

REACH 'LEARNING through ACTION'

Darlington Tuagben, pictured right, a Liberian student studying at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana, became the 1,000th person to receive hands-on training in the field as part of Earthwatch's thriving Capacity Building Programme.



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1,000. and counting.

EARTHWATCH REACHES HISTORIC LANDMARK

Darlington achieved this landmark in Earthwatch history when he joined the project *Cocoa Farming and Biodiversity in Ghana* in June 2007. This two-week Cadbury Schweppes-funded team run by Dr. Kwasi Ofori-Frimpong, is looking at ways to produce cocoa in a sustainable manner in the Fanteakwa district of Eastern Ghana. Darlington said the training had increased his confidence and taught him about proposal writing, communication, team working skills and research techniques.

He added: "Due to the unsustainable use of our environment, we are now faced with serious problems ranging from the depletion of our natural resources and the ozone layer, to global warming. I recommend that there be more than 1,000 new participants trained. I believe this will go a long way to reducing the problems we are facing today."

It was back in January 1995 that Dr. Berhanu Abraha Tsegay became one of the first people to benefit from the birth of the Earthwatch Capacity Building Programme, joining a team from Eastern Africa on the Earthwatch project *Kenya's Wild Forest* to conduct an intensive survey of the little-studied insect populations of the region. Dr. Tsegay recalls the

beautiful Kakamega forest and the great teamwork, adding: "As a botanist it was the jungle that impressed me most. I will never forget it." Dr. Tsegay is currently Associate Professor and Head of Research and Publications at Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia. He says: "Since the Earthwatch project I have developed a love for nature and am trying to contribute to the rehabilitation of vegetation in my home country. This year, my team has established a nursery on campus and produced more than 98,000 tree seedlings. We distributed them free to the local community to plant as part of the millennium celebrations."

With initial funding from the European Union, the Capacity Building Programme has gone from strength to strength, with a wide array of funding partners and an expanded portfolio of projects.

The programme is fast becoming a key mechanism for training the next generation of environmental scientists, primarily in Africa, but now also in Eastern Europe and Asia. Earthwatch is fielding more people than ever; since November 2006 more than 130 people have benefited from an Earthwatch training project and still more will go into the field before the end of the year.



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'I recommend that there be more than 1,000 new participants trained. I believe this will go a long way to reducing the problems we are facing today.'

Darlington Tuagben



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Earthwatch engages people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment. Through our programmes and partnerships we:

- engage people from diverse countries, cultures and organisations, inspiring them to take responsibility for the environment
- support objective scientific research which informs decisions on important environmental issues
- educate and motivate people to change their attitudes and behaviour

FROM THE EDITOR...

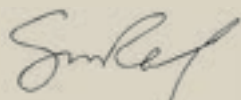
Welcome to the 11th edition of the annual Earthwatch Capacity Building Programme newsletter, REACH. Within this newsletter you will find details about some of the programme's initiatives and projects from 2006/07. The overall goal of our programme is to deliver focused training to people and institutions involved in conservation in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe – and in terms of numbers, 2007 was our most successful year to date.

Headlining this edition of REACH is the fantastic news that over the past 12 years Earthwatch has provided valuable training for more than 1,000 people. Alongside this we have an update about four new capacity building projects: the Mount Mulanje Ecological Survey in Malawi; West African Manatee Conservation; Ghana's Rock Fowl; and Mangroves of Sri Lanka.

We have also focused on one of our most well established regional initiatives, Earthwatch Samburu. This initiative, supported since 2003, has achieved remarkable results, and in 2007 another 14 participants benefited from the knowledge of our project scientists and staff.

We would like to thank all of our scientists, project staff, partners, funders and our inspiring alumni network who have shown generous support over the past 12 years.

We ask you to continue your support and remain in touch with us at alumni@earthwatch.org.uk as we look at new and more effective ways of training the next generation of conservationists, policy-makers and decision-makers for the future.



Simon Reid,
Capacity Building Programme Officer



Samburu

AT THE HEART OF HANDS-ON TRAINING

Fourteen African participants from eight different countries converged in Kenya in 2007 for valuable training in conservation field work. The two teams visited the Earthwatch Samburu regional initiative for two weeks in March and May, where they were involved in a variety of research tasks supervised by Dr. Nick Oguge, Dr. Donald Ogwen, Dr. Paul Muoria and their field staff.

One of those taking part in the training was Tina Hailu, who works as an office assistant in the Earthwatch Nairobi office helping Earthwatch Samburu field director Dr. Nick Oguge. Tina said: "My expectations of having fun and gaining hands-on experience and insight into conservation related field work were both well exceeded. I was also able to learn the value of Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques to improve scientific data collection."

The teams divided their time between two distinct research projects – *Wildlife Habitats* in Wamba, which aims to identify critical habitat sites for key wildlife species and assess the role of protected areas, and *Grevy's Zebras on Community Lands* in Lewa, which is monitoring declining numbers of the endangered Grevy's zebra. Participants were offered the opportunity to explore possible future international collaborations between their respective organisations.

'Working with scientists from different African countries with vast experiences in the field was priceless.'

Andrew Kataya

Moses Kaoma, a wildlife police officer with Zambia Wildlife Authority, said: "The group comprised of different cultures and different work experiences and that gave us the opportunity to learn from each other."

Andrew Kataya, a parks and wildlife assistant with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife in Malawi who gained new skills using GIS systems for data collection and recording, added: "Working with scientists from different African countries with vast experiences in the field was priceless, and it was interesting to see how the Samburu live in harmony with wild animals."

Earthwatch Samburu Programme Manager, Tania Taranovski, said: "The Capacity Building Programme brings together people facing similar conservation challenges, to better learn from each other how to tackle these difficult issues."

The 2007 training programme in Samburu was sponsored by Rio Tinto plc.



Capacity Building participants talk to a member of the Samburu community



Participants back at camp, analysing data collected from the field



After the work is done, participants enjoy a game of football with a local high school team

IN profile

THE PARTICIPANT



Martin Yelibora from Ghana is one of the newest additions to Earthwatch's extended family. He recently secured a position as Research and Project Coordinator for all Earthwatch-related activities with one of our key partners, the National Conservation Research Centre (NCRC). To help him prepare for this position, he visited Earthwatch's *Samburu* initiative in Kenya in March 2007.

Following a degree in Natural Resource Management, Martin worked for the Ghana Wildlife division of the Forestry Commission before taking up his position with the NCRC. However, his love of wildlife started long ago: "From childhood memories I was always found either on the football field or in the wild forest during my spare time. I just loved being adventurous."

After successfully fielding six Earthwatch teams in Ghana Martin says: "My advice to anyone going on an Earthwatch project is to take the briefing document seriously; you may be going into a new environment and there is the need to be extra tolerant; learn as much as possible because it will always be memorable and helpful later."

THE PROJECT SCIENTIST

David Nangoma is lead scientist on the Earthwatch project *Mount Mulanje Ecological Survey*, as well as a biodiversity, conservation, and monitoring officer for the Mount Mulanje Conservation Trust (MMCT).

In 2007, capacity building participants joined David in collecting scientific data to help protect and conserve the Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve.

David's love for conservation grew from his childhood in Tanzania's Serengeti game park. This link with nature eventually led him to study Plant Taxonomy at Reading University in the UK.

Before starting his own project, David participated on another Earthwatch project, *Zebras, Giraffes and Rhinos of the Savannah* in South Africa, an experience which shaped his ability to host teams of diverse individuals.

He said: "From the success of these teams we are showing that with generous sponsorship and the hard work of Earthwatch scientists and support staff, we are positively enhancing the capacity for effective conservation in Africa, Asia and Europe."

MOUNT MULANJE ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

Based in Malawi, this BAT Biodiversity Partnership funded project is led by scientist David Nangoma (see "In profile"). Four teams visited the project in 2007 to build a picture of the ecological health status of Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve to inform future management decisions. Pressures from human populations are impacting on the mountain's ecology.

GHANA'S ROCK FOWL

This project's first participants in September 2007 studied the elusive white-necked rock fowl (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*), a species which until its reappearance in 2003 had not been seen since the 1960s. Run by Patrick Adjewodah from Ghana, and supported by Newmont Ghana Gold Ltd, the project will estimate the population of this vulnerable species in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana.

Four exciting new projects in 2007/08 are giving enthusiastic participants the chance to train in diverse areas of conservation

Pastures new

WEST AFRICAN MANATEE CONSERVATION

Beginning in early 2008, the fourth new Earthwatch project run by chief scientist Patrick Ofori-Danson from Ghana, involves the conservation of manatees in the Afram arm of the Volta Lake in eastern Ghana. Caryn Self-Sullivan, an advisor to the project, said: "It will provide an opportunity not only to start a conservation research project on the insular population of manatees trapped behind the Akosombo Dam, but also to forge a network of young conservation scientists who share a passion for protecting manatees across West Africa."

MANGROVES OF SRI LANKA

In response to the 2004 tsunami, Earthwatch and the Zurich Community Trust established a three-year programme to restore mangrove species at three sites across Sri Lanka. The first team fielded in May 2007, bringing together participants from Sri Lanka and Zurich employees from Australia, UK and Canada. A second team was comprised of Sri Lankan botany students.

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profile of a Partner NGO

TANZANIA NATIONAL PARKS (TANAPA)

- TANAPA is a conservation organisation operating in 14 parks throughout Tanzania whose goal is to preserve the country's rich natural heritage in its pristine condition.
- It is committed to creating a first-class but low-impact ecotourism destination.
- The existing park system protects a number of internationally recognised bastions of biodiversity and World Heritage sites.
- It has worked in partnership with Earthwatch since 2003, when the first of five TANAPA staff members joined an Earthwatch project. The most recent participant, David Banga, said: "The skills I acquired have enhanced my ability in the workplace. I will share them with my colleagues in TANAPA."
- TANAPA is Earthwatch's principal new partner in a Darwin Initiative funded series of projects to study the ecology of the soda lakes of the Rift Valley. For almost two decades Dr. David Harper from the University of Leicester has led volunteer research teams to many different lakes in Kenya. This year for the first time teams will visit lakes in Tanzania to better understand soda lake ecology, as well as the migration and breeding patterns of the iconic lesser flamingo. Some of the lakes, including Lake Manyara, are located in national parks managed by TANAPA.

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Fourteen participants from as far afield as Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Armenia joined lead scientists Natallia Zeliankevich and Dr. Dmitry Grumo on the Earthwatch project *Belarus Wetlands* on two separate teams in June and July 2007.

The unique training courses, totalling four during 2006 and 2007, unite the survey of geobotanical conditions in oligotrophic peat bogs in the north of Belarus with classroom sessions introducing sustainable development, effective delivery of environmental education, and guidance on writing successful funding bids for environmental projects.

The training programme has come about as a result of a highly cooperative partnership between Earthwatch and the Field Studies Council, with funding from the UK Government's Partners for Environmental Cooperation in Europe (PECE) and the BAT Biodiversity Partnership.



'I am going to use the skills and knowledge I have gained for organising and leading new projects related to sustainable development and biodiversity conservation education...'

Natalya Akinshina, team 2, 2007



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Please note: Capacity Building Manager Sarah Staunton-Lamb is on maternity leave from September 2007 to June 2008 and will be replaced by Nicole Yde-Poulsen in the interim.

www.earthwatch.org/europe/capacitybuilding.html

Earthwatch is an international environmental organisation which promotes the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment. We are committed to conserving the diversity and integrity of life on earth to meet the needs of current and future generations.

Earthwatch Institute (Europe) is the European affiliate of Earthwatch Institute, which is based in the USA and was founded in Boston in 1971. Other affiliate offices in the Earthwatch Institute network are based in Australia and Japan. Earthwatch Institute (Europe) is the working name for Conservation Education & Research Trust (CERT), a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (number: 4373313) and a registered charity (number: 1094467).