

REPORT ON THE THIRD GLOBAL COURSE OF THE EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION TRAINING INITIATIVE

ONSITE PHASE | SERENGETI, TANZANIA

COORDINATED BY:

Effective Conservation
TRAINING INITIATIVE



FRANKFURT
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

SUPPORTED BY:

OAK
FOUNDATION



2025

PHOTOGRAPHY: RAFA ABUÍN

Executive Summary

The **Effective Conservation Training Initiative** (ECTI) aims to increase the amount of conservation leaders who are able to manage complex programs and multidisciplinary teams in landscapes of global significance.

This report analyzes results of ECTI's third global course for young conservation leaders from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Australia.

During the initial online phase, participants spent four months reading and discussing the conservation manual, 'Effective Conservation: Parks, Rewilding and Local Development'. This was followed by an on-site phase in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania – one of the world's most iconic parks with a rich history of conservation initiatives and challenges.

Twenty participants from eight organizations and ten countries interacted with experts in team management and senior conservationists from different continents, as well as the FZS team in Serengeti. Together, they discussed the myriad interpersonal and organizational issues related to the management of conservation teams and programs.

Results from a survey carried out after the onsite phase show high levels of satisfaction regarding the online phase, choice and performance by speakers and trainers, overall design of the two first phases, the choice of Serengeti National Park for the onsite phase, logistics and general working environment and energy.



General Context

The **Effective Conservation Training Initiative (ECTI)** was started in 2023 by four leading conservation organizations (Frankfurt Zoological Society, African Parks, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, and Rewilding Argentina) who identified a clear shortage of professionals with the experience, personality, skills and knowledge to lead complex programs and multidisciplinary teams that deliver clear conservation outcomes.

This lack of experienced and effective team leaders is so severe that it becomes a major bottleneck for some organizations to scale up their conservation actions. In parallel, most academic training programs for conservationists are run and taught by professionals with great theoretical knowledge but little experience in the actual management of conservation programs and organizations.

Here, we present the results of a survey conducted after our fourth course. This course followed two global courses in English language, each with an on-site phase conducted in African parks in 2023 and 2024. In 2025 there was also a course for South American conservationists in Spanish language.

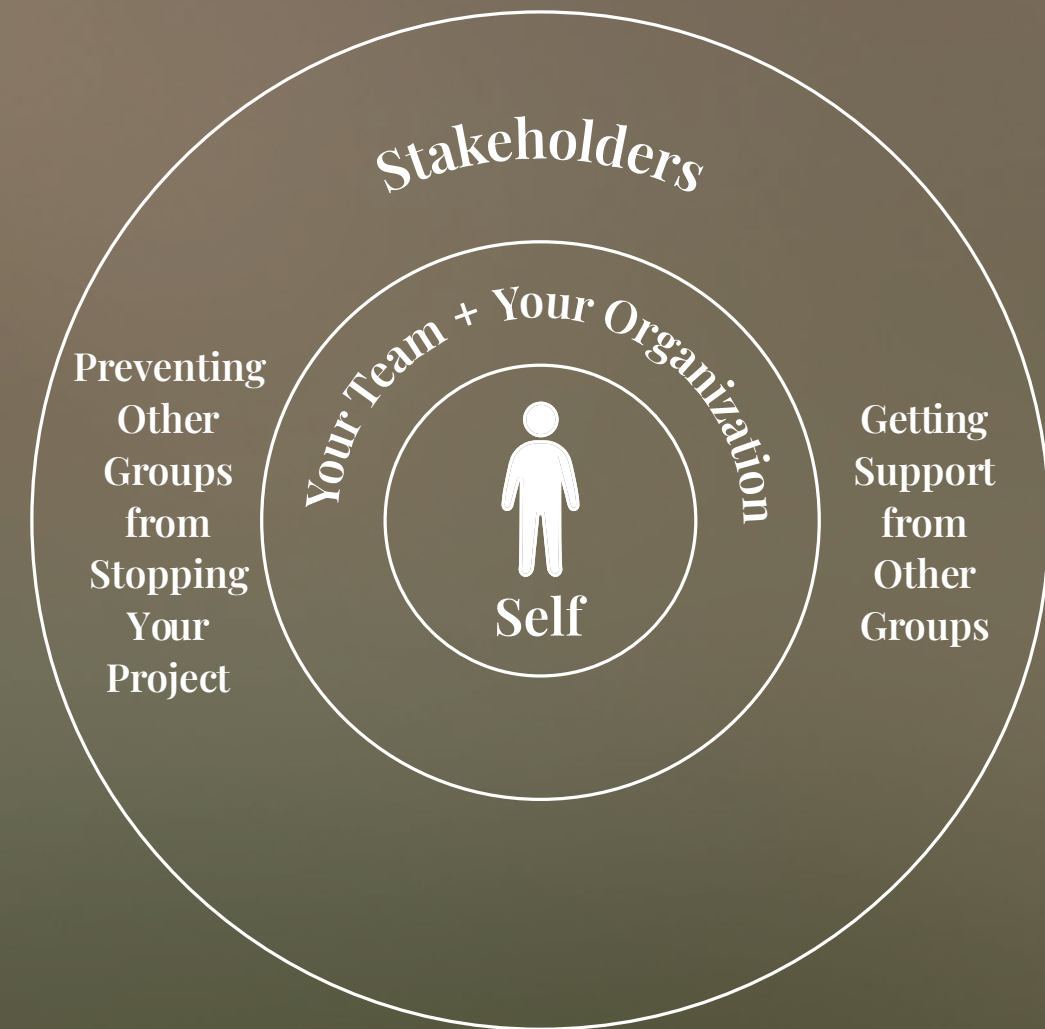


ECTI's Goal

Our goal is to **increase the amount of conservation leaders** who are ready to manage complex programs and multidisciplinary teams in conservation landscapes of global significance.

We identify, train, inspire, and connect **a new generation of conservationists** working in wild areas so they learn about team management and how to build constructive relations with key stakeholders and partners.

The Three Circles of Influence



Effective Conservation = People Management

Training Phases, Participants, Trainers & Speakers

TRAINING PHASES

Phase 1: Reading and online discussions. Four 120-minute sessions took place from May to September 2025, during which groups of four to six participants interacted online.

Phase 2: Onsite training at Serengeti National Park (Tanzana), 17th-27th September 2025.



PARTICIPANTS

There were a total of 20 participants from 8 organizations (Frankfurt Zoological Society, African Parks, Rewilding Argentina, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Tanzanian National Parks, Ambá Uruguay, Conserve Global, Leuser Conservation Forum) and 10 countries (Argentina, Uruguay, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, DRC, Zambia, Indonesia, Australia, Mozambique, and EEUU).

[VIEW DOCUMENT \(PDF\)](#)

TRAINERS & SPEAKERS

In addition to the three main trainers, we invited seven senior conservation practitioners from different organisations and contexts to speak, as well as a CEO with extensive experience of managing teams and organisations in the business world.

[VIEW DOCUMENT \(PDF\)](#)



EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION TRAINING INITIATIVE

REPORT ON THE 3RD EDITION





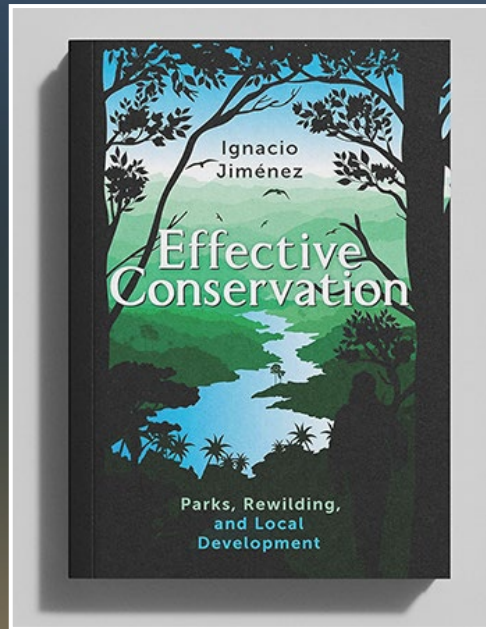
EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION TRAINING INITIATIVE

REPORT ON THE 3RD EDITION

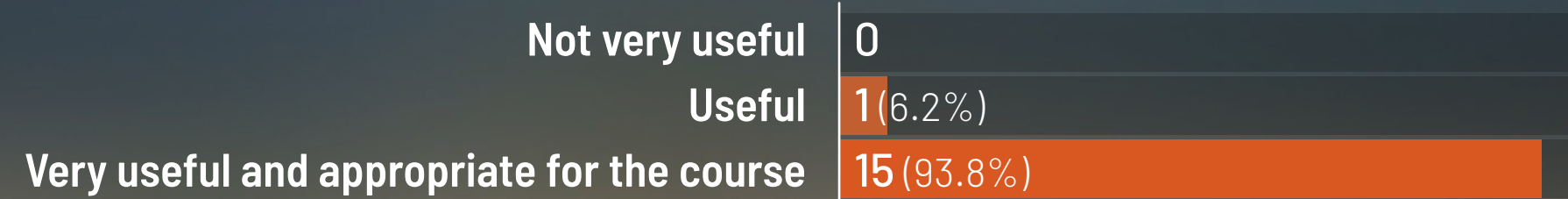
EVALUATION OF 1ST. PHASE OF THE COURSE: READING AND ONLINE SESSIONS

(MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2025)

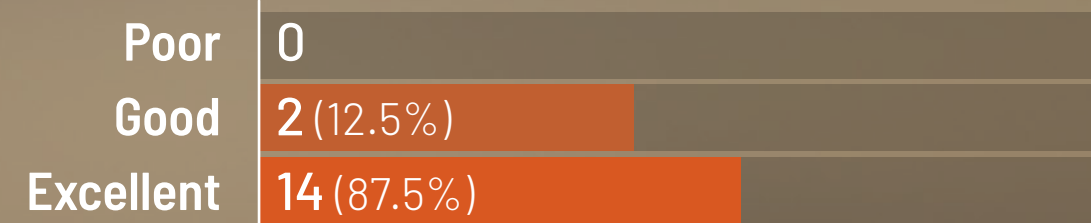




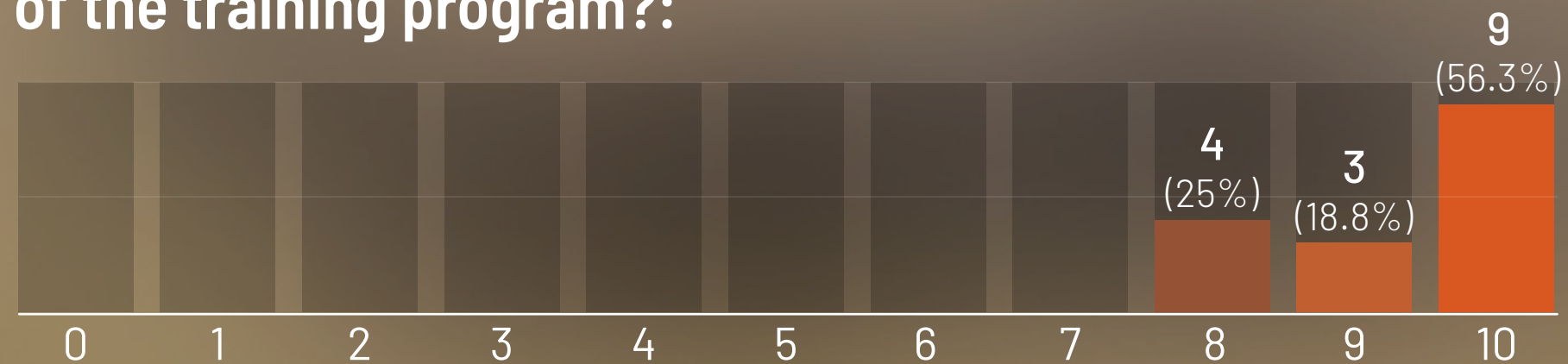
Choose the best option that describes your opinion of the text book used during this phase:



Your opinion on the online sessions to comment on the Effective Conservation book:



From 0 to 10 how would you rate the first online phase of the training program?:



Answers by trainees: n=16

Some phrases summarizing the participants' impressions of the online phase of the program

"It was challengingly right to prepare a leader of their role to be knowledgeable. It helped me remember to read more and know the right technical knowledge to support my teams."

"The phase for both reading and online meeting was insightful and helpful, please continue with the same spirit of hard work."

"The preliminary readings and online meetings not only provided a solid foundation for the course, but by allowing us to meet the participants and establish a clear and shared contract from the very beginning, they created early motivation and a valuable sense of momentum, so that when we arrived, it already felt like we were starting together with a clear direction."

"After engaging in extensive readings and online discussions, I evaluate this phase of the training program as a transformative experience that effectively enhances our understanding and skills, fostering collaboration and insightful exchanges that are vital for our professional growth and development."



Some phrases summarizing the participants' impressions of the online phase of the program

"I found the book's content very adequate to prepare for the course. The idea of the boat and conservation as a public policy process are two terms that definitely stuck in my mind and changed my view of my everyday work. The online sessions were very useful, not only to ground the content and concepts of the book, but also to start exchanging opinions and thoughts with the participants we were going to meet later in the Serengeti. Because of these sessions, when we finally met in person, there was a feeling that we already knew each other. It also helped me to arrive at the training course with my head and thoughts more prepared for it."

"This phase provided a solid theoretical foundation and valuable peer exchange, which helped me to better understand key principles of effective conservation."

"The online session with follow-up questions was amazingly beautiful as it gave us more understanding of the leadership and management. The reading was giving necessary pressure to fully grasp the concepts but meeting online culminated everything to the point of conceptualizing."

Some phrases summarizing the participants' impressions of the online phase of the program

"The content of the book was excellent and highly relevant to the conservation program and organization setting in Indonesia. It was a great introduction to the course."

"The online sessions created a good platform to start the discussions we then dove into when we met in Tanzania. It was a good background and it also allowed us to get the theory of it so that we could then focus on other things when we got together. It was better to spend time together connecting and having real life practical discussions."

"It was a great way to start to meet the participants and engage in the book content!"

EVALUATION OF 2ND. PHASE OF THE COURSE: ONSITE TRAINING IN SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

(TANZANIA, SEPTEMBER 2025)





Evaluation of the sessions managed by the main trainers in Serengeti

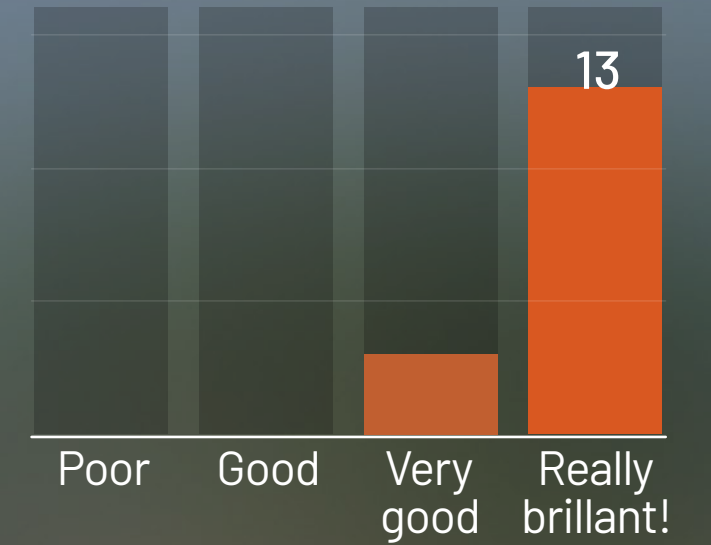
Ignacio Jiménez



Jorge Gibbons



Astrid Vargas



General comments and recommendations on the role of the three core trainers

"The physical interaction model through play by George was brilliant as it made participants to self realize the impact of actions from team leaders to teams."

"Astrid provided a critical dimension to the course. Jorge is very inspiring."

"I think that Ignacio's role was key. He led the course with great commitment and, at the same time, with joy and enjoyment. For me, the way he maintained the structure of the course was fundamental, reading the energy of the group and each participant at all times, paying attention to details and even generating individual talks outside of the sessions to further deepen the concepts or simply accompany the energy of each person. I also want to highlight how he managed the collective motivation, maintaining an atmosphere of enthusiasm with activities such as Sally Up and a great sense of humor. He managed the time clearly and created a bond with the team that really made us feel like colleagues, part of the same pack."

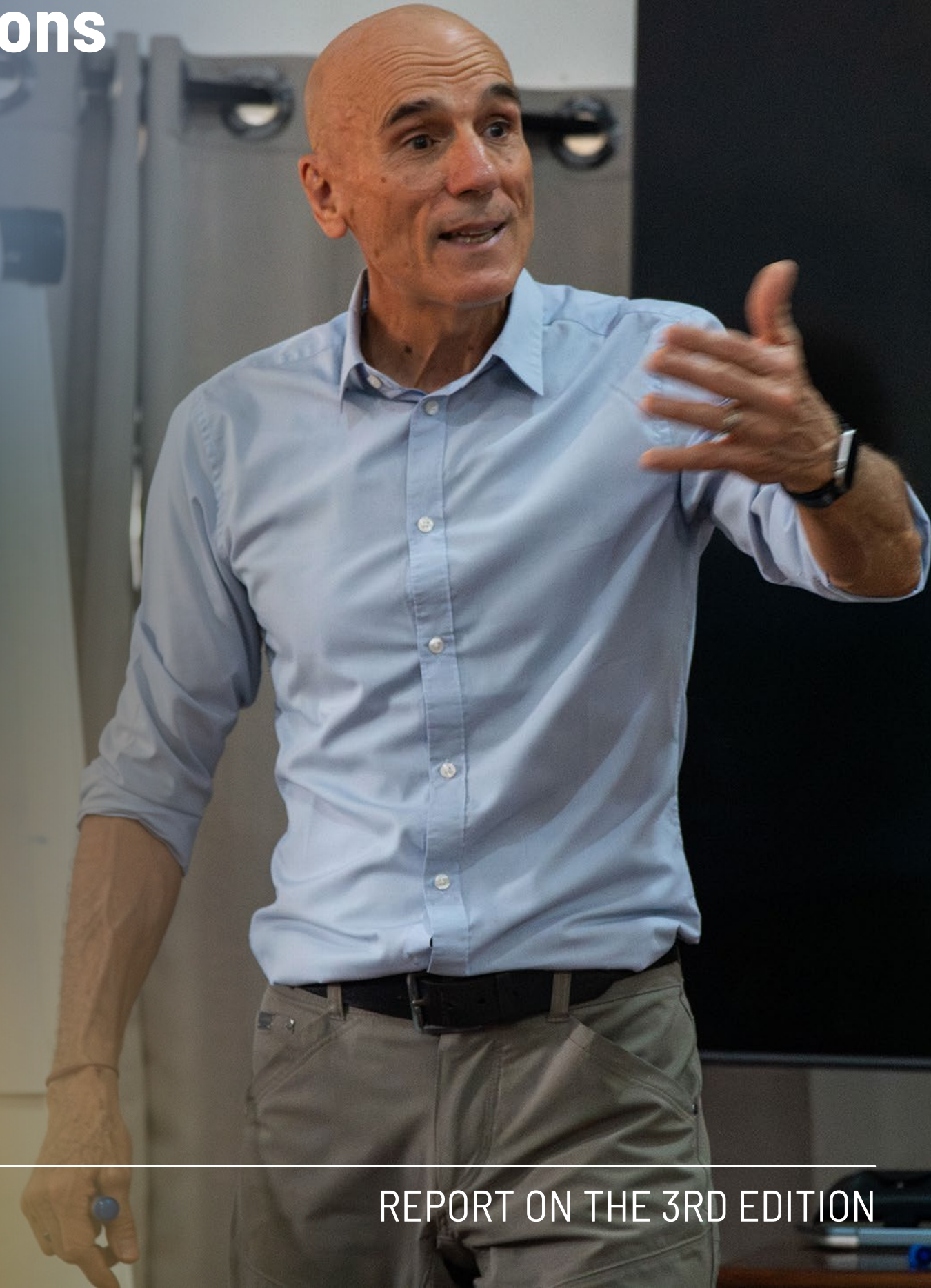


General comments and recommendations on the role of the three core trainers

"The three trainers were absolutely great at their roles. I believe that every topic they treated was well delivered and that the trainers were very clear and reinforced all the time to make sure that all the participants understood and got one hundred percent of the topics they covered. The three trainers complemented each other very well, with different styles and approaches to give their subjects, which provided the course with a really fresh and dynamic rhythm."

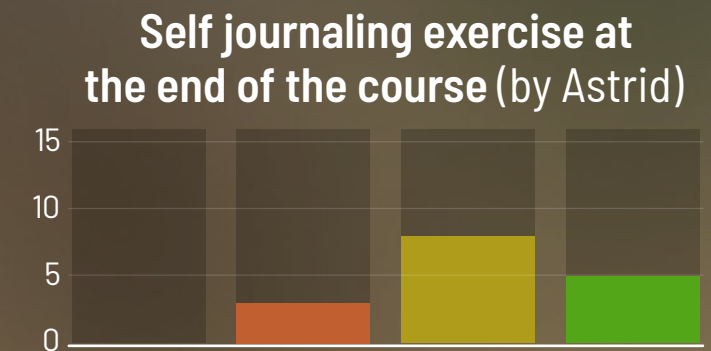
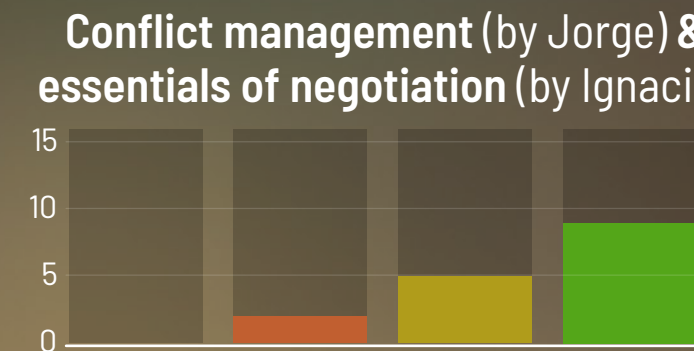
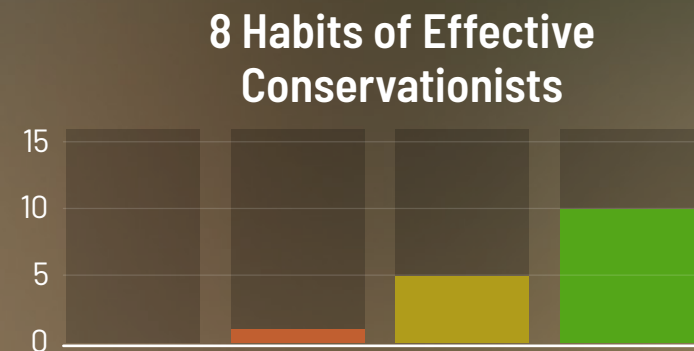
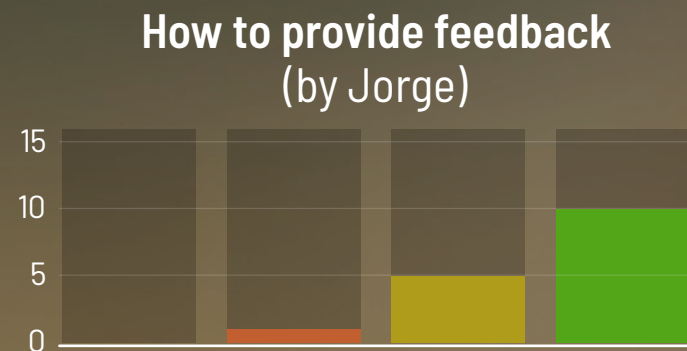
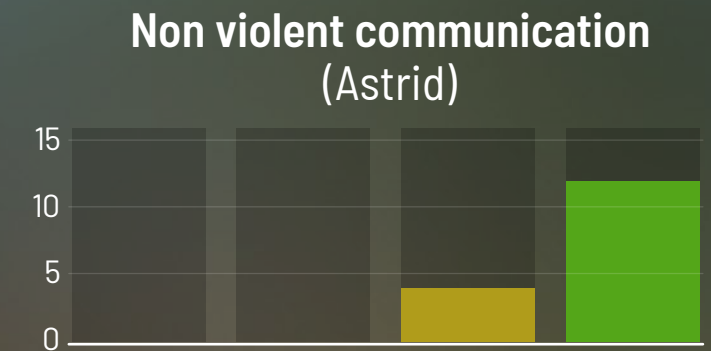
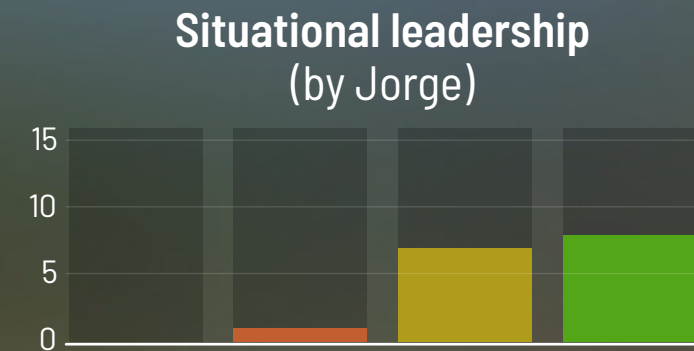
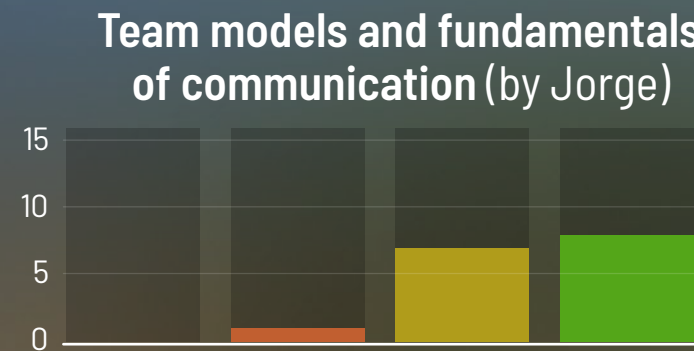
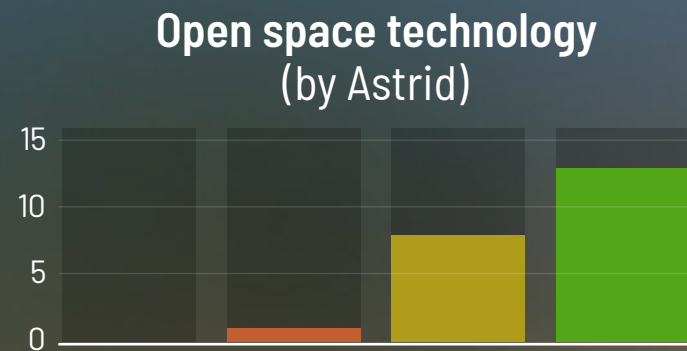
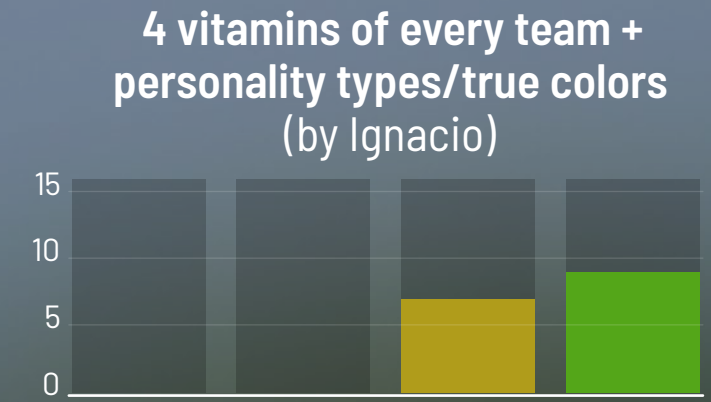
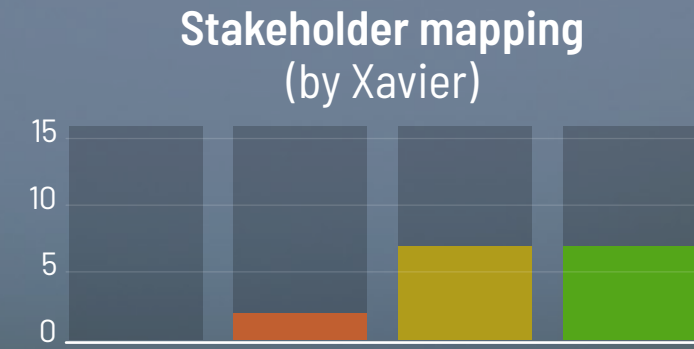
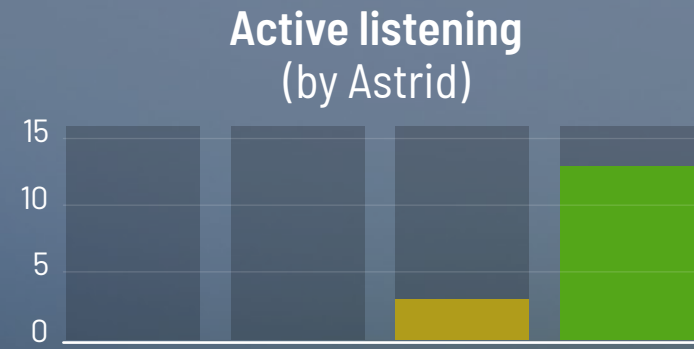
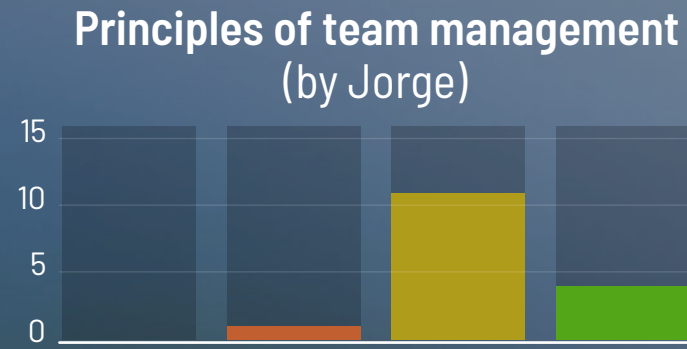
"I mean, they had three different styles but all so valuable in different ways. I know it was impactful because now when I face a situation I can hear their voices ringing in my ear giving me advice."

"The diversity of the three trainers was fantastic—each having differs skill sets and approaches to bring to the course."



How would you rate the following subjects discussed during the course?

Answers by trainees: n=16



Not very useful
 Useful
 Very useful
 Extremely useful!
 I don't remember

Evaluation of speakers/practitioners

Answers by trainees: n=16

Dennis Rentsch



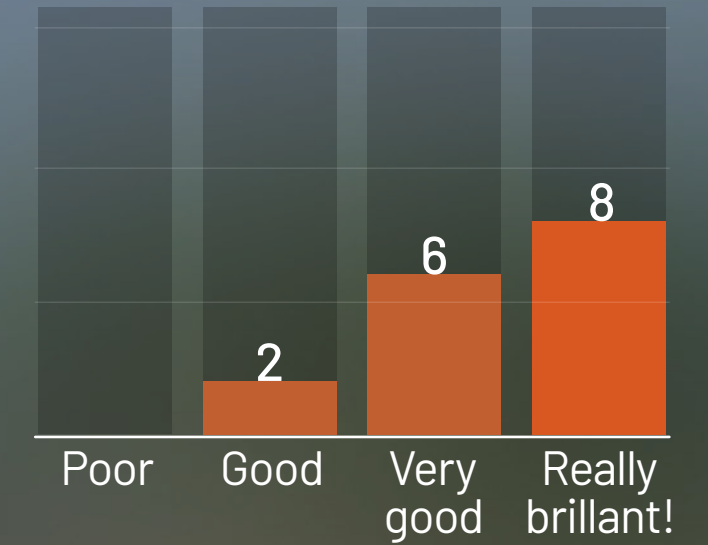
Xavier van Leuwe



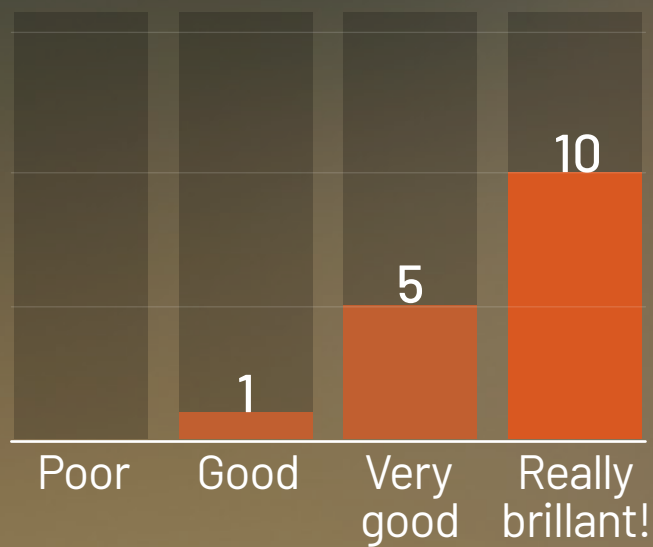
Ian Munyankindi



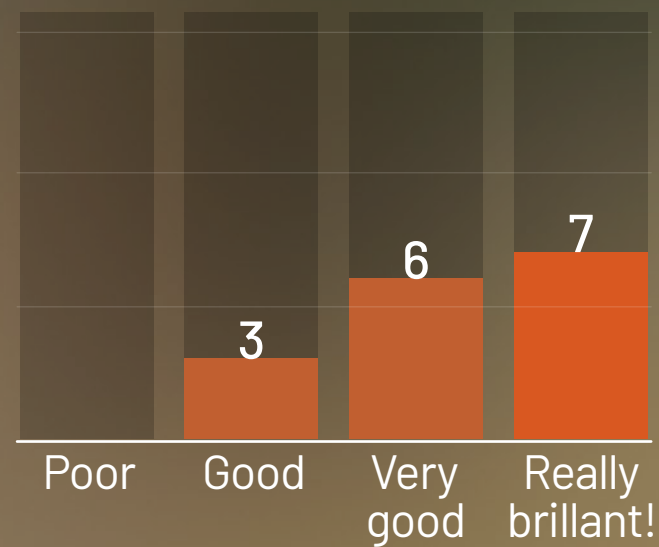
John Kanowski



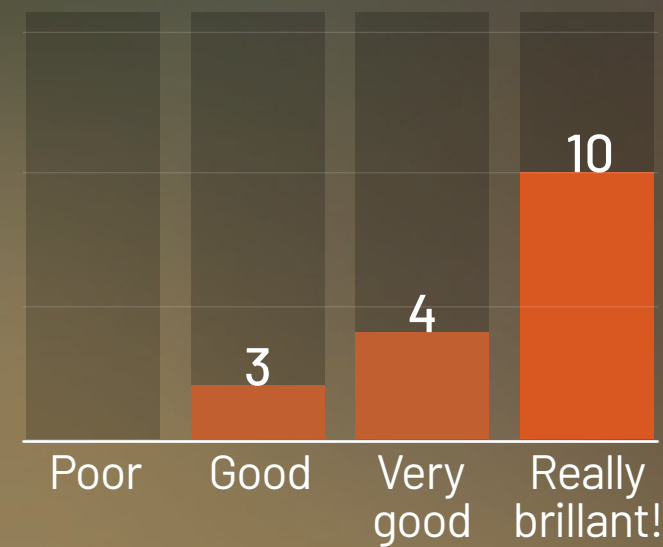
Jean Labuschagne



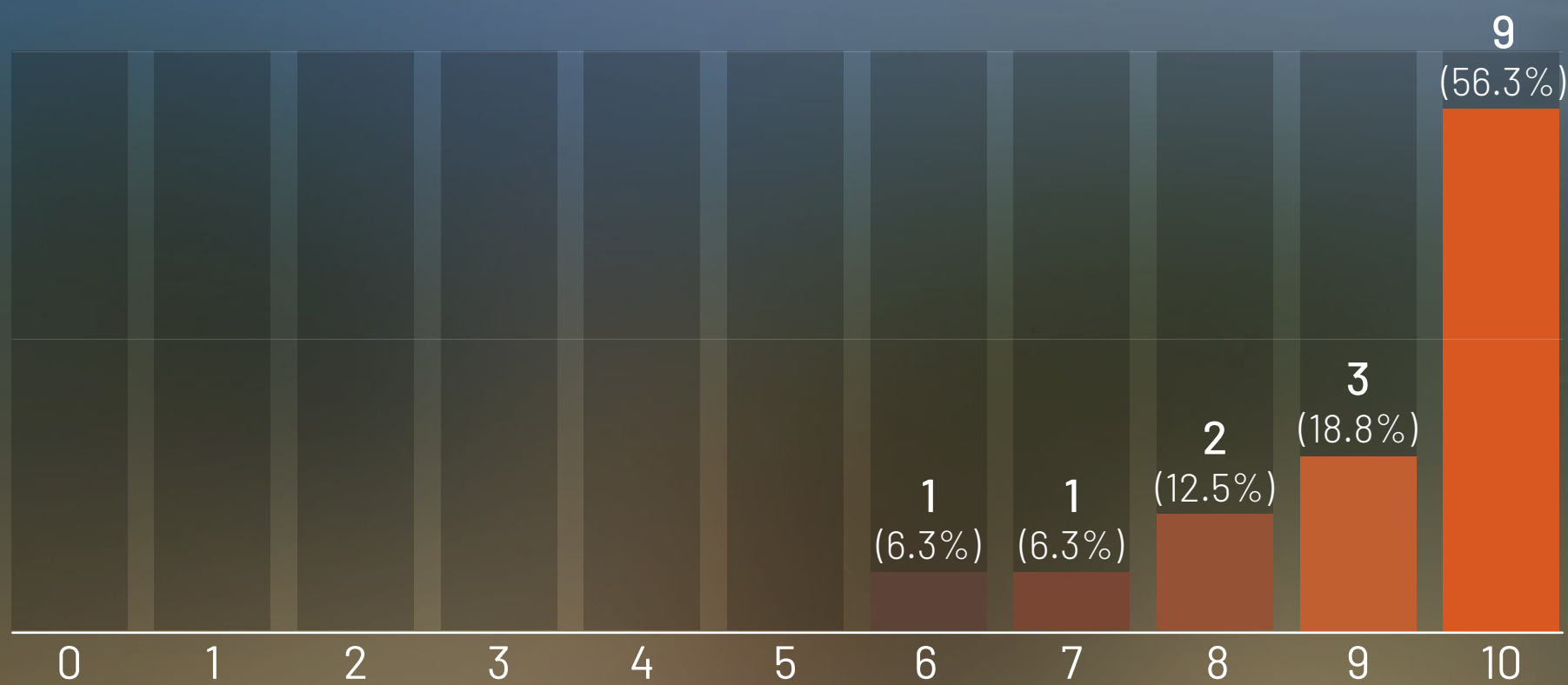
Rudi Putra



Christof Schenck

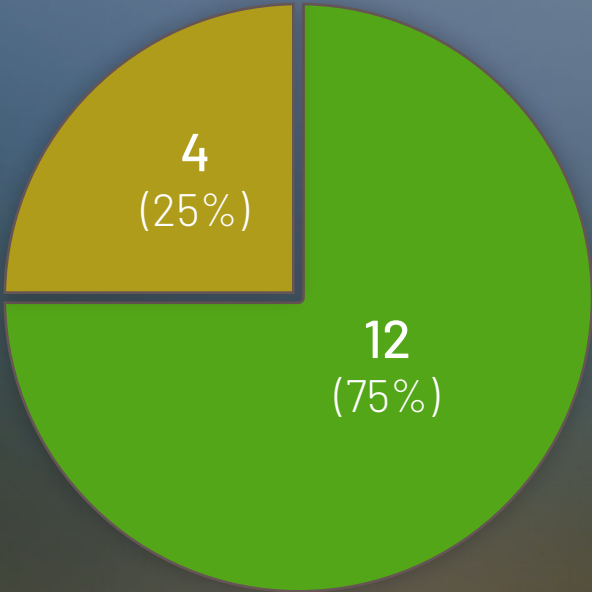


From 0 to 10, how would you rate the pedagogic quality of this part of the training program based on conversations with experienced team leaders?:

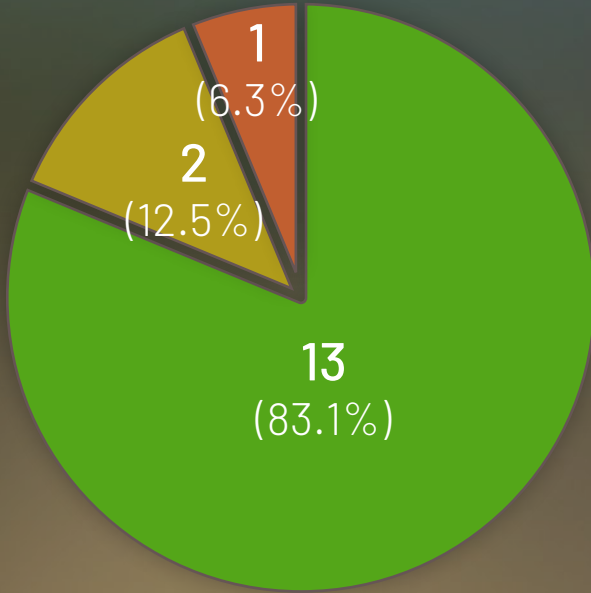


Answers by trainees: n=16

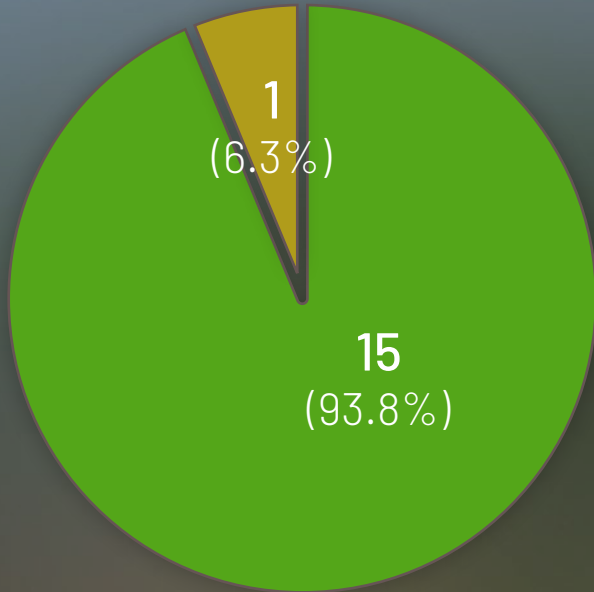
I found the quality of the course with regard to the **establishment of personal and professional links** for my future work to be:



I found the quality of the course with regard to **logistical aspects** (i.e. accommodation, food, pre-course communication, transport, etc.) to be:



The treatment and **human atmosphere** during the course was:



Bad Fair Good Very good Excellent

General comments

"I loved the experience and I'm really grateful for the opportunity given to me to be part of such a great group of people. May the efforts continue to enforce the management of the most critical natural resources that need our actions."

"I would change almost nothing. The location enforced this experience as truly unforgettable! Thank you to everyone who made it happen."

"I believe it is essential to continue with this type of space because it generates a very powerful energy, which I still feel now and which is directly enhancing my work. Maintaining the meetings and the bond between participants seems key to sustaining that momentum. I especially value the diversity of perspectives and roles present. For example, Sebastian's contribution from passionate philanthropy and Xavier's from the business world allowed us to see different parts of the elephant and broaden our perspective on conservation. I suggest that future editions also include voices from the political sphere (people with charisma and a transformative vision), as they could contribute another fundamental 'piece of the elephant'."

"The course was spectacular, with the trainers and speakers very committed to their role. The content was very varied but perfectly understandable. An incredible course with incredible people."



General comments

“The training program was an enriching and transformative experience. It provided a strong balance between theory and practice, while also creating space for exchange among participants from diverse backgrounds. I particularly appreciated the professionalism of the facilitators and the practical relevance of the content. I encourage the organizers to continue with this approach, maintaining the high level of quality and expanding opportunities for alumni networking and follow-up mentoring after the course.”

“The training program was a true life-changing experience for me. The possibility to openly learn and discuss everyday human-related problems and how we can change our attitudes and mindsets to improve our teams and our results was something I haven’t thought about in a long time. I come back to Argentina with many ideas and practical things to put into practice right away, to work better with my own teams and with the stakeholders we work with. The possibility to listen to experienced practitioners, to learn from their life stories and careers, was a unique opportunity, and even better was to be able to ask open questions and discuss the matters that we care about. And to me, the very best thing about the course was the possibility to build relationships, trust, friendships, and networks with young passionate conservationists from all over the globe. These experience encourages me to keep putting my best every day and to work towards building a strong and united conservation network for our future!”



General comments

"All the speakers were phenomenal. I learnt about the job, the career, the lifestyle, the risks, and also about myself as a conservationist. We had very interactive sessions and got to learn a bit about other people and cultures."

"Fantastic initiative – I wish everyone had the opportunity. Huge self growth and reassessment. I really like the diversity from presentations to participants including background and age. It was a fantastic group."

"The diversity of the three trainers was fantastic – each having differs skill sets and approaches to bring to the course."

"Life Changing Moments!"



Recommendations for improvement

Post-training follow-up: Implementing post-training follow-up, such as coaching sessions or discussion groups, could help participants apply the knowledge acquired and remain engaged in their professional development.

Additional resources: Providing additional resources (articles, books, online platforms) related to the topics covered during the training would allow for deeper exploration and independent learning.

Hand out the **training certificate** immediately after the training.

Have the **knitting or shirts made for the learners to wear on the day of the celebration** helps increase visibility.

Investing time on mental health, dealing with stress, performance anxiety.

It may be good to also have a **session dedicated to getting to know the participants**. Maybe in groups even but just a space for the participants to share about their work too. This can be in the form of a longer introductions session maybe at the beginning.

More organized opportunities for **physical exercise**.

Slide presentations by future speakers: It's crucial that all future presenters include their content on slides. This approach not only allows learners to listen to the speaker but also provides them with visual support to read along. By combining auditory and visual learning, we can reduce fatigue and facilitate better understanding of the material.

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