

Bicton Overseas Agricultural Trust (BOAT)

in partnership with Bicton College and Plymouth University

A Report on the Accredited Short Course on Institutional Management and Business Planning (International)

held at

Bicton College, Devon, UK

10th April to 24th May 2013



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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 from 10th April to 24th May 2013. This was the seventh 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 - such as 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 course

BOAT is a registered charity which aims to provide high quality and appropriate training to enhance management skills of key personnel in developing countries involved in managing agricultural training institutes or rural development projects. 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. Many of the early courses which BOAT organised were orientated towards livestock and engineering skills. 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.

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 was 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

Sixteen potential candidates were considered by the Training and Development Sub Group of BOAT together with Bicton College staff. The candidates were identified from personal contacts of BOAT Trustees or former Trustees. Three nominations were received from the Charity Concern Universal. One of these was from Bangladesh and the other two were from Malawi. A further two students from Malawi were also offered places but their visa applications were refused. Four students were nominated by the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development of the Government of Tanzania; three were offered places. Applications were also received from Kulika Uganda, the Inter Christian Fellowship Evangelical Mission in Kenya and individuals.

The field was a strong one with some well-qualified candidates in suitable work positions. The details of the six who arrived for the course are summarised in Table 1 (page 5).

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

Table 1. The participants on the 2013 Course

Name	Age	Institution and Country	Qualifications	Position
Janeth C Bendera	33	Livestock Training Agency (LITA), Tanzania	BSc Agric. Educ. and Extension at Sokoine Agricultural University, and Diploma from Morogoro Teachers' College	Tutor, Livestock Training Agency (LITA), Buhuri Campus, Tanga, Tanzania
Blessings Kambombo	46	Concern Universal, Malawi	Dip. Agric. at Bunda College, BSc Agriculture at Bunda College, MSc Sustainable Agric. and Rural Dev. Univ. College, Dublin	Project Manager, Concern Universal, Msamala Sustainable Energy Project, Balaka, Malawi
William Erasto Moshi	37	Livestock Training Agency (LITA), Tanzania	BSc Animal Science, Sokoine Agricultural University	Farm Manager, Livestock Training Agency (LITA), Tengeru Campus, Arusha, Tanzania
Darlington Dawson Nkenwa	48	Livestock Training Agency (LITA), Tanzania	BSc Agric. and MSc Agric. at Sokoine Agricultural University	Acting Campus Director, Livestock Training Agency, Mdaba, Tanzania
Mark Phiri	37	Alpha Foods, Malawi	Cert. in Agric., Natural Resources College, Malawi, BA Project Management, Pebble University, USA	Manager of Poultry Learning Centre, Alpha Foods, Limbe, Malawi
Smorden Tomoka	37	Concern Universal, Malawi	BSc Agric., Bunda College, Malawi	Project Manager, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) projects, Dedza

Business management and planning

- Strategic and business planning
- Project management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Risk management
- The use of financial tools (budgeting, cash flow projections, profit and loss accounting, sensitivity analysis) through Case Studies of 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 again 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 Tanzania. The Tanzanian students gave presentations at this event. 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. 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 Thursday where students received their Certificates of Attendance and Pitman Training Certificates. They then left for London Heathrow and a return flight home.

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 and staff from Bicton College. The demands of the course, and in particular the assessment schedule, meant that there was limited time for other cultural events. However the students did have a weekend visit to London due to the generosity of Deborah Kearney and her family and Mike Pash, Course Manager. The students appreciated this very much.

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 nine 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 2013

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. The results are included below.

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

Was the course the right length for you? Yes: 5 No: 0 No response: 1

Was six trainees: Too many?: 0 Too few?: 4 About right?: 2

Was the course held at a convenient time
of the year for you? Yes: 6 No: 0

Were the travel arrangements between your
home country and the UK and between the airport and Bicton College satisfactory?
Yes: 6 No: 0

5.3 Specific aspects of the course

Balance between taught elements,
visits and weekend activities? Good: 2 OK: 3 Could be better: 1

The Bicton estate and its operation? Well understood: 4 Understood: 2 Not understood: 0

IT training and updates? Not enough: 2 Useful: 6 Not useful: 0
OK: 4 Too much: 0

Warden system and student
management? Well understood: 4 Understood: 2 Not understood: 0

The three Pitman Training
days: Useful: 6 Not useful: 0
Not enough: 1 OK: 4 Too much: 1

Visits to Kingston Maurward College,
agricultural shows and working farms? Useful: 6 Not useful: 0
Not enough: 0 OK: 6 Too much: 0

Feedback sessions and self study time:
Not enough: 3 Useful: 6 Not useful: 0
OK: 3 Too much: 0

Visits to Trustees and social events? Useful: 6 OK: 0 Not useful: 0
Not enough: 0 OK: 6 Too much: 0

5.4 Living conditions and general aspects of the programme

The quality of the hostel
accommodation? Good: 6 OK: 0 Could be better: 0

Food and other catering?	Good: 6	OK: 0	Could be better: 0
Transport?	Good: 6	OK: 0	Could be better: 0
Contact with Bicton staff?	Good: 5	OK: 1	Could be better: 0
Contact with Bicton students?	Good: 0	OK: 3	Could be better: 3
Friendliness of Bicton staff and students?	Good: 5	OK: 1	Could be better: 0

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 made:

Training needs analysis and curriculum delivery
IT programmes (spreadsheets) (x2)
Self study time (x2)
More time for doing exercises in IT training
More facilitation and interactive lectures than just lecturing
Inclusion of general project management
Marketing module to be combined with Module 2.

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

Project management (x4) with two comments specifically asking for Project Proposal Writing
All was covered
Business planning.

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

Nothing less - the programme was well-structured
All were important
All contents of the programme were important
One lecturer taking the whole day and the timetable leaving no room for study and assignments
None
Limit weekend visits to allow time for rest.

In response to the question: **Was the programme relevant to your post in your home country?** The following comments were made.

Very relevant and very useful to our campus as well as our country
Yes ! - Very relevant

Yes, quite relevant, practical and has immediate application

Yes, it is practical, relevant and enhances skills

Very relevant; this is why I had to apply. The programme will definitely have immediate practical application back home. It will benefit me as well as my organisation at large

Yes the course was relevant as we are dealing with managing institutions and within the institutions there are business and marketing issues.

In response to the request **Please provide explanations in relation to you decisions above where you feel that more detail would help** the following response were made:

In campuses, business is part of our source of income, so we would like more information/detail on business planning especially how to write project proposals

Application detail for visa application, such as course costs which are required on the application form.

Not applicable.

All three modules were useful and quite relevant to the objectives of our institution, regular updates are very important to cope with the challenges in the job market.

It has improved my knowledge and skills on leadership, management, decision making, planning campus businesses as well as my own projects.

I am no longer the same; the course will make a difference to my leadership and management skills. Keep up this good work of serving others to effectively manage rural development programmes. I was really touched during the Devon County Show when I saw the hard work demonstrated by BOAT Trustees in raising funds for the benefit of Africa including myself. It taught me a lesson to always work to serve others.

6. 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.

6.1 Travel arrangements including visas

- Communication is key
- Provide detailed course costs
- Ask for the right visa form (Student VafID)
- Clearly understand the guidelines
- Provide relevant supporting documents
 - Leave of absence
 - Pay slip
 - BOAT statements, invitations.

6.2 Base Room and Facilities, Accommodation and Catering

- Base room OK
- Provision of laptops - excellent idea
- Loss of documents on laptops
- Accommodation excellent
- Catering excellent.

6.3 Course Structure and Content

- Relevant
- Practical
- Pitman course - necessary

- Linked
- Timetable - intensive.

6.4 Course Assignments and Presentations

- Well organised
- Excellent support
- Enhanced understanding
- Testing creativity and thought processes
- Deadline overlap
- Inconsistent dates on deadlines.

6.5 Methods of Delivery

- Most effective
- Facilitation
- Study visits and shows.

6.6 Social Aspects

- Events excellent
- Weekend visits excellent
- Contacts with staff excellent
- Contact with students
 - Fair
 - Attributed to pressure
 - Time constraint.

6.7 Course Highlights

- Highly organised
- Excellent delivery
- Time management excellent
- Learning visits and shows
- Role play
- Inclusion of Pitman - added value
- Devon County Show (*the* Highlight) including JCB diggers
- Eden Project.

6.8 General Comments and Problem Areas

- General – relevant and practical
- Problems areas – structuring of the timetable
- Course Aims – significantly achieved
- Overall impression
 - Immediate application
 - Tailored to our needs
 - Enhanced effectiveness and performance.

6.9 Ideas and Improvements for the 2014 Course

- Re-arrange course delivery times e.g. Pitman and IT sessions at the beginning
- Sustain the course - valuable
- Marketing topic - move to Module 2

- Incorporate Project Management topic in Module 1
- More time on Leadership.

6.10 Conclusion

- Course objectives achieved
- Course quite practical and relevant
- Staff support and contacts - excellent
- Facilitation, learning tours and shows effective
- May require to re-arrange some topics
- May need to introduce Project Management
- Timetable could be revisited and improved.

7. 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 second year was Dr A Henworth 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.

Good attention to detail and care in application of marking criteria.

Robust internal moderation supported by consistency in the standards of assessment.

Appropriate forms of assessment – clearly focussed on the learning outcomes and the needs of students. This was recognised by the course team.

Assessments were designed to provide both formative and summative assessment.

Due to timing of the appointment as external examiner for this course, it was not possible to meet the students this year.

The modules are well designed and appropriate. The assessments provide appropriate challenges and meaningful learning experiences.

An appropriate variety of teaching and learning methods appeared to have been employed on the programme.

Formative and summative assessment should be consistently evaluative across the range of marks awarded. There was some evidence that high scoring students were given feedback which was rightly congratulatory, but could have provided more guidance on how the work could have been made even better.

The programme is running smoothly and in accordance with university regulations.

The threshold standards set for the modules examined are appropriate for modules at this level, in this subject.

Note: The External Examiner will be invited to meet the students during the short course in 2014.

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

8.1 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 feel that this is important in order to assess the usefulness of the course after the participants had returned to their organisations/institutions and had the opportunity to put into practice what they had learnt. A follow-up questionnaire (Annex 2) was sent to the participants by email in early January 2014. The responses have been summarised and the main points extracted for reporting here. Some of the responses were very lengthy and detailed. Whilst this is helpful it would result in a very lengthy report.

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

Response from Janeth Bendera, Tanzania:

- Improvements on how to communicate with other colleagues, how to make decisions, managing resources available and how to plan for the future development programmes

Response from Blessings Kambombo, Malawi:

- Significant changes in the way staff performance appraisal is conducted including encouragement to give feedback to appraisees
- Review of job descriptions and terms of reference
- Frequent communication with team members now employed which has led to improved delivery, job satisfaction and trust
- Improvement in leadership skills
- Implementation of improved business planning and marketing skills.

Response from William Moshi, Tanzania:

- As campus Farm Manager, I have contributed to the relative increase in farm total revenue. This was possible because of increased emphasis on and improvement of proper preparation of business plans, marketing plans and proper record keeping.

Response from Darlington Nkenwa, Tanzania:

- Farm records have improved
- A leave cycle of employees has been instituted
- The capacity for decision making has improved
- Improved management style
- Improvement in marketing of products and services.

Response from Mark Phiri, Malawi:

- Better time management
- The governance module helped in marketing the organisation and improving its image
- Design of posters and fliers for promotion purposes
- Promotion to Program Manager (since moved to another organisation).

Response for Smorden Tomoka:

- Improved personal effectiveness
- Greater use of spreadsheets to enable more efficient management of finances

- Improved financial ability and projects (this has come at the right time as I am now responsible for two high value projects - \$4.2 million and \$1 million)
- Improved communication and organisational skills
- Updating of risk register on a regular basis.
- Training programmes now informed by training needs analysis of staff.

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

Response from Janeth Bendera, Tanzania:

- Planning for more development programmes which will enable the campus to earn more money to help in running it
- Suggesting to the Campus Management on looking forward on training needs analysis for tutors and workers in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness of work, as well as students so that they can fit more in the field of work.

Response from Blessings Kambombo, Malawi:

- We intend to introduce sanitation marketing in the promotion of WASH
- We intend to train local entrepreneurs on business and marketing skills which will be integrated into the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach
- Institutional strengthening of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) using training needs assessment and SWOT analysis to enable the CBOs to become more effective, institutionally sustainable and economically viable.

Response from William Moshi, Tanzania:

- Use appropriate computer programs/software to manage production data as a means of tracking and visualisation of production trends.

Response from Darlington Nkenwa, Tanzania:

- To improve farm performance after acquiring seed money from donors
- To build human resource capacity through providing them with short course training.

Response from Mark Phiri, Malawi:

- Increase fundraising for my new organisation
- Ensure that one or two members of staff attend the BOAT course in future
- Establish my own institution in agriculture through training focussing on governance, agro-ecology and agribusiness.

Response from Smorden Tomoka, Malawi:

- To create markets for sanitation products amongst communities in order to enhance sustainable access
- Identify sanitation entrepreneurs who will be trained to further support communities with sanitation products (budget already earmarked)
- Push 360 degrees appraisal system in order to get rounded feedback on performance
- Link appraisal to our vision, mission and values to enable staff to remain focussed in attaining organisational objectives.

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

All respondents answered **Yes** to this question.

8.5 Specify the topics and methods of transmission

Response from Janeth Bendera, Tanzania:

- Computer skills on spreadsheets, through demonstration.

Response from Blessings Kambombo, Malawi:

- Sharing all course materials with staff and deposited CD with the Deputy Country Director in Blantyre as a repository for Concern Universal staff
- Shared significant part of course content and skills with my project staff and to some extent other partners
- Communication skills and personal effectiveness through short presentations
- Business planning through mentoring and actual development of project proposals
- Curriculum delivery through training needs assessment and design of training programmes for project staff, partners and communities
- Leadership and management skills through delegation and assigning specific and key tasks to relevant staff. Support staff have clear and well-articulated terms of reference to act when I am away travelling in Malawi or internationally or on annual leave.

Response from William Moshi, Tanzania:

- Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet application through individual coaching of students and tutors
- Leadership styles through farm production committee meetings, campus management meetings and the coaching/training of groups and individuals.

Response from Darlington Nkenwa, Tanzania:

- Self evaluation for staff if they are delivering quality training through staff meeting and discussion.

Response from Mark Phiri, Malawi:

- Workshop for staff on strategic planning, marketing and performance review through sharing reports
- Subject-specific training with staff on governance, marketing and business planning involving team building approach
- Conducted performance reviews with the Country Director of my new employer
- Developed training manuals for use by Environment Africa field staff on goat production, grain and tuber production and environmental advocacy. To date I have facilitated 12 organisational trainings, 3 national trainings and 3 regional workshops (Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa)

Response from Smorden Tomoka, Malawi:

- Shared report outlining the key lessons and a practical way forward by email across the organisation
- Shared lessons learnt with staff on leadership - I want to create leaders not followers
- Developed a sanitation marketing strategy with colleagues through orientation meetings and emails. My recent involvement with BOAT has unlocked further understanding of this topic which I will be piloting it with team members in selected villages in Dowa and Dedza.

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

Response from Janeth Bendera, Tanzania:

- Due to relevance and importance of the course, it could be better if more people could get a chance to attend such a course. If possible these courses can be conducted locally-organised by BOAT and campuses as it may enable many people to attend at a time.

Response from Blessings Kambombo, Malawi:

- Continued support to Concern Universal Malawi on staff development
- In-country short-term courses for Concern Universal Malawi and other development partners
- Resources support - some relevant books, equipment and learning materials
- BOAT should utilise its graduates/alumni on some key roles or assignments aimed at enhancing, promoting and supporting its work.

Response from William Moshi, Tanzania:

- Increasing the number of participants in this type of training
- Consider the possibility of local training such as that provided at LITA Tengeru in 2008 as this will not only increase the number of participants but also will relatively reduce the cost.

Response from Darlington Nkenwa, Tanzania:

- Animal feed processing plants for feed formulation and processing
- Training of our staff in management and business planning
- Short course on project proposal and management of projects.

Response from Mark Phiri, Malawi:

- Request for a short course with funding to be conducted by BOAT trustees in Malawi for Environment Africa and Progressio staff (subject unspecified - Editor)
- BOAT to have an affiliate institution in Malawi or somewhere in southern Africa. If conducted in Africa, a larger student base is attained then BOAT mission can be fulfilled.
- Lobby for funding to support BOAT training to increase the numbers which can attend the course in the UK.

Response from Smorden Tomoka, Malawi:

- Continue collaboration and enhancement of partnerships
- Exchange visit to appreciate what the delegates are putting in place
- Continue your charitable support to young and energetic African rural development professionals to further their skills and ability on management and business planning.

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

Responses from Janeth Bendera, Tanzania:

- One thing as a suggestion, whenever possible BOAT to send to Associates any new reference materials concerning the course e. g. Journals, newsletter to keep us up to date (I appreciated the newsletter sent by Richard Taylor, it was wonderful).

Response from Blessings Kambombo, Malawi:

- The course has accorded me long term opportunities and benefits through development of personal leadership, communication and personal effectiveness skills besides business planning skills among others
- I would encourage integration of project management, project proposals and impact assessment (including monitoring and evaluation) into curriculum as these are central for calibre of participants targeted for this course, though timing is another factor for consideration here
- Rationalise and streamline the course to ensure participants have some free time to relax and refresh particularly during the weekends.

Response from William Moshi, Tanzania:

- The possibility of increasing the course duration should be considered; this will give participants enough time for appreciation of course contents.

Response from Darlington Nkenwa, Tanzania:

- Duration of the course should be increased so that the student should have enough time to do assignments and revision
- BOAT should consider the competence of some of the instructors so that they can deliver training effectively
- Otherwise the course is helpful and enjoyable.

Response from Mark Phiri, Malawi:

- Utilise BOAT participants in facilitating trainings in the UK to enhance diversity and relevance to African context for application and practicability of scenarios, case studies, etc.
- BOAT should endeavour to have a recruiting agent so that the course is known in Malawi and Southern Africa through recruitment seminars or workshops.

Response from Smorden Tomoka, Malawi:

- Keep up the good work!
- The course is very relevant and practical
- I am now confidently taking up more responsibilities because of the course
- The skills amassed are necessary for me to lead, manage and motivate people to achieve results
- I am happy to learn that you are organising another course for 2014
- Funds permitting, it will be prudent to identify successful delegates from different cohorts whom you would invite to a round table session – this could be in the UK or elsewhere where appreciable progress is happening.

8.8 What is your job title now?

Janeth Bendera, Tanzania

Agricultural Tutor (also known to be studying for a Masters level course at Sokoine University of Agriculture)

Blessings Kambombo, Malawi

Project Manager, managing multiple projects (5 projects)

William Moshi, Tanzania	First year MSc student at Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania, in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology
Darlington Nkenwa, Tanzania	Director of Livestock Training Agency campus at Mdaba
Mark Phiri, Malawi	Development worker for Progressio UK attached to Environment Africa-Malawi as an Agro-ecology and Extension Adviser
Smorden Tomoka, Malawi	Project Manager for Concern Universal with extended scope, managing two projects in four districts, with increased funding and staffing levels. Recently entrusted to lead Concern Universal's Resource Mobilisation/Expansion Task Force

9. Conclusions

The 2013 Short Course on Institutional Management and Business Planning (International) was the second to be delivered in an accredited format. The six students who participated were all enthusiastic and successful in passing all of their assignments. The names of the students were mentioned for the first time in the programme for the Bicton College/Plymouth University Higher Education Awards Ceremony held in Budleigh Salterton Church. The Chairman read out the names at the Ceremony. The Certificates were posted in October.

Feedback from the course was obtained from a number of sources. Students completed a questionnaire immediately on completing the course and again some six to seven months after it finished. Feedback was also received from a presentation given by the students at the end of the course and from the External Examiner. The Course Team also met to review the implementation of the course.

Students gave very positive feedback on the course and found it practical and relevant to their needs. Many of them have implemented changes in their work as a result of their learning and have plans to do more in the future. In addition, they have passed on their knowledge and experience to their colleagues, which is very much in keeping with the philosophy of BOAT. Students generally felt that the course was the right length although some would have liked it to be longer to have more time to take in knowledge and complete assignments. They felt that it was held at the right time of year and that the travel and accommodation arrangements were good. Most aspects of the course were considered to be well understood and the balance of subjects was felt to be about right. Once again the three Pitman Training days were considered to be very useful. The BOAT students felt that the contact with Bicton students was OK or could be better. This has been a recurring theme despite efforts to improve matters. It is perhaps not surprising given the age and academic gaps between the groups.

The comments on what they would like to see more or less of in the course were interesting and have been taken on board by the Course Team. It was very pleasing to read the comments about the relevance of the course to the students' needs in their home jobs. The response was an overwhelming: *Yes*.

Comments from the External Examiner were positive. It is a pity that he was not able to meet students but he has been invited to come to Bicton College in 2014 when the students are there. The Examiner was happy with the standards achieved by students. He did suggest that more feedback should be given to students on how their work could be improved.

The feedback from students after six months was very encouraging. In many cases the responses were very detailed. They have all made some changes to their work and plan to do more in the future. They also made a number of suggestions on how BOAT might be able to help them as individuals and organisations in their countries in future. A number of them have changed jobs. Two of the Tanzanians returned to their LITA campuses for a short time but are now studying for a Masters level course at university. It is to be hoped that they will return to their posts in due course to continue implementing the benefits obtained from the course. The other Tanzanian is continuing his work as a Director of a LITA Campus. The two Concern Universal staff for Malawi have both assumed greater and wider responsibilities. The other Malawian has changed jobs but is still involved with training and extension work.

The Course Team has met on two occasions to review the operation of the course. Despite efforts to create more space in the timetable for private study and to work on assignments, the students still felt very pressured. This will be addressed again in the 2014 course. The assignments proved to be demanding but students learned a lot from them. This aspect of time pressure will not go away. As a six-week accredited short course attracting 30 level 5 credits, it will always be demanding on students. The Team should however continue to look at ways of improving this position. One possibility might be to ask students to do more work prior to joining the course.

Changes were made to the assignments in 2013 which were well-received. These changes mainly applied to the Modules in Business Management and Planning and Curriculum Management and Delivery. The team should continue to address this aspect of the course with due regard to the academic demands of the level of the course, the External Examiner's comments and students' comments.

The group seemed to work well together. The country spread was not so wide this year with only Malawi and Tanzania represented. In addition there was only one woman on the course. She did not seem to be disadvantaged by this but it would be good to have a better balance. Both of these aspects should be overcome to some extent in the group of nine students expected for the 2014 course.

The feedback received and the reviews undertaken demonstrate that the course in 2013 was a success. There are still some issues arising which need to be addressed. The Course Team is fully aware of these and is addressing them as far as is possible. A number of further changes have been made in the timetable and assignments for 2014.

It is important to recognise that a large number of people have contributed to the success and good experience of these students. These include Bicton staff and students and BOAT Trustees and Friends. In addition those who sponsor BOAT and host visits for students are major contributors to a successful outcome. BOAT thanks them all for their input, much of which is given freely.

(This report was compiled by Fred Harper and Mike Pash, February 2014)

Annex 1: Survey of the experiences and views of the participants on the BOAT Training Course 2013 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 2013. We are planning a similar course for 2014 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)

➤ **Feedback 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 2013 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.

FH/MP January 2014