

# APFNet ALUMNI NETWORK NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2 • JUNE 2020



Taken during the Alumni Sharing in Beijing Forestry University, China

## CONNECT WITH US



APFNet Alumni Community



@apfnetalumni



@ApfnetAlumni



APFNet Alumni Network

Got news? Received a promotion? Given an award? We'd like to hear from you! Send us an email to [apfnetalumni@gmail.com](mailto:apfnetalumni@gmail.com).

APFNet ALUMNI  
NETWORK  
NEWSLETTER

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Alumni Spotlight • P. 2

Students' Corner • P. 7

Alumni's Feedback • P. 10

# MARALGOO SHARES HER ADVOCACY

Studying at Beijing Forestry University, I recalled so many opportunities for management and economics in the field of forestry service. The major in forestry economics and management contributes substantially to relevant learning events and advocacies. It also shares knowledge of emerging best practices in the forestry sector.

APFNet Scholarship Program pointed me out what it means to advocate for myself and to take charge of my own experience. The scholarship program has invested in students and helped them prepare not only for a career but also to be empowered individuals. It serves as an opportunity for young forestry practitioners to gain specialized knowledge in forestry. Looking back, the study experience under the program was pivotal to my career that landed me in the environment sector.

Currently, I am working on a cooperative project called "Ensuring Sustainability and Resilience of Green Landscapes in Mongolia." It is a collaborative project between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), Mongolia. Working with these two organizations have strengthened my skills and international working experience. Being a forest economist in the project helps me to contribute meaningful insights into strategies of reducing rangeland and forest degradation in Mongolia.



**MARALGOO GANBAT**  
Mongolia  
Beijing Forestry University (2015)  
MS Forestry Economics & Management

The experience also made realizations for me to advocate for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood to local communities. The connected challenges of rangeland and forest degradation and biodiversity loss should be addressed to ensure the sustainability of livelihoods and the provision of ecosystem services. I am so glad to be involved in this project and be part of the solution to these environmental risks.

I encourage the current APFNet students to trust in yourself and find advocacy for yourself. We are all driven, hardworking individuals, and want to contribute to our planet. Just believe in yourself and skills, and never stop learning!

"Advocating for yourself is the greatest lesson I have learned. I couldn't stress how much it helped me professionally and personally."



# THE EXPERIENCE THAT IMPACTED SHOVI'S LIFE

Before I applied for APFNet Scholarship Program (ASP), I was working on a research project regarding community-based natural forest management in the Himalaya (ComForm). I have also been passionate about environmental conservation since the place that I grew up is dependent on the natural resources for livelihood and subsistence. It is always my dream to pursue higher education to expand, not just my knowledge about forestry but on experiencing other culture. Being surrounded by diverse cultures has impacted me to be open-minded and understanding in so many layers in life.

Studying in BFU with support from APFNet has widened my views and ideas about the world. In the beginning, I experience culture shock, but I was able to adapt well through my participation in different social events organized by BFU. I appreciate the courses in a way that it is not purely theoretical but an interactive approach. Also, I was given opportunities to participate in several international conferences which helped me establish my professional network.

Currently, I am working as a Climate Coordinator for Mott MacDonald Ltd., which is a consultancy provider working on the Nepal Climate Change Support Program (NSSCP) Phase II. My work is involved in supporting the poorest and most vulnerable communities and local enterprises in Western Nepal to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Also, my current job has engaged me in participatory policy and planning, which are integrated into the Nepali Government's plan and strategy for adaptation interventions and funding. The things I learned about forestry economics and management are very relevant to my current work.



**SHOVIT KOIRALA**

Nepal

Beijing Forestry University (2014)

MS Forestry Economics & Management

It is a fulfilling experience for me because I was able to share the knowledge I learned for local community empowerment. The opportunity to work with local communities has deepened my love for my roots and my country.

I have observed that APFNet alumni and students are growing every year. It is like a tree that continually spread its roots and branches. Every alumni and student is an essential part of our community. I am hoping that our alumni network will serve as a platform to showcase the research works of alumni and students. This will further bind and increase the engagement of our community. I am looking forward to having an alumni reunion in the future to share experiences and ideas. I encourage everyone to apply for ASP and learn China's notable practices in urban and rural development. The opportunity to learn from one of the biggest economies in the world with significant forestry reforms is life-changing, and I cannot wait for others to experience it as well.

3

**"The overall experience under ASP has been positive. The multicultural learning approach has impacted so many layers in my life."**

# SITI'S PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH UNDER ASP

I came to know about Chinese culture at a very young age during history class in secondary school. Since then, I am fascinated with the distinct Chinese culture and dream of studying in the future. After several years of working in government, I finally got the chance and chose the major on forest economics and management at Beijing Forestry University (BFU) under ASP.

Before studying in China, I was working at the Biodiversity and Forestry Management Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Malaysia. My work was related to policy formulation and implementation of various projects. The experience had involved me in formulating Malaysia's position in multilateral environmental agreements and international discussions on the forestry sector.

BFU is one of the top institutions offering forestry in China. During my time, I was able to learn relevant courses related to forest economics and management. Honestly, back then, I had no background in any economics-related subjects. The series of lectures given by experts had given me relevant knowledge on its importance and applicability to sustainable forest management. Also, our field excursions to several provinces in China have exposed me to different effective forest management models that could be applied to my home country. Back then, I was a little timid, but through this study experience, I was able to establish a network of friends from different economies. My appointment as class representative and engagement to various social activities has increased my self-confidence.



**SITI FATIMAH BINTI RAMLI**

Malaysia

Beijing Forestry University (2016)

MS Forestry Economics & Management

After graduation, I return to Malaysia and continue working with the government agency. I am now assigned to the Land and Regional Development Division under the Ministry of Rural Development, Malaysia. My task involves implementing projects to rural communities for livelihood and poverty reduction. This experience had engaged me in the grassroots communities and be able to share my knowledge for empowerment and socioeconomic upliftment. I want to say that the things I learned about forest economics are beneficial in my current profession.

I encourage young forestry practitioners to pursue a degree in forest economics, and I would recommend BFU. For everyone out there, don't doubt your capacities, take chances and open yourself to new possibilities and reach for your ultimate dream. Most importantly show respect and extend help to one another for this will make our community resilient. I noticed that ASP is growing and has transformed into a family. I am hoping that all the alumni and current students will actively support our network. I encourage everyone to please don't hesitate to share your experiences and ideas because it is relevant.

**"The overall experience studying in BFU under ASP is one of my expensive & unforgettable memories that are beneficial in my life."**



# ZAYAR'S PASSION FOR LEARNING

I would have never thought that a small-town boy from Myanmar could have achieved his dream of studying in China. I always dreamed about experiencing Chinese culture and getting higher education in a foreign country. The APFNet scholarship program is a fantastic program that provides opportunities for young forestry practitioners and researchers to pursue their higher education. I earned my master's degree in Forestry at Nanjing Forestry University in 2018.

My experience working as Assistant Manager at the Extraction Department, Myanmar Timber Enterprise under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) have further inspires me to elevate my education level. The knowledge and skills that I would learn will help me to contribute to Myanmar's forestry educational activities.

My study journey in NFU under ASP is a rewarding experience in my life. Living in Nanjing for almost two years has charmed me, especially the city's significant role in Chinese culture and history. I must admit that before studying in NFU, my experience and knowledge about forestry is minimal. However, through a series of lectures, conferences and field visits have broadened my understanding of the broad spectrum of forestry. I also got the opportunity to learn the Chinese language, which expanded my communication skills to a wider audience.

I am a firm believer that exploring new places helps boost our inner spirit. During my study period, I got the chance to visit some of the fascinating landscapes around China. My absolute favourite activities to do in Nanjing is walking around the Xuanhu lake park and hiking to the purple mountain. I also got to roam around some interesting places in Beijing and Pingxiang. This experience is priceless. I got to learn the history of these places and how it has shaped modern China.



## ZAYAR PHYO

Myanmar

Nanjing Forestry University (2016)

MS Forestry

I do believe that learning is a never-ending process. It keeps our mind active and it helps us unleash our abilities that we are capable of doing. Right now, I am pursuing my doctorate in Ecology at Xishaungbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences supported by XTBG and UCAS scholarship program. This is another exciting journey in my academic endeavour and I cannot wait to apply all the things I learned to Myanmar's forestry sector. My study experience under ASP has become a stepping stone in realizing this journey.

After knowing that the APFNet had officially launched the alumni network, I got excited because this will bridge alumni and current students into an interactive community. This platform will keep us connected and learn from each other's experiences. I hope that our alumni network will continue to grow, and I must support future engagements under this network.

"Our passion for learning would push us to discover our abilities, and it will lead us to new experiences that will shape our character."

# SHIRAVAJ LOOKS BACK AT HIS ASP EXPERIENCE

After I completed my bachelor's degree in forestry, I started working as a forester for the National Federation of Forest Resource Users, Nepal. I was at the early stage of my professional career when I realized the need to pursue higher education to thrive in the competitive forestry profession. After a rigorous search on the internet, I came across the APFNet scholarship program, which suits my qualification. Luckily, I was accepted and pursue a master's study in forestry economics and management.

The degree I received from Beijing Forestry University under the APFNet scholarship program has equipped me with knowledge, skills, and the right attitudes to grow in the forestry profession. The scholarship program has helped me achieve my master's degree, which I couldn't afford.

The program had allowed me to explore and live in Beijing, a city with an exciting history and culture. The experience has broadened my perspective about the world. I established connections with new friends from different countries and expanded my professional network. Taking forest economics and management in BFU helped me widen my knowledge about issues in the forestry sector in a global context.

My 2-year study under ASP is by far the most exciting experience in my life. The few months were challenging due to the new culture and environment. But later on, I was able to adapt and consider every day as a gift. Having been able to meet inspiring people from different parts of the world and accomplished personalities like my professor have inspired me to be a better version of myself.



**SHIRAVAJ THAPA**

Nepal

Beijing Forestry University (2017)

MS Forestry Economics and Management

Currently, I am working as a GIS Database Specialist at Environment Resource Management, Nepal. The forestry profession is competitive; however, the theories and methods I learn from forestry economics and management helped me stand out professionally.

I am so happy and thankful for the creation of the APFNet Alumni Network. I am expecting that this platform will provide opportunities for knowledge and research opportunities within the ASP family. And to the APFNet current students: Be open to new experiences, make great friends, work hard, and cherish every moment because you will definitely miss these days in the future.

My journey is far from over. I still have a lot of things to accomplish. I would like to extend my gratitude to APFNet that paved the way for me to achieve my academic goals.

**"Studying under APFNet Scholarship Program is a journey that taught me the most important life lessons and countless happy memories."**



# RICMAR SHARES HIS RESEARCH ON CARBON SEQUESTRATION

I came from a small town in the southern part of the Philippines, where opportunities are limited. The chance that the APFNet has given me is one of the most important milestones in my life and would lead me into a brighter future. I am currently taking my master's degree in forestry economics and management at Beijing Forestry University. The program has provided me with numerous opportunities that changed my life and perspective about the world.

Currently, I am finishing my master's research, which is focused on the potential economic value of carbon sequestration of forest plantations in our province. Climate change is one of the pressing environmental crises that adversely affect the productivity of the natural ecosystem in providing services and benefits. The most vulnerable to this phenomenon are communities living in poverty, which prompted me to focus on this study. Also, my country of the Philippines ranked 13th most vulnerable countries to climate change.

Most of the upland households in the province earn less than USD\$100 monthly and most often hit by natural disasters that affected their socio-economic activities. Currently, the forest plantations of the communities funded by the National Greening program has stored about 58.61 tonnes of carbon per hectare. It has an estimated economic value of \$2,366.28/ha. This implies that the forest plantations managed by local communities can contribute significantly to achieve the country's commitment to international climate change agreements. Most importantly, the carbon stored in these plantations can help communities to earn additional income by selling to emerging carbon markets.



**RICMAR P. MAGARIN**

Philippines

Beijing Forestry University (2018)

MS Forestry Economics and Management

The awareness of the communities about climate change is moderate that needs to improve. Providing technical support and elevating the knowledge of the communities on the importance of planting trees as a cost-effective solution to combat climate change is crucial. Climate change education is also essential to influence the behavior of the communities to engage in climate-friendly activities and to enhance their adaptive capacities.

This journey is just the beginning as I venture for a better future. The fun memories and valuable learning I gain have inspired me to make a significant contribution, especially in climate change mitigation and adaptation, once I finish my studies.

I will be forever indebted to the APFNet scholarship program and BFU for giving me a much-needed launchpad in honing my professional skills and personal growth.

**"My ASP experience is one of the most important milestones in my life that motivate me to be more productive and efficient."**

# MAKHLIYO'S RESEARCH ON FOREST FOOD CONSUMPTION

I have a bachelor's degree in Forestry at Taskent State Agrarian University. When I was studying my undergraduate degree, I was an active and curious learner. Being curious has lead me to get involved with some research in the field of forestry and environmental conservation. I am so happy when I was chosen as one of the awardees of ASP in 2018 to pursue a master's degree at Northwest A&F Agriculture. It has always been my dream to study abroad and gain international experience.

Studying under the APFNet program had given me the chance to join Professor Liu Guangzhe's team that has a well-established platform for scientific investigation. I am beyond grateful for his support and guidance in my scientific research endeavors. From my perspective, the APFNet scholarship program provides international students with an inspiring and unique experience related to scientific research. The scholarship offers students the opportunity to work in a research environment alongside experienced researchers and postgraduate students working on forest science-related fields.

Forests and other tree-based systems such as agro-forestry contributes to food and nutritional security in myriad ways. The provisional services provided by forests are essential and must be explored through research for its sustainability. As a young researcher, I am enthusiastic about exploring the forest food services. After a thorough discussion with my supervisor, we have decided to focus on the "Young People's Perception of Forest Food Consumption in Different Cultures." There has been increasing evidence that shown the importance of forest food and tree-based systems for supporting food production and contributing to dietary diversity and quality to address nutritional shortfalls.



## SHADIBEKOVA MAKHLIYO

Uzbekistan

Northwest A&F University (2018)

MS Forest Protection

My research focuses on the extent of the cultural influences of forest food consumption. It examines the attitude of young people in China and Uzbekistan. By doing this, it will be able to draw out facts and compare the forest food consumption between two different cultures. Through this research, I had the opportunity to exchange views among the students in China and Uzbekistan. Also, it serves as a venue for me to embrace two different cultures.

After finishing my study, I am planning to work at forest governmental institutions and engage in esteemed research activities for the sustainable forest management of my country.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to APFNet and NWAUFU for this life changing experience to improve my knowledge and skills in the field of forestry.

"The knowledge and skills I learned will helped me build my career and make a real change in forestry sector in my country and the world."



# MIN HAN'S RESEARCH ON TREE SPECIES FOR SALINE AREA

I started my master's degree in 2018 and will conclude this year. Working as Deputy Staff Officer at the Dry Zone Greening Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation in Myanmar has pushed me to pursue higher forestry education to contribute and addressing the deforestation in my country.

Although Myanmar is one of the most forested countries in mainland Southeast Asia, several areas have been experiencing severe deforestation. An essential ecosystem like mangrove forests is also experiencing environmental pressures. The Ayeyarwady delta region is the eighth largest mangrove forest in the country. Currently, the mangrove area in the region has only an area of 500,000 hectares. The country has an annual deforestation rate of 0.3%. Thus, forest restoration effort is urgent to prevent further decline of the forest cover in the country.

My research focuses on the "Nitric Oxide (NO) Alleviates the Adverse Effects of Salt Stress in *Cyclocarya paliurus* Seedlings by Activating Chlorophyll Fluorescence, Photosynthesis, and Enhancing Antioxidant Systems." This research examines the effects of sodium nitroprusside (SNP, a nitric oxide) and salt stress on physiological parameters of *C. paliurus*.

I have chosen this research since *Cyclocarya paliurus* has the potential for timber production. Also, its leaves have medicinal properties such as hypoglycemic, anti-hyperlipidemia, anti-HIV-1, antioxidant, and anti-cancer properties. Moreover, the leaves of the species are potential for tea production and other medicinal purposes. The result showed that the exogenous application of nitric oxide in *C. paliurus* could alleviate salt stress. Also, it activates the photosynthesis process by enhancing the chlorophyll content and anti-oxidative activities.



**PHYO MIN HAN**

Myanmar

Nanjing Forestry University (2018)

MS Forestry

Myanmar was once used to abundant areas of forests, especially mangrove forests. Restoration in mangrove forests is a considerable challenge because salinity affects the survival and growth of trees. The knowledge I learn from my research is useful, especially in the restoration of saline areas in the country.

I am grateful for the opportunity that APFNet has given me in fulfilling a postgraduate degree at NFU. I would also like to express my gratitude to my advisor Prof. Shengzuo Fang and my laboratory mates for the inputs and cooperation during the conduct of the field experiment.

After graduation, I am planning to return to my work and use the knowledge I gained to engage in research activities, especially in areas with high salinity in my country.

"My learning and experience have motivated me to contribute to the sustainable forest management in my country."

# APFNet ALUMNI SHARED THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST ISSUE



**“Congratulations for the first APFNet Alumni Newsletter. I am delighted to receive this newsletter hope more to come.”**

**–Iqtie Qamar Laila (BFU Batch 2011) from Malaysia**



**“Thank you so much for the great efforts in establishing the APFNet Alumni Network. I am proud to be part of APFNet Alumni and hopefully share information and experiences within this community.”**

**– Tet Nay Tun (NFU Batch 2014) from Myanmar**



**“The establishment of APFNet Alumni is a great opportunity for the APFNet family to reconnect and engage in meaningful discussions. wishing good luck for all APFNet Members.”**

**– Ekanayake Mudiyansele Buddhika Piumali Ekanayake (BFU Batch 2015) from Sri Lanka**