

COURSE REPORT

Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes

(Delivered in Spanish)

April 9 to May 22, 2018

An online course organized by:

The Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative (ELTI)

Center for Research on Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems (CIPAV)

Summary: This online course responds to the global challenge of building resilience in rural landscapes immersed in accelerated environmental, cultural and economic change. The course is designed to facilitate constructive dialogue between traditional land-use practices and the scientific knowledge available on this subject. Specifically, it highlights the principles and strategies for improving both profitability and sustainability of agricultural production, and, at the same time, recover the capacity for agricultural landscapes to offer goods and ecosystem services.

By integrating knowledge from diverse disciplines such as agroecology, silviculture, agroforestry and ecological restoration, the course aims to help participants learn how to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of rural landscapes in ways that:

- Improve production yields;
- Strengthen local cultures and livelihoods; and
- Build upon the synergies between conservation, restoration and sustainable land-use.



*The smallholder community of Bellavista, in the El Dovio municipality, Valle del Cauca, Colombia
Photo credit: Zoraida Calle*

ELTI is an initiative of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental studies and was created with generous support from Arcadia, a charitable fund of Peter Baldwin and Lisbet Rausing (www.arcadiafund.org.uk).



Format: This six-week course was offered in Spanish and was divided into thematic modules, each one lasting a week.

The thematic modules were:

Module 1. Conceptual tools - understanding the past to innovate the future

Module 2. Strengthening local cultures

Module 3. Agroecological principles

Module 4. Ecological restoration to enhance degraded lands

Module 5. Strategies for agroecological restoration

Module 6. Lessons learned and case studies

Educational Tools: The course was designed to facilitate the exchange of ideas and collaborative distance learning through the use of:

- Pre-recorded presentations by course instructors and guest lecturers;
- Interactive text-based presentations that provide a synthesis of core concepts;
- Suggested readings to complement the presentations;
- Case studies from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Panama;
- Weekly online live discussion sessions with the course instructors and invited guest experts;
- Weekly discussion forums, during which participants shared their thoughts and questions about the material and the challenges they face in their projects;
- An optional homework assignment including a site visit to an area relevant to the course project; and
- Assignments guiding the participants to create a final project: a preliminary management plan for the integration of restoration and agroecology on a site of professional or personal interest.

Participants who completed the course requirements received a certificate of participation.



Photos taken by course participant Wilson Suárez during his site visit as part of his course project "Proposal for the ecological restoration of the Horizontes farm in the municipality of el Peñol, Antioquia, Colombia." (left) Panorama view of pastures, living fences with pine and eucalyptus species and the beginning of the Peñol reservoir. (right) Mixed eucalyptus and native species plantations around the pastures. Photo credit: Wilson Suárez

Participants: This course was designed for a diverse audience, including professionals working in forest management, agriculture, rural development, environmental policy, agricultural extension, environmental education, academia and other environmental fields. Full and partial scholarships were provided to attract participants specifically from rural and indigenous communities in Latin America.

The cohort of participants included 27 environmental professionals coming from 10 different countries and representing a variety of sectors including government, non-governmental organizations, private companies, community groups, academia and public-private partnerships.

Instructors and Coordinators:

Dr. Florencia Montagnini from the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (F&ES) served as lead professor for this course. She recorded multiple lectures, participated in four live sessions and provided feedback on project work throughout the course.

Zoraida Calle, ELTI's Colombia Program Coordinator and Restoration Coordinator at CIPAV, recorded multiple lectures, participated in five live sessions and provided expert feedback in response to participant questions and projects.

Gillian Bloomfield, ELTI's Online Training Program Coordinator, facilitated the delivery and management of the course, with teaching assistance from Yale F&ES students **Javier González Rivero** (M.E.M. 2019) and **Fabiola Hernández Álvarez** (M.E.M. 2019).



An agroforestry system in Costa Rica where course participant Pablo Gordienko directed his course project "Macaw Lodge Sanctuary: an experimental model farm for teaching about agroforestry systems." The photo shows a mixed system with cacao, plantain, Inga edulis, the coyol palm (Acrocomia aculeata) and native trees adjacent to a preserved forest patch. Photo credit: Pablo Gordienko



The El Vetiver farm, located in Cali, Colombia, has a variety of innovative agroecological practices developed by its owner Jesús Gómez. Photo credit: Zoraida Calle

Other primary contributors who provided pre-recorded video lectures and/or participated in live video conferences, included:

- **Miguel Altieri**, University of California, Berkeley, the Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology, United States
- **Víctor Arroyo-Rodríguez**, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico
- **Alicia Calle**, University of California, Santa Cruz, United States
- **Julián Chará**, Center for Research on Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems, Colombia
- **Belgis Madrid**, Association of Agricultural and Livestock Producers of Pedasí, Panama
- **Enrique Murgueitio**, Center for Research on Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems, Colombia
- **Clara Nicholls**, University of California, Berkeley, the Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology, United States
- **Raimunda Santana**, Independent consultant, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Mexico
- **Jacob Slusser**, Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative, Achotines Laboratory, Panama
- **Carlos Venegas**, Center for Education and Technology, Chile
- **Zoilo Vergara**, Association of Agricultural and Livestock Producers of Pedasí, Panama

Outcomes and Follow-up: The majority of participants were actively engaged throughout the course, benefited from the feedback they received from the instructors and their peers and successfully completed their preliminary management plans. In the months following the course, ELTI will follow up with the participants to see how the course and final projects have influenced their professional development and the management of their individual restoration sites.

For more information: Please contact Gillian Bloomfield, ELTI Online Training Program Coordinator (Gillian.Bloomfield@yale.edu)



Live discussion session with participants and instructor, Dr. Florencia Montagnini, Zoraida Calle and Gillian Bloomfield.



Live discussion session with guest presentation by Raimunda Santana

Live sessions were held using videoconference software, "Zoom", which allowed for dialogue between course participants and invited guests.