COURSE REPORT

Forest Landscape Restoration and the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology - Malawi

January 22 - February 9, 2018

A blended course organized by:
Environmental Leadership & Training Initiative (ELTI)
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and TerrAfrica

Group photo of course participants, facilitators, and organizers. Photo credit: NEPAD.

Background:

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) provides an opportunity to transform large areas of degraded and deforested land into landscapes that produce numerous ecological, economic, and social benefits. Many countries have made commitments to restore millions of hectares of degraded and deforested land under the Bonn Challenge, which is an international effort to restore 150 million hectares around the globe by 2020 and 350 million by 2030. Achieving these commitments, however, requires that decision-makers address the diverse ecological, socio-political, and economic factors that impact restoration efforts at different scales.

The Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) provides a framework to analyze, identify, and prioritize restoration opportunities in order to develop a suite of landscape restoration strategies for particular contexts. By situating ROAM within a broader framework of information on tropical forest and landscape ecology, socio-political and economic processes related to restoration, and landscape restoration strategies, individuals involved with FLR policy, planning, and implementation can develop the foundation needed to achieve a range of objectives, such as economic growth, food security, biodiversity conservation, and carbon sequestration.

ELTI is an initiative of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental studies supported by Arcadia, a charitable fund of Peter Baldwin and Lisbet Rausing (www.arcadiafund.org.uk). IUCN is a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its 1,300 Member organisations and the input of some 15,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

Participants talking with community members at the Chimanga Catchment site, during the field visit on Day 3.

This training course aimed to develop the capacity of staff members from government and other key agencies to implement ROAM. This objective is particularly important for countries striving to meet Bonn Challenge targets by 2030, as implementing ROAM can help governments generate appropriate information for improved decision-making on FLR implementation. In 2016, Malawi committed to restore 4.5 million hectares of land under the Bonn Challenge and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100).

Course Objectives:

The specific objectives of this course were to:

1. Present key principles of tropical forest ecology, disturbance, social and governance factors, and landscape restoration actions;

2. Support participants to develop a Theory of Change that will generate sustained multiple benefits of FLR in the context of Malawi by implementing a situation analysis of landscape degradation and the drivers of degradation and deforestation;

3. Provide participants with the knowledge to evaluate and compare an array of forest landscape restoration methodologies and understand how biophysical and socio-economic conditions of a landscape influence decision-making about which strategies to utilize;

4. Develop a shared understanding of landscape restoration opportunities and the value of multifunctional landscapes amongst participants, to help increase resource allocation to landscape restoration programs and increase engagement of key policy-makers from different sectors;

5. Present ROAM as a robust and adaptable framework to analyze and develop FLR strategies, plans, and supporting policies;

6. Provide opportunities for participants to engage in critical discussion, share expertise, and connect with other practitioners engaged in landscape restoration and ROAM-related activities in their country; and

7. Discuss and help develop capacity to contribute to the realization of Malawi's commitment to the Bonn Challenge and the AFR100.

Mosaic multi-use landscape in Dedza district, Malawi.

Course participants discussing important stakeholders for FLR and ROAM.

Participants completing an interactive exercise on identifying restoration opportunity areas.

Format:

The training course comprised two primary components:

1. A **Two-week online primer** presented key information on social and ecological fundamentals and landscape restoration strategies. The primer included pre-recorded lectures, interactive text-based presentations, case studies, an introductory live discussion session, and assignments in which participants were asked to relate themes to their own local context.

2. A **Four-day in-person training course** was held at the Malawi Sogecoa Golden Peacock Hotel in Lilongwe, Malawi and included a comprehensive and interactive program on FLR and ROAM. The course incorporated a range of teaching approaches, including key presentations on theory and application of FLR and ROAM, interactive exercises, field visits, and peer-to-peer exchange.

The in-person course included the following presentations and activities:

Day 1:

The first day began with an opening session to welcome participants and introduce the training event. Presentations on the Bonn Challenge, the AFR100, and ROAM followed the opening session.

Participants then discussed and identified local degradation indicators, drivers of degradation, and FLR objectives in an interactive group exercise. Participants learned about social and cultural considerations for FLR and completed an activity identifying and prioritizing important stakeholders to engage with in FLR and ROAM.

Day 2:

On the second day, participants completed an interactive group exercise identifying priority restoration areas in a landscape. They learned about ecosystem services and landscape restoration, including restoration strategies to achieve specific ecosystem service objectives and planning tools for measuring and assessing benefits. Participants then completed an interactive group activity to identify restoration zones and site-specific FLR interventions, using a landscape approach.

Participants sharing their own work and experience related to FLR and ROAM, during the "FLR Roundtable" session.

Participants meeting with community members in Dedza district to learn about thier restoration efforts.

Trenches that have been constructed by the community as part of the Chimanga 1 Catchment Project.

During the afternoon, Tangu Tumeo of the Malawi Department of Forestry presented on the status of FLR and ROAM in Malawi. Following the presentation, participants shared their own experience and knowledge on FLR and activities contributing to the Bonn Challenge in Malawi, in an "FLR Roundtable" session.

Day 3:

On the third day, course attendees visited two field sites to demonstrate course themes and help visualize FLR opportunities.

Participants first visited Kapirimutu hill, located in the Dedza district. They met with community members who discussed the history of the site and visited the hillside to see the restoration outcomes firsthand. The hillside was historically bare and degraded by forest exploitation. In 2007, the community started to implement management activities and establish bylaws to restore the area. Forest rehabilitation on the hill has been primarily from natural regeneration. Finally, participants visited a downstream site where water recharge is now present year-round due to restoration of the hill.

Participants then visited Chimanga 1 Catchment, a project area of the Malawi Drought Recovery and Resilience Project (MDRRP), which was developed to meet the food security and livelihoods needs of communities affected by drought. Participants consulted with community members who explained the activities they have implemented on the site. The primary activities on the site focused on water harvesting and water resource rehabilitation in the catchment zone.

Day 4:

On the final day, participants shared their reflections about the field visit, then completed an interactive exercise on cost-benefit analysis for landscape restoration interventions. The activity was followed by presentations on data and multi-criteria analysis for ROAM, financing for FLR, and considerations for scaling up FLR. Participants completed a final wrap-up activity, developing a "road map" to plan and implement ROAM. The event ended with course evaluations and closing remarks.

Participants visiting an area restored by the local community through natural regeneration, Kapirimutu hill , Dedza district, Malawi.

Participants:

Twenty-five participants, representing Malawian ministries and governmental departments (e.g., agriculture, land resources, forestry, irrigation and environmental affairs) and other Malawian institutions, attended the course.

Facilitators:

The course was facilitated by Salomé Begeladze (Programme Officer, IUCN Global Forest and Climate Change Programme), Karin Bucht (Online Training Program Associate, ELTI), and Joseph Njue (GIS Officer, IUCN ESARO), with assistance from country focal point Gertrude Kambauwa (Malawi Department of Land Resources Conservation) and NEPAD representatives Rudo Makunike, Cheikh Tidjane N'dongo, and Edith Maboumba.

Follow-up:

All participants were actively engaged during the four-day in-person course and indicated that their experience was a positive one. In the course exit survey, 100% of participants rated their experience in the course as "good" or "very good." Many participants accessed the online primer before, during, and after the in-person course. In the coming months, ELTI aims to follow up with participants to see how the course has influenced their professional development, and how they are managing and planning FLR in their work.

For more information: please contact Karin Bucht, ELTI's Online Training Program Associate: karin.bucht@yale.edu.

ARCADIA

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