



**Coimbra Group
Scholarship Programme
for Sub-Saharan Africa**

**Evaluation Survey
2008-2013 grant holders**

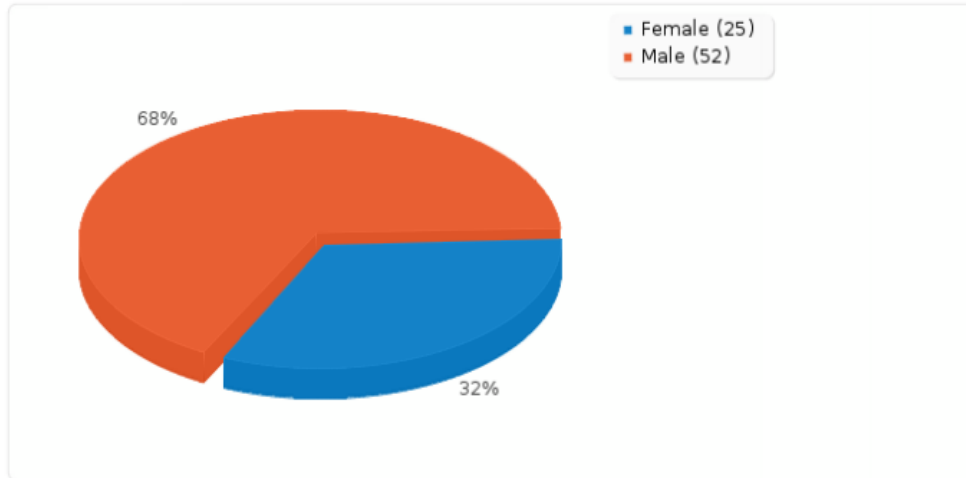
Coimbra Group Office

January 2015

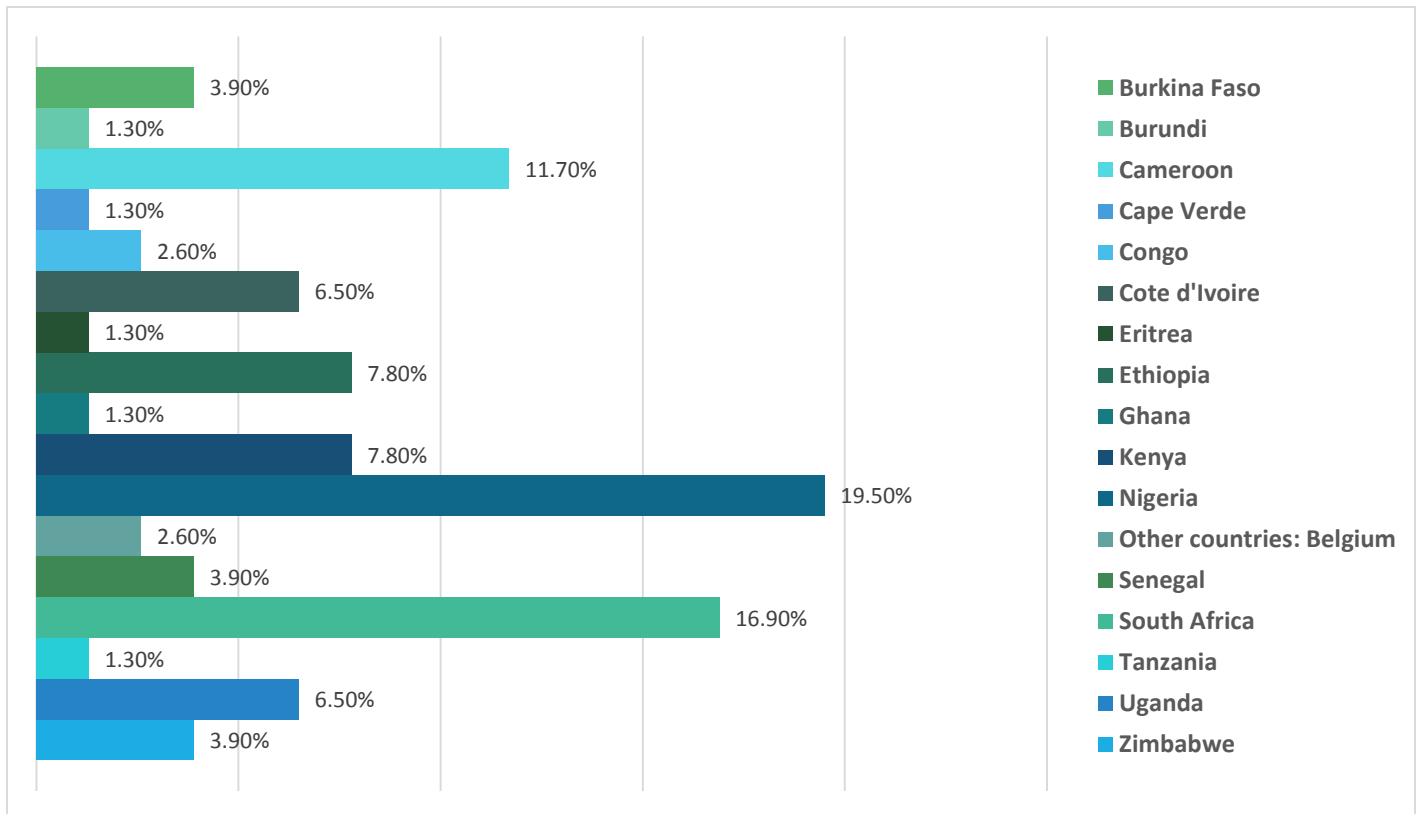
Response rate 87% (77 respondents out of 89 people questioned)

Average age when answering the survey: **37.7**

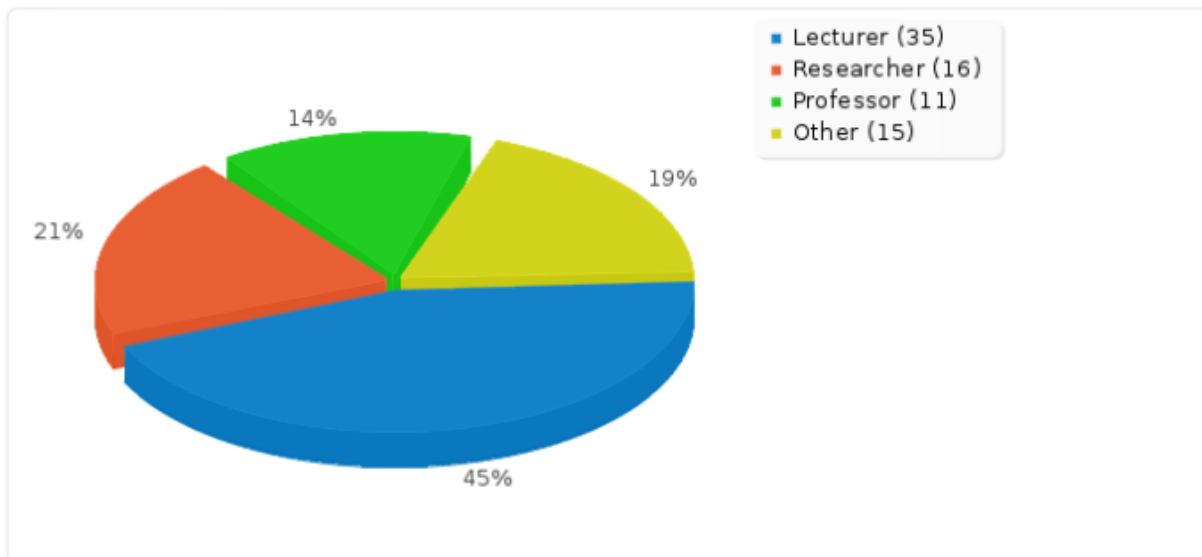
Gender: 68% men, 32% women



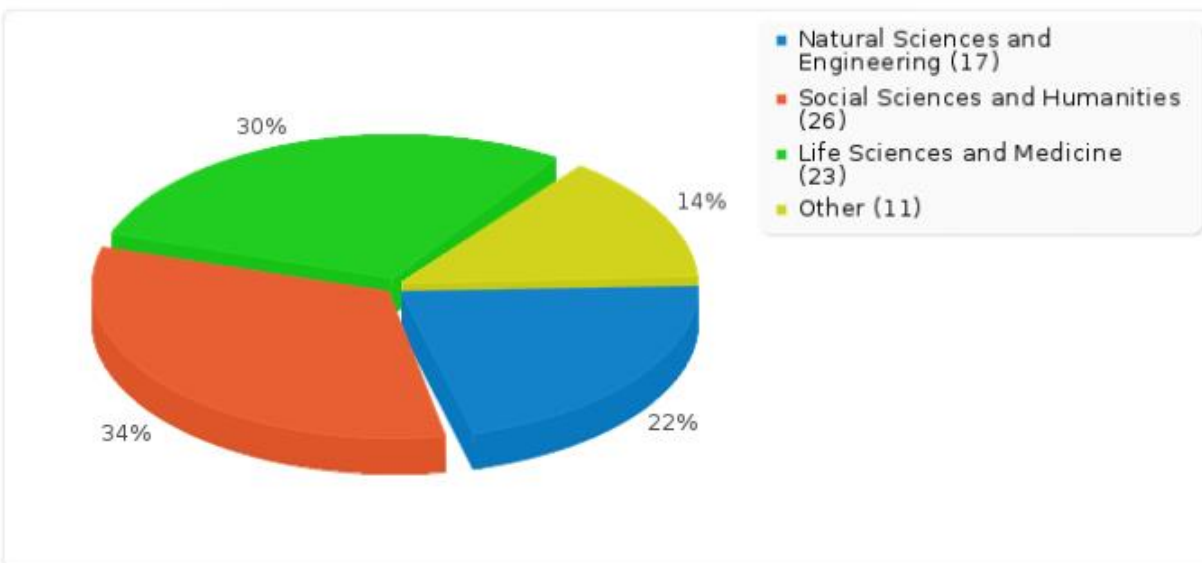
Country of home university



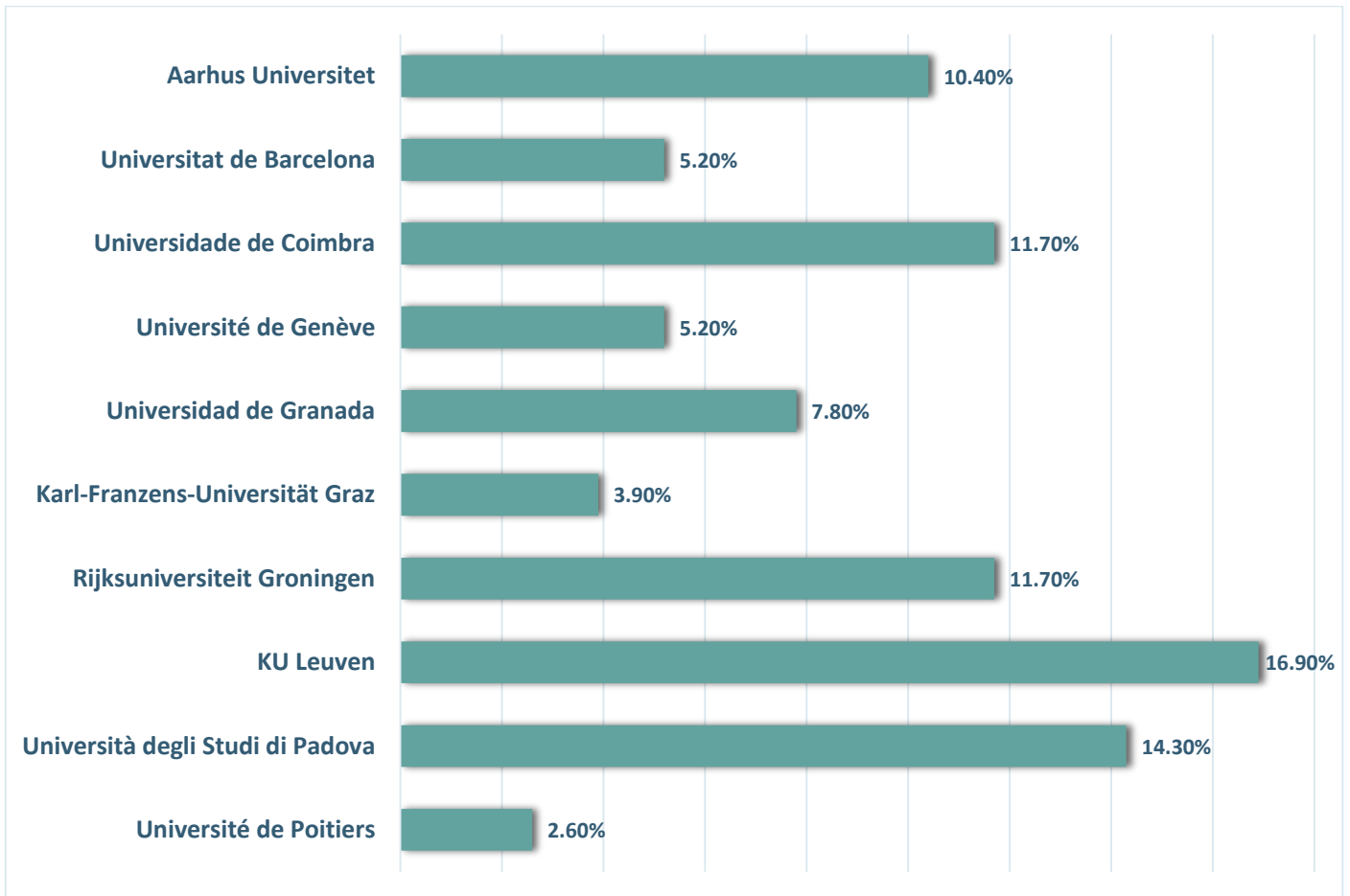
Position at home university



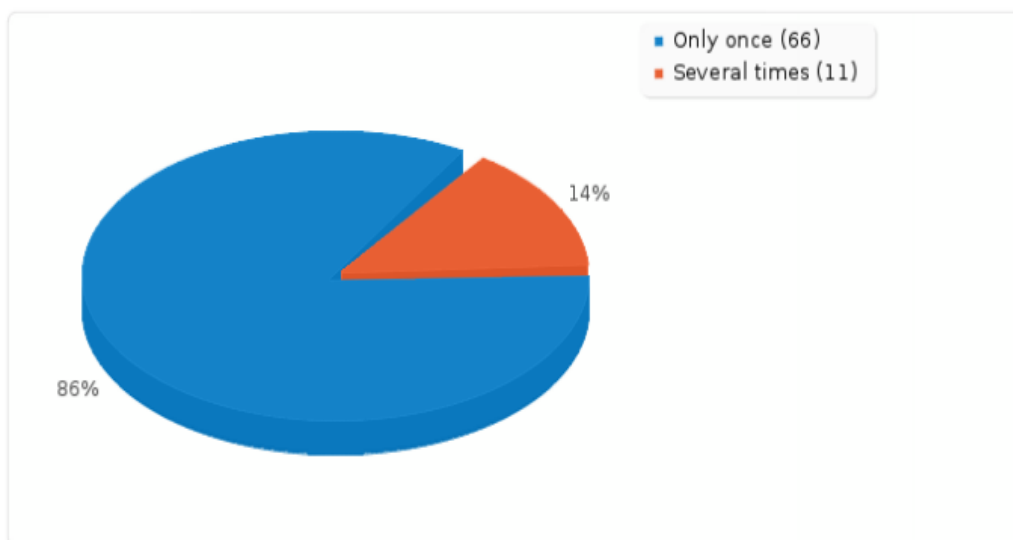
Field of research



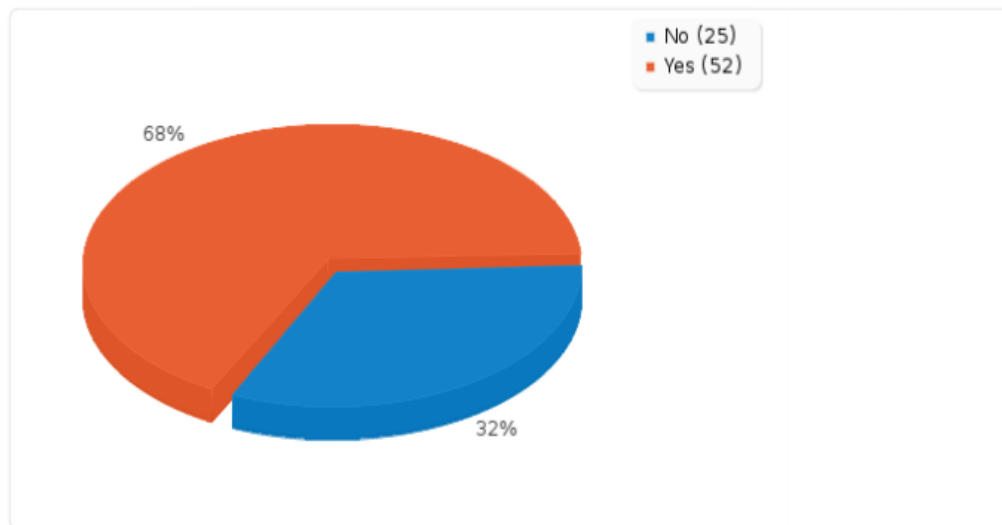
Host university



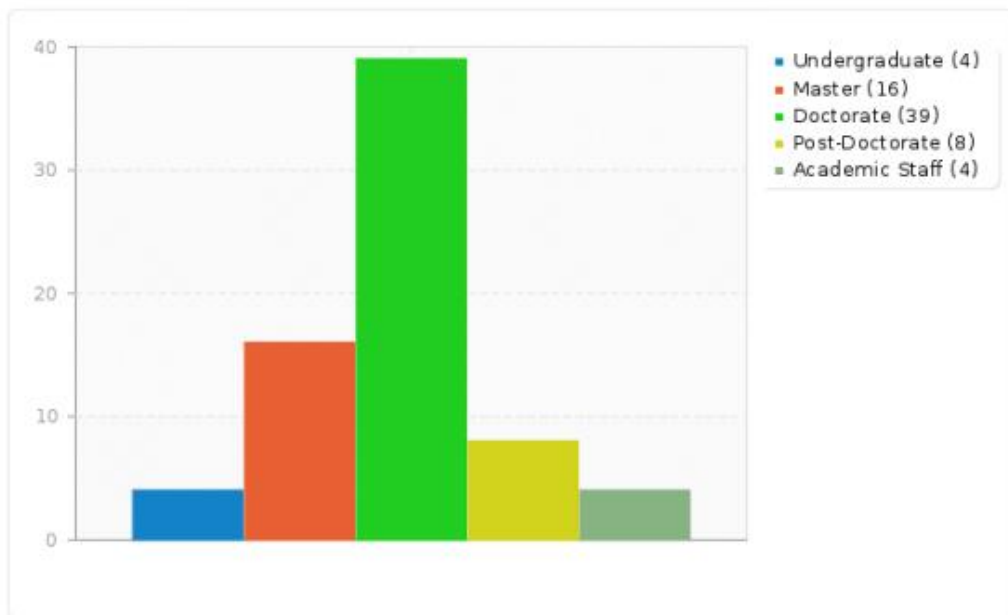
How many times did you apply for a Coimbra Group Scholarship?



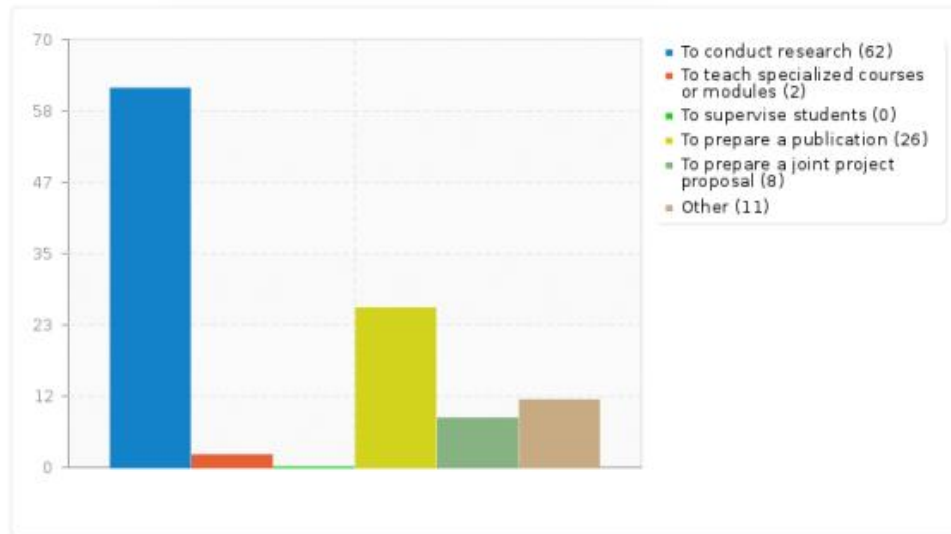
Have you ever stayed at a foreign university before?



At which academic levels?



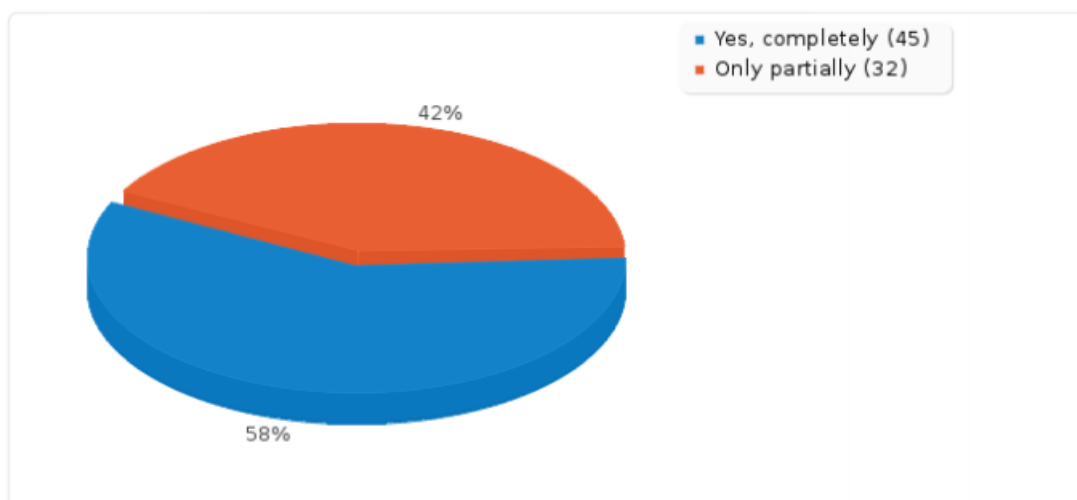
What were the main objectives of your stay?



Other objectives:

- "write [my] thesis"
- "To prepare a PhD research proposal"
- "To update my knowledge in laboratory medicine and particularly to learn more about quality control"
- "to develop advanced knowledge and skills in the use of ICT and other audiovisuals in teaching and learning and to participate in other academic activities at the Center for Instructional Psychology and Technology"
- "Literature review and prepare a PhD concept"
- "To learn a specialised technique"
- "documenting research and courses"
- "To learn financial processes of an international university"
- "To prepare my PhD proposal"
- "To be trained on microbial sampling techniques and prepare and present my PhD proposal"

Did you achieve these objectives?



Comments: main reason for the partial achievement of the objectives: the **duration of the scholarship was too short**.

"Time was not sufficient for me to do all that I intended to do."

"Mainly because of the short duration, however, we continued the joint work remotely."

"The time was too short and there were little funding for the study."

"I am still conducting research from secondary material for my Thesis. I am yet to finish my thesis [...]. I wrote two papers and one was published but the other one has been back and forth to the publishers. Currently it is under review."

"The subject of research was completely new for me. Hence its preparation requires more than two months."

"The time given was so short to accomplish as I might expected."

"Actually, I have completed one work, which is now in processes for publication on the International Journal of Analytical Chemistry. I have also started another work, but I could not finalize it because of the shortage of time."

"The time was too short for us to accomplish the entire work."

"I was able to finish 2 articles which have been published. But I am still working on the main article which has not yet been published because the research conditions in my home university are not very suitable for scientific research."

"I was hoping to interact with the academic community. I never had this opportunity. My host who would have assisted me was busy and out of the country not long after I came."

"I could not finish the publication because the time was short. However, I and my supervisor were able to continue working on it after the fellowship period via correspondence."

"Three months is very [little time] for the research. If I had some financial backing I could have extend it further."

"Limited time"

"The stay was short."

"The intended proposal needed more time (12 months) or so."

"I did not carry out all my laboratory research because the stay was short."

"Time was not enough."

"I was unable to repeat my analysis and obtain a full set of data. Having said that, learning the technique enabled me to set up the technique in my own lab and we are currently completing the project."

"The length of stay was short (2 months). The amount of the scholarship has allowed to buy a few books."

"I wanted to study the macromolecular and rheological properties of pectic fractions from papaya peels. Because of time (only 3 months) we only studied the macromolecular properties."

"Shortage of time and well-trained helpful professional and lack of lab facilities."

"The book I was preparing for publication has not been published yet, due to editorial delays. The paper I was working [on] will be published in 2013."

"Because the stay period was short."

"Duration is short."

"I learned the cultivation of spirulina and even I wrote a project on cultivation of spirulina in Ivory Coast but I have not been able to do quality aspect of Spirulina cultivated in Belgium."

"My main goals were achieved, but I didn't have enough time to do other activity tests in order to confirm the activity seen in the Zebrafish and be able to write an article."

"During these three months I achieved my objectives for these months but it is just a part of research proposal."

"Time is very short to finish my research."

"C'est encore en cours car la soutenance n'a pas encore eu lieu. Mais dans l'Université d'accueil, j'ai atteint mes objectifs."

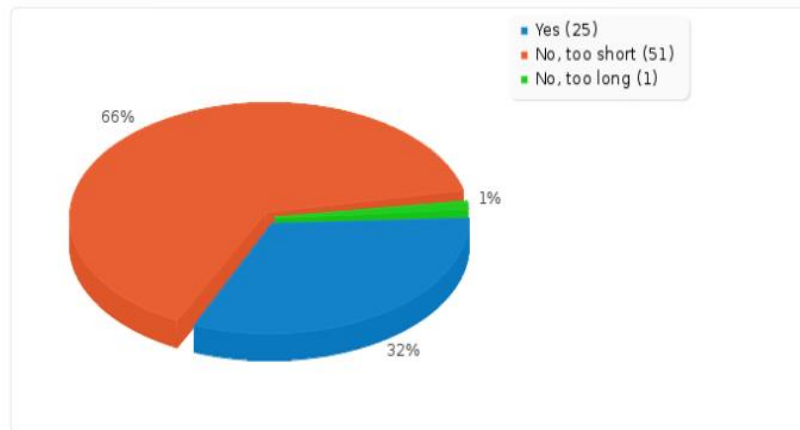
"Time for sample collection was long so I couldn't carry out all the expected experiments."

"I intended to research and write four articles for publication later in a book form. But the time was too short for me to accomplish the task. However, I managed to have two of my articles published."

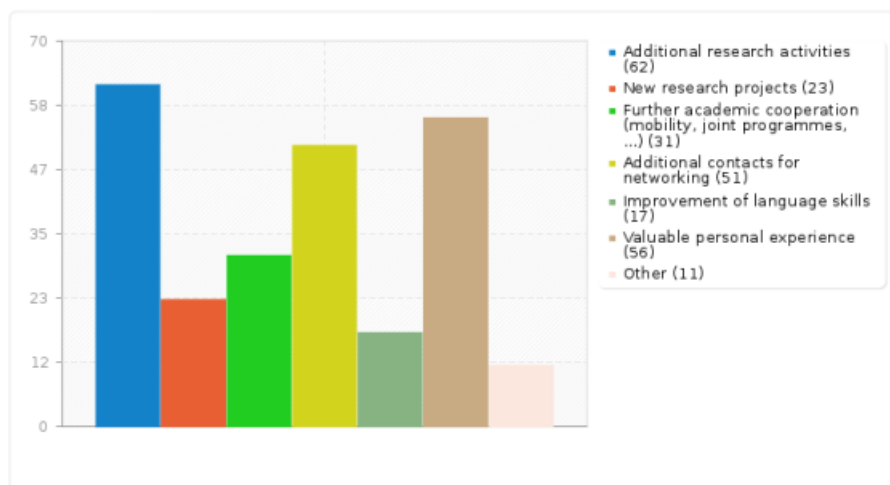
How long did you stay at the host university?

Average: **2.9 months**

Was the duration adequate?



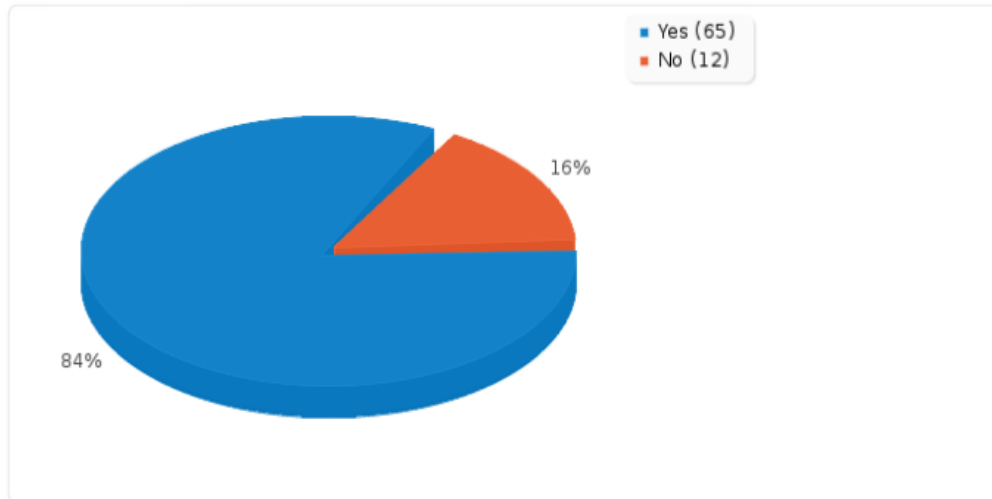
What were the main benefits of your stay?



Other benefits:

- "Sharing of research experiences and also use of advanced analytical instruments [...], which are difficult to get in least developing countries like Ethiopia."
- "I was able to write a proposal in which I got a NUFFIC scholarship."
- "it availed me the chance of setting my postdoctoral focus straight"
- "contact with specialist in my area"
- "close communication and support from my supervisors"
- "technology transfer for my control"
- "I gained skills in quality control for laboratory medicine"
- "one publication"
- "Writing articles and documentation"
- "Broadened understanding of my study project"
- "Access to literature not available when in Kenya"

Was it easy to find a supervisor or contact person at the host university?



Comments:

"If I didn't have the help of Dr [...] at the [host] University [...], It would have been quite impossible. The Professors did not want to agree to send me a Letter of Invitation."

"Many supervisors were skeptic and reluctant accepting invitations for reasons I really do not know."

"Many of the people I contacted did not respond at all to my messages. It was tough as I had to contact several people and only got response from a few."

"I guess I was just lucky to have found Prof. [...]. Most prospective host do not reply to mails. Maybe they do not know about the programme or due to language issues."

"The contact was made at an International conference in Kampala, Uganda. I had no prior access to the Professor."

"A supervisor should have confidence in the student project to accept to welcome him in his lab, so, many of them do not even reply to the mail asking for acceptance as host lab."

"Only one responded"

"Because the supervisors want to know & believe in you."

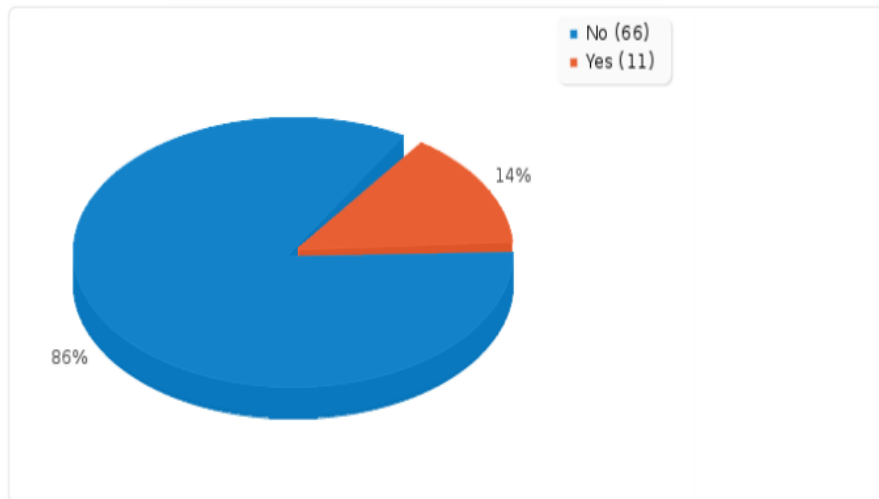
"Most supervisors indicate that they are busy or express ignorance about the scholarship and its requirements"

"Because I chose a supervisor who was my previous supervisor during my PhD study"

"Most potential hosts do not respond to emails to declare their availability"

"Almost all of contact did not have a place in their laboratories or did not carry out certain tests that you would like to perform"

Did you encounter any special problems before or during your stay at the host university?



What kind of problems?

Lodging

*"**Lodging problem** was very serious, since I was asked to find for myself an accommodation, and I had never been in [host city] before. Also, the **grant support proved to be insufficient**, since I found myself in need toward the end, and was obliged to take money from personal savings."*

*"Problem of **accommodation**."*

*"It is a bit **challenging to find accommodation when on very short stays**"*

*"The only thing I was not happy about was the **accommodation** that I was sharing with the other fellow, it was way below what I envisaged, I felt those 3 months were the worst, I think the universities hosting should make sure that an accommodation befitting the status of the researcher is sought and prepared. Besides that it was a wonderful opportunity!"*

*"The **rent is expensive in Europe** so I hope that the amount of the scholarship will increase."*

Payments

*"My **stipend was not credited on time** into the bank account"*

*"The problem had to do with receiving funds for the scholarship. There was a problem with my host bank and for some two weeks or so I had **problems accessing the funds**. It is important that an awardee of the scholarship be assisted in having an account in [host country] and have access of funds from [host country]. Many banks in my country have VISA but this is only to do some purchases and you cannot withdraw cash. So if one receives money in their home institution bank as in my case, it would be difficult to access the cash. Eventually I got a cheque and deposited it in a friend's account who was so helpful and allowed me to use his account."*

*"There was a problem in relation to **payment**. I received my salary after 2 months of staying in [host city]."*

*"**Accessing bank account**"*

Amount of funding

"The funding could only enable me to stay for 2.5 months since I had postponed by going. I had to pay for the next 2 weeks on my own."

"There was **no budgetary support for the research**. My supervisor had to make a special appeal to the University to get the research funds and use some of his personal money."

"The scholarship **didn't cover the international and local travel**."

"The only problem that I have is the **price of room**. It is too expensive for the student. I think is better to harmonize the price of room."

"The **fund** allotted for transportation is **so small**. I hope you will improve in the future."

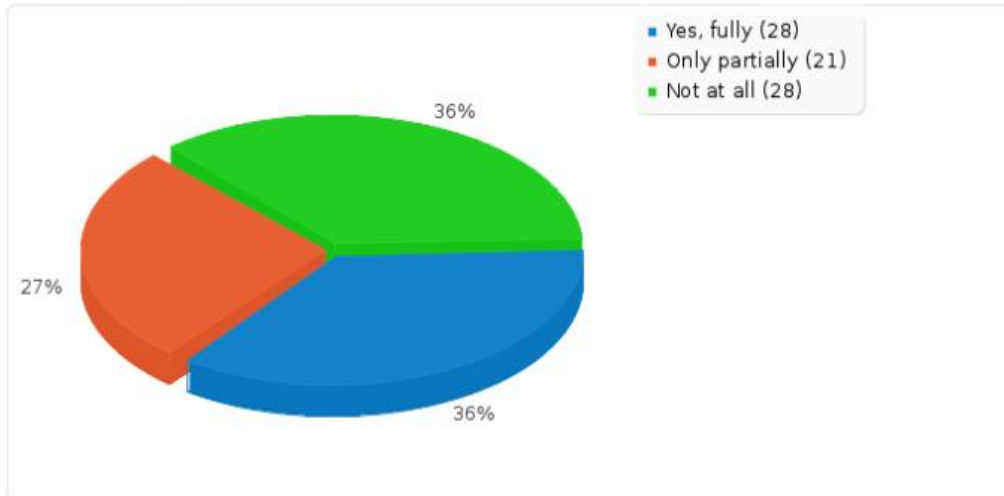
"The **subsistence** paid to me seemed to be **insufficient** as the cost of living [was] high."

Miscellaneous

"**Cultural barrier and social system differences** but nothing unduly unsavory. I had the best time of my life so far, as soon as I understood the cultural system."

"I only had a problem of getting the **VISA** because the VISA processing for students is very long. I eventually settled for a tourist VISA, otherwise all was well."

Was your stay abroad supported by your home university?



Comments:

Study/research leave

"I was given the whole of September as an additional one month for my vacation that year."

"I was granted permission to be away for the three months. However while some institutions would give financial assistance to facilitate their staff in addition to what the fellowship offers, no such support was given by my home university."

"My host University only provided paid leave of absence. There was no other facilitation."

"I was granted a leave to study abroad."

"My home university partially supported my stay abroad by granting me permission to travel abroad for 3 months without any problem."

"I was allowed to use my annual research leave to travel to [host university] for the fellowship."

Regular salary

"My stay was not supported financially. My home university accepted to give me a study leave during which I continued to receive my salary and was able to assist my family back home with everyday necessities. Because I was just beginning my writing, the stay was, of course, short and as expected it would not have been possible to finish in the three months."

"My home institution paid my salary for the period of the fellowship but this was sufficient to complement the Fellowship stipend from COIMBRA."

"They continued to pay my salary while I was away but could not assist in additional funding that I needed."

"They continued to pay my monthly salary."

Financial support

"I received air ticket from my home University and pocket money to use for a few days after arrival."

"My university supported only the travel by plane in low cost."

"I was given my salary and some pocket money."

"Paid to me books to learn Spanish."

"Transport and some expenses for staying."

"My home university paid for my air ticket."

"My University took on charge one month of my stay. The rent is expensive in Europe so I hope that the amount of the scholarship will increase."

"[The home] University contributed to my pocket money."

Non-financial support

"My home institute did not contribute in any way to my stay abroad. But I had their moral support."

"support during sampling"

"Although my home university was happy for me to gain knowledge, it didn't contribute at all to any expense associated with my trip or my stay abroad."

No (financial) support

"PhD students are not supported financially in my country so I benefit only from the Coimbra Group scholarship."

"My home university doesn't give any kind of support if you travel for your own research purposes or activities."

"The University said that since I have a scholarship, they do not have to get involved financially."

"My university does not have enough financial means - My stay was completely supported by the Coimbra Group scholarship."

"No support was provided by the home university as the research was driven by [the supervisor] and myself."

"The stay was fully funded by the Coimbra Group."

"My home university couldn't support me, [it] was tough to cover everything."

"The travel fees were supported by myself and the rest by the Coimbra Program Scholarship."

"The dean of our faculty was not happy."

"I only relied on Coimbra scholarship"

"the ticket was paid by myself"

"I supported myself alongside the scholarship"

"No it was not supported. I received my support from the Coimbra Group Scholarship"

"My university does not have financial resources to enable researchers to do internships at other universities."

"My home university just gives us their approval to go but it does not give us financial support."

"I was relying on the stipend that I received from Coimbra, which was somehow paltry because it was too expensive in [host country]."

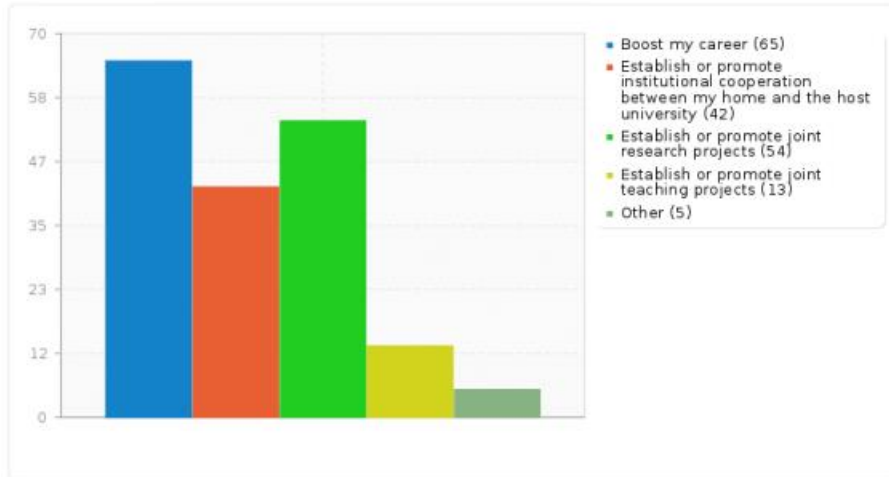
"Here at home, the Government doesn't give any support to research, it is a big problem and we have to deal with that."

"My stay was supported by the salary given by COIMBRA Group scholarship"

"My university does not fund research for teachers. I pay myself what [I had] to pay"

"All my stay at the [host] University was covered by the Coimbra Group scholarship I obtained."

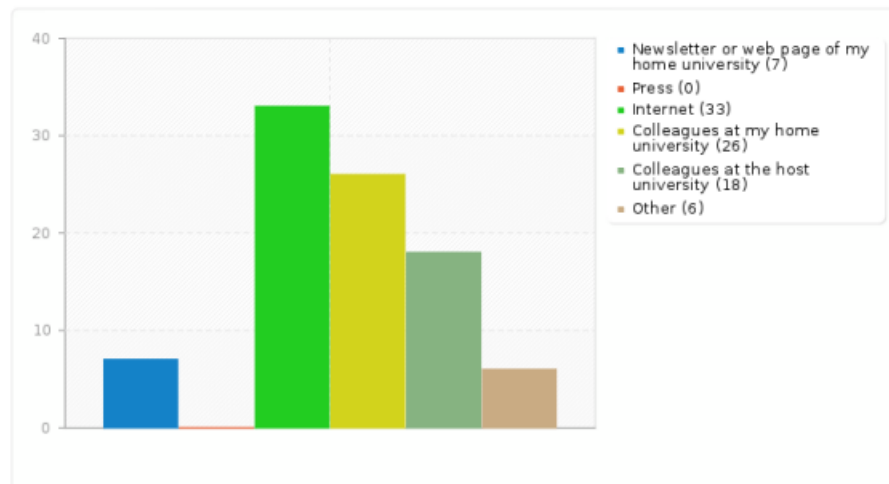
What kind of impact do you think your stay at a Coimbra Group university will have?



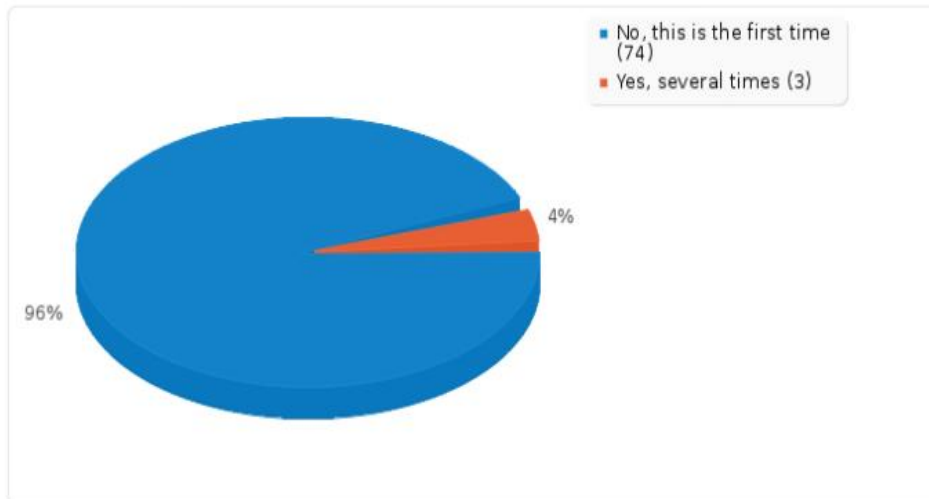
Others:

- "open my eyes to new area"
- "Technology transfer to my home University"
- "Je souhaite vraiment mettre sur pied l'Economic Developemnt Board que je propose, pour sortir la jeunesse Camerounaise du chômage endémique dans lequel elle est plongée"
- "Has facilitated to accomplish my proposal on time and of good quality"
- "learning new research techniques and use of equipment not available in home country"

How did you come to know about the Coimbra Group Scholarship Programme?



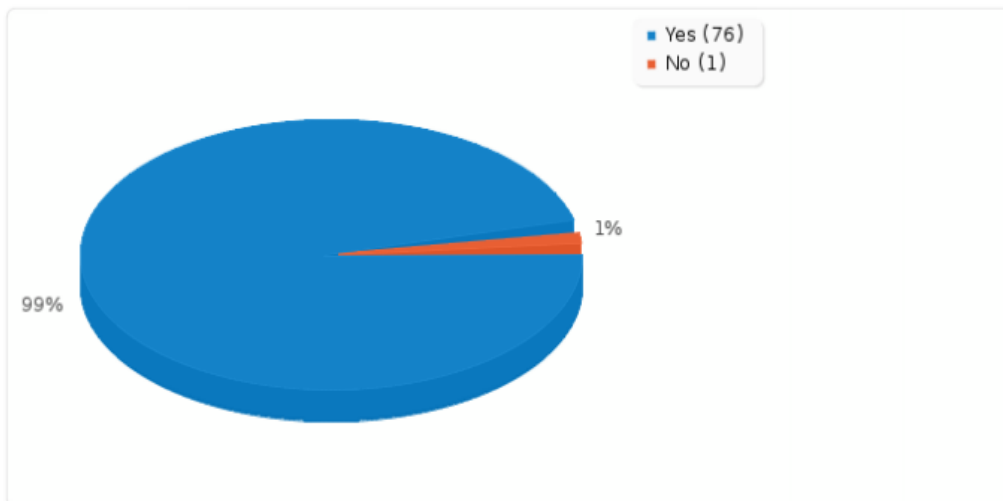
Were you ever granted a Coimbra Group Scholarship before?



Would you be willing to become an ambassador or advisor for future Coimbra Group Scholars?

"Yes": 100%

Would you like to join a Coimbra Group Alumni Association?



Additional comments or suggestions

Duration should be extended

"The duration should be extended in order to accommodate room for completion of research work at the host university. Also, that a certificate is given for the award of this scholarship for record purpose."

"It [would] be good if time and funding [could] be extended for a longer period for one to complete his research and at least send it to be published."

"This award is an important opportunity for students from Africa, because they have the opportunity to go to a university with the facilities they need to achieve their goals. My suggestion is that it would be important and useful for us that the duration of training is prolonged [by] a month or more."

"I would like to suggest a case by case determination of duration of stay at the university based on proposed objective, as one month is a bit short especially due to time one takes to settle in a new country."

Positive feedback

"The mobility has impacted on my research career and is still impacting positively till date. [...] my research profile improved and I now have another fellowship for a full PhD in Brazil. Thanks to COIMBRA."

"I am very satisfied with your scholarship, and would like to say thank you."

"Although my stay abroad was short, it was worth it as I achieved so much in a short time. I'm grateful for the opportunity and look forward to getting another one for my Postdoc programme. Thank you so much."

"Thank you Coimbra Group. Please continue to do this to help young researchers from developing countries to improve their skills as much as you can."

"Just to express my heartfelt gratitude for that support and to wish to benefit for another opportunity."

"I would like to thank the Coimbra Group Scholarship Programme for the valuable research experience that I received at the [host] University. It allowed me an opportunity to meet other scholars in a European university with whom I have conducted research leading to publications. I am very grateful to Coimbra Group Scholarship Programme for this great opportunity to network to further my career. I would be very happy to act as an ambassador/advisor for future Coimbra Group Scholars and it is a great idea to join the Coimbra Group Alumni Association. Please count on my participation."

"Just to thank Coimbra for the opportunity, I really appreciate."

"My stay at [host university] was a success and had boosted my career. I now work on my university as a teacher and researcher. Thank you Coimbra Group"

"Coimbra Program is a good opportunity for young African researchers. Through this program we can improve our research capacity, we can also learn about the host university and share our finding with other researchers abroad. And after completion of the program, I have taught my young labmates."

"I would like to thank Coimbra Group for their help. They helped me to improve my research work and to achieve some part of my proposal. Thank you."

"I just want to appreciate the opportunity that Coimbra scholarship gave me to have a research stay at [host] University. It opened many academic contacts. I wish Coimbra could give me another chance in future to be at [host] University. The Library is well resourced. This is completely different from my University. We hardly have books in our library. Thank you once again for the scholarship."

Suggestions

"The program is very good. Small research grants should be made available for buying research consumables during the stay. For young African Researchers, opportunities should be given to them to visit as young professors to learn more from colleagues, interact, build networks as it is the case for Latin American countries."

"Coimbra Group could link up with our Centre For International Linkages And Programs at University of Nairobi. This may allow the group access more Kenyan and East African students."

"Je souhaiterais que La Bourse Coimbra aide les postulants dans l'obtention des Lettres d'invitations des professeurs d'Université."

"Coimbra Scholarship is a great opportunity for young academics, such as me, in developing countries. It really has enabled me to develop new and different capabilities and abilities from an international perspective. It has promoted my teaching and research skills. It has enhanced my academic expertise and academic leadership skills and thus promoted my personal and professional development. More importantly, it enabled me to help my colleague lecturers and (research) students in my university in Ghana to develop their academic and professional skills. For instance when I was at [host] University, I was able to connect my colleague lecturers and PhD students to some professors abroad. In addition, it has helped me to manage and lead my faculty successfully towards the achievement of the mission of the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. In this regard, I wish to suggest that Coimbra Scholarship Group should kindly give me another opportunity to travel to my host university to expand and strengthen the above enumerated benefits. Their kind consideration should also be extended to more young academics from developing countries. I wish to take the opportunity to use this platform to express my deepest appreciation to Coimbra Scholarship Group for their kindheartedness."

"It would be good for beneficiaries to have another opportunity of being supported by Coimbra. For example, I benefited from the scholarship at the initial stages of my PhD."

"I think that the scholarship should be available for 10 years after the PhD degree in order to strengthen and extend the collaboration."

"Coimbra should also give an opportunity to students from Europe to come to Africa to enable them to also appreciate the differences that exist between post-graduate education in both parts of the world."

"Coimbra Group should put in place post-doctor for emerging African researchers to strengthen their collaboration."

"I would like to take this opportunity of passing a word of gratitude to Coimbra Scholarship for the opportunity granted to me to further my research career. As previously indicated I learnt a lot while [at the host] University."

"This help is commendable. However would like the number of seats be increased; the amount of the scholarship be higher and the stay be longer."