



UNITED NATIONS  
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**UNU-LRT**

Land Restoration Training Programme

## NEWSLETTER



### Six-month training programme

The annual six-month training programme started on 13 March, with 14 fellows from eight different countries. The fellows this year come from Ethiopia (1 fellow), Ghana (3), Lesotho (2), Malawi (1), Mongolia (3), Niger (1), Uganda (2) and Uzbekistan (1), four women and 10 men. The six-month training focuses on land restoration and sustainable land management and the specialists that are trained at UNU-LRT come from our many partner institutions, such as universities and research institutions, ministries and local governments, and NGO's and state agencies. This year's group is the largest to date and when the group finishes the training in September, more than 100 people will have graduated from the training programme.

The highlights of this year's training were several international guest lecturers. In May, UNU-LRT received specialists from partner institutions in Uganda. Two of them, **Dr Daniel Waiswa** and **Dr Gerald Eilu**, both lecturers at Makerere University in Kampala, gave a lecture on the status and management of invasive species in Uganda. In June, UNU-LRT received two lecturers from Leeds University, UK: **Professor Lindsay C Stringer**, who gave a lecture entitled *The Economics of Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management*, and **Dr Claire Quinn**, who led discussions with the UNU-LRT fellows on the subject of methodology of cost benefit studies on sustainable land management. Finally, in August, UNU-LRT welcomed **Dr Maryam Niamir-Fuller**, who has extensive experience in the field of sustainable development. Dr Niamir-Fuller directed the Sustainable Land Management Program of UNDP in the 2000s and she also directed the Global Environment Facility Unit of UNEP, where she oversaw and managed development projects in all environmental fields. Furthermore, she coordinated and lead the UNEP's engagement in the design of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by

the UN. Dr Niamir-Fuller, who holds a PhD in Rangeland Management, gave three interactive lectures on rangelands, livestock and land restoration. She focused on how to move towards sustainability in the extensive and intensive livestock sectors, proposing a conceptual framework model to transform the sectors.

The six-month training is soon coming to an end and the fellows are now busy finishing their individual research projects. There are over 20 supervisors attached to the research projects this year from several institutions, including the Agricultural University of Iceland, Soil Conservation Service of Iceland, University of Iceland, Iceland Academy of the Arts, Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources, and two consulting engineering companies (EFLA and VERKÍS). The graduation will take place on 13 September.



### Open seminars on climate change, land use & management and UN SDG's

UNU-LRT co-organized an open seminar in May on *Climate Change and Land Management in Uganda* at the Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavik with the Institute of International Affairs at the University of Iceland. The key-note speaker was **Dr Jerome Sebadduka Lugumira**, soil scientist at the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), a partner institution of UNU-LRT in Uganda. His presentation was entitled: *Climate Change and Land Management in Uganda*. In his talk Dr Lugumira outlined the effects of climate change on agro-based land in Uganda and how the country has adapted its policies to tackle the emergent challenges. He also discussed the institutional challenges facing the implementation of the policies. The UNU-LRT Director, Dr Hafdis Hanna Aegisdottir, as well as Dr Jon Geir Petursson, Director at the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources and UNU-LRT Studies Committee member, also provided inputs to the meeting.

In August, UNU-LRT hosted an open seminar at the National Museum of Iceland, where the main international guest lecturer of UNU-LRT, **Dr Maryam Niamir-Fuller**, gave a talk entitled: *Breaking Silos: The Design and Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*, where she focused on how different sectors can cooperate on achieving an integrated implementation of the SDG's. Dr Niamir-Fuller, who is an expert in the field of sustainable development, has worked extensively within the UN system e.g. with UNEP, where she coordinated the design of the SDG's and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UNU-LRT fellows attended and presented at an open seminar in May on *Land use and climate change* organized by the Agricultural University of Iceland at the Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavik. The UNU-LRT fellows gave two talks at the seminar on *Effects of climate change on land and livelihoods in Africa and Central Asia* and *Climate change in Africa and Central Asia: What needs to be done?* These talks were presented on behalf of the UNU-LRT fellows by Ms Beatrice Dossah from Ghana and Mr Richard Komakech from Uganda.



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## Building awareness on land restoration to broad audiences: the ENABLE project

UNU-LRT is a part of the ENABLE consortium, a partnership of organisations from the private, public, and non-profit sectors. The main goal of ENABLE is to establish an educational platform to create awareness about the functioning of ecosystems and the benefits of sustainable landscape management. Such education can bridge the gaps between ecology and economy, environment and business, theory and practice, global and local, and help deal with global challenges as defined in the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The ENABLE consortium has already created one MOOC on [Landscape restoration for sustainable development: A business approach](#). This course is aimed at business students and professionals as well as anyone with an interest in business-driven landscape restoration. It offers comprehensive knowledge of landscape degradation and restoration from both the perspective of natural science and from an economics and business perspective. The course was launched on 1 May and is open to all and free of charge. The course has already attracted more than 1000 learners from all over the world. It provides an exciting opportunity to spread the knowledge of how restoring degraded landscapes can return natural, social and financial capital that supports people's livelihoods and wellbeing. You can find more information about the MOOC on the ENABLE [website](#) and register for the course [here](#).

The partners in the ENABLE consortium are UNU-LRT, Rotterdam School of Management, Commonland, Estoril Conferences and Spanish National Research Council. Additionally, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Economics of Land Degradation, University of Leeds, UNCCD and IUCN, support the project with valuable advice. ENABLE is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

We encourage you to follow the ENABLE activities on [twitter.com/enable4returns](https://twitter.com/enable4returns)



## Linking migration, land degradation, and land restoration: Potential for sustainable livelihoods

UNU-LRT held a workshop at the Estoril Conferences on 31 May together with its partners in the [ENABLE consortium](#). The theme of the workshop was *Linking migration, land degradation, and land restoration: potential for sustainable livelihoods*. At the workshop, two former UNU-LRT fellows shared their experiences on restoration work in their countries. They were Dr Bulgamaa Densambuu from the Green Gold Pasture Management and Animal Health project in Mongolia and Mr Moustapha Ibrahim from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in Niger. In their talks they showcased the benefits that land restoration brings to local communities, such as employment, food security and business opportunities. This improves the livelihoods and living condition of local people and reduces the need to migrate.

The ENABLE workshop started with a talk on the importance of leadership skills to successfully restore landscapes. It was followed by talks on the extensive damage caused by land degradation and the multiple benefits large-scale landscape restoration brings. Local cases from Portugal and Spain were introduced, showcasing the challenges and opportunities in restoring landscapes. Then the diverse capacity needs for resilient ecosystems and societies were discussed and capacity building at UNU-LRT introduced, followed by the cases from Niger and Mongolia presented by the former UNU-LRT fellows.

The [Estoril Conferences](#) are a biennial events in Estoril, Portugal. The theme this year was Global Migration: Leaving home in a globalized world.



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## Visit from Uganda – short course development

UNU-LRT will carry out a short course in Uganda in September this year with its Ugandan partner institutions, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Makerere University. The short course will be on sustainable land management, land restoration and linkages with climate change. In mid-May, the Ugandan members of the curriculum development team visited Iceland to attend a working meeting with their counterparts from UNU-LRT, in order to develop the short course curriculum. The four Ugandan specialists are Dr Jerome Sebadduka Lugumira, a Natural Resources Manager at NEMA, Ms Evelyn Mugume, a District Environment Officer in Kasese municipality and former UNU-LRT fellow, and two lecturers from Makerere University: Dr Daniel Waiswa and Dr Gerald Eilu. The team of four had a very productive five-day stay in Iceland.



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### Former UNU-LRT fellow awarded MSc scholarship

UNU-LRT has for the first time awarded an MSc scholarship to a former fellow. Earlier in 2017, UNU-LRT had an open call amongst former fellows for applications on a competitive basis for an MSc degree at the Agricultural University, for a project that has a focus on measuring carbon sequestration rates in soils afforested during the past 50 years in three areas in Iceland. UNU-LRT received some good applications from former fellows and it was Mr Joel Owona, a former fellow from Uganda, that was accepted by the Agricultural University as the candidate that was granted the scholarship.

Mr Owona arrived in mid-June and started immediately to work on his MSc project. The UNU-LRT warmly welcomes Mr Owona.



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### New staff member

In June this year, Dr Isabel C Barrio was employed as a Project Manager (part time) in a temporary position at UNU-LRT. Dr Barrio also works part time as a Research Associate at the Institute of Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Iceland (UI).

Dr Barrio obtained her PhD on management of native rabbit populations in agricultural landscapes of Southern Spain in 2010, and worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Alberta (Canada) from 2011 to 2014. She has taught courses on ecology, conservation biology and grazing management at the graduate and undergraduate level, and she is actively involved in supervising students. Within the UNU-LRT programme, Isabel supervises and coordinates fellows' individual research projects and helps with administration and organization. Isabel is warmly welcomed to the UNU-LRT Team!



**UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY - LAND RESTORATION TRAINING PROGRAMME**

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