

Bicton Overseas Agricultural Trust (BOAT)

A Report on the Course on Institutional Management, and Business Planning

held at

Bicton College

25th April to 8th June 2011

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PART 1. INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, COURSE CONTENT AND DELIVERY

1. Introduction

This report describes the delivery of and feedback from a six-week course on Institutional Management and Business Planning conducted at Bicton College in East Devon from 25th April to 8th June 2011. This was the 5th year that the course had been offered.

Bicton Overseas Agricultural Trust (BOAT) is aware of the great importance of agriculture in the economy of developing countries. Sound and appropriate training and education are key factors in economic and social success. It is particularly important to have a well trained and educated population which can act in future as a catalyst to transforming the current systems of farming to a more sustainable and commercially orientated approach. Agricultural Training Institutions funded by Governments or Non-Government Organisations e.g. Trusts and Missions have been established in most developing countries. These have a central role in providing a focus for training and education courses for young people, farmers, extension workers, and other personnel in related industries and organisations.

The aim of the course is to provide training for senior managers from training organisations in developing countries to be better equipped with more skills to help them manage their establishments more efficiently and effectively.

2. Background

BOAT is a registered charity which aims to provide high quality and appropriate training for key personnel in developing countries in a range of practical skills in agriculture and rural activities. In particular it is keen to provide training in skills which are transferable and which can benefit a wider group of people than those participating directly in the courses. In the early stages of BOAT, in each year three to four course participants travelled from their own countries and were based at Bicton College in East Devon for a period of about 8 weeks. Many of these early courses which BOAT organised were orientated towards livestock and engineering skills but in 2006 the first Course in Institutional Management and Business Planning was established.

The Institutional Management and Business Planning Course now runs for six weeks at Bicton College with six or more participants. Bicton College is a Further Education College which provides full and part time courses in agriculture and a range of other land-based industries.

Close links have been developed with countries in East Africa and in particular with Tanzania. The links with Tanzania are now very strong and many people have benefited from training activities held both in country and at Bicton College and through reciprocal visits. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place between BOAT, Bicton College, the Livestock Training Institute at Tengeru and the Government of Tanzania, which outlines areas of co-

operation. More recently links have developed with non-government organisations in other east African countries namely Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, The Gambia and Zambia.

The course planned for 2010 did not run. There were two reasons for this:

- some candidates had difficulties in obtaining visas due to the tighter regulations introduced by the UK Border Agency
- disruption of air traffic due to volcanic dust in the atmosphere from a volcanic eruption in Iceland.

3. The Participants

Ten potential candidates were considered for participation in the course by the Training and Development Sub Group at its meetings on 20th September and 23rd November, 2010. The intention was to enrol eight candidates in this 20th Anniversary year for BOAT. However six were eventually enrolled. Other selected candidates either withdrew or failed to get a visa in time.

The list in 2011 included candidates from The Gambia. Two were selected from this country in 2010 but were unable to come due to the reasons outlined above. The candidates from The Gambia were identified with the help of a non-government organisation called Concern Universal. Concern Universal is an international development organisation the work of which includes activities to improve food security and sustainable livelihoods. It operates in countries in Africa, Asia and South America. Other potential participants were considered from Kenya, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. The details of those who arrived are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The details of the participants on the course in 2011

Name	Age	Institution and Country	Qualifications	Position
Rosemary Wamalwa	46	Inter-Christian Fellowship Evangelical Mission (IcFEM), Kenya	Final Craft Certificate in General Agriculture (Sangalo Institute of Science and Technology)	General Co-ordinator Fellowship Savings and Credit, IcFEM
Daniel W Simiyu	34	IcFEM, Kenya	Professional Higher Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development	Assistant Co-ordinator in charge of Agro-forestry and Landscaping. Employed by IcFEM since 1999
Burang A K Danjo	54	Concern Universal, The Gambia	Cert. in Community Development, Diploma in Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management, Diploma in Project Planning, Diploma in Community Health Planning	Organisational Development Officer(Extend Capacity Building Local Partners and Establish Local Networks)

Paul Joof	25	Gambia is Good, through Concern Universal, The Gambia	Certificate, Diploma1 (HNC), Diploma 2 (HND), Advanced Diploma(HND), Certificate of Merit in Managing Organisations all at the Banjul Institute of Professional Studies	System Controller for Gambia is Good in The Gambia
Albert Obukulem	46	Kulika Trust, Uganda	Diploma in Education (Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo), Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture and Farmer to Farmer Extension (Reading University, UK), BSc in Agriculture at Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi.	Administrative tutor/project officer, Kulika/Concern Nakasongola Food Security and Right Fulfilment Livelihoods Project
Christopher P Kapembwa	37	Every Home for Christ Food Security, Zambia	Advanced Diploma in Agriculture (Adra Institute of HE), MSc Agronomy (University of Zambia), Master in Project Management (University of Liverpool in progress)	Project Facilitation Team Leader, Every Home for Christ Food Security

The Table shows that the participants came from a wide range of academic and practical backgrounds. Academically the participants were not as well qualified as those in 2009 but this did not create any particular problems in coping with the demands of the course. There was only one woman but this did not present any problems. It is normal policy to create a better gender balance. The participants came from four countries and the age range was 25 to 54.

4. The Course Design, Content and Delivery

4.1 Design and Content

The Course was designed with the aim of exposing the participants to management style models in Bickton College. Bickton College is a further education institution located in East Devon. It aims to meet the learning needs of the land-based economy across the whole of Devon and, in addition, some specialist regional needs. It has an estate of 166 hectares and significant residential accommodation. It has strong links with relevant industries and professions. The participants were also given an insight to one other land-based college.

The six participants arrived at London Heathrow airport at different times. They were met by Trustees and driven to Bickton College where they were accommodated in an en suite hostel

on the College campus. Meals were provided in the student Dining Hall. The first few days of the course were designed as an introduction to East Devon, the College campus, shopping, IT induction and an explanation of the course plan and timetable. Each participant was provided with a Bicton College fleece, lever arch file, writing pad, notebook and memory stick. Each week each participant received £15 pocket money.

The core of the curriculum focused on the aspects of college/institution management which are crucial to its successful operation. These included:

- Management structure
- Financial and business planning and management
- Estate management
- Management of the curriculum and its delivery
- Marketing
- Governance
- Staff development and the development of managers
- Quality assurance and assessment, including inspection procedures.

The participants were also given the opportunity to:

- Observe teaching and learning styles
- Develop their IT skills
- Study methods of recording the performance of farm enterprises
- Observe ways of forging links with external organisations
- Develop an awareness of health and safety procedures and risk assessments
- Meet with students to study the organisation of their activities.

The participants were given one-day training courses delivered by external tutors in the following:

- Communication skills
- Decision making
- Personal effectiveness.

The course also provided the participants with the opportunity to develop skills in their personal areas of technical or business expertise. This was achieved through visits to farm enterprises, shows and other organised events and visits to the Trustees and Friends of BOAT. In association with this aspect, a cultural programme was provided to help the participants to integrate into, and understand, the British way of life. BOAT Trustees feel very strongly that it is important to provide a social and cultural dimension to the programme as well as delivering a relevant academic component.

4.2 Learning Outcomes

The main learning outcomes were designed to be the following:

1. Understand alternative methods and styles of managing a training institute.
2. Apply those management methods or styles that are appropriate in another institute.
3. Write an outline business plan for an institute.
4. Write an outline strategic plan for an institute.
5. Design a suitable academic structure to meet the educational and training needs of the organisation.

6. Establish a Board of Governors or Advisory Board appropriate to local needs.
7. Apply IT skills including PowerPoint and Desktop Publishing.
8. Communicate effectively to colleagues and transfer knowledge and experience.
9. Make effective decisions.

4.3 Delivery

The opening ceremony took the form of a lunch with a large group of staff of the College, BOAT Trustees and Friends of BOAT.

The core of the course was delivered in a dedicated tutorial room on the first floor of Bicton House which became the base room for the group. It was fitted with a PowerPoint projector and a flip chart. Each participant had his/her own laptop computer.

The timetabled hours were 0900 to 1030, Tea, 1100 to 1230, Lunch, 1330 to 1500, Tea, 1530 to 1700, evening meal. The course material was delivered by Bicton College administrative and teaching staff and BOAT Trustees. Computer tuition was delivered by the Secretary of BOAT who had taught on previous courses. Each participant made PowerPoint presentations including one on their impressions of the course which will be referred to later. BOAT is very grateful to the staff of Bicton College, Trustees and Friends who gave their time willingly and freely to deliver the components of the course programme.

In order to experience management in another land-based college a visit was made to Kingston Maurward College in the neighbouring county of Dorset.

The participants had the opportunity to develop skills in their personal areas of technical or business expertise with visits made to a smallholder unit (with poultry, pigs, sheep and cattle), a beef cattle farm, a large outdoor pig unit, a large milking goat enterprise with a rotary parlour, and organic poultry and vegetable units. The roof of the goat building was covered in solar panels to generate electricity. The group also visited a small poultry abattoir and a farm shop. The participants were also able to see the small scale equipment which is used for making sausages from poultry meat. Visits were also made to the North Somerset and Devon County Agricultural Shows, Mole Valley Farmers, Vapormatic at Exeter, and the Eden Project in Cornwall.

A cultural evening was organised which included an African meal followed by a short presentation by the participants. This was followed by traditional English Morris dancing in front of Bicton House and the participants had a go. The enjoyable evening concluded with a cream tea. Wendy Cowdroy organised two social events in the evenings in each week. These included tractor driving, rounders and experience on the high ropes course.

At weekends the participants were welcomed into the homes of Trustees and Friends of BOAT, many of whom are farmers. This enabled an insight into the British way of life as well as an opportunity to see and in some cases take part in some aspects of UK farming. They also visited Crediton Farmers' Market, Richard Burston's poultry farm and Exeter

Cathedral and city. Finally a 'Friends of BOAT' Evening with a buffet took place when the group members received their Course Attendance Certificates.

Before departure the group travelled to London and were given a tour of the Palace of Westminster arranged through the good offices of Neil Parish, the Member of Parliament for Tiverton and Honiton. In the evening before this visit, the group enjoyed an open top bus tour of the cities of Westminster and London. The group departed for their home countries from London Heathrow.

PART 2. EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

5. Analysis of the Questionnaires completed at the end of the Course in June 2009

5.1 General comments

All six participants completed a feedback questionnaire at the end of the course at Bicton before returning home. The questionnaire was structured in the following sections and the full text is available at Annex 1.

General aspects

Specific aspects of the course

Living conditions and general aspects of the programme

Open questions:

What would you like to see more of in the course?

What items that were not covered would you like to see in the programme?

What would you like to see less of in the programme?

Was the course relevant to your post in your home country?

5.2 General aspects

All six participants felt that the course was the **right length**.

Five participants felt that the **number on the course** was about right and one felt that there were too few.

Five respondents felt that the course was **held at the right time of year** and one did not.

All respondents felt that **the travel arrangements between the home country and the UK and between the airport** were satisfactory.

5.3 Specific aspects of the course

Two participants felt that **the balance between the various activities** in the course was *Good* and two felt it was *OK*.

The session on the **Bicton estate and its operation** was either *Well understood* (1) or *Understood* (5).

The **College management structure and development of the management team** was *Well understood* by four participants and *Understood* by two.

The session on **Governance and planning the Board's activities** was *Well understood* by three participants, *Understood* by two and *Not understood* by one.

All participants felt that the sessions on Lesson Observation were *Useful* and that the time devoted to this activity was *OK*.

The sessions on **IT training and updates** were considered *Useful* by all respondents. Three of them said they were very useful.

Business and financial planning were *Well understood* by four respondents (one of whom said very well) and *Understood* by two.

Health and safety and risk management were *Well understood* by five respondents and *Understood* by the other.

The **Academic Committee Structure** was *Well understood* by four respondents and *Understood* by two.

The **Warden System and student management** was *Well understood* by three respondents and *Understood* by three.

The three one-day sessions on **Communication Skills, Decision Making and Personal Effectiveness** were considered *Useful* (including four Very useful). All respondents felt that the amount of time allocated to these subjects was *OK*.

The **Visits to Kingston Maurward College, agricultural shows and working farms** were considered to be *Useful* by all respondents. Five respondents felt that the time devoted to these activities was *OK* and the other felt that it was *Not enough*.

The **Feedback sessions and self study time** were considered to be *Useful* by all respondents. Five of them felt that the time devoted to these activities was *OK* and one felt that it was *Too much*.

All six participants felt that the **Visits to Trustees and social events** were *Useful* (one very useful) and that the time devoted to these activities was *OK*.

5.4 Living Conditions and General aspects of the Programme

The **Quality of the hostel accommodation** was considered to be *Good* (one very good) by all respondents.

The **Food and other catering** were considered to be *Good* by four respondents, *OK* by one and *Could be better* by one.

The **Transport** was considered *Good* by four respondents and *OK* by two.

The **Contact with Bicton staff** was considered to be *Good* by five respondents and *Could be better* by one.

The **Contact with Bicton students** was considered to be *OK* by one respondent and *Could be better* by five.

Four respondents felt that the **Friendliness of Bicton staff and students** was *Good* (4) or *OK* (2).

5.5 Open question responses

In response to the question: “**What would you like to see more of in the course?**” the following responses were received.

Business management

Business planning and proposal writing

Financial budgeting

IT - more time (x2)

Communication Skills, Decision Making and Personal Effectiveness

IT to be delivered by Pitman tutors

Farm Records

More events with Bicton students

More Pitman facilitators.

In response to the question “**What items that were not covered would you like to see in the programme?**” the following statements were made.

Participation in farm practicals

More marketing sessions

Coverage of EaRTH should be delivered.

In response to the question “**What would you like to see less of in the Programme?**” the following responses were received.

Business and financial planning subject (one response)

All was useful.

In response to the question “**Was the course relevant to your post in your home country?**” every participant said that it was either *Very relevant* or *Relevant*.

6. Feedback from the final presentation of the participants

6.1 Background

In the last week of the course participants were invited to give presentations to a group of Trustees and Friends on their experiences of the course. This activity provided another useful source of feedback and the main points are summarised in this section.

6.2 Course aims

The main aim of this course was to improve the capacity of managers in agriculture in the developing world especially in Africa.

6.3 Travelling to the UK

- Travelling to the UK from Africa is not as easy as expected
- Our first attempts for visa applications were rejected
- Finally visas were granted on the second attempt
- On arrival, our visas, upon scrutiny, were subjected to further clarification.

6.4 Base room/accommodation and facilities

- It is quite hard to leave home and stay away for 6 weeks in a new place for the first time.
- We have been well taken care of , Bicton has been a home away from home
- Rooms were appropriate and meals were good and properly served
- Learning, training and recreation facilities were very good.

6.5 Course structure and delivery

The course structure and content was perfect: (educative and interactive)

- Teaching sessions
- Farm visits
- Staying with families
- Evening activities.

The variety of methods used by facilitators greatly enhanced our understanding:

- Lectures
- PowerPoint presentations
- Handouts
- Demonstrations
- Use of case studies from Africa.

The selection of places visited was a good mix.

- The variety of places visited was an eye opener
- We appreciate the commitment and motivation of the farmers we visited
- The shows provide an opportunity for the community to display and market their products and access further information
- Farmer co-operatives such as Mole Valley Farmers are role models for African farmers.

The weekend visits were appreciated.

- We had lovely weekends with host families
- Host families committed a lot of their time and resources during our stay
- Host families exposed us to their ways of life, historical sites, etc.

6.6 Social events and relationship with staff and students

- The cultural evening was a special honour, gave us privilege to share our different cultures and backgrounds
- We were introduced to an English cultural dance. It was amazing to have a taste of the dance steps
- We were privileged to participate in the 20th Anniversary of BOAT celebration and the cutting of the cake
- All staff are charming and friendly, responded positively to our needs whenever we called upon them, this has been remarkable
- Not much interaction with the students except for one of us; probably age difference has been a factor.

6.7 Course highlights

Most encouraging and exciting on course delivery were the methods used for presentation:

- The facilitators were willing to go the extra mile each time
- All facilitators had mastered their subjects
- The selected topics were relevant and all applicable to our different institutions/programmes.

6.8 General comments

- This type of course is appropriate to programme managers in developing countries
- The course was well designed and professionally executed
- BOAT delegates are now eager to roll out some of the new ideas to the farmers
- The six weeks were worthwhile
- As delegates we appreciate the gesture provide by Bicton College Principal and staff, BOAT Chairman and Trustees.

6.9 Suggestions/Recommendations

- Course involving health and safety, risk management, student affairs and first aid be placed earlier in the course timetable
- Some of the practical sessions should include students to enhance interaction
- BOAT Trustees should continue to diversify their fund raising ventures to enable an increase in the number of trainees and schedules
- BOAT Trustees should where possible work with in-country partners to conduct in-country training.

7. Feedback from participants six months after they returned to their home countries

7.1 The Methodolgy

In addition to feedback obtained from the participants at the end of the 6-week course, it was always the intention to seek further feedback after 6 months. The Trustees felt that this was important in order to assess the usefulness of the course after the participants had returned to their institutions/organisations and had the opportunity to practice what they had learnt. The questionnaire previously referred to (Annex 1) was sent to the participants by e-mail in early January 2012. The participants were requested to respond to the second part of this. The response was complete. The narrative which follows is a summary of the main points in response to each question.

7.2 What changes have you made to the way you carry out your job as a result of participating in this course?

Responses from participants from Concern Universal, The Gambia:

- Conducted interpersonal communication training for staff of two of our partner organisations to enable them to effectively mobilize communities for action
- Facilitated Self Assessment for my organisation (Concern Universal) to establish their strengths and weaknesses and developed an Organisational Development Plan (ODP) out of the weakness for action
- Successfully developed, with support from other staff, a proposal and got funding from UN Democratic Fund to the amount of \$225,000
- Made copies of some of the presentations received for some of the staff to improve their knowledge and performance in the field.
- Definitely helped me to become a serious problem solver at my job

- Increased level of morale and helped to facilitate solving mid-management resolutions
- Fortified my managerial skills to better carry out my financial monthly reporting tool.
- Helped to improve my coordination and effective communication with the rest of my colleagues.

Responses from Lifeline, Zambia

- My planning systems have changed completely
- The execution of programmes and activities is all professional now – it is exciting.

Responses from participants from IcFEM, Kenya:

- Increased confidence in doing my work and especially dealing with people
- As a result of the course I have now an added responsibility to set off organisation's banking facility that is now up and running
- Now dealing with a wider scope of people including the general public which has given me an added responsibility of doing a lot of public relations
- Improvement in communication skills
- The course enhanced my understanding especially in business planning, financial management, leadership management and, as I pass it to others, I get to understand the values
- Time management is improved.

Response from Kulika Uganda:

- We have increased participation of all in planning, decision making and team work with all staff members which has increased motivation and ownership of work at the centre
- I have increased awareness and vigilance on the prevention of work-related accidents and losses at the centre and the farm
- I have lobbied and got support for more protective and working farm gear for all farm and staff maintaining the centre facility
- I, with other staff have increased publicity of the centre facilities and the services provided at the centre in the wider community and so we have registered more functions, such as meetings, retreats, seminars and workshops by organisations using our conference hall and residential facilities on a rental basis
- With skills acquired on the course, I have introduced participatory supervision and increased delegation to enhance team performance
- I have increased mentoring support with individual staff, emphasising quality of work, setting deadlines, benchmarks/work indicators and keeping records in all aspects of our work.

7.3 What additional changes do you intend to make to your job or institution as a result of participating in this course?

Responses from participants from Concern Universal, The Gambia:

- Currently reorganising our organisation and my input to support in the implementation of the organisational development plan is key to enhance effectiveness
- Intensify the fund-raising efforts in the organisation
- Helped in adjusting to the restructuring and scaling down of some valuable staff in my organisation
- Senior management have recognised the benefits of the course and I am assigned to additional tasks
- Improved my confidence to work independently and to be prepared for the unexpected circumstances surrounding the work environment.

Response from Lifeline in Zambia

- Organised a two-day staff workshop with the staff team on goal setting and measuring performance
- Assisting my wife to coordinate a successful project.

Responses from participants from IcFEM, Kenya:

- Improve my time management and personal effectiveness
- Improve my planning, budgeting and reporting
- Share with the management alternative resource mobilisation mechanisms
- Share Mole Valley Farmers' experience with management and staff as a means to improving the staff savings and credit scheme for better staff welfare
- To be a more effective manager who will deliver better quality trainings to my colleagues and others in the community to accelerate transformation
- Produce what is required and avoid wasting time to achieve the objective.

Response from Kulika Uganda:

- To practice more setting and meeting deadlines to enhance our efficiency
- We look forward to introducing and popularising short course for farmers, instigated and paid for by them, who cannot come for long courses
- To offer vocational certificate/diploma courses for school leavers skills developments for more productive adulthood life and registering the centre with the Ministry of Education
- To provide industrial training at the centre consolidating partnerships and networking with other training institutions
- We are also looking to increase livestock numbers to realise economies of scale; with modern doable management systems seen during visits during the course. I shared this with my supervisors. We need help to source electric fencing for this purpose, which is not available in the Ugandan market, for pigs and scratching village chickens.

7.4 Have you passed on any skills or knowledge, which you may have learnt from the course? - and if the answer is Yes, please specify the topics and methods of transmission.

Responses form participants from Concern Universal, The Gambia:

Yes (x2).

- I have helped to support my colleagues who are not very conversant with IT literacy
- Passed on knowledge about how to develop a good communication network
- Shared knowledge with colleagues on how to develop business strategic plans
- Know how to develop a financial yearly budget plan
- Passed on skills to sales team on how to improve and utilize market opportunities without necessarily incurring high costs
- I have trained staff in partner organisations on interpersonal communication methods.

Response from Lifeline, Zambia

Yes.

- Passed on skills and knowledge in conflict management, budgeting and planning, communication skills, farm record keeping and many more.

Responses from participants from IcFEM, Kenya:

Yes (x2).

- Informal sharing-communication skills, time management, personal effectiveness
- From time to time I assist staff deficient in computer knowledge
- Financial management - project monitoring and evaluation
- Training needs analysis
- Farmer groups and food security
- Effective communication.

The method of transmission has mostly been training team leaders in groups by lecturing and giving handouts.

Response from Kulika Uganda:

Yes.

- Identification of work-related risks/vulnerabilities/accidents for staff and livestock at work by briefing meetings
- Ways of mitigating and managing risks at work such as heavy lifting and restraining livestock by guided discussions and demonstrations
- Giving first aid at work and identification of low cost remedies for prophylaxis/ill health in livestock and humans by demonstrations and practical specimen identification
- Record keeping on the farm by follow up and reviews with individuals
- Participatory planning and budgeting and reporting through meetings and discussion of estimates
- Shared reading materials with centre staff on personal planning, personal effectiveness and development of work.

7.5 What future support and developments involving you own institution and BOAT would you like to see?

Responses from participants from Concern Universal, The Gambia

- I would like support from BOAT to provide a good reference to The Marshall Papworth Trust Board to enable me to do a degree in Agricultural Economics in the UK
- Assistance in setting up a large business organisation such as BOAT to create employment and vibrant sustainability in future
- It will be good if there could be a line of communication between BOAT and Concern Universal (CU) especially on sharing innovative ideas and related information that will enhance programme planning for charity work
- It will be helpful if BOAT and CU can jointly raise funds to implement training programmes.

Response from Lifeline, Zambia

- I just want to be a life member of BOAT.

Responses from participants from IcFEM, Kenya:

- More staff to experience the training and exposure
- Training to be conducted in different countries on rotational basis to reach more staff and those trained to be involved in planning and facilitation
- Organise exchange programmes between participants from different countries for more exposure and learning to create more impact
- Allow time for formal sharing sessions with other staff, adds to the significance of the course
- The more values/knowledge you acquire from BOAT trainings, the support from my institution as it is happening, I see a bright future of our community getting transformed.

Response from Kulika Uganda:

- BOAT may support Kulika to identify like partners for joint development programmes, enhancing organisation and staff capacity/growth and manage community resource needs in Uganda and in the rest of Africa as in our organisational mission
- Financial support where possible or how best to raise funds to enlarge the community development to increase institutional training, provision of vocational skills for school leavers, graduates without employment skills with rapidly increasing numbers in the country
- The centre needs an administrative office, housing for staff/tutors, a transport van and farm transportation facilities. We continue to seek support from any volunteer to complement our local effort for capital development to shape our training/community development facility to perform better
- I wish to see more staff/tutors offered similar exposure, meeting new people and seeing things done differently outside Uganda.

7.6 Please make any other comments that you wish on the course and future ideas

Response from participants from Concern Universal, The Gambia

- Schedule the topics of business strategic planning/risk management in the early hours of the morning. This is a demanding subject area and post lunch tiredness can make it difficult to concentrate. (My sincere and utmost thanks to David and John who have given their level best to educate us as well as sharing our different experiences with them)
- The course content reflects the needs of many charity organisations that work with farmers and will continue to make impact
- Although most of the attendees comes from East Africa, and may be that is why most examples by facilitators are related to east Africa, yet BOAT can expand their network in West Africa to attract more students.

Response from Lifeline, Zambia

- No comment. I just congratulant BOAT for the accreditation of the course and wish the 2012 students a success and good stay at Bicton with lovely BOAT Trustees.

Responses from participants from IcFEM, Kenya:

- The course is very relevant to programme leaders and institution managers
- Provide for a session where participants from different countries could share experiences from their organisations
- The course has a significant achievement especially to the developing countries. I would like to congratulate BOAT Trustees for their successes and provisions you did. God bless BOAT as you endeavour to train more managers from Africa.

Response from Kulika Uganda:

- All the modules are relevant, but they need more African context examples
- The programme could include trainers visits to beneficiary organisations/ institutions to learn from them and further carry out more practical needs assessments of individual partners
- Alternatively the training to done with partners in Africa to reach more individuals/institutions.

8. Feedback from Bicton College Staff

As part of the evaluation of this course the opportunity was taken to ask Bicton College staff who had contributed to give their views on the group. A number of them took the opportunity to do so and their comments are summarised below.

“A brief comment from me: the delegates were a delight to host this year and Bicton College is privileged to be associated with and inputting to this programme and gains significant cultural and educational benefits from it” - David Henley (Principal).

“Positives:

Smooth running – excellent support by Wendy.

No real issues regarding delivery.

They all settled in well and integrated well with academic staff.

Things to improve:

The candidates seemed to want more financial input – Adrian did an extra session.

The candidates didn't seem to understand the College's wish to integrate them as guests with staff and students and did not turn up for some sessions which we had planned so in future we would like to ascertain feedback from the candidates on what they would like to do in the evening" - Jane Townsend (Deputy Principal - Academies).

"Three very productive sessions. Good responsive group. Really engaged with the subject matter. For future years review the length of sessions which were a bit long" - Adrian Ford (Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Services).

"I found the delegates very keen to get involved in the session on timetabling. They were interested and asked lots of relevant questions. The evening events planned for Animal Care was Rounders. A few delegates got involved and seemed to enjoy the session. Our students certainly did". - Sue Merrett (Academy Head).

"I felt my session, although very enjoyable, was very relevant to their needs. We did have an interesting conversation about support for single parents and the law in this country about abandonment. In future perhaps some queries or action points can be provided for me so that I can prepare relevant material". - Lydia Cherrett (Student Support).

"I found the group to be very friendly and approachable and always smiling and happy. They seemed to get on very well as a group and as individuals; they fitted in very well with College life. Some of them have kept in touch with me since they returned to Africa". - Wendy Cowdroy (PA to Jane Townsend and Course Administrator).

9. Conclusions

The 2011 course was a great success. The feedback from all sources was very favourable and supportive. The participants gained a lot from their studies and the experience of the course. They worked well together from the outset. There was very little criticism of the course and it was relevant to their needs.

The course for 2012 will be a slightly different version as it will be delivered as an accredited course with a credit rating of 30 Level 5 units. However most of the suggestions for changes can be incorporated into the new format. These include:

- placing the subjects of health and safety, risk management, student affairs and first aid earlier in the timetable
- more opportunities to interact with students both socially and in the formal programme
- more time on IT.

Some other topics were mentioned in the feedback but the overall impression is that the course contains relevant material in the right balance. The balance between free time at the weekends and stays with Trustees and Friends was not an issue this year.

Some wider issues were fed back from the six month questionnaire. One of these relates to BOAT providing more in-country training programmes and workshops to reach a wider audience, Boat is responding to this and is planning a Workshop at the Natural Resources College, Lilongwe, Malawi in the summer of 2012. BOAT accepts this recommendation and will be looking for further opportunities to develop such activities. Furthermore we accept the comment that more examples could be provided from experiences in African countries.

It is encouraging to read, in the responses after six months, how much of the course content and experiences have been utilised in the workplace of the participants. This has always been the aim of BOAT to train the trainers who will then return to their home countries and spread the word about what they have learnt which is relevant to the needs of their colleagues and organisations. Trustees who work so hard to raise money to support such courses should be heartened and encouraged by this feedback.

The difficulties associated with obtaining visas should be reduced now that Bicton College is a Tier 4 Licensed Provider under the UK Border Agency structure and the course is accredited. However it will be interesting to see how this unfolds in reality.

The delivery of this successful course was very much a team effort. The formal inputs from Bicton staff, BOAT Trustees and Friends and Pitman facilitators were all appreciated. We should also acknowledge the time given willingly and freely by many others in hosting visits and looking after the participants at weekend, in the evenings and during the final days in London. It is the complete package which has made this course such a great success.

Note: This report was compiled and written by Fred Harper (Chairman of BOAT and Trustee) and Mike Pash (Course Manager) – February 2012 .

Annex 1: Survey of the experiences and views of the participants on the BOAT Training Course 2011 on Institutional Management

Introduction

The Trustees of BOAT are very interested to have your thoughts and ideas on the Training Course, which you attended at Bicton College in the period April to June 2011. We are planning a similar course for 2012 and your feedback will be very helpful to us in improving the content and delivery of the Course. Please complete all of the questions in an honest and open way by ticking boxes and adding comments. We are very willing to receive criticism where it is constructive and helps to improve the Course for future participants.

General aspects

Was the course the right length for you? Yes No

Was 6 trainees too many? too few ? or about the right number?

Was the course held at a convenient time of year for you? Yes No

Were the travel arrangements between your home country and the UK and between the airport and Bicton College satisfactory? Yes No

Specific aspects of the course

Please indicate your views on the technical content of the course by marking a box.

(Where indicated below please mark the item either Useful or Not Useful and then also mark Not enough, OK or Too much separately).

➤ ***Balance between taught elements, visits and weekend activities?***

Balance good OK Could have been better

➤ ***The Bicton estate and its operation?***

Well understood Understood Not understood

➤ ***College management structure and development of the Management team?***

Well understood Understood Not understood

- ***Governance and planning of the Board's activities?***
Well understood Understood Not understood
- ***Lesson observation?***
Useful Not useful Not enough OK Too much (mark 2 boxes)
- ***Work shadowing?***
Useful Not useful Not enough OK Too much (mark 2 boxes)
- ***IT training and updates?***
Useful Not useful Not enough OK Too much (mark 2 boxes)
- ***Business and financial planning?***
Well understood Understood Not understood
- ***Health and safety and risk management?***
Well understood Understood Not understood
- ***Academic Committee Structure, Quality Assurance and Learning Resources?***
Well understood Understood Not understood
- ***Warden system and student management?***
Well understood Understood Not understood
- ***The three days on specific topics:***
 - ***Communication skills***
 - ***Decision making***
 - ***Personal effectiveness?***
Useful Not useful Not enough OK Too much (mark 2 boxes)
- ***Visits including Kingston Maurward College, Agricultural Shows & working farms?***
Useful Not useful Not enough OK Too much (mark 2 boxes)
- ***Feed back sessions and self study time?***
Useful Not useful Not enough OK Too much (mark 2 boxes)
- ***Visits to the Trustees and Social Events?***
Useful Not useful Not enough OK Too much (mark 2 boxes)

- **What additional changes do you intend to make in your job or institution as a result of participating in this course?**
- **Have you passed on any skills or knowledge, which you may have learnt from the course, to your colleagues?**

- **If the answer is yes, please specify the topics and methods of transmission.**

- **What future support and developments involving your own institution and BOAT would you like to see?**

- **Please make any other comments that you wish on the course and ideas for the future?**

Name: **Position**.....

Institution:..... **Date**

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.