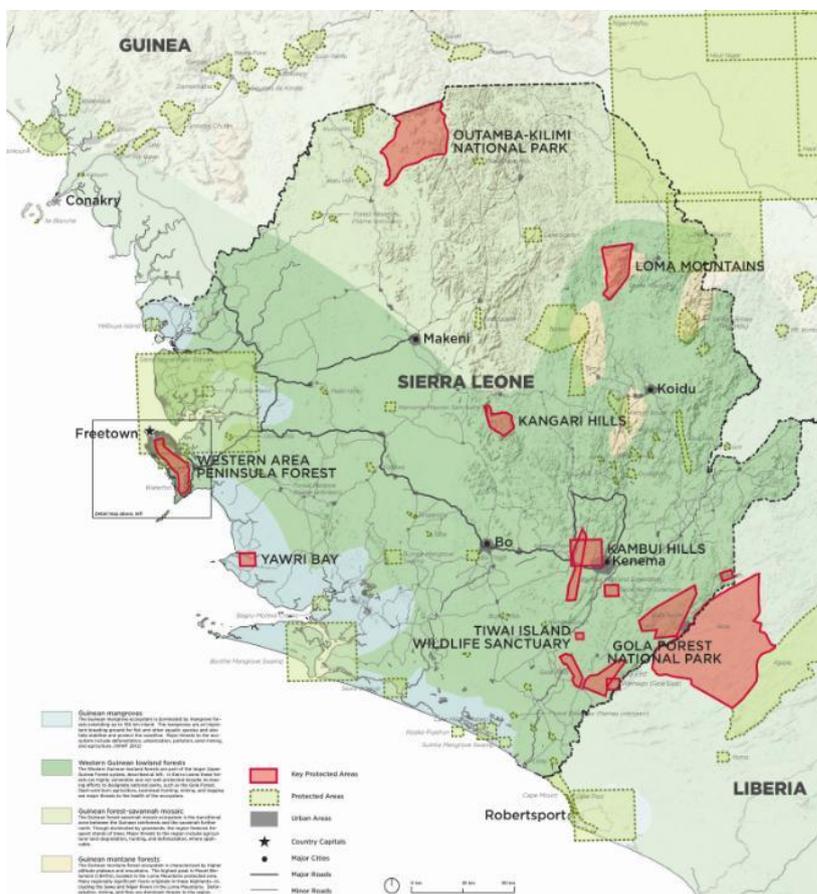
As part of the fragmented Upper Guinean Forest System, Sierra Leone is home to several endangered and threatened species, including **the red colobus, pygmy hippopotamus, chimpanzee, white-necked picathartes**, and **Jentink's duikers**, as well as numerous endemic and medicinal plant species.

The Western Area Peninsular Forest (WAPFoR) covers 500 hectares, spanning the western area of Sierra Leone; it encompasses Freetown, the capital, and is home to 1.5 million people.

One of the eight biodiversity hotspots in Sierra Leone, the WAPFoR hosts **80--90% of the country's terrestrial biodiversity** in addition to serving as a water catchment area for Freetown.

Unfortunately, due to **fuel wood/charcoal production, timber harvesting, stone quarrying, agriculture, and settlements/ road construction**, the WAPFoR is being deforested at an alarming pace.

In light of these unique threats, the BRELC is ideally situated within the WAPFoR and easily accessible from the capital, keeping visitors in touch with the environment and its threats.



‘Only 4% of Sierra Leone’s territory is currently under conservation protection and the environment is recognised to be under growing pressure from a rising population, increasingly expanding mining operations, large-scale land acquisitions, domestic fuel (firewood /charcoal production), slash and burn agriculture, illegal fishing and poor waste management’.

Biodiversity and Renewable Energy Learning Centre



A Message from Tommy Garnett, Director of Programmes, EFA:

“We cherish what we love and can only love what we know.
Learning about the environment is the first step to loving nature.
This is the goal of the Biodiversity and Renewable Energy Learning
Centre’



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BIODIVERSITY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY LEARNING CENTRE (BRELC)



“THROUGH EDUCATIONAL AND INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS, BRELC STRIVES TO INFORM, INSPIRE AND EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS TO PROTECT AND RESTORE THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.”



OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS & UNIVERSITIES WILL COVER THEMES SUCH AS:

- Ambassadors of Biodiversity
- Renewable Energy
- Climate Change
- Taking care of our Planet
- Natural Resources and Sustainability

With our unique location we provide an interactive learning experience for all ages and abilities. For more information contact the Environmental Education Officer.

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1 Beach Road, Lakka
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ACTIVITIES

Daily Events

- Guided forest tour
- Renewable Energy tour
- Medicinal Plant Garden tour

Exhibitions & Workshops

- Climate Change in Africa
- Native Sierra Leone Species
- How to make a natural pesticide?

Films & Talks

- EFA Films
- Educational Animations
- Bimonthly talks with guest speakers

FACILITIES

- Library & Resource centre
- Internet Hub
- Shop
- Juice bar & Cafeteria
- WC toilets
- Play Area
- Conference Hall
- Exhibition Room
- Tree Nursery & Medicinal Plant Garden
- Renewable Energy and Examples of Best Practice

Education Programme at the Biodiversity and Renewable Energy Learning Centre (BRELC), Banga Farm, Sussex, Sierra Leone – Summer Edition 2014

We provide an interactive learning experience for all ages and abilities. Our education programme includes indoor and outdoor activities to foster a connection between people and the environment. The themes for our Spring Education Programme are listed below. For further information and to book a session please contact the Environmental Education Officer or the main office info@efasl.org.uk.

Early Years (2 - 5 yrs)

Our
Environment

Ambassadors of
Biodiversity

Taking Care of
our Planet

Primary School (5 - 10 yrs)

Habitats

Ambassadors of
Biodiversity

Climate Change

Secondary School (11 - 16 yrs)

Climate Change

Ambassadors of
Biodiversity

Renewable
Energy

Post 16

Renewable
Energy

Natural
Resources &
Sustainability

Climate Change

Early Years (up to 5 years)

Sessions are 30 to 45 minutes and are designed for a maximum of 30 pupils.

Our Environment

This session explores what the environment is, the living and non living things found in the environment and how all living things are part of a food chain.

Activities: making food webs, painting and short film.

Type: Full or Half Day

Ambassadors of Biodiversity

This session explores the animals and plant species of West Africa and Western Area Peninsula Reserve, the problems they face and what positive things we can do to help them.

Activities: Planting pots and animal activities.

Type: Full or Half Day

Taking Care of Our Planet

This session promotes awareness of the different types of waste and how we can keep ourselves and our surroundings clean.

Activities: 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

Type: Full or Half Day

Primary School (5 – 10 years)

Sessions are 40 to 55 minutes and are designed for a maximum of 30 pupils.

Habitats

This session explores the different habitats around the world with particular focus on Sierra Leone and the Learning Centre.

Activities: Guided forest walk, beach walk and short film.

Type: Full Day

Ambassadors of Biodiversity

This session explores the animals and plant species of West Africa and Western Area Peninsula Reserve, their importance, how they become endangered and our responsibility to protect them.

Activities: Guided forest walk and medicinal plant garden.

Type: Full Day

Climate Change

This session promotes an understanding of the causes and consequences of climate change and how to adapt ourselves to its effects.

Activities: Scientific demonstrations and short films.

Type: Full Day

Secondary School (11 – 16 years)

Sessions are 45 to 60 minutes and are designed for a maximum of 30 pupils.

Climate Change

This session identifies the causes and consequences of climate change and how to conserve energy and adapt ourselves to its effects.

Activities: Scientific experiments and short films.

Type: Full Day

Ambassadors of Biodiversity

This session explores the animals and plant species of West Africa and Western Area Peninsula Reserve, their importance, the main threats to them and our responsibility to protect them.

Activities: Guided forest walk and group discussions on how to protect native species.

Type: Full Day

Renewable Energy

This session explores what energy is, how to save energy and the types of renewable energy.

Activities: Scientific demonstrations and Tour of the Centre.

Type: Full Day

Post 16

Sessions are 60 to 75 minutes and are designed for a maximum of 40 to 50 students.

Renewable Energy

This session promotes awareness of how to save energy, the types of renewable energy and their future.

Activities: Scientific demonstrations and experiments and Tour of the Centre.

Type: Full Day

Natural Resources and Sustainability

This session explores the mineral resources of Sierra Leone, the consequences on the environment and the population and identifies the best practices for exploitation.

Activities: Scientific demonstrations, film and Guest Speaker.

Type: Full Day

Climate Change

This session identifies the causes and consequences of climate change and who is affected and how Governments are combating the effects.

Activities: Scientific demonstrations, film and Guest Speaker.

Type: Full Day

Future topics will include:

- The Protected Areas of Sierra Leone
- Endangered Species of Sierra Leone
- Millennium Development Goal 7 – Ensuring environmental sustainability
- Natural disasters and Prevention
- Sustainable Fishing
- The Coast
- The Forest
- Responsible Tourism
- Best Practice
- Palm Oil
- The Value of Water
- Animal Adaptations
- Weather and Climate: What's the Difference
- Recycling and Pollution