

EMPOWERING YOUNG SCIENTISTS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACTS RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE, CAMEROON AND UK COLLABORATION

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Cameroon Association of Young Scientists (CAMAYS) supports mutually beneficial networks between young scientists in different parts of Cameroon and abroad, promotes collaborative research geared towards poverty alleviation and aims to bring scientific debate out of the lecture halls into new arenas. By setting up school science programmes (e.g. school laboratory, science summer camps, science outreach, workshops, field trips, competitions/awards etc.) for youngsters CAMAYS aims to identify and nurture talent from a very young age, designed to awaken their interest in scientific topics at an early age. CAMAYS' key objective is to provide training in new information technology and opportunities for the sharing of scientific resources and ideas, and to support research or mobility of young scientists through source funding.

CHALLENGES

Science in Cameroon faces a range of challenges including the availability of relevant data and the uncertainty attached to that data for a particular use, the accessibility of funding for research infrastructure and the extent of the skill base.

Although the UK partner does face problems related to availability of data and funding, against the background of the local conditions in Cameroon young scientists face important challenges in these areas which will affect the nature and quality of their work.

At the same time there is a high demand for sound scientific information to inform policy decisions in relation to the important issues that have to be addressed by Cameroon like poverty alleviation and the impact of climate change.

For Cameroon to face these challenges it is important to have a strong, active, and internationally respected and well connected scientific community, which encourages and supports the development of young scientists to a high standard nationally. The collaboration between CAMAYS and Macaulay Institute aims to encourage and empower young scientists to overcome these challenges.

The Macaulay Institute undertakes research, in the context of rural land use and resource management, with the objective of assessing the environmental, economic and social impacts of land use, and the consequences of changes resulting from factors and influences such as policy, management, climate and pollution. It also has a long history of coordinating research projects, developing decision support tools to aid the formulation of land use policy and natural resource management.



JOINT ACTIVITIES OF CAMAYS & MACAULAY INSTITUTE: MEETINGS SUPPORTED BY THE BRITISH COUNCIL, YAOUNDE

- The role of Science in poverty alleviation (2004)
- Land use and climate change (2005)
- Uncertainty in climate change (2006)
- Inauguration of the Cameroon Ecological Society (CES, 2006)

CAPACITY BUILDING IN CAMEROON AND UK

In Cameroon data collection is well established and in particular the process of collecting information through the use of GPS by members of local communities is something that the UK can learn from. Collected data are given added value through analysis and modelling, both of which are not as well developed as the data collection in Cameroon. The collaboration allows opportunity for both partners to gain through sharing knowledge and experience in these areas.

Many of the challenges faced by Cameroon can not be addressed by one scientific discipline; the joint meetings have invariably been multidisciplinary, and the joint meetings have explored a number of different ways of participants' interaction which have been successful in engaging participants more actively in meetings and encourage the adoption of integrated approaches to science.



NETWORKING

The opportunity of networking for young scientist is important because it gives them a chance to share ideas, knowledge and experiences as well as gaining confidence in presenting their work and work in a multi-disciplinary context.

At the same time the events have proven a good platform for debate on important issues that will support the efforts on development and poverty alleviation.

In general the joint activities aim to broaden and strengthen the scientific base in Cameroon and build capacity among young scientists to support and inform policy in development and sustainable resource management.

