

Darwin Fellowship - Interim Report

(Please check guidance for submission deadlines, max 3 pages.)

Darwin Main Project Ref No	17 – 011
Darwin Project Title	A participatory conservation programme for the Comoro Islands
Name of Darwin Fellow	Misbahou Mohamed
UK Organisation	Bristol Conservation and Science Foundation
Your Organisation(s)	Dahari (Comorian NGO)
Your role within your Organisation	Interim Executive Director, returning to post of Director of Strategy
Start/end date of Fellowship	September 2013 – August 2014
Location	Madagascar and UK
Darwin fellowship funding (£)	22,450
Type of work (eg research, training, other, please specify)	Exchange visits, immersion and onthejob training in Madagascar; English training and conservation diploma in UK
Main contact in UK Organisation	Neil Maddison for BCSF; Hugh Doulton for Dahari
Author(s), date	Misbahou Mohamed and Hugh Doulton, March 2014

1. Background

- Briefly describe your involvement in the Darwin project before the start of your fellowship.

Misbahou Mohamed was a key figure in the implementation of BCSF's Darwin Comoros project (17-011), which ran from April 2009 to December 2012. Misbahou was a village facilitator and team leader for one of the intervention regions in 2009 and 2010, before being promoted to become the local coordinator of the project. He sat on the project's senior management team in the Comoros, and his role included management of the local field team of 10 technicians and of relationships with local partners. In the field he was charged with managing social dynamics – supporting field technicians to develop management committees and select appropriate beneficiaries. He also participated in report-writing and in the project's steering committee meetings. Misbahou also participated in the process of creation of the local NGO *Dahari*: meeting with other local NGOs to learn lessons, managing meetings of the reflection committee charged with developing the structure, elaborating the statutes. He is one of the founder members of the NGO and will have a leadership role within the structure.

- Describe aim and objectives of the Fellowship, and programme of work

To develop the leadership, management and technical capabilities of a key member of the Comorian NGO *Dahari*.

Objective 1a: Gain a high level of English fluency in order to be able to communicate and work with partners and funders.

1b: Gain a Graduate certificate in Endangered Species Management through the Durrell Conservation Academy:

1c. Develop understanding of programme management, scientific research, public education and training through mentoring and support from BCSF and Durrell staff.

1d: Develop leadership and management capacities through mentoring from project managers from Durrell, WWF, BlueVentures and a rural development partner in Madagascar.

1e: Develop applied skills in GIS, scientific research, social marketing, programme management, agro-ecology, and landscape management through on-the-job training in Madagascar.

2: To apply the lessons learnt to improve the impact of the NGO *Dahari* and the ECDD project on the implementation of the CBD in the Comoros.

2a: Capitalise on mentoring and training experiences by producing a full report with recommendations for implementation of lessons learnt.

2b: Perform workshops with NGO and project staff to integrate lessons learnt into programme implementation.

2c. Return to Comoros to take up lead role in NGO and ECDD project.

3: To develop regional and UK institutional support for the NGO.

3a: Develop contacts in the host institutions in Madagascar and in other NGOs and develop support for the NGO *Dahari*.

3b: Develop links with potential partners and funders of the NGO in the UK through meetings facilitated by the host institutions and other supporters.

3c: Capitalise on links by developing collaboration proposals with the different organisations.

- Briefly describe the roles of the UK and Fellow's institutions

BCSF: Will organise English training for two months in Bristol, and organise a host family for the fellow to live with. During this period will provide in-house training and mentoring in public education programmes, conservation programme management, and scientific research. Will host the fellow for a visit to their lemur conservation project in Madagascar.

Durrell: Will provide a scholarship for the fellow to gain a certificate in Endangered Species Management through the Durrell Conservation Academy. During his time in Jersey will also provide additional in-house training and mentoring in conservation programme management, scientific research, training and facilitation skills. Will host the fellow in Madagascar for one month focussing on training in communicating biodiversity, in GIS, and in scientific research. Will serve as a home-base during the fellow's time in Madagascar and assist with networking.

Dahari: Will organise host stays in Madagascar, logistics, and support Misbahou throughout the fellowship

2. Progress

- Provide a brief account of your work since the start of your fellowship, showing progress against the programme of work.

The fellowship began on the 4th September 2013 in Madagascar. The objective was to understand the approach developed by different NGOs in the field of community conservation and the different methods and tools developed to support their approaches. Firstly, I spent one month with the NGO Blue Ventures in the southwest, and then I stayed three weeks with Durrell Madagascar in the field and one week in their offices.

And the end I had meetings to create links with other organizations which can support Dahari in the long term (see list below). I then spent a month in the Comoros writing up my report on lessons to be integrated into Dahari's work.

From the 30th November 2014, I was in Bristol for ten weeks to learn English at the International House of Bristol.

- Provide an account of any problems encountered and how you have or are planning to overcome them.

Problems encountered	Overcome problems
----------------------	-------------------

Difficulty to understanding local dialects in Madagascar	Working in conjunction with local technicians from Durrell Madagascar and Blue Ventures
Inaccessibility of some field sites =	Walking to and sleeping in intervention sites
Undervaluation of the budget for Madagascar	Reducing costs as much as possible

- Are there any issues you would like to raise? No

3. Achievements and Outcomes

- What have been the main achievements and outcomes to date, and how do they relate to the overall aim and objectives of the Fellowship.

Main achievements	Objectives of fellowship
Several contacts with local and international organizations in Madagascar were made: Blue Ventures, Durrell, FAO, Conservation International, WWF, CIRAD Madagascar, Madagascar Voakajy, GRET, AgriSud, Fanamby, GSDM	3a: Develop contacts in the host institutions in Madagascar and in other NGOs and develop support for the NGO <i>Dahari</i> .
Meeting with various members of BCSF staff and participation in some activities in Bristol Zoo	1c. Develop understanding of programme management, scientific research, public education and training through mentoring and support from BCSF and Durrell staff.
Acquired better understanding of different approaches and tools for conservation with Blue Ventures and Durrell Madagascar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving local community in conservation of biodiversity • Training community leaders • Community Based Management, social analysis and participatory research • The integrated Population, Health and Environment approach • Using social marketing to conserve biodiversity 	1d: Develop leadership and management capacities through mentoring from project managers from Durrell, WWF, BlueVentures and a rural development partner in Madagascar. 1e: Develop applied skills in GIS, scientific research, social marketing, programme management, agro-ecology, and landscape management through on-the-job training in Madagascar.
A mid-term report was submitted to NGO Dahari with the lessons learnt in Madagascar	2a: Capitalise on mentoring and training experiences by producing a full report with recommendations for implementation of lessons learnt.
Obtaining a certificate in English in International House Bristol in England	1a : Gain a high level of English fluency in order to be able to communicate and work with partners and funders.

4. Next Steps

- Briefly describe forthcoming activities, events, milestones

Undertake Durrell Endangered Species Management course at the Durrell Academy in Jersey and gain diploma (mid-March to mid-May)

Month in Comoros in May and June to capitalise on training in UK, write report, and integrate lessons learnt into Dahari's strategy

Two months in Madagascar in July and August spending a month with WWF on conservation management, and a month with CIRAD on rural development projects. We may request to change the dates for the last part of this training.