

RUFFORD CONFERENCE REPORT



MADAGASCAR 2019

**Funneling post-conference excitement into concrete next steps for achieving your career
and research objectives**

*A training activity for recipients of Rufford Small Grants for Nature working in
Madagascar and ATBC 2019 Annual meeting participants*

Funded by:



4th August 2019

Antananarivo, Madagascar

Venue : Le relais des plateaux Ivato

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

BACKGROUND AND CONFERENCE SUMMARY

THE CONFERENCE THEME AND MAIN OBJECTIVES

THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

THE IMPACT OF THE RSGS

CHALLENGES FACED AND ISSUES RAISED

RECOMMENDATIONS

ANNEX



Conference venue

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our special thanks and sincere gratitude to Rufford Foundation for their generous support in making this training day a great success. In particular, we would like to thank:

- Mr. Josh Cole, the director of the Rufford Small Grants, for accompanying us on this training day;
- The Guest of Honour, Prof. Hajanirina Rakotomanana, Chair of the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) for his welcome speech and words of encouragement;
- Prof. Ramahazosa Irrish Parkers, the Head of the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Anatananarivo Madagascar, for his words of motivation and for his active participation during the training day;
- Rindra Harilanto Nantenaina and Nacia Raoelinjanakolona for their support with logistical aspects of the event.

We also extend our warmest thanks to all the participants for their enthusiasm and active participation during the training!

About the Organiser and Trainers:

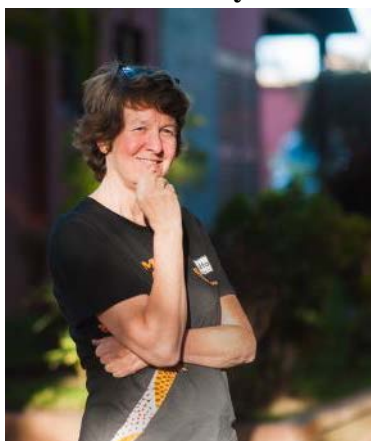
Dr. Onja Razanamaro is a researcher at the University of Antananarivo where she conducts research on the famous Madagascar baobabs. She was also the Scientific Secretary of ATBC's 2019 Annual Meeting, held in Madagascar. In the context of this event, she organized more than a dozen workshops during and after the ATBC event. Onja's own networking experience is a useful example to work on with students in this training workshop; by pure coincidence she was able to find a project collaborator while attending the 2017 Conference of the British Ecological! She subsequently obtained a Rufford Grant and more recently, the Darwin Initiative Award.



Dr. Tuyeni Heita Mwampamba is also a former recipient of the Rufford Small Grants for Nature and an interim Board Member of the Africa Chapter of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) in charge of Capacity Building, Communication and strengthening South-South collaborations between tropical biologists. She is a research professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and mostly conducts training on participatory process, collaborative governance of natural resources and sustainability science. She was inspired to propose this course after realizing how little advantage her own students take of their conference experience to build and nurture their networks and the fear, they express having in approaching senior congress delegates to initiate important contacts.



Dr. Rosie Trevelyan is the Director of the Tropical Biology Association (TBA) based at Cambridge University. Established in 1993, the TBA is a registered charity and a company limited by with offices in Cambridge (UK) and Nairobi (Kenya). The Association is dedicated to training scientists, project managers and educators working in the tropics, to manage and safeguard biodiversity, long term. More than half of TBA's trainees are from Africa and Madagascar. Rosie is a passionate instructor and facilitator of the learning process, using effective pedagogical tools to inspire and promote new knowledge acquirement.



Dr. Tahiana Andriaharimalala is the Director of the Regional Department of the Environment and sustainable development Ministry in Morondava. He works on tropical biodiversity conservation. As part of his responsibility, Tahiana teach also at the University of Science and applied Ecology in Antsirabe and the Catholic University in Antananarivo. Tahiana was the key personnel during the GBIF annual meeting in Madagascar in 2015.



BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE TRAINING

The Rufford Foundation is one of the main funding sources for conservation projects in Madagascar, of which approximately 210 projects have been funded since 2000. Rufford is committed to supporting research projects as well as conferences to encourage publication and networking especially of early career researchers. A Rufford Conference of recipients from Madagascar was last held in Madagascar in 2015 with strong participation 13 of Rufford grantees. Since then, Madagascar recipients had not had an opportunity to meet and learn about each other's work.

The Rufford Foundation has been a strong and consistent supporter of the Annual Meetings of the Association for Tropical Biodiversity and Conservation (ATBC). The ATBC annual meetings are the biggest annual encounter of the community of tropical biologists. This year's ATBC conference took place between 30th of July and 4th of August in Antananarivo, Madagascar and was attended by 915 tropical biologists from developing countries and developed countries alike. Unsurprisingly, ATBC 2019 was the largest event of its kind ever to have been held in Madagascar. In addition to funding for the main event, the Foundation also provided funding for a post-ATBC training day that took the form of a special Rufford conference that could brought together Madagascar-based Rufford grantees, some of who were participating at the ATBC event.

The one-day training was developed to give the opportunity to young researchers to develop their skills to maximize the benefits of attending conferences. The post-conference training day allowed young researchers, largely Rufford grantees, to benefit further from the ATBC conference by acquiring skills in communication and networking, and to further network with fellow conservationists and learn from each other. The training workshop **“Funnelling post-conference excitement into concrete next steps for achieving your career and research objectives”** took place on the 5th of August 2019 at the **Le relais des plateaux Hotel in Ivato, Antananarivo**. A total of 27 participants from three countries took part.

The training day was divided into two main parts: networking and communication. Active-learning methodologies were applied, abandoning the use PowerPoint presentations and encouraging individual to interact and discuss instead. Practical exercises were applied to ensure that participants could interact actively, with purpose, and basing a lot of their discussions on their own experience. Sets of lessons learned and tips were collaboratively generated through these experiences. A Facebook group was generated by participants who felt it would be a fruitful was to to continue networking and sharing knowledge and experience post-training.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Justification for the training:

Young conservation scientists need a suite of skills – and the confidence to apply them – for their careers to flourish. These professional skills are often not taught at university, hence the need for workshops such as this one. Networking is the process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts. It is an essential skill for everyone, particularly early career scientists who need to establish contacts and rapport with potential collaborators, advisors and employers.

Networking can take many forms and occurs in many types of spaces. For conservation biology researchers and practitioners, conferences are a key platform for meeting new people, hearing about new ideas and sharing one's work and experience. Conferences are attended by wide range of participants, from senior renowned researchers well-respected in the field, to first-time attendants just entering the field of conservation biology. Moreover, conferences are rare and expensive events to attend, hence once there, they should be enjoyed and reaped for their fullest potential benefits.

Approaching senior researchers, introducing oneself effectively, asking the 'right' questions, and following up on established contacts is not easy, however, particularly for young and early career individuals coming from cultural contexts in which approaching seniors requires established protocol. This training session provides participants with the tools and skills needed to conduct their own networking in the context of international conferences where some of the barriers they might experience in their own home countries and institutions might not apply.

The objective of the training:

The main objective of this training day was to equip participants with the skills and tools necessary for ensuring successful networking during conferences. We also wanted Rufford Grant recipients based in Madagascar to have an opportunity to meet each other, know about each other's work, and explore the opportunities for collaborations. Hence, to some extent, the training was also a networking opportunity for grantees.

The workshop focused on two skills areas that early career conservation scientists have told us they need training in to help them develop professionally to the next level. The first skills area is in communication: these are skills that are very important for scientists attending conference. A scientist needs to be able to communicate without PowerPoint, in short periods of time when meeting people at conferences. Networking opportunities present themselves in short spurts during conferences. Participants need to have numerous variations of their introductory talk to match different circumstances that present networking opportunities.

The second focus was on how to ensure participation in conferences brings in added value through networking. These are considered soft skills that are rarely taught but which are important for a young researcher attending a conference to have, whether or not they are giving a presentation.

Training structure:

The workshop followed a practical approach using exercises and discussions and peer-to-peer learning and feedback.

Preparing for networking at a conference:

Prior to the ATBC conference participants who had registered for the training were sent out a short set of tips on how to prepare for networking at the conference. The tips included advise such as how to identify who they want to network with (and contacting them prior to the event), identifying the talks that they want to attend, going to the talks by people they would like to meet, and reading the most recent papers and works of researchers they would like to approach at the conference. During the training, participants were asked how well (or not) they felt they had achieved their networking objectives at the ATBC conference. Their responses were used as material to work with for the rest of the training session.

Developing Good and informative networks

An introductory session at the beginning of the training day was intentionally omitted in order to undertake an activity requiring participants to introduce themselves under conference circumstances. During the first coffee break, participants “practiced” networking by meeting new people and learning how to communicate information within a brief time limit. This was done where each participant was assigned to find one participant that he/she did not know before and then each participant had to present his/her new colleague to the rest of the group. To enhance the spirit of sharing and community, participants also presented each other with Rufford t-shirts.



Saskia and Manoa introducing each during the coffee break



Left: Tuyeni and Misa's network. Right: Rosie and Naina's network.



Left: T-shirt sharing experience with Lanto and Jean Robertin. Right: T-shirt sharing experience with the chair of ATBC 2019 and the head of the faculty of Science.

Identifying different approaches and challenges for networking

Four objectives of networking were identified by the participants: career advancement, funding, looking for collaborators, and to expand your network beyond your field (i.e., explore new areas to work in). Team group of 4 to 5 participants were allocated each of these objectives and tasked with the identifying viable strategies for achieving each one in a conference setting, and the challenges for doing so. Each group presented a summary of their discussion in plenary where additional strategies and challenges could be identified.



Organizing the team group

Communicating the importance of your work

The objective of this activity was for participants to be able to explain their work in 3 or 5 sentences that cover the most important points. These skills are important to use whether talking to someone at a conference or writing a short email as follow-up to a conference. The aim of the exercise was for participants to be able to describe their research question; explain why their research is important or innovative or urgent, and to sum up what their take-home message is.

For the exercise, participants first developed their individual answers to these questions. They then joined a smaller group in which each one practiced this 'pitch' in turn, gaining feedback from the rest of the group. One group member was then selected to give their final pitch to the rest of the whole workshop who then gave constructive comments – on what worked very well, and what they could improve on.

Pitch – Saskia



My research question

If acoustic indices derived from sound recordings can be a proxy for biodiversity in a cultural landscape like in north-eastern Madagascar?

It is important

Because the rapid decline of biodiversity globally increases the need of rapid biodiversity assessment methods like eco acoustic surveys are.

Main result

That - if regarding very different land-use types / a broad gradient in land-use intensity - some acoustic indices can be a proxy for biodiversity.

And so what?

More research needs to be done in the field of ecoacoustics! Case studies and also guidelines are needed. Start recording now!

Njara estimated *Propithecus verreauxi* density and cut tree abundance in four management zones of the dry forest of the Bezà Mahafaly Special Reserve. She found overall high density of *Propithecus verreauxi* and that density is not correlated with number of cut trees as expected.





Pitch group

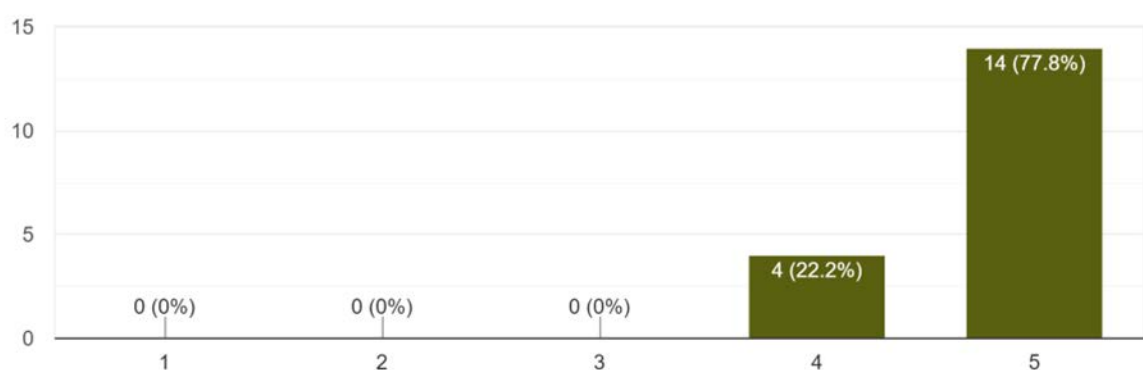
THE IMPACT OF THE TRAINING

This training workshop was very well received by the participants who said so directly to the trainers and organisers and manifested it in the training evaluation. Participants were partic had a positive impact on the participants, especially for young researchers. Among these participants, some of them have never been in an International conference event before and have already found the benefits of possible networking, funding and collaboration through a conference. Others who only think about presenting their posters and making oral presentations at an international conference were surprised at the other benefits obtained in a conference. Thus, the testimonies obtained during this conference were an example for this impact.

A total of 18 participants responded to the post-training evaluation survey we sent out on the same day.

How satisfied were you with today's training workshop?

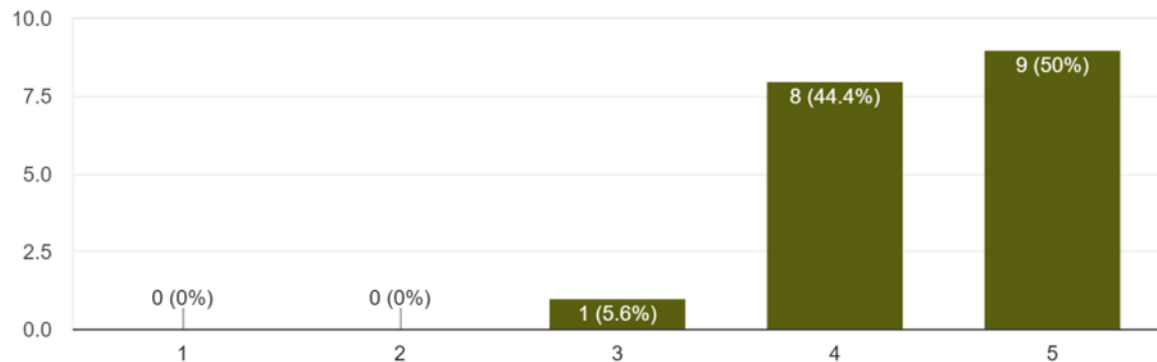
18 responses



Participants could choose from unsatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5)

How relevant and helpful do you think it was for your "next step" for research, conservation or career development?

18 responses



Participants could choose from "unhelpful" (1) to "extremely helpful" (5)

Participants listed the following key take-aways from the training: [direct text from evaluation survey]

- Speed speech preparation, open-minded
- Networking needs engagement of myself, it also needs some preparation. Making a plan for yourself e.g. which people to meet during a conference. Make a strategy
- Fear
- Talk to people and do it now not next year
- Learn more about how to pursue my career after finishing my research project
- The methodology of doing the workshop and all valuable knowledge
- Motivation/initiative for writing project ideas related to my field of knowledge and maybe I will try to write paper on my relevant research with sufficient data
- I really learnt from your sharing and from everyone experience especially the strategies and challenges in networking
- During group discussion, some people shared their path on how they got their current position. These sharing were very inspiring and help me to take decisions for my career advancement. 2) For maintaining network, dare to approach and always send emails to peers. 3) Knowing everything but not restraining into your field.
- Networking is reciprocity
- All session was important, but the communication tips were so relevant to me to make a good first impression to people who I am talking to
- I got more tips in networking and speaking in public
- There are many things that I have learnt from the training but there are two lessons that I would like to precise here as key take always from this training. First, I learnt that when networking I need to manage everything before I met the people that I want to meet (contact them before if possible, attend their presentation, ready for the question and project that I will be talking about with them, etc.). Second, I have to convinced them that I am believe in my work and want collaboration which benefit both reciprocities.

- I really need to develop my networking abilities (I always afraid to speak with important person like you (trainers). I do not know why, but after this workshop, I think I will try to remedy. (As during this workshop, I did not dare. I did not reach yet such objective, that why I put four for the above question))
- Exchange of information
- The strategy to use to meet a big fish during the conference
- My key take always from the training was the approach to do to make z good networking.

Testimonials:



Manoa Rajaonarivelo

"By the Rufford workshop, I've learned that networking needs practice and planification. A precise objective is expecting in this network" Hope to have an opportunity to participate in some workshop with you again."



Ratsisetraina J. Rita

"I am happy to attend the workshop because I learnt the strategy and challenge to achieve one's goal for attending a conference. I also met someone from different field, and it was good to share ideas and learnt from that person."



Jean Robertin Rasoloariniaina

"This training has taught me how to connect with people and how to value my research."



Zo Samuel Ella Fenosoa (at the left)

"During Rufford Workshop, Zo Samuel Fenosoa, Rufford grantee in 2018 studying the dispersal of mistletoe *Bakerella* in Madagascar, learns how the network with peers works. This is demonstrated by the actions of giving and receiving a T-shirt to another participant."



Nasandratra Nancia Raoelinjanakolona (at the right)

"I experienced during this workshop that networking is a challenge for everyone who want to advance in their career. Thus, as it said, I am challenging to expand my network through peoples who I met during the ATBC conference."

Rindra Harilanto Nantenaina

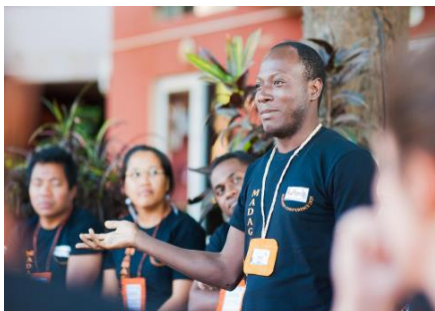
"This conference was fruitful for me as early career scientist, because I have learnt from it how to network and be confident when we talk to someone about my own project."



Seheno Andriatsaralaza

"The Rufford conference was a unique opportunity for me to learn how to use networking opportunities to become an useful way for advancing my career as a researcher. As an early-career researcher, I learned about how getting my peers' interests for my research projects and then reaching their collaboration."

I really appreciated to have chance to attend the Rufford conference as it provided me a unique opportunity at my current stage of my career. So, I'd like to thank You so much for inviting me."



Gbadamassi Dossa

"This workshop taught me that being pro-active is the currency of networking". "One can only get better in networking by practicing, and this workshop offered us this real-time practice."



Naina Rabemananjara:

My name is Naina Rabemananjara and I have learned a lot in such short time during the event. I am personally enjoying all the topics we had, especially how to make a good networking during a conference which is one of most important thing I think to know because doing research is not an easy task, We always need to help each over and the tips we had to make a good approach to talk with people

were so relevant to me.



Holi Rabemananjara (at the left)

I am Holi Rabemananjara. I work with GERP association as an environmental educator and a database manager with Madagascar Lemurs Portal project. As an early career, participating in the post-conference workshop with Rufford foundation was very helpful and very important for me. I got many things from the workshop leaders and learnt from

other participants' experiences on how to get an effective networking in advancing my career, in funding sources and in finding collaborators



Rio Heriniaina

"This post conference is an educational opportunity for me and a great time to create a networking with peers."

ISSUES RAISED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The written and verbal responses of the participants indicate that this kind of training opportunity is rare and was very useful to them. Based on their positive responses, we think that an annual training such as this should accompany all annual ATBC conferences – and other meetings that Rufford supports. We strongly recommend replicating this training at universities in Madagascar and in other institutions of research and conservation biology in Africa. Repeating the training at next year's ATBC Meeting in Cartagena Colombia and/or at the 1st ATBC Africa chapter meeting planned for 2020 are recommended starting places for continuing this and other training. An additional day of proposal writing, or abstract writing would be an added value while implying very little additional cost.

The participants indicated that an additional day to expand on the communication training (communicating your research to a scientific community) would be highly valuable. We would do this training before the conference so that participants can immediately apply their new skills in a real conference.

Conducting a joint Rufford-ATBC Africa Chapter meeting whereby Grant recipients from the East Africa region at least, could get a chance to share their work with a wider community. We feel that this combining the two events would be mutually beneficial to both.

List of recommended training topics provided by the participants in the online post-training evaluation survey:

- Proposal writing
- Maybe on writing ideas down, like for a project proposal. How to be precise and concise, but it really depends.
- How to write a research proposal
- Managing time with family and research
- Talking about how to write a good proposal in order to ask for funding or collaboration
- How to write a good proposal
- Capacity building on how to present research to funders for funding or drafting scientific research for publication
- One of the challenges that a group shared during the training was "How to write a good proposal for a funding sources so it would be better to talk more about it
- Detailed Strategies of writing a good research proposal.
- Data analysis and statistic
- If we had an additional day. It would be nice to have a session about how to give a oral presentation in a conference in front of many people
- Tips about how to give a nice talk/poster presentation
- Topic on grant proposal and management of the project once we have the fund
- Negotiation technics
- How to write successful article.
- ecosystem management and local impact; have a good collaboration; new ideas for predicting the valuation and conservation of the natural ecosystem
- Eeverything about publishing research papers
- It would be really nice to have a topic about how to write a grant specially to know more about Rufford grant.

BUDGET

BUDGET	1 £= 4375 ar	4406 £= 19253424	
Items	Unit	Total (ar)	Total (£)
ACCOMODATION OF EACH PARTICIPANTS (night of the 4th with breakfast)			
Room for the trainers at Relais des plateaux (3 persons with tax 20 %)	414500	1243500	284,229
San Cristobal (2 participants with taxe 20 %)	245260	588624	134,543
Mirandava hotel (15 participants with taxe 20 %)	70000	1260000	288
Anjaina hotel (8 participants)	70000	560000	128
Taxi r(2 trainers)	70000	140000	32
Transport cost from Majunga - Antananarivo back and forth (for the student from the University of Mahajanga/ western coast of Madagascar)	34000	68000	15,5429
Transport cost from Morondava - Antananarivo back and forth (for the student from the University of Mahajanga/ western coast of Madagascar)	45000	90000	20,5714
Car rent 2 days	360000	720000	164,571
sub Total		4670124	1067,46
CONFERENCE MATERIALS			
<i>Conference goodies</i>			0
Pens	1000	30000	6,85714
Classes	13 000	390000	89,1429
Bloc note	1 666	49980	11,424
T-Shirt	10 000	300000	68,5714
Name tag	6 000	180000	41,1429
Banner	90000	90000	20,5714
Roll up	59000	118000	26,9714
Photography	500000	500000	114,286
Marker	2000	10000	2,28571
sub Total		1667980	381,253
CONFERENCE VENUES AND FOOD			
Conference room and equipment	333333	333333	76,1905
Breakfast	16666	500000	114,286
Coffee break (2 times)	14166	850000	194,286
Lunch	33333	1000000	228,571
Diner	33333	1000000	228,571
water	4166	104150	23,8057
Jus	16 666,00	133328	30,475
Cuvee brute	62 500,00	125000	28,5714
Coca PM	3 333,00	3333	0,76183
Taxe Relais des plateaux (20%)		878083	200,705

Conference training cost (4 trainers)	1828500	7314000	1671,77
Preconference organization		20000	4,57143
Car rent 2 days	360000	720000	164,571
sub Total		12981227	2967,14
TOTAL		19319331	4415,85
Atbc contribution (bank charge and some TVA cost)			

THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS LIST

Rufford Conference		
Name (First name / Last name)	Email	Institution
01. Seleno Andrianbarela	s.andrianbarela@gmail.com	University of Antananarivo
02. Emery Heuzenry	emery.heuzenry@gmail.com	Univ. Hildesheim
03. Njaratiana Anick RAHARINDRO	njaratianaanick@gmail.com	Antananarivo University
04. Lavasoa Manuelle Sylviane Rakotozefy	lavasyloviand@gmail.com	Antananarivo University
05. RASOLOARINAINA Jean Robertin	ratsimlta@gmail.com	University of Antananarivo
6. Josh Cole	joshc@rufford.org	
7. RAKOTOMAHAMA Hajun	rakotomh@yahoo.com	Antananarivo University
8. RAMAHAZOSA Jushy Linka	ramahazos@yahoo.fr	Antananarivo University
9. Radosoa A. ANDRIANAWARIKO	aniainodna@yahoo.fr	Antananarivo University
10. BOSSA GBADAMASSI G.O.	gbadamassi@gmail.com	Chinese Academy of Sciences
11. RAVAHATRAMANANJARASOA Fely Naina	rav_felymail@yahoo.fr	University of Antananarivo
12. HERINIAINA Rio	rio.heriniaina@gmail.com	University of Diego
13. NANTENAINA Rindra Harilanto	rindra.harilanto@gmail.com	Univ. of Antananarivo
14. RADELINJANAKOLONA N. Nancie	nancie.raelinjanakolona@gmail.com	Univ. of Antananarivo
15. RATSISETRAINA J. Rita.	rita.ratsisetraina@gmail.com	Association NDRY Haitoo
16. LABETANANJARA Naina	indri.naina@gmail.com	University of Antananarivo
17. RASOLOZAKA Misa	mirabolozaka@gmail.com	University of Antananarivo
18. Sashia Dröge	droeges@uni-hildesheim.de	University of Hildesheim
19. RANDRIAMATO ANDRO Heutono DD	randrianantoendroheutona@gmail.com	University of Antananarivo
20. RASOLOZAKA Nirilanto	nirilanto.rasolozaka@gmail.com	University of Antananarivo
21. RASAPONARIVelo Herimino Manoa	manoa.herimino@gmail.com	University of Antananarivo
22. LABETANANJARA Nalinirina	nirinamananjara@gmail.com	Association GERP
23. FENOSOA Jo Samuel Ella	jellafenosoa@gmail.com	University of Antananarivo
24. Romy Trevelgen	RST@cam.ac.uk	TBA
25. Tahiana RMDRIANA RIMPLALA	tahiana22@gmail.com	Univ. TANA/CHRG/
26. RAZANAMARO Dufa	onfarah@gmail.com	MEDD
27. Tuyen Heita MWAMPAMBA	tuyen@cielo.uam.mx	Univ. Xana
28. STEPHENNO ANDRIAMI MANA	stephenno	ATBC
29. RAJONARISON Lalaina P.	lalaina-pithivias@gmail.com	Univ. of Mexico, Africa University of

There were 27 participants from different countries

Program for the day:

Times	Sunday 4 th August
7:00-9:00	Hotel Break Fast, registration of all participants
9:00-9:30	Opening Ceremony: Keynote address by the Chairman of the ATBC 2019 LOC and the Dean of the faculty of Science Tuyeni Introductions: Workshop objectives How to network
9:30-11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants activities - Onja's history time
11:00	Coffee Break / Networking exercises/ Photograph time
11: 00-13: 00	Plenary time for each participant
13:00-14:30	Lunch & Networking& Group Photo
14:30-16:30	How to communicate by Rosie Participants roles
16:30-17:00	Coffee break
17: 00 – 18: 00	Feedback, wrap up, and Closing Remarks
18:00-19:00	Free time
19:00-21:40	Group dinner

ANNEXE 01

Photo gallery



