

Bicton Overseas Agricultural Trust (BOAT)

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

held at

Bicton College

12th April to 30th May 2012



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PART 1 INTRODUCCION, 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 (International) conducted at Bicton College in East Devon, United Kingdom. This was the 6th time that such a course had been offered.

Bicton Overseas Agricultural Trust (BOAT) is aware of the great importance of agriculture and rural development issues 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 widespread current systems of farming to a more sustainable and commercially-orientated approach. Agricultural and rural development training institutions funded by both Government and 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 course aims to provide essential training and personal development to senior staff in the management of both Government and Private training institutions which are involved in education, training and extension in the subjects of agriculture and rural development in developing countries.

2. Background to the new course

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, UK 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 course runs for six weeks and has been offered at Bicton College for six or more participants in each year. Bicton College is a Further Education College which provides full and part time course in agriculture and a range of other land-based industries. The course offered in 2010 did not run because of difficulties in obtaining visas and disrupted air traffic due to volcanic ash in the upper atmosphere.

In 2011 BOAT and Bicton College looked carefully at providing a course which could be accredited. An accredited course is more attractive to potential students and their employers and sponsors and also gives recognition to the academic level of the course delivered. It was also felt that this model was a more cost effective method of delivering BOAT training based in the UK. Detailed course planning meetings were held and the course was presented to Plymouth University for accreditation as a Short Course in Institutional Management and Business Planning (International) with three Level 5 Modules each attracting 10 Credits. After some amendments the course was accredited and offered in that format for 2012. Level 5 is equivalent to the early years of a degree course or Higher National Diploma in the England, Wales and Northern Ireland Qualifications and Credit Framework.

The Modules are:

- Governance and Management of Institutions (10 credits)
- Business Management and Planning (10 credits)
- Curriculum Management and Delivery (10 credits).

The Course Leaflet is available on the web site www.boatagtrust.co.uk . Further details on content and methods of delivery are provided in Section 4. of this part of the Report.

Over the last few years BOAT has developed links with a number of African countries. Its links in East Africa are particularly strong. BOAT has trained over 40 people from Tanzania both in country and at Bicton College. In the summer of 2012, a new Memorandum of Understanding between BOAT, Bicton College and the newly-formed Livestock Training Agency (LITA) was agreed and signed. This was facilitated by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development. This is a significant development and provides a strong basis for future cooperation with the six sites in Tanzania which will deliver the Agency's work. In recent years other students on BOAT courses have come from Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Nigeria, The Gambia and Zambia.

3. The Participants

Twelve potential candidates were considered by the Training and Development Sub Group of BOAT together with Bicton College staff. The intention was again to enrol eight students but last minute changes in visa arrangements meant that two from Tanzania were unable to attend. The candidates were identified from personal contacts of BOAT Trustees or a former Trustee. Four nominations were also received from the Charity Concern Universal on the assumption that two would be selected. The field was a strong one with some well-qualified candidates in suitable work positions. The details of those who arrived for the course are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 The details of the participants on the course in 2012

Name	Age	Institution and Country	Qualifications	Position
Anthony U Atah	33	Concern Universal, Nigeria	BSc Geog and Regional Planning(University of Calabar), MSc (In progress) Land Resource Evaluation and Planning (University of Calabar)	Project Coordinator, Environment and Livelihoods, Concern Universal, Nigeria
Maurice J Barasa	41	Inter Christian Fellowship Evangelical Mission (IcFEM), Kenya	Dip in General Agriculture (Kenya), Certificate in General Agriculture (Kenya)	Human Resources Coordinator, IcFEM Mission, Kimilili, Kenya
Judith N Byaruhanga	39	Kulika Uganda, Uganda	BSc Agriculture (Makerere University, Uganda): Advanced Cert. of Education (Christ the King S.S.S.); Uganda Cert. of Education (Christ the King S.S.S.)	Farmer Training Officer for Kulika Uganda, Uganda. Also sharing project implementation and leadership responsibilities.
Agostinho A P Cigarro	39	Concern Universal, Mozambique	B Commerce in Business Administration (Catholic University of East Africa, Kenya); MBA (in progress) World University of Leadership, USA)	Finance and Administration Manager, Concern Universal, Mozambique
Florence N Ddumba	43	Kulika Uganda, Uganda	Cert in Sustainable Agriculture (Mityana DFI, Kenya; BEd (Makerere University, Uganda; PgD in Sustainable Agriculture (University of Reading); MSc in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (University of London)	Training and leading the Key Farmer Trainers Courses , Kulika, Uganda
Victor K Kaimfa	52	Veritas College, Malawi	Cert. in Agriculture (NRC Lilongwe, Malawi)	Agriculture and Development Facilitator, Veritas College, Malawi

BOAT has trained a number of people from Kulika Uganda and the Inter Christian Fellowship Evangelical Mission, Kenya, in the past and it is good to keep this continuity. It was the first year that a person had been recruited from Mozambique but we have had people from Nigeria and Malawi in the past. It is interesting to note that in this year in the period 30th July to 3rd August BOAT also ran a 5-day workshop at the Natural Resources College, Lilongwe, Malawi for 29 participants on Managing Sustainable Agriculture: Improving Agricultural Management by Training and Extension which is the subject of another Report (see the web site).

4. The Course Design, Content and Delivery

4.1 Course Content

This accredited course was delivered as three 10 Credit level 5 Modules. It was very intensive and the Modules were delivered, assessed and marked within a six-week period. A summary of the content follows.

Governance and management of institutions

- Governance of institutions
- Styles of leadership and management
- Staff management and deployment
- Management information systems
- Property and land management.

In addition, three one-day sessions were provided by Pitman Training on: Communication Skills, Personal Effectiveness and Decision Making.

Business management and planning

- Strategic and business planning
- Project management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Risk management
- Case studies on farms and other agricultural businesses
- Linking the role and management of the farm and estate to the delivery of the curriculum.

Curriculum management and delivery

- Training needs analysis
- Design and structure of programmes of study

- Course management
- Teaching theory and practice
- Quality processes and procedures
- Student support services
- Information technology and computing.

The timetable was very full and little free time was available for self study. This proved to be a problem for students. Other items were scheduled which included visits to farms and agricultural businesses, another agricultural college, agricultural shows and the homes of Trustees and friends of BOAT. In addition the participants were invited to attend a one-day seminar organised by the South West branch of the Tropical Agricultural Association which happened to be on Agriculture in Malawi. Victor Kaimfa gave a joint paper to this meeting with BOAT Associate and former Trustee Professor John Wibberley. Some social activities were organised to encourage integration with staff and students at Bicton College.

4.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

In the accredited course format the modules express the Learning Outcomes expected of students. This is key to the successful delivery of the course and its understanding by students. The LOs are listed here for each Module.

Governance and management of institutions

LO1 Critically evaluate the role of governance including advisory boards and committees.

LO2 Demonstrate an understanding of the different styles of leadership and describe systems of training managers.

LO3 Understand the role of the human resources department and identify how it drives quality improvement through personnel management.

LO4 Demonstrate through critical analysis the techniques and systems used to manage property and land.

LO5 Design a marketing plan and understand the benefits of links with external organisations.

Business management and planning

LO1 Understand how to prepare a 3-year business plan for a specified organisation based on the home institution of the student.

LO2 Prepare and understand financial accounts for an organisation or a project.

LO3 Understand the process of writing a strategic plan for an organisation.

LO4 Carry out a risk assessment for a business.

LO5 Demonstrate the use of advanced IT skills.

Curriculum management and delivery

LO1 Evaluate and identify training needs for a given population.

LO2 Design and prepare a timetable for a training or extension programme.

LO3 Understand modern teaching theory and practice and apply this in a practical situation.

LO4 Evaluate quality assurance procedures.

LO5 Demonstrate an understanding of the various student support areas required to ensure a whole organisational approach to the student experience.

4.3 Course delivery

The course was delivered according to a very tight time schedule. Blocks of time of 90 minutes duration were allocated as follows: 0900 to 1030, 1100 to 1230, 1330 to 1500 and 1530 to 1700 hours. In addition some sessions were scheduled in the evenings and some extra tutoring was necessary at the weekends. On other weekends, some excursions were arranged

The students were invited to arrive some five days before the timetabled course started. This was to allow adequate time for briefing and a settling in period. This induction period proved to be a successful arrangement and will be repeated in 2013. At the end of the course there was a day of feedback on assignments and also the students were asked to complete feedback questionnaires. There was a Presentation Evening on the last Monday where students received their Certificates of Attendance and Pitman Training Certificates. They then left for London on Tuesday morning where they had a cultural tour including the Houses of Parliament and a tour of the cities of London and Westminster. They then departed from Heathrow in the evening of the Wednesday.

The course was delivered by a wide range of people many of whom gave their time freely. The students had their own dedicated room on the first floor of Bicton House. This was ideal and was the base room for the duration. It was equipped with a Power Point projector and flip charts. Each student had his or her own laptop computer.

It was important that this course was delivered in a land-based college environment as this type of institution is the underlying environment for the content. Being in residence during the working term time enabled the students to experience college life at first hand. A visit to Kingston Maurward College in Dorset enabled the students to see a different model of management and governance.

A cultural evening was organised which included an African meal followed by a short presentation by the students. This was followed by entertainment laid on by UK students from Bicton College. The demands of the course, and in particular the assessment schedule, meant that there was limited time for other cultural events.

This restriction on social and cultural activities is a penalty of running an accredited course where the academic demands must be met in order to achieve the credits. There were ten assessment items in total which involved a range of approaches from written reports to role

play and from presentations to producing promotional materials. The assignments were considered to be relevant and appropriate but demanding in terms of the time required to complete them.

PART 2 EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

5. Analysis of the Questionnaires completed at the end of the Course in May 2012

5.1 General comments

All six participants completed a feedback questionnaire at the end of the course before returning home. The questionnaire was structured in the following sections and the full text is available as 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 programme relevant to your post in your home country?

5.2 General aspects

Five out of the six felt that the course was about the **right length**. The other respondent felt that more time was needed.

Half of the respondents felt that six was about the **right number** for the course but the other half felt that there should be more with a suggestion of up to ten.

All of the respondents felt that the course was **held at the right time of the year**.

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

5.3 Specific aspects of the course

The balance between various activities in the course was considered *OK* by two respondents and *Could be better* by four. This point needs to be addressed for future courses.

The session on the **Bicton estate and its operation** was *Well understood* by all respondents.

The **IT training and updates** was considered to be *Useful* by four respondents and *Not useful* by two. Two felt that it was *too basic* and should be tailored to individual needs. Half of the respondents felt that the time allocated to this area was *Not enough* and half *OK*.

The section on the **Warden system** was *Well understood* by two respondents and *Understood* by the other four.

The three days on specific topics of **Communication Skills, Decision Making and Personal Effectiveness** were considered *Useful* by all of the respondents and five of them would have liked more time on these aspects.

Visits to Kingston Maurward College, agricultural shows and working farms were considered *Useful* by five respondents and the other felt that they were *OK*. In terms of time devoted to these activities, one felt that there was *Not enough*, three felt it was *OK* and two felt that there was *Too much*.

In terms of **feedback sessions and self study time** all respondents felt that it was *Useful* but they all felt that the time allocated for these activities was *Not enough*. This balance needs to be reviewed for 2013.

In terms of the **Visits to Trustees and social events** all of the respondents felt that they were *Useful* but in terms of time allocated, two said it was *Not enough*, three said it was *OK* and one said it was *Too much*.

5.4 Living conditions and general aspects of the programme

The **Quality of the hostel accommodation** was considered *Good* by all respondents.

The **Food and other catering** was considered *Good* by five respondents and *OK* by one.

The **Transport arrangements** were considered *Good* by all respondents.

The **Contact with Bicton staff** was considered to be *Good* by three respondents, *OK* by two and *Could have been better* by one.

The **Contact with Bicton students** was considered *Good* by two respondents, *OK* by two and *Could have been better* by two.

The **Friendliness of Bicton staff and students** was considered to be *Good* by four respondents, *OK* by one and *Could have been better* by one.

5.5 Responses to open questions

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

Leadership

More detail on Business Plans and Management

Management topics

General principles of Business Planning

More time on private and self study

More time on Pitman Training topics (x2)

Objectives of field visits need to be made clear from the outset

Learning outcomes to be made clear from the outset

Students should have an agricultural background.

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

Marketing Plan (x2)

Lessons on marketing

Conflict mitigation and management

Estate and property management.

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

Visits to farms (x2) and their relevance explained

Less timetabled material

None

All must be relevant to the Modules.

In response to the question: **“Was the programme relevant to your post in your home country?”** all respondents replied **Yes**. Comments included: *Very relevant; most of it; Very much so; All sections are relevant to a Short Course of this kind; Yes it was.*

6. Comments from the External Examiner

As an accredited course this one is subject to the same quality assurance procedures as all other courses in the University. One of these is the scrutiny by the External Examiner. The External Examiner appointed for this first year was Mrs Rebecca Clyde who examines other courses at Bicton College at Foundation Degree level. The standard report form for External Examiners in the University is nine pages long and it is not proposed to repeat all of it here. In fact not all sections are relevant to a short course of this kind. Selected comments are detailed below.

Wide range of assessments used. These enabled both formative and summative assessments to be achieved by all learners, in a variety of ways. Marking standards were accurate, with consistency across the modules. Some informative feedback was provided to the learners on areas for improvement.

Generic criteria are used for each assessment. These are applied appropriately by tutors to award achievement of learning outcomes. Specific grading criteria, relating to each learning outcome is evident in assessments.

All tutors use the standardised assessment brief. Assessments are well produced with clear descriptive tasks, linked directly to the learning outcomes. Clear internal verification

processes are in place for all modules. Assessments contain well documented evidence that the process of marking, grading and moderation of assignments is fair and consistent.

Good variety of assessment types embedded within vocationally relevant briefs. Clear range of generic and academic skills embedded within assignments.

Assignment briefs were provided for all learners when assessments were set. These all follow the college's own standardised format and provided clear written tasks.

All students were able to participate fully in all forms of assessments. All were treated equally whatever their ability, understanding, needs and background. All learners were able to complete all of the assessments. No group or individual was observed to be disadvantaged.

Overall the amount of assessed work is manageable for the students. However there are some small concerns here that due to the nature of the course, (it being a condensed short course), that the learners did not always have sufficient time to produce assessments to their fullest potential. This was largely due to a lack of time available for in-depth research and collection of data. The course team are however aware of this and are planning to review the management of the modules, in order to reduce the time pressure on the learners.

Under Strengths:

Commonality in assignment format

Excellent student/staff relationships

Wide range of assessment methods

Incorporation into the teaching and learning of the college's excellent resources and the additional use of local work based and educational establishments.

Excellent links with local industries and other educational establishments are utilised as teaching and leaning resources for learners.

Consider more emphasis on the development of numeracy and literacy skills, so that they are integrated into the existing teaching, learning and assessment procedures. Allow sufficient time for learners to carry out more in-depth research and collection of data for assessment in order to reach their full potential.

7. Feedback from the participants 6 months after completion of the course

7.1 The Methodology

In addition to the 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 organisations/institutions and had the opportunity to practice what they had learnt. A follow-up questionnaire (Annex 2) was sent to the participants by email in late December 2012. One questionnaire was not returned from Uganda due to local communication difficulties and illness

The response are reported largely *verbatim* in the order in which the questions were asked.

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

Response from Anthony Atah, Concern Universal, Nigeria:

- I have learned to consider my work from the organisational point of view, and not limit myself to the narrow space of my job description. This way I am able to link the progress of my work to the organisation's strategy and while meeting my project goals, meet the organisation's goals as well.
- The way I organise my work has improved. I have overcome the temptation of occasionally developing work plans in my head. Now my diary is filled up with personal work plans in addition to the monthly project/programme work plan. This way I am able to prioritise more effectively and track my performance.
- I attended the BOAT training at a point where I felt my organisation had nothing more to offer to my career development. That has changed. Now I take personal responsibility to enjoy my work and plan ahead. I have become more aware of my work environment, and am creating a personal positive work culture to reflect what I would like to see as organisational work culture. Taking personal responsibility for change can be the key factor enabling organisational effectiveness. I am happy that I am able to influence other staff within the organisation with my outlook to work.

Response from Maurice Barasa, IcfEM, Kenya:

- Thanks, I wish to state that I have done some contribution in many ways. Our meetings in the Management used to take a long time but now it is well managed since I advised the management to form small committees to be in charge of different departments to meet regularly and the Executive to meet only to ratify issues for a short time.
- I also helped the organisation in the development of our new organogram using the knowledge I got from Bicton organisation structure.
- For a long time we had never had a staff appraisal programme which I developed when I came and it is now in place. Am currently helping in developing HR policies in the Mission besides my work.

Response from Judith Byaruhanga, Kulika Uganda, Uganda:

- I have been involved in compiling, preparing and submitting reports to donors.

Response from Agostinho Cigarro, Concern Universal, Mozambique:

- Time Management: do things each at a time and not leave anything that I can do today for tomorrow. Tomorrow may not come. Considerable reduction on the time spent over the phone and use the time for important things.
- Communication: the course helped me to gain confidence regarding presentation using PowerPoint.

- Use of Calendar: Calendar is now my best friend, putting down all I need to do and follow up the pending ones.
- Delegating more duties: No leader is perfect. The best ones don't try to be - they concentrate on honing their strengths and find others who can make up for their limitation. "No one leader can be all things to all people. It's time to end the myth of the complete leader. Those at the top must come to understand their weaknesses as well as their strengths" [www.http://hbr.org/product/in-praise-of-the-incomplete-leader/an/R0702E-PDF-ENG](http://hbr.org/product/in-praise-of-the-incomplete-leader/an/R0702E-PDF-ENG), (2007 accessed 7 May 2012). Bearing in mind that no one leader can be all things to all people, I concentrated more effort in the areas where I am good on and delegating to others what they can do better. As a result of this goals are met.

Response from Florence Ddumba, Kulika Uganda:

- Writing professional reports as a result of the training.
- Reporting effectively to my bosses and colleagues.
- Making wise decisions improved greatly.
- Before any training I carry out needs assessment for effective running of the training.
- Risk assessment of the trainees in the training venue.

Response from Victor Kaimfa, Veritas College, Malawi:

- My presentation skills have improved, the course also taught me PowerPoint presentation.
- Personal effectiveness.

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

Response from Anthony Atah, Concern Universal, Nigeria:

- I would like to support my organisation to be more effective in planning and following through with planned activities. It is common that in the midst of crowded work schedule some equally important actions are ignored or put on hold. I believe it is possible that with improved planning, prioritisation and delegation of roles, every task can be performed when they should be.
- The organisation's strategic document will be reviewed in this year, 2013. I plan to support the process to ensure we learn to take advantage of our strength and improve in areas that we identify as necessary.

Response from Maurice Barasa, IcfEM, Kenya:

- I intend to make more changes particularly in quality assurance in every aspect of our work particularly when developing training materials for our communities, staff safety, documentation and general keeping of all staff.

Response from Judith Byruhanga, Kulika Uganda, Uganda:

- To develop performance plans for our organisation.
- To conduct a risk assessment session.

Response from Agostinho Cigarro, Concern Universal, Mozambique:

- My major concentration will be on consolidating the learned experience and sharing the experience with others.
- In addition to that I intend to create a digital story reflecting the value added due to attending the course.

Response from Florence Ddumba, Kulika Uganda:

- I intend to hold weekly meetings with field officers based on feedback and preparatory meetings for the next week.
- I hope to direct my field officers to prepare work plans and submit them for discussion.
- Carrying out staff appraisal every four months.

Response from Victor Kaimfa, Veritas College, Malawi:

- The additional changes that I intend to make especially to my organisation is to advise to increase the number of Board of Trustees and also to increase the number of sub-committees.

7.4 Have you passed on any skills or knowledge, which you may have learnt from the course, to your colleagues?

All but one respondent answered **Yes** to this question. The odd one out said that this would be dealt with in the second semester.

7.5 Specify the topics and methods of transmission.

Response from Anthony Atah, Concern Universal, Nigeria:

- I shared my learning in leadership and decision making with 12 staff within my organisation. The plan was to develop a module and deliver the discussions in phases. However this sequential delivery has not happened as the programme is overwhelmed with project's delivery and fund raising activities. Feedback received from this one forum was positive and has led to a discussion on how the organisation could improve in several ways, particularly making meetings more effective, which I led on and recommended areas of improvement.
- Notwithstanding the inability to follow through the phased training, I have shared one-on-one my experiences in relevant areas with staff to enable them to manage relationships and resolve conflicts.

- To support staff performance I provided leadership support that was highly commended across the organisation, and raised the awareness of some staff on the need for appraisals, and supported them through the exercise.
- In addition, staff of local partner civil society organisations and rural cooperatives have benefited from training in business development to support increased income generation among rural households from small scale businesses.
- Though it appeared at the time of the course that I had nothing new to learn from the information technology trainings, I now appreciate the sessions on PowerPoint presentation. Now my slides are not crowded and I am able to keep my audience's attention focussed on me and what I am saying, not on the many texts on my slides. I find this very interesting! I have shared this with some of my colleagues.

Response from Maurice Barasa, IcFEM, Kenya:

- I have had several meetings with our staffs. We have trained in ensuring quality of our work, planning for meetings that involve different groups of people, and more important communication skills since we are always in the community.
- I did PowerPoint presentation in my training targeting leaders of our programmes.

Response from Judith Byaruhanga, Kulika Uganda, Uganda:

- Guidelines for self protection and conducting effective appraisal meetings through discussion with my colleagues.

Response from Aghostinho Cigarro, Concern Universal, Mozambique:

- This activity has been planned for the second semester.

Response from Florence Ddumba, Kulika Uganda:

- Computer skills learnt shared with four colleagues.
- Risk assessment in training venues will now receive greater prominence.
- Needs assessment more widely used and shared.
- Effective communication through staff meetings, during training sessions and workshops.

Response from Victor Kaimfa, Veritas College, Malawi:

- PowerPoint presentation - through practical on the computer.

7.6 What future support and developments involving your own institution would you like to see?

Response from Anthony Atah, Concern Universal, Nigeria:

- A sustained link between the BOAT trainees and BOAT will be important for improved skills transfer and knowledge sharing. It will be good to see on the web sites

of BOAT and Concern Universal what impacts the trainings are having in the lives of staff, the organisation and rural beneficiaries (the population we support).

- Encouraging previous trainees to seminars may contribute to sustaining the link, creating new relationships and building organisational competencies and BOAT outreach participate and make presentations in BOAT.

Response from Maurice Barasa, IcFEM, Kenya:

- I have advised our organisation to request you to train our Management team since I found the course so helpful and very relevant to us.
- I have asked them if it is not possible to send people to UK then they request you to do a week training in Kenya.

Response from Judith Byaruhanga, Kulika Uganda, Uganda:

- Staff development.
- Funding of staff to gain qualifications in Information Technology.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects and MIS.

Response from Agostinho Cigarro, Concern Universal, Mozambique:

- B.O.A.T should consider giving support to candidates via e-mail or other means. For instance, if someone has any query should be able obtain support from B.O.A.T..

Response from Florence Ddumba, Kulika Uganda:

- Developing a strategic plan for my institution.

Response from Victor Kaimfa, Veritas College, Malawi:

- The future support that I would like to see involving my organisation and BOAT is that of continued relationship through trainings, that is to say other members of staff from Veritas College Trust be trained by BOAT.

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

Response from Anthony Atah, Concern Universal, Nigeria:

- Considering the short duration, busy timetable and very rich content of the BOAT course, it may be useful for the course to begin early to correspond with potential trainees and prepare them for the assignments ahead. Course module related engagements may begin two months early, with the requirement that the students send in initial presentations before they arrive in the UK. Sharing the course modules ahead of time may help in preparing students for the work ahead.
- The travel arrangement, including early invitation and all the necessary documentations for visa application and pick-ups in the UK is excellent.

Response from Maurice Barasa, IcFEM, Kenya:

- Thanks for that course. I will never be same. My life and way of doing things changed drastically after attending the course.
- My suggestion is add more units and maybe if finance allow increase the number trainees per organisation.
- I would also suggest that you compare the cost of training in UK and doing it in member countries and go the cheaper and most effective.

Response from Judith Byaruhanga, Kulika Uganda, Uganda:

- To allow development of special projects for individual institutions other than the UK- based case studies for the Business Planning Module.

Response from Agostinho Cigarro, Concern Universal, Mozambique:

- I think that one of the changes that I benefited from the course and changed my life was to learn simple principle like “if you want to get milk, take care of the grass”. This principle learned from visit to a farmer and now I use it as crosscutting issue in professional and private life. In whatever I do, I think in line with the principle.

Response from Florence Ddumba, Kulika Uganda:

- The course should be longer to reduce the stress and tension.

Response from Victor Kaimfa, Veritas College, Malawi:

- BOAT to be organising an ex-students meeting for the African students to be meeting either in the UK or in any African country just to share ideas and experiences.
- BOAT to think of extending the six weeks training may be to 1 or 2 years training.
- BOAT to think of sponsoring Masters degree programmes in future.

7.8 What is your job title now?

Anthony Atah, Concern Universal, Nigeria

Programme Manager ,
Environment and Livelihoods

Maurice Barasa, IcFEM, Kenya

In Partnership and Networking
Section and also in charge of
Community Capacity Building
and management of their
projects

Judith Byaruhanga, Kulika Uganda, Uganda

Project Officer.

Agostinho Cigarro, Concern Universal,

Finance and Administration

Mozambique

Manager

Florence Ddumba, Kulika Uganda, Uganda

Program Officer

Victor Kaimfa, Veritas College, Malawi

Agriculture and Community
Development Officer

8. Feedback from student presentation

At the end of the course, the students gave a collective presentation on their experiences on the course. Some of this information was captured in the feedback questionnaire. However the presentation raised other issues which are summarised here.

8.1 Course structure

- Was comprehensive with principles relevant to the course.
- There will be a need to have adequate induction earlier on in the course giving: i) a detailed overview of each course module and expected tasks and learning outcomes and ii) IT sessions may commence early and tailored to needs.
- Timetable was clear but had little free time for individual studies.
- Some management concepts may have been given too little consideration compared to others (e.g. leadership versus curriculum planning/student records).
- Early induction at the library and use of personal computers to access *ebrary* supported learning.

8.2 Course content

- Course content was rich and relevant to the aims of the course.
- Course Module 2 - Business Management and Planning may be modified to: i) present more generic principles of planning and managing businesses, ii) explain concepts when applied to animal husbandry and iii) be flexible to allow delegates to identify, develop and present business plans relevant to their home institution.

8.3 Methods of course delivery

- Use of visual aids - this was well-utilised, combining projection from a computer with use of flip charts.
- Case studies - well used by various tutors.
- Engagement with learners - this varied depending on how each learner filtered information that was given. We may recommend more generic illustrations and setting clear learning outcomes at the start of the lesson to improve the delivery of some sessions in Module 2.

- Individual support - individual work was encouraged and adequate support provided according to individual needs.
- Adequate learning and reference materials were provided.

8.4 Course assignments and presentations

- Assignments were relevant to each module and general aims of the course. They provided opportunity for increased learning and maybe improved with more concise communication.
- Presentations provided opportunity to synthesise arguments, improved team work and group dynamics and encouraged confidence building.

8.5 Visits

- Farming businesses provided opportunity for comparative learning but may have been too often.
- Agricultural Shows provided a combination of opportunities for sales, exchange of learning and leisure.
- Mole Valley Farmers was an excellent case study for comparative advantages of organised farmer groups.
- Vapormatic – (NB - not undertaken before the day of presentation).

8.6 Course highlights

- Governance module was very impressive in clarity, content, style of delivery, mix of presenters with each topic clearly linked to the other and in relevance
- Curriculum management and delivery was impressive in content, style of delivery and relevance.
- Institutional Management and Business Planning was good in content, relevance and in individual support.

8.7 Level of Course Aims achieved

- Lessons learned on more effective training included
 - Farming as a business
 - Record keeping
 - Gross margin and profit analysis
 - Needs-based training
- Lessons learned on improved management of and quality of delivery by institutions included
 - Leading to influence
 - Standards setting

- Staff development
- Logical decision-making process
- Planning
- Action.

9. Conclusions

The feedback from this first accredited course has been thorough and detailed. The overall impression gained is that the course was a success. There has been very positive feedback from all of the participants and all of them felt that it was relevant, to some degree or another, to their work. All of them have used something from the course in their work and have plans to do more. This is important as it is the wish of BOAT that the training should benefit a wider audience.

The timetable prepared was always an ambitious one with little free time to study and engage in wider cultural activities. The reality was just that and the students felt under great pressure from the word go. It is right that such a programme should be challenging but the organisers must strive to reach a proper balance of activities. There were very few free slots in the timetable and the students were asked to complete ten assignments in an intensive six-week period. Changes were made to the timetable as the course progressed to alleviate some of these problems.

The academic level of the course appeared to be appropriate as indicated by the feedback from the External Examiner and the students. All of the students passed the course and were awarded their 30 credits at level 5. However there was a wide range of ability in the group as evidenced by the marks. There is no doubt that this course is rightly academically demanding and future recruitment procedures should take note of this.

Feedback on the individual modules indicated that there were some difficulties in terms of relevance and understanding. This has been acknowledged by the Module Leaders and Course Team and changes made for the 2013 course. A Course Review meeting was held on 7th November and changes were agreed. The Course Planning Group met again on 7th January 2013 and broadly agreed the content for 2013 which incorporated many of the changes necessary.

The general arrangements at Bicton College were agreed to be good. These included transport, catering and accommodation. The relationship with Bicton College staff was good and the students made a special point of mentioning this in their feedback. Relationships and contact with students were not so strong. This is a pity as the course dates are planned to coincide with term dates when the College is operating in term-time mode. However it is difficult to “engineer” such contacts and there are age and cultural differences which make this difficult. However a very successful cultural evening was held with students. More contacts are planned with mature Foundation Degree students in future to offset the age difference factor.

It is clear from the feedback that the course was a success. However there were some problems in the delivery of the modules and the time pressures on students which need to be addressed. The Course Team has carefully considered the feedback and made a number of changes for 2013. However this will always be an intensive short course which will be demanding.

A number of people associated with the course regret the diminution of the cultural aspects of its predecessor, such as general farm visits and staying with Trustees at weekends. However this will always be a compromise and it will be a priority for students to gain their credits. The Trustees and staff of Bicton College should not lose sight of the fact that the delivery of this first accredited course was a success and the students gained a great deal from it.

(This report was compiled by Fred Harper and Mike Pash, February 2013)

Annex 1: Survey of the experiences and views of the participants on the BOAT Training Course 2012 on Institutional Management

Introduction

The Trustees of BOAT are very interested to have your thoughts and ideas on the Accredited Training Course, which you attended at Bicton College in the period April to May 2012. We are planning a similar course for 2013 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

Please indicate your views on the items below by marking a tick to the right of the statement when making your choice

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

➤ ***IT training and updates?***

Useful Not useful Not enough OK Too much (mark 2 boxes)

➤ ***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)

Living Conditions and General Aspects of the Programme

The quality of the hostel accommodation? Good OK Could have been better

Food and other catering? Good OK Could have been better

Transport? Good OK Could have been better

Contact with Bicton staff? Good OK Could have been better

Contact with Bicton students? Good OK Could have been better

Friendliness of Bicton staff and students? Good OK Could have been better

➤ **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?**

Institution:.....

Date

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

Annex 2 –Questionnaire – Survey of the participants 6 months after the course finished



Registered Charity Number: 1017527

BOAT Course on Institutional Management and Business Planning (International)

Feedback Questionnaire 6 months after the Course was completed

BOAT Trustees are in the process of reviewing the course delivered in 2012 and planning the next one. We value your feedback as part of the evidence for making changes or not. You completed a questionnaire on completion of the course which was helpful. We would now like to ask you to give us responses to the questions below now that you have had a chance to reflect on the course and perhaps put some of it into practice. Thank you for your help and we hope that you are well and enjoying your work.

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

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

3. Have you passed on any skills or knowledge, which you may have learnt from the course, to your colleagues?

4. If the answer to 3. is *Yes*, please specify the topics and methods of transmission.

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

6. Please make any other comments that you wish on the course and Ideas for the future.

7. What is your job title now?

Name:

Institution: **Date:**

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire and returning it to us.