

A network of ICRA alumni in Ghana

'Coming from a traditional research background, I had a niggling feeling that what I was doing in the field was kind of hit and run', remembers Joyce Bruce, a researcher at the Nyankpala Animal Research Institute in Ghana. 'The ICRA programme showed me a range of participatory research tools and gave me the confidence to use different methods. And my ability to compromise and search for common ground has been greatly strengthened.'

'I became a much better listener and teamwork manager following ICRA training in group dynamics', adds Naaminong Karbo, who heads the Nyankpala station. 'Since ICRA, we have put smallholder farmers much more in the driving seat and have introduced working groups consisting of many different stakeholders.'

As the numbers of ICRA alumni increase, their multiplier effect also increases. Joyce and Naaminong have been involved in forming a network of alumni who will work together to create a greater voice for change in Ghana.

The ICRA training course has helped in other ways too. 'We have seen an increase in the amount of contract research coming our way and this is vital for the survival of the institute, since government funding has decreased by a third in recent years and we have to make up the deficit', says Joyce. 'We are now being recognised as a team that does good work and delivers on time. Our ICRA experience has helped us work efficiently and our project proposals are usually successful in securing funding.'