

Capacity for Conservation & Resource Management event-planning and projects support

Kenya, FFI East Africa Office, Riara road, Nairobi from 15/04/2015 to 14/10/2015

Funded by: Conservation Leadership Program & Fondation Segre

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Executive summary

The internship was aimed at developing my conservation capacity through on-the-job training at FFI East Africa, and through exposure to a partnership network. I was tasked to provide logistical support in the planning of a large, regional capacity building conference involving a number of key partners based across Africa and internationally. With the supervision of FFI staff, we were able to host the conference successfully as we managed to compile and send out an information pack and short biographies to the participants before they travelled to Nairobi. I also provided support in office administration to help with management of conservation projects. This resulted in updating of all office files and smooth running of the day to day activities.

Introduction

Capacity building for conservation is important as it equips environmental practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out conservation work. It also informs decision makers on the best possible practices so as to achieve the best results. It is therefore critical that environmental practitioners at all levels get some capacity building.

Aim and objectives

This goal of this internship was to develop my conservation capacity through on-the-job training at FFI East Africa, and through exposure to a partnership network. My main objective was to provide support in planning an international conference on 'Building Capacity for Conservation & Resource Management in Africa' and a CEPF Learning Exchange held in Nairobi,

Kenya from 26th to 30th July, 2015. I also provided general office support to the FFI East Africa Office in Nairobi in projects management and assisted in general office administration.

Activities and methodology

Some of the major activities during the internship include; compiling short biographies of the CEPF grantees. From their resumes and biographies I was able to capture the key descriptions of the person and compiled the information into a handout. I compiled an information pack for the CEPF grantees on what to expect in Nairobi and the CEPF learning exchange. I also provided support to the Africa organizing committee of the capacity building conference. This was through researching contacts of potential sponsors, sourcing and costing of entertainment options for the opening dinner and researching media contacts for marketing of the conference. In addition, I also helped in the sourcing and selection of the transport option for the field trip after the conference (31st July 2015).

I got a chance to be the acting finance officer for the week of 25 – 30th May 2015 whereby I made the weekly payments for the office. I also did general office management of ensuring all files were up to date and ensured that office supplies were stocked in time. Additionally, I reviewed some proposals for the Rufford grants. Using a guide I was able to identify whether a proposal had met the set requirements for funding.

Output and results

With the supervision of FFI staff, we produced a CEPF grantees handouts with their short biographies which we circulated to the grantees before their arrival Kenya. We also compiled and sent out detailed information packs to the CEPF grantees. These ensured that the grantees had all the necessary information about their destination (Nairobi) and about the CEPF learning exchange. As the acting finance officer I ensured all payments were made and the financial records updated. This resulted in the smooth running of the office. I updated all the office files resulting in improved accessibility to content and material. Through the proposal reviews, I helped the Rufford grants panel in their decision making process.

Achievements and impacts

Given the fact that the internship was aimed at providing support to the planning of a conference, the impact was short term. Through a coordinated effort, we were able to host the capacity building conference successfully as planned. All the service providers did an impeccable job and there were no mishaps. The CEPF grantees had a fruitful networking session as they were freely and constantly engaging one another throughout the conference. This was a good sign as it demonstrated exchange of ideas and knowledge sharing for conservation.

The greatest impact of this internship was on me as I have gained invaluable personal and professional skills. Through my interactions I have gained skills in negotiating, critical thinking, networking, financial management and office management. I have also sharpened my communication and interpersonal skills.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I found the internship to be very helpful as it gave me a reality of conservation. The interaction with the various stakeholders in the last six months has made me see the value of good communication. The capacity building conference further emphasized the value of an informed society, from the decision makers, implementers all through to the community level. The networking event at Montpellier was a necessary part of the programme as it gave me a global perspective of conservation. Such exposure and interactions is good as it stimulates people to seek global solutions to local problems. These kinds of opportunities should be availed to more African youth so that we can realize that Africa too has solutions. We will realize that if we focus on the important issues, we have the resources needed to be a highly developed continent.

Acknowledgements

The internship would not have been a success were it not for the help of the following great people. Richard Lamprey, Josephine Nzilani and Patrick Lelei gave me the best welcome, were always there to lend a helping hand, and for that I am very grateful. A special thank you goes to Stuart Paterson and Amy Duthie for their tireless assistance. A special thank you also goes to

Richard Rono and Gideon Bett, both of East Africa Wild Life Society, for the good networks they provided me with.