

Raising the profile of African environmental research



**Report on a series of
innovative workshops
held in Uganda, Nigeria,
Kenya and Ghana**

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Report on a series of innovative workshops held in Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana in 2010





“The workshops really were an eye opener. They changed my perspective on writing research proposals to one which I can build on to aid my progress and development”

Workshop participant, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2010

Rationale behind the workshops

Environmental research is essential to policy-making for sustainable natural resource management and poverty reduction in Africa.

However there is a lack of capacity among African scientists for securing funding, conducting sound research and communicating research results to relevant stakeholders.

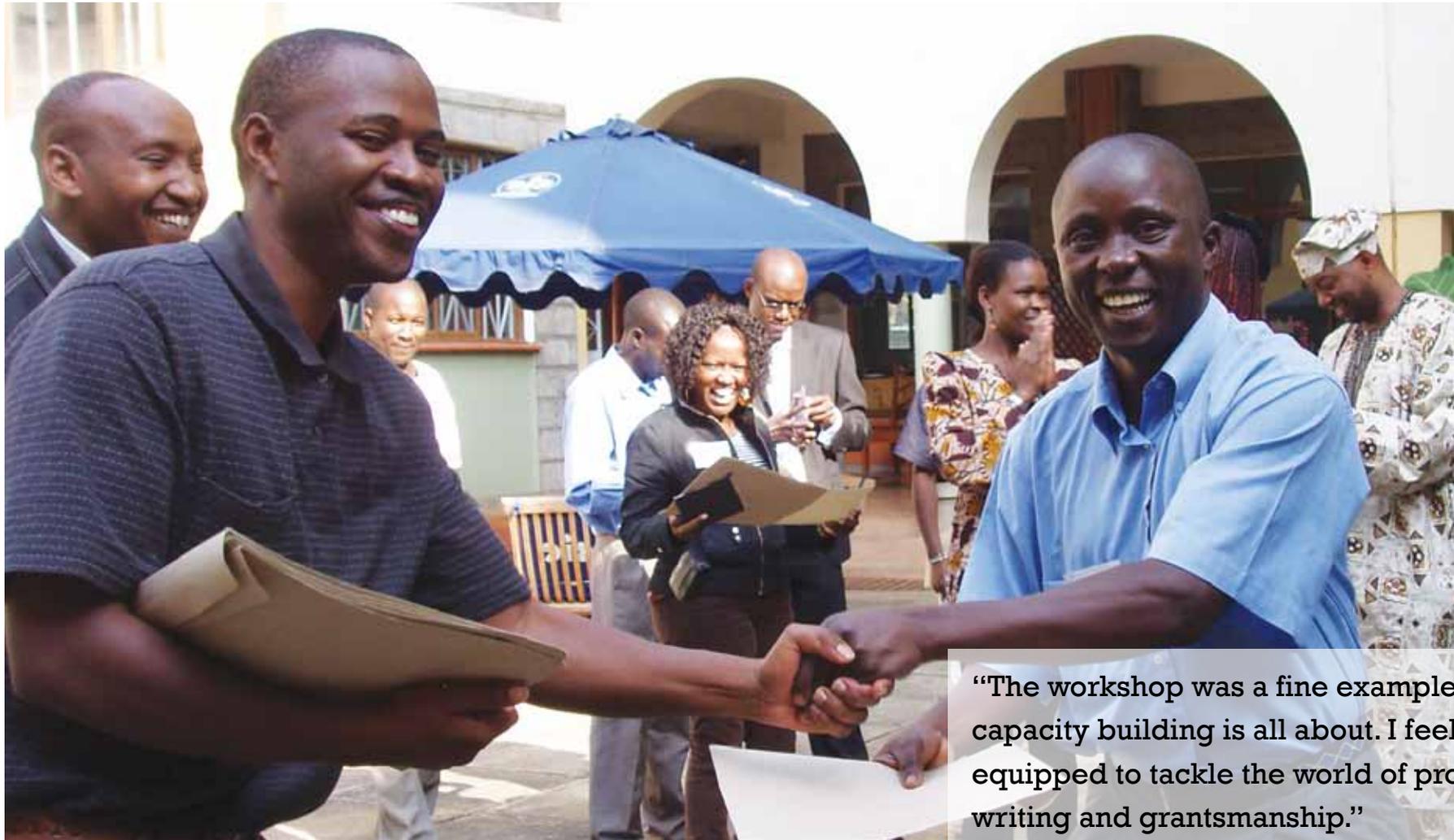
This has led to a disproportionately low publication output from African countries relative to the research being carried out. Consequently, African environmental scientists tend to experience a low international profile as their valuable research results cannot be accessed by the wider scientific community.

The undeservedly low profile of African research not only hinders the work of the wider scientific and conservation community in influencing policy

at national, regional and international levels, but also increases the likelihood that research will be duplicated and that resources will be wasted. It is vital that such research information is made available, and it is particularly important for demonstrating the value of natural resource management to people's livelihoods.

The workshops described here form part of our work to build skills in scientific research and communication among African scientists.

In 2010 the Tropical Biology Association trained 75 scientists from four African countries at a series of specially-designed workshops. This document reports on these workshops and gives an account of their impact.



“The workshop was a fine example of what capacity building is all about. I feel more equipped to tackle the world of proposal writing and grantsmanship.”

Workshop participant, Nairobi, Kenya, 2010

Who attended, what was learnt

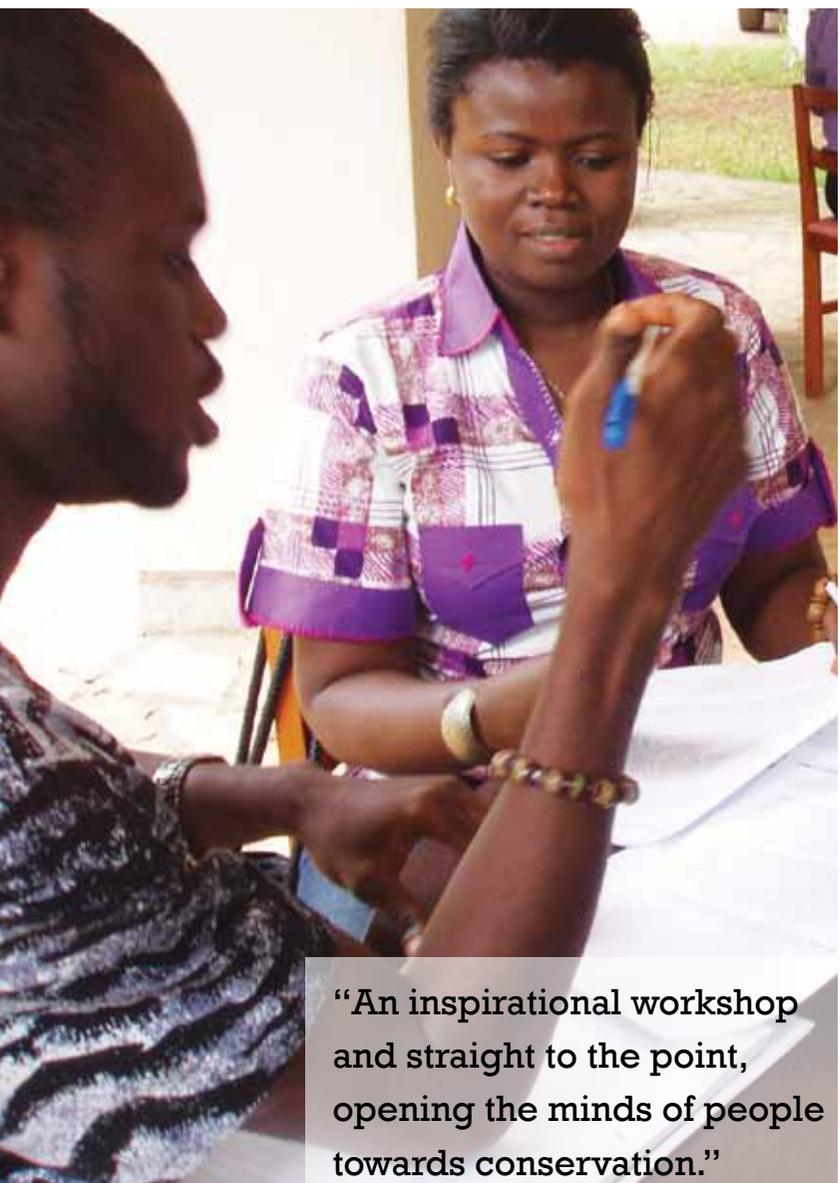
The scientists attending the workshops come from institutions responsible for research, policy, and sustainable natural resource management. The 2010 workshops were designed to build expertise in developing successful research proposals. In 2011 and 2012 further workshops will be held on the themes of communicating research results and designing quality research in the field.

Seventy-six research scientists attended the workshops, from 44 governmental and non-governmental institutions. Participants all rated their skills and knowledge as significantly improved after completing the workshops.

Teaching on the workshops was participative, involving practical exercises, discussions and feedback from instructors and peers. Delegates learned skills in proposal writing, fundraising, and interpreting

grant application forms. They received one-to-one guidance on the research proposals they brought to the workshop in order to develop them into successful funding applications. TBA provided resource materials from the workshops and the training manual *Fundraising Guidelines* to help delegates continue to apply the skills learned. The workshops received extremely positive comments on the quality of instruction and relevance of topics.

At the end of the workshops, delegates set personal targets of how they would apply their new expertise back at their institutions during the next 6 to 12 months. As well as developing new proposals, the targets included training colleagues at their home institutions. Achievement of those targets will be assessed on a regular basis as part of the continuing support from TBA.



“An inspirational workshop and straight to the point, opening the minds of people towards conservation.”

**Workshop participant,
Kampala, Uganda, 2010**

Workshop content

Report on 2010 workshops held in Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana

Part 1: Fundraising

Scientists are increasingly required by their institutions to fundraise to support priority research and conservation work. Through talks and practical exercises, this module taught essential skills of “how, when and where” to ask for money.

Part 2: Proposal writing

The module focused on writing research and conservation projects. After a talk on writing research proposals, delegates took part in a practical exercise looking at ways to respond to a funding call or announcement.

Part 3: Decoding the application form

Poor presentation of an application can defeat a good project. Participants were taught how to prepare and present budgets. The day’s teaching also included interpretation of

application forms including demystifying donor terminologies and the “logical frameworks” required by funders. While day two had covered conservation research proposals, this day focused on applied conservation projects.

Part 4: Identifying funding sources and setting targets

Delegates were taken through the various sources of project funding for which they could apply. They then learned how to identify relevant funders, and accessible grant funding opportunities were signposted. Other sources of funding were also discussed, including philanthropic donors and corporations. This was followed by a practical exercise on how to market one’s work in limited time. Delegates then took stock of lessons learned and set personal targets for the next six months.



Workshop follow-up

Ensuring workshops have maximum impact

TBA is committed to provide support to help delegates realise their targets. Delegates will all be enrolled in the TBA follow-up support programme through the TBA alumni desk in Nairobi.

Delegates were encouraged to send their proposals to TBA who will engage mentors to help review and improve them for submission. TBA emphasised that it has a wide network of experts who are willing to act as mentors and reinforced the importance of completing the entire mentorship process.

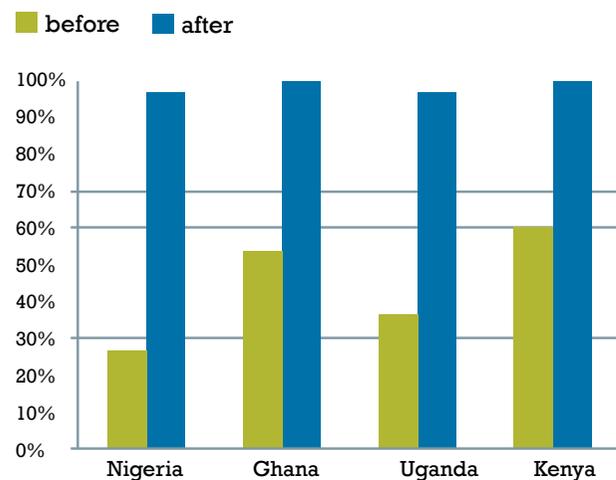


Workshop outputs and assessment

Delegates at the 2010 workshops had produced the following outputs by April 2011

Output from participants	Number
Corporate funding bids submitted	1
Organised seminars	2
PhD/MSc proposals developed	6
PhD/MSc scholarships applied for	4
Scientific papers written or published	3
Project or research proposals developed	32
Networked with others	10
Attended further training activities	3

Skills in scientific writing and publishing as assessed by participants before and after the workshops



Participants' knowledge typically increased by **54%** as a result of the workshops



Participant assessments

All feedback received from the scientists who attended the workshops was very positive and delegates left feeling that they were now able to overcome the barriers to proposal writing that they had previously identified. One participant, from Kampala, Uganda:

said: “The workshop came just in time when I needed it. It was such a well selected course for the group of participants.” Another said: “An inspirational workshop and straight to the point, opening the minds of people towards conservation.”

How participants assessed workshop quality and relevance

	Participants	Workshop score	Teaching score	Correct balance between talks and practicals	I am 'very likely' to apply what I learned
Nigeria	18	1.1	1.1	82%	100%
Ghana	22	1.1	1.2	100%	100%
Uganda	18	1.3	1.2	82%	94%
Kenya	22	1.2	1.2	89%	100%
Mean scores		1.18	1.18	88%	99%

Scores are on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'excellent'

Where the delegates came from

<p>Ghana 22 delegates from 14 institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council for Scientific and Industrial Research • Environment Protection Association of Ghana • International Water Management Institute • Kwame Nkurumah University of Science & Technology • Research Department of the Office of Parliament • University for Development Studies • Ghana Atomic Energy Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection Agency • Ghana Wildlife Society • Forestry Commission • Friends of the Nation • Institute of Professional Studies • University of Education • University of Ghana
<p>Kenya 18 delegates from 8 institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egerton University • International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology • Kenya Forest Research Institute • Kenya Wildlife Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenyatta University • Moi University • National Museums of Kenya • Nature Kenya
<p>Nigeria 18 delegates from 10 institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria • Ogun State's Ministry of Forestry • National Horticultural Research Institute • Nigerian Conservation Foundation • Nigerian Institute for Oceanography & Marine Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Benin • University of Ibadan • University of Lagos • Federal University of Technology • University of Ado
<p>Uganda 18 delegates from 12 institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makerere University Institute of Environment & Natural Resources, Dept Botany & Dept Zoology • National Fisheries Resources Research Institute • Local Government (Adjumani & Kabale Districts) • National Agricultural Research Organisation • Mbarara Zonal Agricultural Research & Development Institute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Rocha Uganda Initiative • Coalition for Crisis Prevention • Islamic University in Uganda • Kyambogo University • Mbarara University • University of Malawi • Oracle Consultancy

The workshops described in this report were the first year of a three year project.
The TBA's partners in this project are:



Zoology Department
and the Faculty of
Forestry and Nature
Conservation, Makerere
University, Uganda



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