

Report: Follow-up survey to former fellows – 2013

In the first quarter of 2013, a survey was sent to all former fellows that have graduated from the Land Restoration Training Programme in Iceland, now the UNU-LRT Programme. The fellows graduated in the period from 2007 to 2012, total of 41 fellow, 20 women and 21 men. The aim of the survey was to explore UNU-LRT fellows' work and education experiences since graduating.

36 former fellows responded to the questionnaire sent to them by e-mail, or 88%¹, 53% men and 47% women. Highest number of respondents came from Mongolia and Uganda, but those are also the countries which have sent the highest numbers of fellows to the UNU-LRT Programme.

1. Current workplace and responsibilities at work

Twenty-five out of the 36 that responded to the questionnaire were still at the same workplace as before joining the UNU-LRT programme, or 69%. Out of the 11 that had changed workplace, four were studying further (PhD's and MA's).

At the time of the survey, the former fellows were currently working in the following fields:

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|------------------------------|-----|
| 1) Research and/or teaching: | 61% |
| 2) Public administration: | 28% |
| 3) Private sector: | 8% |
| 4) NGO's | 3% |

2. Influence of training on participants' work

With the exception of one, all of the respondents agreed that the participation in the UNU-LRT Programme had influenced their work. Most commonly, participants described more responsibilities and/or new projects (39%) at their work to be the main changes compared to prior to the UNU-LRT participation. Secondly, a promotion or a new job (26%) as well as enhanced skills and knowledge in the job (26%) were also mentioned.

3. Further studies

After graduating from the UNU-LRT Programme, 16 out of 36 respondents have studied further or 44%. Most of them took or were taking their MA or MSc degrees or eight people. Seven former fellows had pursued their PhD's and one a Diploma.

Furthermore 69% of the former fellows had participated in a local and/or international conference since leaving the UNU-LRT Programme and many of them had participated in several ones. Twelve former fellows, or 33%, had published articles/papers after graduating from the programme.

¹ All numbers are rounded.

4. Enhancement of professional and personal skills

All respondents replied that participation in the UNU-LRT Programme had enhanced their professional skills. Of those who responded to this question, 70% said that their analytical skills had improved and 20% said that their communication skills (verbal, writing and presentation skills) had enhanced. Increased awareness and new approach was mentioned of 6% of participants, while 3% mentioned management skills.

Regarding the personal skills, almost all of the respondents believed they had improved. Most respondents thought their advancement was predominantly in interpersonal and cultural relations (35%), as well as in personal development (coaching) (29%).

Language and communication also scored high (23%).

The study subjects and/or programme aspects of the UNU-LRT Programme most useful for the participants were as follows (34 respondents, who picked three areas):

- 1) Individual project (47%)
- 2) Academic skills (38%)
- 3) Statistics and analysis (32%)
- 4) Application of theories and principles (29%)
- 5) Research methods (29%)
- 6) Programme management methods and skills (26%)
- 7) Field trips and other outside activities (26%)
- 8) Lab work/Field work (24%)
- 9) Theory (15%)
- 10) Personal skills (15%)

5. What was missing

The former fellows were also asked to mention subjects or aspects they would have liked to learn more about (they should pick three areas) (33 respondents):

- 1) Statistics and data analyses (61%)
- 2) Lab work/field work (48%)
- 3) Research methods (45%)
- 4) Academic writing and presentation skills (45%)
- 5) Application of theories and principles (30%)
- 6) Personal skills (e.g. social interaction and coaching) (21%)
- 7) Programme management methods and skills (18%)
- 8) Individual project (12%)
- 9) Field trips and other outside activities (12%)
- 10) Theory (6%)

Of missing subject from the UNU-LRT Programme, the former fellows listed the following:

- Start with level 2 programme (for more senior professionals)
- Grant proposal writing, fund raising and networking
- Sustainable restoration skills
- Communicating research findings
- Environmental and landscape design
- More time on GIS
- Cultural and political aspects on SLM, evolution of land management institutions
- Data analysis and management package
- Add time to make it a MA/MSc programme
- Participatory methods of land degradation assessment, participatory monitoring, mapping and other related
- Seed production management
- Issues related to water management, alternative livelihood activities
- Arc-GIS
- International approach of land management, international/regional approach studies, community mobilisation
- Final Certificate should include the subjects learnt in the programme (be like a transcript)
- More time for statistics and use of statistical software for data analysis
- More time for statistics and GIS
- More time added for statistics and data analysis
- Grant proposal writing
- Course on leadership/leadership training
- Environmental pollution
- Basic land evaluation/economics should be incorporated