

Zoo Biology Training Working Group

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This working group met to continue the discussion started at the 2003 CBSG meeting on how CBSG could act as a catalyst for facilitating professional development and training in zoo biology for zoos/aquariums in regions with little access to such programs. The group discussion began by reviewing the work done in 2003. That preliminary work focused on necessary tasks that needed to be addressed such as the processes for identifying regional training needs, identifying sources of trainers and developing the strategy for coordination of training efforts. The focus of the project changed this year as the work progressed.

At last year's meeting, the group decided that CBSG would be an appropriate organization to coordinate zoo biology training programs:

- CBSG has an extensive network that includes experts with specialties in wide-ranging skills from population management to landscape assessment. Experts have been instrumental in offering training for single workshop assessments (CAMPs and PHVAs).
- CBSG can be the catalyst for training in-country people who ultimately are the ones responsible for conservation in their own country (e.g., helping zoo professionals develop and enhance their skills to improve animal management and zoo based conservation programs that can indirectly affect biodiversity).
- CBSG and its regional offices have conducted a wide variety of training courses including training in population management, studbooks, husbandry, veterinary care and population risk assessment that have begun to have local community impacts.
- CBSG can be influential and effective at facilitating technology transfer. This is a major contribution that could theoretically occur without a major cost (personnel or financial) to the organization itself. This can occur largely because the zoo network already employs many potential trainers.

The training approach would be as follows:

- Use CBSG and its regional networks as primary point centers to identify target audiences for training (along with regional zoo associations where appropriate).
- Generate a database of past and existing training programs and identify successes, failures and gaps.
- Generate a database of people in the network that would be willing to be part of the capacity building activities (have support from their own institution).

- Tools and concepts explained through different levels would include conceptual as well as follow-up practical experience and mentoring.
- Tools and concepts would be explained through multiple languages.
- Tools and concepts would be taught to local trainers who can train others in their region.
- A monitoring function would ensure that capacity building is successful through evaluation and follow-up.
- Improved communication and formalized system would be developed for linking those regions with a training need with training teams.

This year, the main issue began as follows: There are different kinds of zoo biology training needs in different regions of the world. How can CBSG act to facilitate this training process? Three goals were determined:

1. Identify needs in terms of what (topics) and where (within region) and develop a database.
2. Identify strategy for training to meet these needs. Find out what had worked in the past, what didn't work. Develop a list of those willing to contribute to the training. Have a training summit to create a strategy to implement the plan.
3. CBSG would act to help link potential trainers to the people that need the training.

Kathy, as a CBSG facilitator had been approached by various regional CBSG conveners concerning the need for training in various zoo biology disciplines for zoos in their region. She stated that there were different levels of training needed in different regions. In South Asia there was an interest in basic training: animal husbandry, nutrition, records-keeping, animal welfare. Some zoos in India were ready for a more advanced level in topics concerning population management. In Indonesia and Southeast Asia, there was a need for population management training. In China, although there are no ISIS members, they are maintaining studbooks and are following population management practices, but need advanced training in population management tools such as PM2000. The Chinese want 1-2 people to be trained intensively, possibly in the US for population management, at ISIS for records management and to attend an SSP masterplanning meeting. They can then become the trainers for their region. In Meso - America basic husbandry and animal welfare training is needed.

Regional differences were discussed along with the need to respect cultural as well as managerial styles differences. Sally stated that in India, training from the outside may work better in field biology. Zoo people may be open to only certain avenues of outside assistance. It is common for retired zoo directors to do training. It would be possible to have a team to come over and refresh the knowledge of zoo directors who can then assist in training in their region. A big problem is turnover in staff. Kathy stated that many people that work in zoos in India come from Forestry departments. If preliminary training could be done for forestry staff, this would help them advance to a zoo career. In order to have someone outside the zoo to offer training, it needs to be done with sensitivity to the culture of that country in mind.

Yolanda reported that for AMACZOA institutions (Meso-american and Caribbean Zoo/Aquarium Association) there has been a training program in place for about 14 years that is directed at different levels in the zoo - keepers, curators, educators, directors. Also there is training available in such areas as strategic planning and marketing. AMACZOA is now trying to establish a program with CBSG and is working on extending a proposal for funding. A 5-year program is wanted. The training areas would include reproduction, nutrition, animal welfare, can add education. Everything is ready to establish a program.

Karin reported that AZA (American Zoo/Aquarium Association) has a whole series of training courses through the AZA Professionals Schools. These courses include Institutional Records-Keeping, Population Management, Conservation Education, Management (Career Development and Organizational Development), Animal Keeping, Elephant Management, Institutional Collection Planning, etc. The courses are taught at a specific site and the students travel to the school for class. There is now a Master's degree program in zoo management through G. M. University that can be attained through completion of the required number of courses.

Sue reported that her interest in CBSG-facilitated training was in relation to the upcoming process of developing training for Zoo Information Management Service. How could CBSG be involved in training for ZIMS? She was on a fact finding mission to find out about regional perspectives for training. She said that there will be a meeting in December 04 to come up with a training strategy for ZIMS. ZIMS will come out in 18 months to 2 years. It is imperative to start developing material for how to roll out training. There would be a need for training for the whole body of ZIMS with initial prioritization for records and data management. Training would be needed for the basic skills of records-keeping.

Sue suggested that facilitating training would be a very large job. A training coordinator may be needed if CBSG was to effectively facilitate training. Sally suggested that perhaps this would be an effort more appropriate for WAZA to undertake. WAZA has funds for training already. Sue suggested CBSG could assist by researching needs but proposed that if there was to be a drive towards facilitating professional training, perhaps the project would better fall under the umbrella of WAZA.

The working group came to a consensus that the goals for CBSG-facilitated training should begin with a more narrow focus to ensure that the project was not too expansive to accomplish.

In order to help promote effective training, CBSG will compile databases of needs and training programs. This will help facilitate communication between those that are in need and those that can provide that training. A third database will be developed to identify funding sources. Some funding sources mentioned were AZA Training Awards, grants from British Council, GEF, UNEP & CIRCC.

NOW : CBSG GOALS FOR FACILITATING ZOO BIOLOGY TRAINING:

1. Compile a needs database (what types of training are needed in various regions of the world).
2. Compile a listing of current training programs and opportunities.
3. Compile a list of funding sources available for training opportunities.
4. Make all three listings accessible (distribute).

ACTION PLAN:

To compile the needs and training program databases, the regional CBSG conveners will be contacted to approach zoo associations in their region. Zoo associations that do not fall within a region with a CBSG office will be contacted directly. A survey will be developed to collect the information. Kathy will send a draft of the survey to members of this working group for comment, then send it on to the CBSG conveners and regional zoo association offices. A plan for collecting funding information was not specifically discussed at this session but will be developed as results from the initial survey are collected. This survey will be developed by the end of 2004 for distribution early in 2005.

Specific assignments:

Kathy- Chinese zoos and associations (AZG), Japan – contact Hiroshi Hori of CBSG Japan, go to regional zoo association and other appropriate contacts. Indonesia – contact Jansen Manansang at CBSG Indonesia. Jansen can contact SEAZA. Mongolia –Kathy can check with Evan Blumer who has direct contact with those in Mongolia. Europe – contact Bengt Holst at CBSG Europe.

Sally - Approach South Asian institutions (Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka) through SAZARC as its Director. Approach Indian Zoos through their association (IZDA), Central Zoo Authority of India and SAZARC

Yolanda - Coordinate contacts for CBSG Mesoamerica, Contact Patrícia Medici – CBSG Brasil, Contact Amy Comacho at CBSG Mexico

In general the survey will be distributed through CBSG regional conveners to approach regional zoo associations. Kathy will develop the draft surveys. The needs survey will request the following information:

- Region and/or institution
- Topics requested with priority ratings for each (high, medium, low)
- Language
- Contact information
- Scope
- Request for on-site or external location

For the training program survey: • Timeframe (current, past, future) • Frequency of offering – schedule for program • Region available • Topics offered (agenda) • Location of program • Cost • Language • Target audience

Zoos and aquariums make significant contributions to global conservation efforts through education, propagation of protected species, participation in conservation management programs, collaborative efforts in *ex situ* and *in situ* research and other areas of wildlife management. CBSG is in a position to be able to assist collaborative efforts by facilitating zoo biology training in regions of the world that need assistance. This coordination would entail identifying gaps in training, and linking those that need assistance with those that can provide the professional development programs.