



Dear former fellows and other friends of UNU-LRT

At the end of the year we look back at the progress made, and achievements and milestones reached in 2010. We have compiled the highlights into this small leaflet that we are sending you along with good wishes for the festive season ahead.

LRT recognised as United Nations University Training Programme



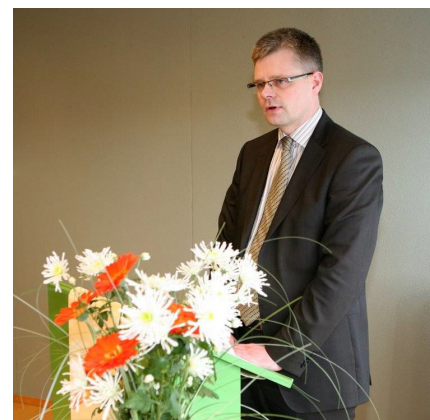
After signing the agreement at the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs on February 17th 2010. From left: Sveinn Runolfsson director of the SCSJ, Hafdis Hanna Aegisdottir UNU-LRT director, and Agust Sigurdsson AUI rector.

On February 17th the Land Restoration Training Programme was formally recognized as a postgraduate-level United Nations University Training Programme, when an agreement of cooperation was signed by the United Nations University, the Government of Iceland, the Soil Conservation Service of Iceland (SCSI) and the Agricultural University of Iceland (AUI).

Many years have passed since the first ideas of establishing a training programme in Iceland on land restoration emerged. The long road we have passed from the first idea to a fully flown UNU training programme has been guided by many talented, unselfish and committed people. The UNU-LRT team

thanks all these people for their unwavering commitment to the programme and their continued support. We believe that this is only the beginning of a highly successful training programme that will be leading in the training of specialists in land restoration and sustainable land management.

The recognition of LRT as a UNU training programme was celebrated at the headquarters of UNU-LRT in Keldnaholt Reykjavík. The UNU-LRT is the third UNU training programme in Iceland and we are very proud to be a part of that family. Speeches were delivered at the celebration on behalf of the many groups of people that have contributed to the establishment and growth of the programme.



Einar Gunnarsson, the permanent secretary of state addresses the celebration at the UNU-LRT headquarters

The first annual six-month training of UNU-LRT

The first annual six-month training of the Land Restoration Training Programme since it became a part of UNU was offered this year. This annual course is the central activity of the UNU-LRT programme. The six-month training usually starts in April and ends in October. This year the training could not start until May 3rd due to the eruption in Eyjafjallajökull volcano and the disruption it caused on air travel around the world. To make up for this delay the programme was compacted by teaching on Saturdays and adding evening classes.



The 2010 UNU-LRT fellows in a lowland area that was highly impacted by ash from the Eyjafjallajökull volcano eruption. From left: Moustapha Ibrahim (Niger), Sodgerel Purevee and Burmaa Dashbal (Mongolia), Nazgul Esengulova (Kyrgyzstan), Alemayehu Muluneh (Ethiopia) and Hiskia Mbura (Namibia).

Six specialists from five countries participated in the 2010 six-month training and received specialized training in *land degradation assessment & land restoration* (3 fellows), and *sustainable land management* (3 fellows). They came from Ethiopia, Namibia, and Niger in sub-Saharan Africa, and Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan in central Asia. Niger and Kyrgyzstan are new countries represented in the programme. The fellows presented their individual project work at the graduation ceremony on October 7th.

Networking and continuing education

To facilitate networking of fellows and educators of UNU-LRT, an internal file system has been developed and added to the website of the UNU-LRT. The internal file system makes it possible for educators to upload and update their educational material for the programme on the website, and for former fellows to access this material for their continuing education. Educators will also be able to access each other's materials, which will benefit the curriculum development of the programme. We hope that this internal file system will increase traffic to the UNU-LRT website and facilitate networking activities among fellows in future projects. Networking among former fellows in their future assignments is a valuable product of their stay in Iceland and it facilitates links between institutions in developing countries. The internal file system was developed in cooperation with the UNU Fisheries Training Programme in Iceland.

Staff

The UNU-LRT programme director, Dr. Hafdis Hanna Aegisdottir, went on a maternity leave in April. The deputy programme director, Berglind Orradottir, has served as the acting director during her leave. Jona Bjork Jonsdottir has worked at the UNU-LRT programme since April and will work until the end of the year, when the programme director resumes her post. Thorbjorg Valdis Kristjansdottir works part time as office manager of the programme as in previous years.



All the personnel who have worked at the LRT programme since its establishment were gathered at UNU-LRT at the opening feast of the 2010 six-month training programme on May 11th. From left: Jona Bjork, Ingibjorg Svala, Berglind, Sigridur, Hafdis Hanna and Thorbjorg Valdis.

Best wishes for the Festive Season and a Happy New Year

Hafdis Hanna Aegisdottir, Berglind Orradottir, Jona Bjork Jonsdottir

and Thorbjorg Valdis Kristjansdottir