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Course Evaluation Summary

UNU-INWEH International Training Course on Mangrove Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Annamalai University, India, September – October 2013

April 29, 2014

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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 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 the development of a network of professionals from developing countries, working in mangrove ecosystems.

2. Report Overview

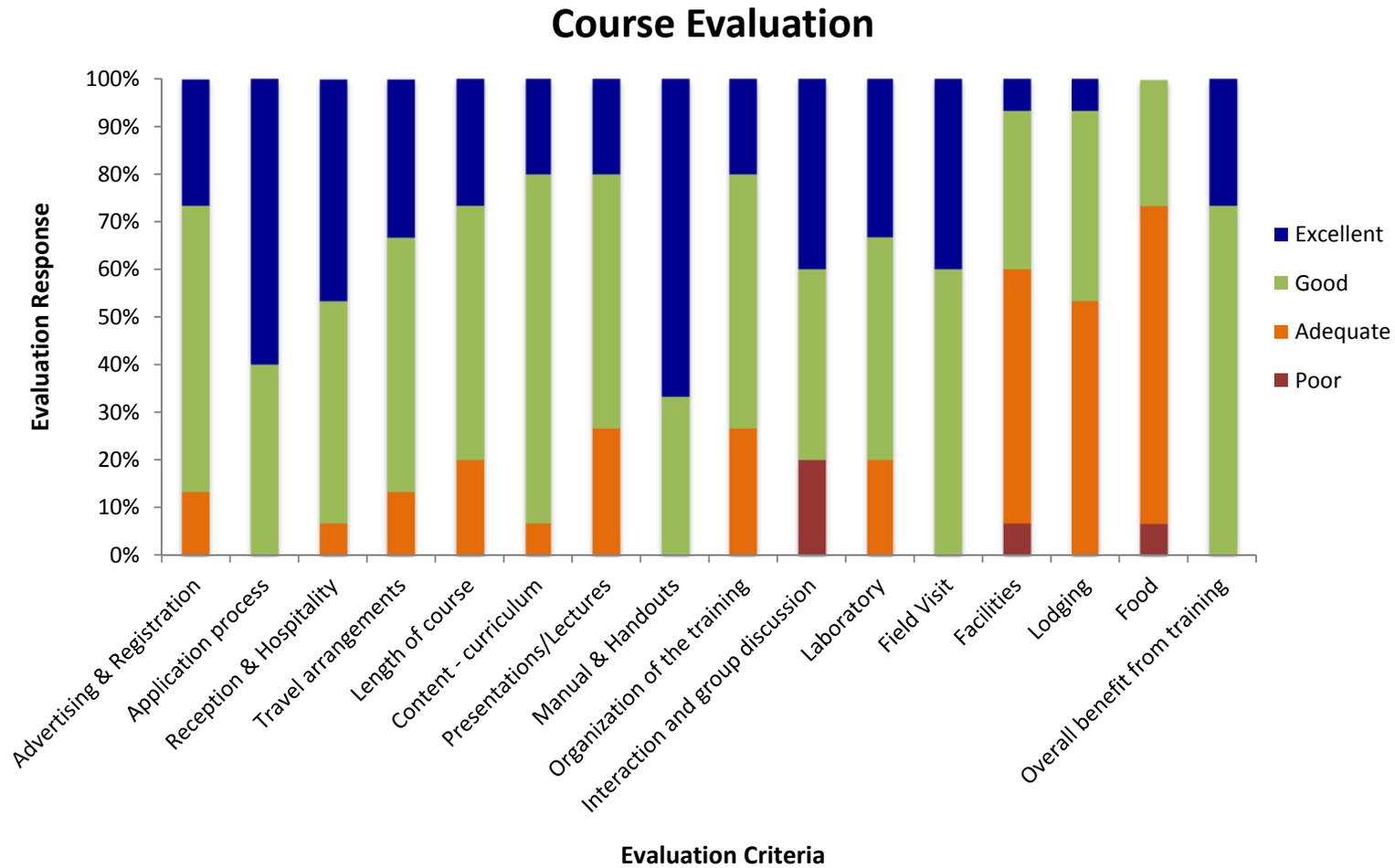
This past year the program successfully held its 13th International Training Course hosted by Annamalai University in India. Fifteen participants from across South-East Asia took part in the 15-day course focused on mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems. The following report summarizes the results of the course evaluations made by participants who took part in the September 2013 International Training Course organized by Annamalai University, Faculty of Marine Science in Tamil Nadu, India and sponsored by the UNU-INWEH.

The results of the course evaluation highlight several areas in which the course functioned extremely well, as well as potential areas for improvement. In general, the respondents agreed the course met their 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.

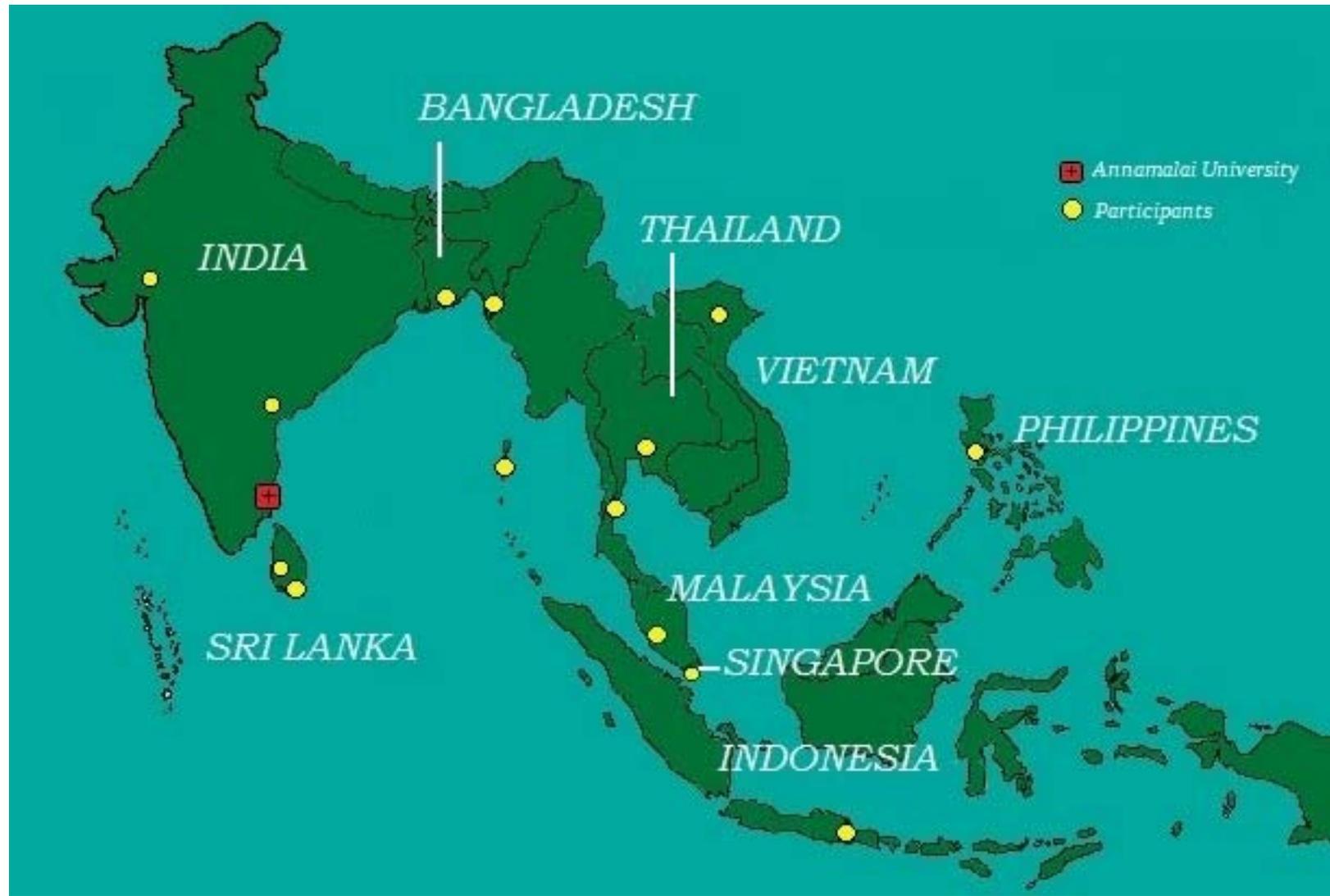
The potential areas for improvement, as highlighted by the respondents, are:

- Schedule more field trips, fieldwork and group discussions
- Find accommodations that had better Internet access and air-condition
- Focus the lectures on advanced concepts
- Provide a wider range of food selection

3. Course Evaluation:



4. Dissemination of course training;



5. Respondent Feedback;

a) Lecture Delivery

The majority of respondents found the lectures to be highly informative and covered a variety of concepts. The respondents said the information learned would be used to create mangrove research programs in their respective countries. However, respondents felt that some lectures covered basics concepts. It was recommended that lecturers assume the students have a general understanding of the material and should cover more advanced concepts. One participant suggested revising the material to include case studies in the respondents' respective countries. Lastly, participants recommended that lecturers speak at a slower pace, as some students are not fluent in English.

Overall impression; good

b) Field work and demonstrations

All respondents felt the field trips were highly effective in solidifying the concepts learned in lectures. Participants thought the techniques learned were highly applicable to their own research. Furthermore, the participants thought the instructions given by the lecturers were clear and easy to understand. Respondents recommended developing additional field studies, as they thought it was the most useful aspect of the program.

Overall impression; excellent

c) Course manual and other materials

The respondents felt the course material was organized and in-depth. However, the participants were not informed about daily activities, and thus could not use the material to prepare. One student suggested that concepts in the course manual could be elaborated more. This would make it easier to refer back to the course in the future. Three participants felt the group discussions were weak. The participants suggested that the training program could allocate more time for students to share ideas. One respondent recommended creating an activity where students would work together to create solutions to problems.

Overall impression; excellent

d) Accommodations

The participants found the accommodations to be good or adequate. The majority of the participants felt the accommodations did not live up to their standards of an UNU-INWEH

international course. The respondents suggested that the facility provide dorm rooms with air-condition, Internet access and water heaters.

Overall impression; adequate

e) Food

The majority of respondents felt the food was adequate. Respondents suggested taking into consideration the diversity and varying tolerances of the participants when making meals. The participants enjoyed lunch and felt that breakfast and dinner could be improved.

Overall impression; adequate

f) Reception and hospitality

The respondents agreed that the reception and hospitality was outstanding. The hosts were highly respectful of the individuals and cultures, 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:

- Practical hands on experience through lab and field visits (including specific techniques learned during that time)
- Fieldwork on sample collection and mangrove assessment
- Lectures on the effects of mangroves on climate change, defining carbon stocking rates in mangroves/soils and country reports

h) Least useful component of training program

The majority of respondents found the entire course to be useful. However, some respondents felt the lectures covered basic concepts. The respondents suggested that lecturers focus on more advanced concepts and case studies. One respondent said the Climate Change Vulnerability lecture was a disappointment, as it did not cover methods to assess vulnerability in their respective countries. Furthermore, the respondents felt the program could improve by better managing their time. The respondents felt the time spent waiting (15-30 minutes) could be used towards additional activities. The respondents also thought that some activities were not properly prepared, as the activities felt rushed near the end.

Suggestions for future programs

The following suggestions were made by the respondents to improve on the course:

- Accommodation and food
 - Provide good Internet access, air-condition and water heaters to the rooms
 - Provide more comfortable modes of transportation.
 - Create a more diverse food selection
- Schedule
 - Provide course materials and daily schedules well-in-advance so the students can prepare
 - Decrease the time spent waiting between activities
- Course content
 - Include more labs, fieldwork and hands-on work
 - Allocate more time for group discussions
 - Create more in-depth lectures by removing basic concepts
- General
 - Improve on the T-shirt design

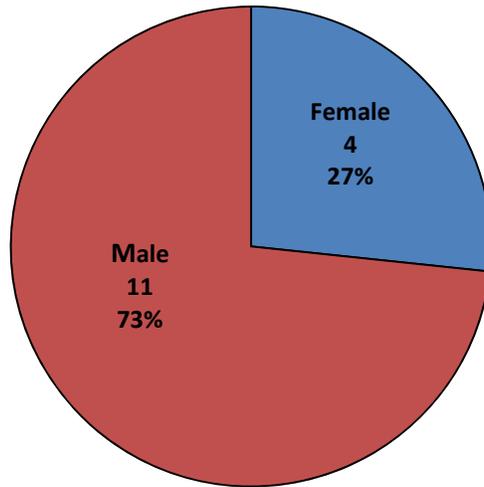
i) General opinion and other comments

All respondents agreed that the training course was a great success and highly beneficial. Many respondents thought the information and research provided was relevant to the topic and their own research. The respondents all agreed that the field studies were the most beneficial portion of the course. The respondents all expressed gratitude and appreciation to the lecturers and training staff.

Annex 1. Questionnaire Respondents:

Course	Respondent	Gender	Age	Subject background	Affiliation	Country
2013	Mr. Abdul Alim Shaikh	M	27	Forestry	CNRS Munshigonj Office	Bangladesh
2013	Mr. Mohammed Shah Nawaz Chowdhury	M	31	Marine Science	University of Chittagong	Bangladesh
2013	Mr. S. Kumaralingam	M	28	Marine Sciences	Zoological Survey of India	India
2013	Mr. P. Hareesh Chandra	M	25	Biotechnology	Andhra University	India
2013	Mr. Jigneshkumar Trivedi	M	26	Zoology	University of Baroda	India
2013	Mr. P. Karthick	M	27	Marine Biology	Pondicherry University	India
2013	Ms. Ika Yuni Agustin	F	30	Forestry		Indonesia
2013	Mr. Ahmad Bakrin Sofawai Bin Abu Bakar	M	24	Environmental Sciences	University of Malaya	Malaysia
2013	Mr. Carlo Carlos	M	25	Environmental Sciences	Ateneo de Manila University	Philippines
2013	Mr. Ong Desmond	M	27	Life Sciences	CleanTechOne	Singapore
2013	Ms. Gayani Thilakarathna	F	36	Marine Ecology	University of Ruhuna	Sri Lanka
2013	Mr. Menake Gammanpila	M	43	Aquaculture	Research and Development Agency	Sri Lanka
2013	Ms. Orn Anong	F	35	Aquatic Science	Marine and Coastal Resources Research & Development Center	Thailand
2013	Ms. Phairin Phenpraphai	F	32	Fishery Science	Marine and Coastal Resources Research & Development Center	Thailand
2013	Dr. Dao Van Tan	M	39	Plant Biochemistry	Mangrove Ecosystem Research Centre	Vietnam

Gender Balance



Annex 2. Acknowledgements;

This summary report is based on evaluations for – and provides a summary of – the 13th International Training Course on Mangrove Biodiversity and Ecosystems held from September 23 – October 07, 2013. The course report was assembled by Dr. T Balasubramanian, Dr. K. Kathiresan and Dr. S. Ajmal Khan.

*Sincere thanks and appreciation are given to UNU-INWEH, Dr. T Balasubramanian, Dr. Kathiresan, Dr. Ajmal Khan and the Mangrove Biodiversity and Ecosystem training team for creating an exceptional experience for the participants.