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ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY

Course Evaluation Summary

UNU-INWEH International Training Course on Mangrove Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Annamalai University, India, November-December 2012

May 10, 2013

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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

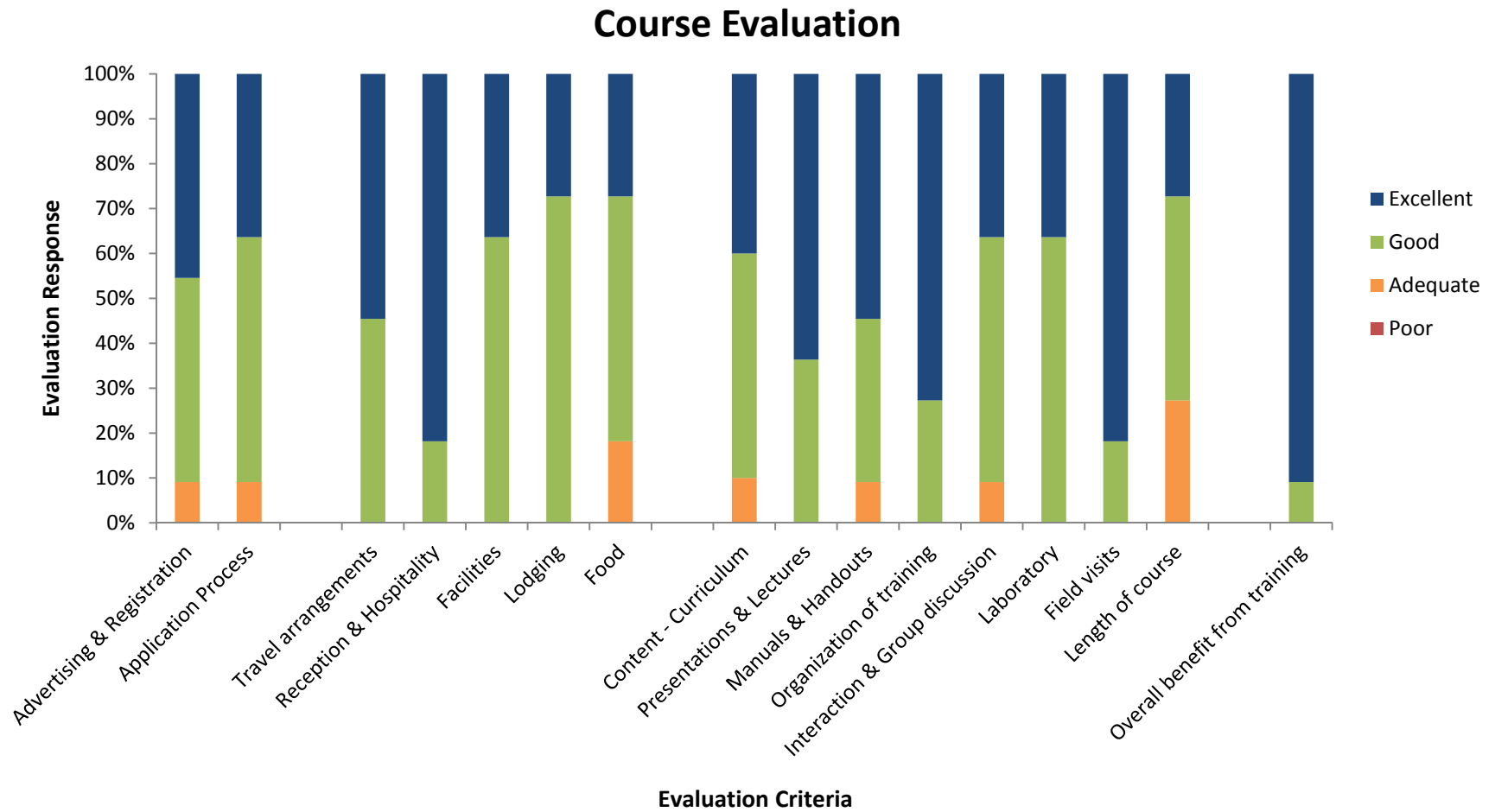
This past year the program successfully held its 12th training course hosted by Annamalai University in India. 11 participants from across South-East Asia participated in the 15 day course focused on mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems. The following report highlights the course evaluation by the participants who took part in the November 2012 training course organized by Annamalai University, Faculty of marine science in Tamil Nadu, India and sponsored by the UNU-INWEH.

Results of the course evaluation highlighted several areas in which the course is doing extremely well as well as potential areas of improvement. Respondents, in general, have strongly agreed that the course met their full expectations and achieved both of its objectives. Several respondents went on to highlight the relevance of the course and the prospects of implementing the materials learned in their own research, teachings, and conservation efforts.

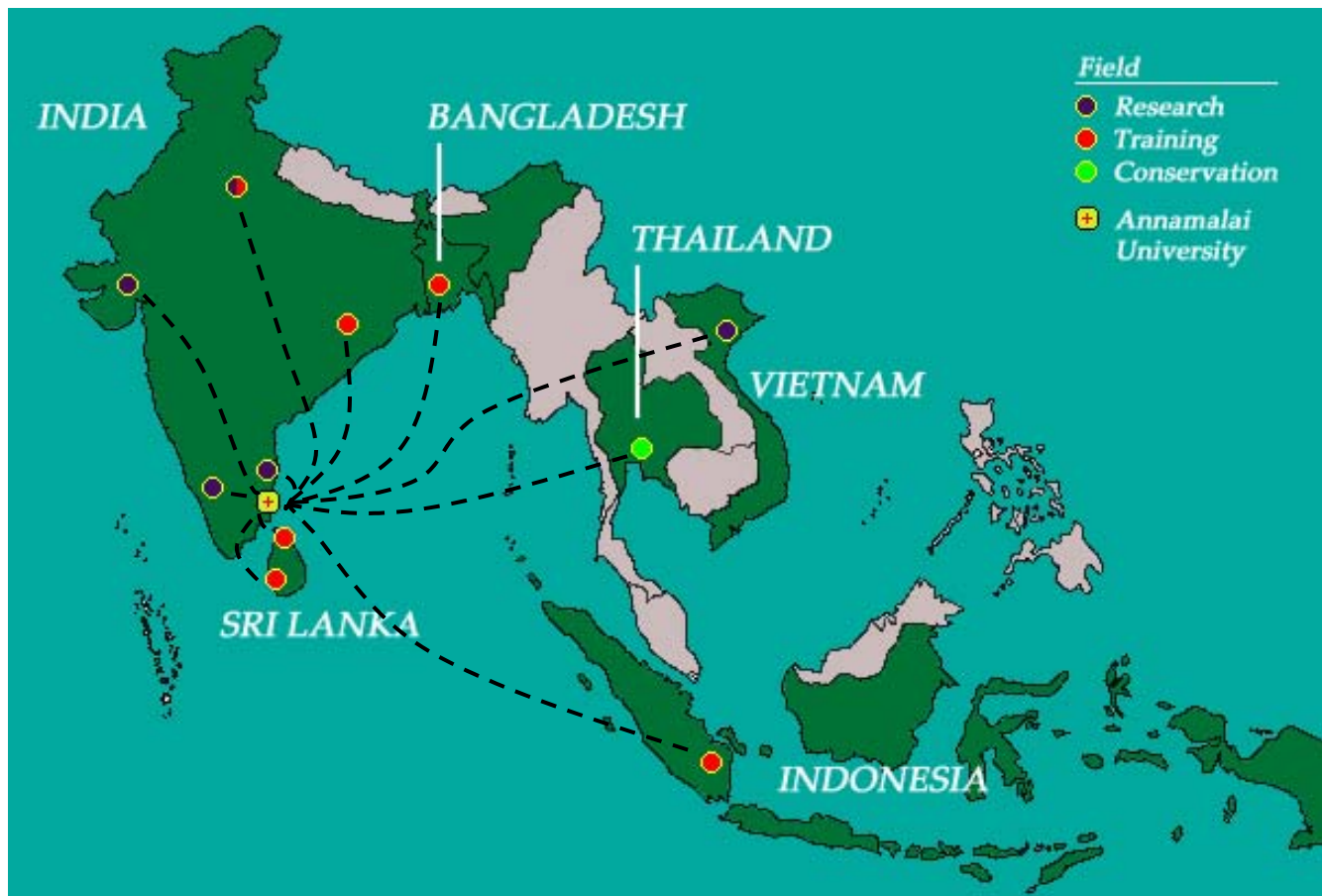
Potential areas of opportunity highlighted by respondents:

- Implementing a website specific for the course to allow for networking between past, present and future participants as well as professionals in the area of mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Implementation of designated library time daily to allow participants to do further research, explore the vast collection of materials that are available, meet and discuss, or spend extra time in the lab.
- Extension of the program from 2 weeks to 3-4 weeks to allow for better training and more field modules that would provide additional practice for concepts learned in lectures.

3. Course Evaluation;



4. Dissemination of course training;



5. Respondent Feedback;

a) Lecture Delivery

All respondents thought that the lectures were well done. Presentations were said to be highly informative and covered all major aspects of the topic. Lecturers were effective in delivering the material and provided substantial information on relevant topics as well as the latest research in the area of mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems.

Overall impression; very good

b) Field work and demonstrations

All respondents felt that the field trips were highly effective in relating concepts learned in lectures to the real world. Field work was found to be highly informative and useful in gaining practice for the various techniques learned. Applicants also complemented the use of a variety of different training sites.

It was felt that not enough time was allowed to properly grasp /master the various techniques. More than half of the respondents suggested increasing the total length of the program so as to incorporate more field work sessions and demonstrations. This would allow for more effective training and practice of concepts learned in lectures. One individual also suggested developing demonstrations or field work on topics such as sea weeds, sea grasses, and mud skippers. Another two suggested more practical applications of GIS be covered.

Overall impression; excellent

c) Course manual and other materials

Course material was found to be in depth and organized. Respondents also agreed that various informative materials were provided in addition to the course texts.

More than half of the respondents suggested having dedicated/scheduled library times daily to allow for individual research and browsing of the extensive collection of materials present at the library. Many respondents also suggested expanding the WIFI and providing internet access within the dorms. Two participants suggested that it may be beneficial to set up a separate website for the Mangrove training course that would allow for networking with past, present and future participants as well as research groups in the topic area to hold discussions and contribute to each other.

Overall impression; very good

d) Accommodations

All respondents found the accommodations to be favorable.

One individual suggested having individual rooms so as to allow for some privacy and personal space.

Overall impression; good

e) Food

Most respondents found the food to be favorable.

One individual suggested taking into account the diversity and varying tolerances of the participants when making meals.

Overall impression; good

f) Reception and hospitality

Respondents all agreed that the reception and hospitality was outstanding. The hosts were found to be highly respectful of the individuals, cultures and genders and no bias or discrimination was felt.

Overall impression; excellent

g) Most useful component of training program

The majority of respondents agreed on the following aspects of the training course as being most useful:

- Field and lab visits
- Practicals and lectures
- Biodiversity assessment.

Respondents also felt that the information provided on GIS systems analysis, economic valuation of mangroves, and climate change management were interesting side notes and highly useful.

h) Least useful component of training program

The majority of individuals agreed that the entirety of the course was useful to some degree. Though, one individual felt that some lectures near the end were redundant. Another individual felt that the study on the 'products of fish' was not very useful to the overall course.

i) Suggestions for future programs

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

- Schedule
 - Allocate some free time (suggested 1 hour) daily for participants to meet up and discuss research, work in the lab, or visit the library.
- Materials
 - Set up dedicated website for program and participants.
 - Have expanded WIFI and internet connection in dorm rooms.
- Course content
 - Increase the number of experiments and field work so as to properly apply learned theory and gain sufficient practice.
 - Have a greater variety of demonstrations and field work in areas such as; Sea weeds, sea grasses, and mud skippers as well as modules/discussions on GIS applications.
- Overall program
 - Look into expanding program to other areas and countries such as West Africa or Bangladesh.
 - Increase the length of the program to allow for sufficient level of training and practice.

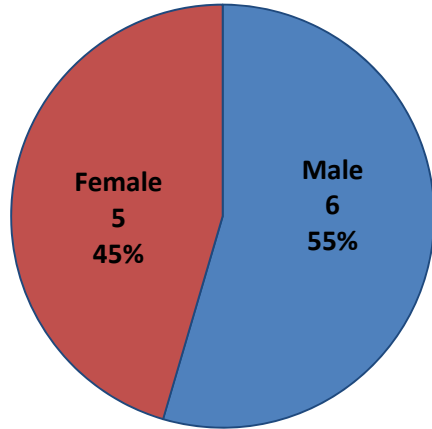
j) General opinion and other comments

All respondents were in agreement that the training course was well carried out and highly beneficial. Useful information and research on the relevant topics were provided and there was good coverage on the ecological importance of mangroves as well as the negative environmental effects that occur in their absence.

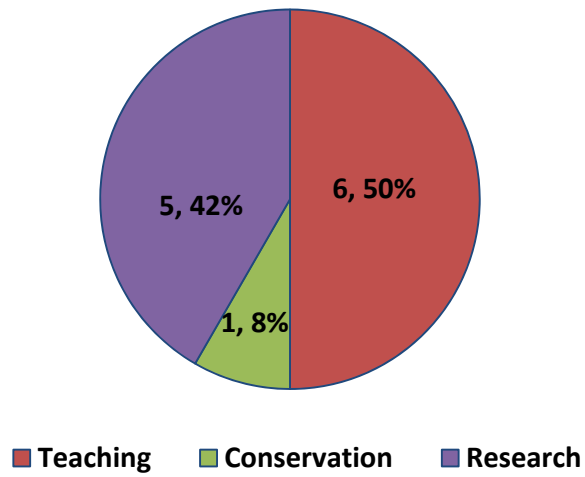
Annex 1. Questionnaire Respondents:

Course	Respondent	Gender	Age	Subject background	Affiliation	Country
2012	Mr. Vu Man Hung	M	30	Mangrove Ecosystems	Institute of Marine Environment & Resources	Vietnam
2012	Mr. Melki	M	32	Marine Sciences	Sriwijaya University	Indonesia
2012	Ms. Patcharaporn Yaowosooth	F	30	Agriculture	Marine & Coastal Resources Research and Development Center	Thailand
2012	Mrs. Piratheepa	F	33	Aquaculture	University of Jaffna	Sri Lanka
2012	Ms. Kasunthi	F	32	Aquaculture	Ocean University	Sri Lanka
2012	Dr. Dipti Raut	F	44	Marine Biology	Ravenshaw University	India
2012	Mr. Isah Tasi'U	M	30	Botany	Jamai Hammad University	India
2012	Mr. Kada Narayna Murthy	M	24	Marine Biology	Pondicherry University	India
2012	Ms. Reshma Bobda	F	26	Botany	GEER Foundation	India
2012	Mr. Monjural Haq	M	29	Fisheries & Marine sciences	Jessore Science and Technology University	Bangladesh
2012	Mr. M. Sureshkumar	M	25	Forestry	Tamil Nadu Agricultural University	India

Gender Balance



Application of Training



Annex 2. Acknowledgements;

This summary report was compiled based on – and is a summary of – the International Training Course on Mangrove Biodiversity and Ecosystems November 27 – December 11, 2012 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.