

Report on the Workshop at the Atlantic Hotel, December 2nd 2003 Training Courses of the Darwin Initiative Project

Background

Representatives from the following organizations and government departments were invited to attend the workshop: Department of Parks and Wildlife Management (DPWM), Department of Forestry (DoFor), Department of Fisheries (DoFish), Department of Community Development (DCD), National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), National Environment Agency (NEA), University of The Gambia, Gunjur Environment Protection and Development Group (GEPADG), The Association of Non Governmental Organisations (TANGO), Concern Universal, Actionaid and Makasutu Culture Forest (MCF). Prior to the workshop, a questionnaire was circulated to the participating organizations and government departments to collect information. The collated information formed the basis for discussion in the workshop (see appendix 1).

Present: Mr Abdoulie Njie, MCF
Mr Craig Emms, Makasutu Wildlife Trust (MWT)
Dr Linda Barnett, Darwin Initiative project co-ordinator
Mr Alhagi Cham, TANGO
Mr Sarjoh Fata Joh, DoFor
Mr Alpha Jallow, DPWM
Mr Lamin Jarjusey, DCD
Mr Famara Darboe, DoFish
Mrs Ajie Binta Kinteh, NEA
Mr Kebba Bajo, GEPADG
Prof, Tina Jonsyn Ellis, University of The Gambia
Mr Osman Touray, Concern Universal

Other Invitees: Director General, NARI, Regional Director, Actionaid, V.C., University of The Gambia.

The workshop started at 10.30 am

Minutes of the Workshop

After everyone had introduced himself or herself, Linda Barnett (LB) described the Darwin Initiative project, and the aim behind the training courses that were being discussed at the workshop. The participants then went on to discuss in detail the areas highlighted in the questionnaires with regard to the course content, course learning activities, target audience and accreditation of the courses with a view to determining the content of the first two courses. Any additions to the collated information from the questionnaires as a result of the workshop discussions are shown in italics in Appendix 1.

Course Content

There was a general agreement amongst the participants at the workshop and from the information gained from the questionnaires that the following areas were thought to be important areas for training:

- Policy and legislation,
- Enforcement of the law,
- Research techniques and recording,
- Biodiversity indicators,
- Conservation management.

Other areas to be covered included taxonomy (plants and different animal groups in The Gambia), project planning and management, monitoring in biodiversity projects, the impact of biotechnology on biodiversity, governance including biodiversity and land use planning, methods of instruction and people management, EIA.

Course Length

Practically it was agreed that the courses should be kept on the shorter side, probably two weeks with the possibility of a field trip during the weekend in the middle for some courses.

Course Activities and Effective Forms of Training

There was a general consensus among the participants that although some of the learning activities would be through a formal lecturing forum, that the learning activities should be made as participatory and practical as possible e.g. to include real practical experience of knowledge gained in the classroom, e.g. field work and different site visits, group exercises and discussions and seminars. This would enable the participants to be part of the training and not just receivers of it.

It was generally agreed that one form of activity should also be the preparation and presentation of papers, in order to provide participants with the experience of making public presentations.

There should be a variety in the form of presentation; including various audiovisual aids e.g. videos, audiotapes, and slides. Visiting lecturers should be encouraged, and there should be close collaboration with the natural resource institutions.

Participants should also be provided with lecture handouts for future reference, including suitable material to enable them to understand and pass on the knowledge gained from the courses to fellow workers at their organizations and institutions.

The effectiveness of knowledge transfer during the courses should be assessed, probably through questionnaires prior to and after the course.

It was also highlighted that the acquisition of certain computing skills would benefit participants on the courses. The Darwin project is not currently set up to cater for these requirements but LB reported that she would look into possible collaborations with other institutions to see how this gap may be addressed.

Certification and Accreditation of The Courses

The workshop participants agreed that these were a very important aspect of the courses. A linkage to a programme in the UK should be developed and course certificates should be awarded on merit basis only. Without this it would be difficult for audiences such as the civil service, middle and senior management to take the course seriously.

Course Target Audience

There was a general consensus among the participants that the training would be most effective if targeted at middle level staff (e.g. government grades 6,7 and 8 and their equivalent in other organisations), thus enabling this level of staff to influence senior staff after training as well as being able to transfer knowledge to their lower level staff. The training should be given to a broad audience including an element of in service training for those management officials dealing with natural resource issues e.g. customs and excise, police, local authorities.

The training should also aim to provide trainers at the local level e.g. members of MDFTs, NGOs, executives of VDCs, staff at the Rural Development Institute and Kafuta College.

Content of Courses

It was agreed that the first two courses would be

1. Biodiversity, National Policy and the Law
2. Research Techniques and Recording, Methods of Instruction

Recommended Actions

LB to produce report for the workshop and circulate a detailed course content description for courses 1 and 2, for feedback from participants at the workshop.

The workshop ended at 4pm.

Appendix 1 Collated Answers to Circulated Questionnaires

Darwin Initiative Project Training Courses

Note: word and phrases in italics are additional information added during the workshop.

The key areas of biodiversity and biodiversity management that The Gambia needs training in:

1. Environmental legislative/policy framework
 - a) how policy affects people and how to enforce the policies. How important the policies are to their survival.
 - b) Negotiation skills/*advocacy skills*
 - c) Environmental laws and policies
 - d) *Overlaps and conflicts between policies*

2. Enforcement of the law
 - a) How the law impacts on people's life.
 - b) Legal approaches to protecting biodiversity in The Gambia.
 - c) Law enforcement techniques, including surveillance, patrolling, arresting, record keeping and statement writing.
 - d) Liaison networks (*with law enforcement agencies*)
 - e) *Alternatives – examples of monetary incentives to conserve biodiversity e.g. ecotourism.*

3. Research techniques and recording
 - a) Looking at the three broad categories of Convention on Biological Diversity, ecosystems, species and genetic diversity (including inventories, distribution, abundance, ecology etc.)

 - b) Especially to ascertain changes, and work with the indigenous people in strengthening this area.

4. Biodiversity indicators

5. Conservation management
 - a) Preparing and writing management plans, *including sensitization*
 - b) Implementing management plans
 - c) Practical management techniques
 - d) Monitoring and evaluation
 - e) *Administration skills (people and finances)*

6. Others:

Campaigns

What biodiversity really is – to give a basic and solid understanding of biodiversity and people's relationship to it. What the rules are to protect and conserve it – in order to maintain sustainable activities in relation to biodiversity. The linkages and snags between local communities and institutions for biodiversity management - their roles and limits.

Specific management skills for biodiversity management.

Establishing and describing the linkages between the different sectors - the collective role.

Biodiversity and governance

Biodiversity and land use planning

Biodiversity inventory and planning

Taxonomy and identification, *including botany (scientific and local names), and a broader outlook to at least cover most of the animal groups that can be found in The Gambia. Identification of toxic plants.*

Biodiversity audits *(should be covered in biodiversity indicators)*

Biodiversity status and trends *(should be covered in biodiversity indicators)*

Wildlife/human conflict and its management *(could be covered in conservation management)*

Appropriate technology transfer, *including aquaculture.*

Design a training package for community members who are the main beneficiaries and major users of our natural resources (i.e. the rural people/farmers) – *this will be different from that for training the trainers, perhaps more pictorially based, as different training skills are needed for illiterate and literate audiences.*

Continuous assessment and or monitoring and evaluation of stakeholders involved in natural resources management and also those involved in the indiscriminate exploitation of our natural resources (mostly the rural poor are most active in this area).

Training on gender and the environment, *emphasizing their different reliance's and impacts.*

Biotechnology essential considerations: interpretation, perception, advantages and disadvantages, regulatory mechanisms and systems. *Limit subject area to potential threats to biodiversity (natural) and gains (agriculture).*

Monitoring of biodiversity projects including

Monitoring and surveillance

Visioning, monitoring and reporting
Planning projects using results based approach and situation analysis
Principles of good project evaluations
Co-management techniques of natural resources
Administration and management issues of protected areas.

Preparation of press releases, instruction in public speaking including radio and TV interviews.

Methods of instruction for training, people management, *clear communication including producing effective faxes etc.*

EIAs and wildlife guiding

Describe the type of activities that you would like to see happen during the training courses.

Lectures

Summary notes

Lecture handouts for future reference as a take away package

Seminars – topics presentation for further discussion

Group discussions

Practicals

Assignments at the end of each module. Exchange visits *e.g. different protected areas in the Gambia and even Senegal.*

Fire management/control should form part of the course programme.

Theoretical background followed by practical applications. Case studies from Africa, and other developed and developing countries *e.g. South Africa camp fire project, Zimbabwe, East Africa, Costa Rica.*

Emphasis on fieldwork to be technically enhanced.

Dramas, with maximum variety of local languages.

Duration should be long enough to give participants maximum time to participate fully and comprehend what is being taught.

Provide practical and group exercises and plenary sessions and ateliers for participants to better understand and be able to use the knowledge gained effectively at their co-workers organisations/institutions

Getting the courses both certified and accredited (i.e. to provide participants with certificates affiliated to the University of Warwick, U.K.)

Give reasonable per diems and transport refund to participants to keep them motivated.

Prepare module subjects, lecture notes and references.
Practical assignments and attachments to protected areas of The Gambia.
Students/participants research projects on topics relevant to the Gambian situation.
Moderate monthly allowances to cover transport fares etc.

One or two week field safaris for participants to conduct practical field exercises.

Certificates to be awarded on merit only.

Darwin field centre to be affiliated to a recognized Institution/University.
Consideration to be given to weekday and weekend courses depending on the type of student.

*Pre and post course questionnaires to evaluate effectiveness of the transfer of knowledge.
Visiting lecturers*

Safari where participants study different aspects e.g. in a forest and report back to the group.

Do you think it is important that the courses are certified or accredited in some way?

Yes, accreditation is recognition of achievement and is rewarding and satisfying to the recipient.

Important for attracting certain categories e.g. civil service – middle and senior management.

Strongly suggest the course is linked to a programme in the UK.

Will go a long way to concrete the concept of biodiversity and related issue, which are here to stay.

Very important to be seen to be working together with credible institutions.

What do you think are the most effective forms of training?

Theory and practical training.

Lecture, and participatory approach, enriching both sides, so both trainers and trainees gain. Flexible approach, informal, no chairs, no distractions.

Lectures 40%

Practicals, field work, seminars 60%

Use of audio visual aids.

Participatory group discussions with guidelines.

Theoretical background followed by practical applications. Case studies from Africa, and other developed and developing countries.

Emphasis on fieldwork to be technically enhanced.

Use of participatory methods/techniques, enabling the participants to be part of the training and not just receivers of it at the other end *e.g. quizzes*.

Training venues should be comfortable and environmentally friendly (adult-learning).

Involvement of other relevant institutions external lecturers (visiting professors etc.)

Emphasis on practicals especially botany and other subject matters.

Learning to do things in a participatory manner.

Participants to learn how to prepare papers and make presentations on selected subjects or topics of relevance which can be part of their evaluation as well as help participants to be used to making public presentations in workshops and seminars etc.

Quizzes

Computing component is essential to the course.

Making the project sustainable

What level of staff should be targeted with the training?

Field technicians in agriculture and natural resources.

Local communities through providing trainers on MDFT, executives of VDCs.

Rural Development Institute (*5 full time members of staff*)

Middle management among divisional offices

Programme Unit heads including selective staff of the Directorate.
Equal opportunity given to *both genders* from all levels.

Middle and senior level staff – biodiversity inventory, analysis and planning needs urgent attention, both practically and for policy formulation.
Data collection and management is important for middle level staff.

All different levels, concentrating on practical for the more advanced.

Grades 9 and 12 students, government and private employees.

Middle level to influence the senior staff after the training as well transferring knowledge to their lower level staff (e.g. government grade 6,7 and 8)

Junior, mid career employees and if possible school leavers as science students interested in biodiversity conservation.

In service training for senior management officials to update and develop their capacities to respond to policy and management issues, *including officers from the police, customs and excise, and finance departments.*

Trainers to go out and train other people.

Any Other Comments

The training should aim at trainees becoming trainers at the local level. Periodic training for local leaders and farmers at the community level should be conducted as an ongoing process of an awareness campaign.

Involvement and targeting of women to raise their capacity.

The Gambia lacks researchers in the area of biodiversity. It is therefore important to include research planning and experimental design in the training programme. Sample plots should be established as part of the fieldwork as for monitoring. Linking the training programme to a University in the UK will help in getting additional learning materials and visiting lecturers.

As the first project of its kind, maximum training and lectures have to be delivered for the success of the project for the Gambian people.

Close collaboration with the natural resource sector institutions especially Dept of Parks and Wildlife Management and the Forestry Department, *NEA, Dept Fisheries and NGOs* in the practicals of the course.

Protected areas to be used during field research or practicals.

Refresher courses