

## ● Building capacity among early-career researchers

### Supporting developing nations

Extending the Society's existing work in support of young people undertaking field research and expeditions, our International Leadership and Capacity Building (ILCB) project, funded by Royal Dutch Shell plc, has enabled us to provide opportunities for Ecuadorian, Indonesian and Ugandan researchers at an early stage in their careers, to undertake field research in their home countries.

To date we have awarded nine bursaries of £2,000 each, accompanied by our expert mentoring and support, to ensure each recipient benefits fully from the opportunity.

Priority is given to field research relevant to the UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of making a contribution to ensuring environmental sustainability. The eight MDGs range from eradicating extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. All have the target date of 2015.

In 2008, Ugandan Simon Akwetaireho was one of the first to receive an ILCB bursary. This made it possible for him to undertake field research investigating the economic value placed by local communities on the Mabamba Bay area in the country's Wakiso district.

By measuring not only the local but also national and international economic impact of ecological damage to these important wetlands, Simon succeeded in helping to place the need for their conservation on the agenda of development decision-makers in the region.

Now working in Uganda for an international NGO, the Wildlife Conservation Society, on a project aiming to conserve the biodiversity of northern Albertine Rift forests, Simon is putting to good use the skills and knowledge he developed through his ILCB-funded study.

"An important aspect of my work is assessing the ecological, economic and cultural value of the forests", he says. "I hope I can contribute to their protection for the benefit of present and future generations."



Indonesian Fiona Zakaria secured an ILCB bursary in May 2009, to conduct field research into ways of providing access to a safe supply of water for the urban poor in Jakarta.

Our funding and support allowed her to investigate how water resources are managed in the city, where over-pumping has created concerns about the availability and quantity of ground water supplies.

Her research revealed that existing water programmes only benefited a small proportion of Jakarta's poorer households and illustrated the need for new investment in the expansion of access to piped water supplies.

As a result of her work in Jakarta, Fiona has recently been recruited by UNICEF to work on its Water Sanitation and Hygiene programme in Sudan.

Supported by the ILCB project, Simon and Fiona's research has helped to further knowledge relating to the conservation of vital environmental resources in their home countries and other developing nations.

[Six more bursaries are available in 2010](#) for early career researchers from Ecuador, Indonesia and Uganda. Group applications are also welcome.