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ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY

Course Evaluation Summary

UNU-INWEH International Training Course on Mangrove Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Annamalai University, India, November 2009

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1. Background

The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) international training course on mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems is designed to build the capacity of professionals and institutions to undertake monitoring, research and management of mangrove ecosystems, in developing Asian countries. This is achieved through training of young professionals in research methodology and the latest trends in research on the conservation of biodiversity in mangrove ecosystems. The program is also set up to promote and encourage development of a network of professionals from developing countries, working in mangrove ecosystems.

2. Report Overview

This past year the program successfully held its 9th training course hosted by Annamalai University in India. 13 participants from across South-East Asia participated in the 15 day course focused on mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems. The following report highlights the course evaluation by the participants who took part in the November 2009 training course organized by Annamalai University, Faculty of Marine Science in Tamil Nadu, India and sponsored by the UNU-INWEH.

This course evaluation highlights the feedback received from participants and points out both the areas in which the course did well and areas in which improvements can be made. From the feedback received it can be concluded that course was successful in meeting its objectives as it provided an exemplary environment for young professionals in the area of mangrove biodiversity and conservation to develop techniques in mangrove research and conservation as well as learn about current research in the field and network with each other as well as lecturers and faculty at Annamalai University. The main areas of improvement can be summed up in the following point.

- Efficient use of time. Respondents found that lecturers were too lengthy and covered too much basic information. These could be condensed into more streamlined lectures that coherently provide the most important information in a timely manner. Time can also be saved by finding accommodation closer to the research facility which was a 2 hour drive away from the residences. Finally, the time saved can be best utilized by implementing more field work modules in order to allow for a more extensive training period and hands on opportunities.

3. Dissemination of course training;



4. Respondent Feedback;

a) Lecture Delivery

Respondents found lectures to be highly informative and provided a good foundation for a variety of scientific concepts in mangrove conservation. Lecturers were thought to be highly knowledgeable and resourceful in their fields and conveyed their material well.

Some respondents felt as though the lectures focused too much on basic concepts and time could have been better utilized by going more in depth on certain topics, as many participants already had a good background in the field. A few of the lecturers were found to be highly monotonous and did not engage the participants, which may be good to alleviate in future courses. Conversely, many lectures, although highly informative, were lengthy and content heavy. Respondents suggested streamlining the course so as to keep the more important detail, cut down on basic information, and save time.

Overall impression; Good

b) Field work and demonstrations

Respondents enjoyed the field work sessions and agreed that the modules were useful in providing application to theory. Demonstrators and technicians were highly informative and skilled at their tasks. They were able to effectively convey proper techniques and suggest improvements to current models. The field work and demonstrations were beneficial in terms of observing effects of deforestation as well as techniques of conservation, restoration, and mangrove care.

Respondents agreed that the amount of field work was short compared to the lectures. It was suggested that the amount of field work should be increased so as to gain more hands on experience and properly learn to apply the techniques and concepts learned in lectures.

Overall impression; Very Good

c) Course manual and other materials

Course manuals were found to be highly detailed. Many respondents agreed that the manual would be a good reference to refer back to after the course and later on in their career. Respondents also appreciated the handouts that were provided by some lecturers as supplementary to their presentation. Both of these materials contained a range of information at various levels allowing for both novices/students as well as experienced researchers to benefit from them. Faculty and staff at the center were highly resourceful and helpful with the

needs of the participants. Library hours were extended when needed and faculty and researchers were more than happy to share/discuss their research.

Respondents suggested that it would be beneficial to have all lecturers provide handouts on their presentations to make them easier to follow. There were also some lectures and concepts that were not found in the course manual. It would be good to include these in the manual for future reference. Finally, some chapters in the manual were found to be short and could use additional detail.

Overall impression; Very Good

d) Accommodations

Most respondents were pleased with the accommodations provided. Residence managers were helpful with the needs of the participants.

Some respondents noted that the quality of the residence was not very high, albeit the accommodations were at a research camp. Respondents also agreed that the accommodations were too far from the CAS facility and that if closer ones can be found, much more time can be used for field work or lectures.

Overall impression; Good

e) Food

Respondents enjoyed the meals and agreed that the food was both delicious and healthy. Meals contained a variety of options to suit several different taste preferences. Meals, snacks and tea were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. Kitchen staff was also very accommodating and would ask for preferences and requests.

Some respondents found it difficult to either adjust to the Indian style or maintain eating the local food for the extended period of time and suggested having either a more international menu or an option to self-cook.

Overall impression; Good

f) General opinion and other comments

Respondents felt that the course was highly beneficial and congratulated the staff, organizers, and lecturers for their commitment to the course and for making it such a success. Participants were able to take away valuable skills in mangrove conservation, knowledge on policies and government, and a variety of other information that can be used in their respective fields.

g) Suggestions for future programs

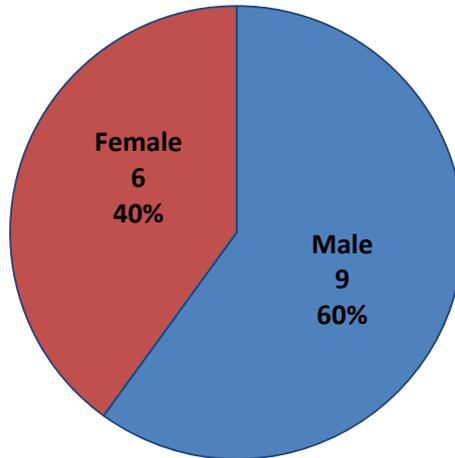
The following suggestions to improving the training program were made by respondents:

- Schedule
 - Maintain a strict schedule with the lectures.
 - Condense the amount of information presented in lectures
 - Increase the amount of field work
- Materials
 - Provide handouts for all presentations
 - Provide a more detailed course manual with all concepts learned in lecture
- Overall program
 - Provide a 'packing list' for participants that is appropriate to local weather conditions
 - Provide accommodations that are closer to the CAS facility so as to make more efficient use of time.

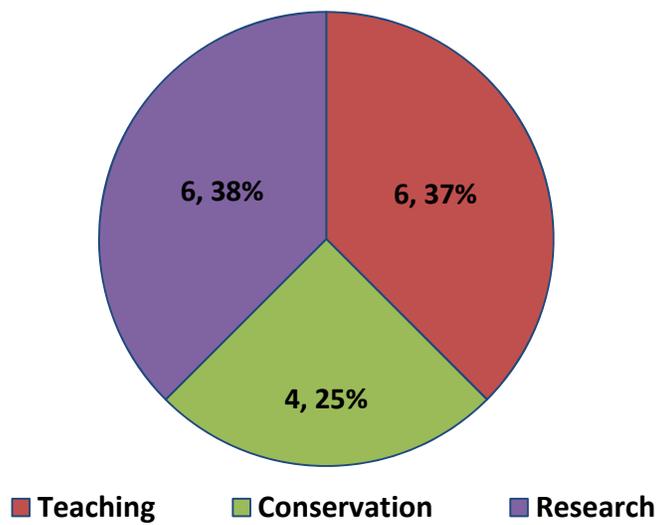
Annex 1. Questionnaire Respondents:

Course	Respondent	Gender	Age	Subject background	Affiliation	Country
2009	Mr. Abdullah-AL Mamun	M	25	Fisheries Biology	Noakhali Science and Technology University	Bangladesh
2009	Mr. Mohammad Eusuf Hasan	M	38	Marine Science	Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project Dept. of Environment	Bangladesh
2009	Mr. Mohammad Belal Hossain	M	33	Marine Science	Noakhali Science and Technology University	Bangladesh
2009	Ms. Jyotiskona Barik	F	23	Marine Science	Jadavpur University	India
2009	Ms. M. Durga Bharathi	F	24	Zoology	National Institute of Oceanography Regional Center	India
2009	Mr. Manan Shukla	M	27	Zoology	Bombay Natural History Society	India
2009	Mrs. Itchika Sivaipram	F	35	Marine Science	Chulalongkorn University	Thailand
2009	Ms. Nichaya Praditsup	F	32	Environmental	Chulalongkorn University	Thailand
2009	Dr. U.P.K Epa	M	39	Coastal Aquaculture	University of Kelaniya	Sri Lanka
2009	Mr. E.P.S. Chandana	M	40	Zoology	University of Ruhuna	Sri Lanka
2009	Mr. Sapto Andriyono	M	30	Coastal Engineering and Management	Airlangga University	Indonesia
2009	Ms. Armi May Torrechilla	F	29	Remote Sensing & GIS	Zoological Society of London (Mangrove rehabilitation project in the Philippines	Philippines
2009	Ms. Nguyen Thi Gia Hang	F	27	Ecology & Environment	Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City	Vietnam
2009	Mr. Saeen Bakhsh Shaikh	M	28	Environmental Studies	Karachi Forest Campus	Pakistan
2009	Mr. Shadrack Joseph Ulomi	M	44	Maine Ecology	University of Dar Es Salaam	Tanzania

Gender Balance



Application of Training



Annex 2. Acknowledgements;

This summary report was compiled based on – and is a summary of – the UNU-INWEH International Training Course: Mangrove Biodiversity and Ecosystems October 5-19, 2011 Course Report assembled by Dr. T Balasubramanian, Dr. K. Kathiresan and professor S. Ajmal Khan.

* The respondents are all grateful to UNU INWEH, Dr. T Balasubramanian, Dr. Kathiresan, professor Ajmal Khan, and the rest of the mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems training team for the exceptional experience that they had the opportunity to take part in.