

## COURSE REPORT

# Introduction to Forest Landscape Restoration

**May 2 to June 13, 2021**

An online course organized by:

The Environmental Leadership & Training Initiative (ELTI) at the Yale School of Environment

The Russell E. Train Education for Nature Program (EFN) at the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

**Background:** Tropical forest landscapes provide countless benefits for humans and nature: benefits that are at risk from unprecedented degradation and deforestation across the tropics. Forest landscape restoration offers a pathway to halt and reverse these effects to ensure sustainable ecosystems for generations to come. Every year, the World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Education for Nature (EFN) program supports local conservation organizations to accelerate restoration efforts through their Reforestation Grants. Even with funding, however, implementing locally adapted restoration initiatives is complex. Ecological and social conditions greatly influence the success of different strategies. This means that project implementers need to have a holistic understanding of these factors and a toolkit of restoration options to match with site conditions. Training project implementers on restoration fundamentals can help build individual and organizational capacity, and in turn, strengthen on-the-ground results of restoration projects.

ELTI delivered this online course in collaboration with WWF's EFN program to support their grant recipients who are implementing restoration projects in Africa and Asia. The course aimed to develop participant's understanding of key principles for planning, implementing, and monitoring effective restoration projects that meet the needs of both humans and nature.



*Degradation in Kagombe forest, Uganda, which was the focus of Kamugisha Emmanuel and Alislam Said Musa Mutegeki's course project.*  
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## Course objectives:

- Explore basic principles of forest ecology, natural and anthropogenic disturbances and illustrate how disturbances affect regeneration potential;
- Help analyze the social and cultural factors influencing restoration projects and strategies for involving different stakeholders in restoration;
- Present a spectrum of restoration strategies and inform how to match project goals, biophysical and social context with appropriate restoration actions;
- Illustrate real-life examples of restoration in practice and strategic considerations for restoration through global case studies; and
- Introduce the importance of restoration monitoring for evaluating ecosystem restoration success and informing adaptive management strategies;
- Provide opportunities for participants to network and build a community of practice with other environmental professionals working on restoration projects.

**Course structure:** This course included a series of videos, interactive presentations, readings, discussion forums, live sessions with invited experts, and applied assignments. The course had six weeklong thematic modules:

**Module 1.** Introduction to ecology, disturbance, and regeneration potential

**Module 2.** Socio-cultural and political aspects of restoration

**Module 3.** Strategies to catalyze restoration

**Module 4.** Integration of restoration and production

**Module 5.** Restoration monitoring and evaluation

**Module 6.** Development of a restoration project

Through the weekly assignments, participants developed forest restoration plans for their organization's restoration initiatives. Participants had several opportunities to receive feedback from instructors and to exchange with peers through the course live sessions, discussion forums, and assignment review. At the end of the course, participants who finished all course requirements received a certificate of completion.

**Participants:** Sixteen individuals representing eight countries and 14 different local conservation NGOs enrolled in the course. All participants were EFN grantees selected by WWF.



WEEK 1

**Introduction to ecology, disturbance, and regeneration potential**

May 3-9



WEEK 2

**Socio-cultural and political aspects of restoration**

May 10-16



WEEK 3

**Strategies to catalyze restoration**

May 17-23



WEEK 4

**Integration of restoration and production**

May 24-30



WEEK 5

**Restoration monitoring and evaluation**

May 31-June 6



WEEK 6

**Development of a restoration project**

June 7-13

*Participants viewed course materials according to the weekly themes*



**Instruction team:** Dr. Tendro Tondrasoa Ramaharitra (Ph.D.) served as lead instructor and Karin Bucht (Africa and Blended Training Programs Coordinator, (ELTI) facilitated the course delivery. Dr. Eva Garen (ELTI), Dr. Florencia Montagnini (YSE), and Dr. Dylan Craven (University Mayor-Chile) contributed as guest experts during the weekly live sessions. Additionally, 14 international speakers presented on restoration theory and case studies in pre-recorded lectures throughout the course.

**Outcomes:** Through the course, participants developed 12 unique restoration plans for sites in Cameroon, DRC, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Nepal, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Participants rated their learning experience in the course as 4.4 out of 5. All participants also indicated that they are highly likely to apply the knowledge and skills gained. In particular, participants said they had a better knowledge on ecological and socio-political context, the wide suite of restoration strategies that can achieve different restoration objectives, and the importance of monitoring restoration projects.

**For more information:** Contact Karin Bucht, ELTI Africa and Blended Training Program Coordinator ([karin.bucht@yale.edu](mailto:karin.bucht@yale.edu))