

APFNet ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



MORE ALUMNI ARE USING THE ONLINE PORTAL

Since the set-up of the APFNet Alumni Online Portal last December 2020 more alumni are using the platform. To date, a total of 106 out of the 188 alumni and students are registered in the online portal. This means that 50% of the members of the alumni network have already registered accounts and been engaging with other members using the platform.

For this quarter, the portal has garnered a total of 527 visits with an average 5.06 minutes of time spent per visit. While page views have reached 2991 views from alumni and students. The APFNet through its alumni relations assistants in collaboration with Vaave are constantly making ways to enhance and improve the features and contents of the portal for more active engagements. If you have not registered in the portal yet, you may directly visit the webpage below to register.

<https://www.alumniapfnet.com/use/login.dz>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Alumni Spotlight - 1

Alumni News - 4

Research Corner - 7

Current Students - 9



www.alumniapfnet.com



APFNet Alumni Community



@apfnetalumni



@ApfnetAlumni



APFNet Alumni Network

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

ARIF SULFIANTONO

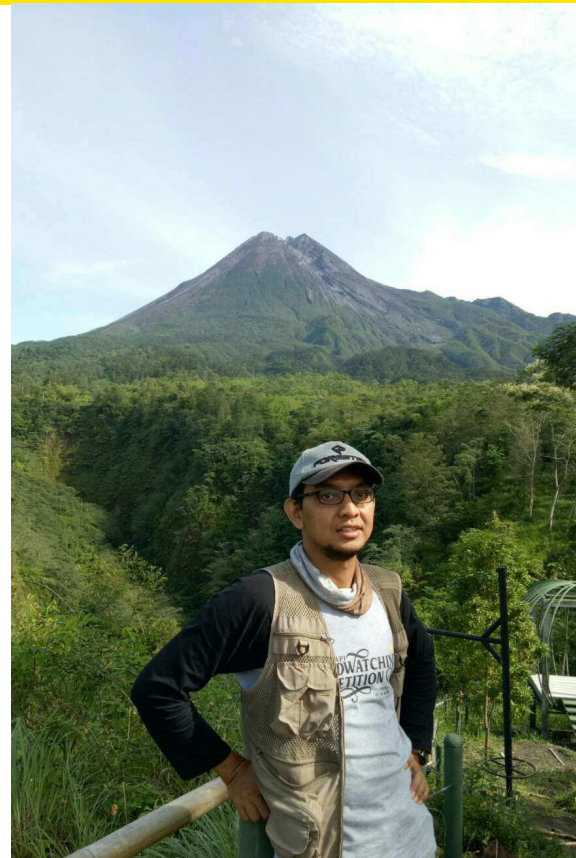
I am Arif Sulfiantono from Indonesia. I earned my master's degree in forestry major in silviculture at Beijing Forestry University in 2014. Since I was young I wanted to travel to China because I was fascinated with Chinese martial arts and thinking of learning it. Having been awarded with the APFNet Scholarship Program (ASP) has given me the opportunity to pursue my dreams and the chance of learning Chinese martial arts. Unfortunately, I haven't had the chance to learn it.

When I applied the APFNet Scholarship Program, I was working at the Merapi Volcano National Park, Ministry of Forestry and Environment. By the end of 2019, I was transferred to Yogyakarta Provincial Tourism Office where my work is related to tourist villages and ecotourism.

Since 2017, I was appointed as the coordinator of the Indonesian Forestry Climate Change Expert Network for the Java Island Region. I became the youngest committee member alongside with other six administrators who are also Professors from different Universities. Working with communities has really validated my capacity to make significant change and has motivated me to keep doing my utmost best.

Currently I am working on ecotourism in a tourist village based on sustainable development goals. Also, I wrote articles in Kedaulatan Rakyat - a local newspaper in Indonesia - where I tackle about village tourism, avitourism, climate change, and wildlife and nature conservation. I am passionate in bird photography which pushed me to joined Beijing Bird Watching Society when I was still studying. Whenever I travelled to different villages I took photos which I shared to my social media platforms.

The on-going pandemic had negative impact on tourism for instance in local villages the tourist visit had decreased to 50%. The tourism sector is very complex and the links are connected from upstream and downstream. This year, there is a bright potential for regional tourism especially for tourism villages due to its natural beauty and culture. Hence, in one of my latest articles I have emphasized the need for tourism village to innovate, adapt to change, and collaborate in order to survive the pandemic.



"The alumni network connects alumni and students. Organizing webinars and collaborative research works would make it more alive and functional"

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Khonethong SOUKPHAXAY

My name is Khonethong SOUKPHAXAY, I'm from Lao PDR, I worked for National University of Laos, as a lecturer assistant at Faculty of Forest Science. I was awarded with the APFNet Scholarship in 2016 and graduated in 2018 from Nanjing Forestry University, China PR, with a major in Forest Engineering. The economy of my country is highly dependent on natural resources especially forest products.

I am well rounded on the technical support on wood products development for wood industries. Working at the university, provided me the opportunity to give lectures to students, which pushed me to improve my knowledge. This is one of the reasons why I decided to apply for scholarship program.

Studying at Nanjing Forestry University (NFU) was the first experience of living abroad. I had opportunities to learn more about the diversity of culture from my classmates from Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, I have created networks from attending activities that were organized by APFNet and NFU.

The APFNet Scholarship Program is a good scholarship which has been supporting capable forestry professionals in achieving degrees in the field of sustainable forest management from leading institutions in China. I have suggested the scholarship to my colleagues and students who are interested in pursuing their master's degrees abroad. I have given them advices about the scholarship like the application and courses. I also, share this information to my social media accounts to encourage potential students.

I think the alumni network is a good connection between alumni and current students under the APFNet Scholarship Program. This would be a good opportunity to collaborate with forestry sectors in the region. For instance, my interest is to collaborate research on wood technology and wood composite. I would actively engage more in this platform.



"My knowledge and skills on wood products has increased and deepen. I was able to communicate and share experiences with colleagues and partners both in my country and abroad"

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Myadagbadam Batdorj

My name is Myadagbadam Batdorj an APFNet alumna of NWAUFU. I have a bachelor's degree in environmental science at the National University of Mongolia. During my undergraduate I worked as a research assistant at the Soil Laboratory, Institute of Geography-Genecology, Mongolian Academy of Sciences from 2014-2015.

In 2016, I was involved in a field research expedition in the Khangai Mountain Range, Central Mongolia under the Laboratory of Geochemistry and Geomorphology for Korean Geomorphologists Association.

I have to admit that I was really resistant to study abroad and it took some convincing from home to get the opportunity and experience new environment. At the beginning, it was a bit struggle for me, but it definitely strengthened me to grow and experience research internationally. The program was short for research based degree, however the courses are well-tailored and useful in my academic exploration. Also, I created my own self improvement strategy in order to get valuable experience.

I completed my master's degree in soil and water conservation and desertification control in 2019 at Northwest A & F University. My study period at NWAUFU was helpful in my career in the field of soil and water conservation. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to upgrade my knowledge, but at the same time provided me with a unique experience of appreciating the long history and culture of China.

In terms of study approach and participation the scholarship program is diverse. It establishes an environment where we share knowledge, experience, and healthy discourse around forestry issues across the globe. I am thankful to APFNet and the NWAUFU for opening a door to pursue my master's degree. Also, I am indebted to my supervisor Professor Zheng Fengli and the Institute of Soil and Water Conservation and the Forestry College for the useful knowledge and skills I acquired.

Currently, I am pursuing my doctorate degree at the National University of Mongolia. I will use all the gained knowledge and experience and cultivate useful research which will contribute to environmental conservation and protection in Mongolia and the world.



"It was a great chance not just in improving my understanding about science, but it provided a unique experience to appreciate the long history and culture of China"

PAVING A WAY IN STRENGTHENING THE FOREST CERTIFICATION IN THAILAND

It has been an ambition of Utharat Suksumake to study abroad. According to her, she tried applying several scholarships and finally got one in Germany but unfortunately was canceled due to the political situation at the time. But this setback has led her to know about the ASP. "I have been waiting to pursue my master's degree in forestry since then and then ASP came that paved a way to fulfill my ambition," said Utharat. She has no doubt to pursue her masters in China because for her understanding, the country has remarkable technologies in forest management as well as the success in reforestation programs.

When asked about her study experience under ASP, Utharat has recalled plenty of memories and experiences. "I consider studying at Beijing Forestry University as one of the most wonderful experiences in my life," said Utharat. She further expressed that most of the credits goes to her supervisor (Professor 杨华), who allowed her to attend academic seminars, join field work with other Chinese students, and visits to forest national parks in China. Through this, she was able to learn and gain special experiences not included in her study program.

Right after graduation she was working in remote areas of Northern Thailand where she had the opportunity to work with some forest dwelling tribal populations. After joining the Royal Forest Department (RFD), she was working at the Forest Research and Development Bureau. "I am interested about wood properties and wood identification. I worked hard to do many researches and wrote several textbooks which are important and useful for Thai timber wood properties," said Utharat.

Her involvement as a member and the secretary for the forest certification committee was considered by her as one of her most important contributions in the forestry sector in Thailand. The outcome was the new Regulation for Wood Products Certificate in compliance with EU-FLEGT and Lacey Act Regulation. This regulation would enhance the potential and sustainable management and utilization of forest products that will affect positively in international timber trade. Being an expert in wood identification, she often traveled to attend many court cases of illegal logging as government witness. From 2016-2017, she served as a member of the committee for the ITTO project on the "Development and Implementation of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Managed Forests and Community Forests".

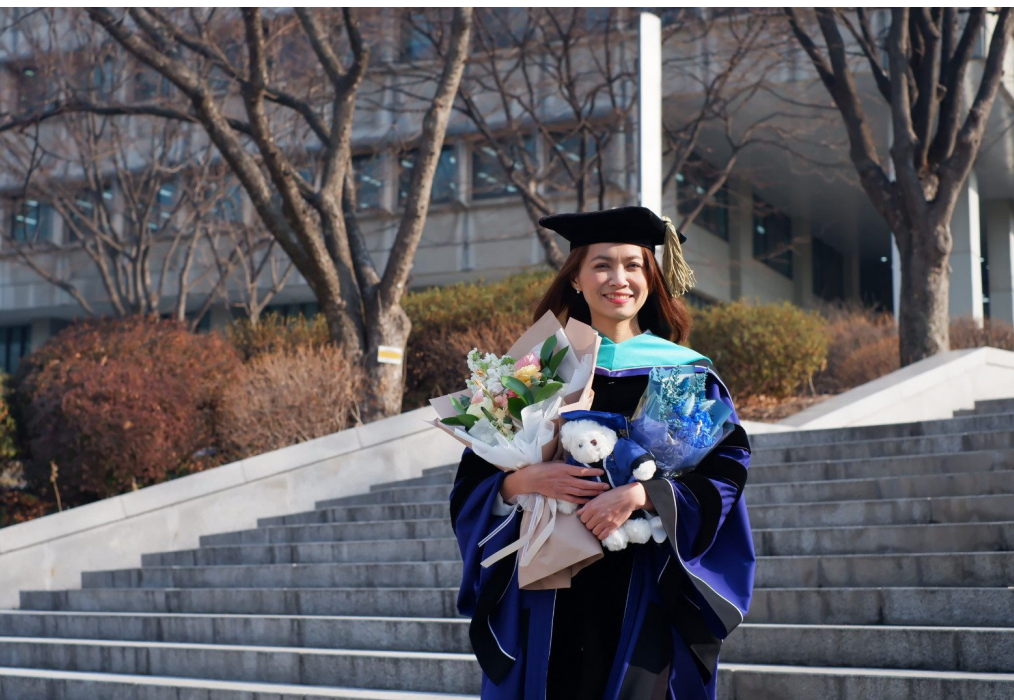


Utharat finished her study program in 2012. During her master's degree she undertook legal timber verification and identification as major and selected the existing system of chain of custody for timber products as her research study. This makes her as a knowledgeable person in that area and her thesis was the first document that RFD sent to European Union Facility team for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). **"The knowledge I acquired in the field of forest certification, chain of custody, and timber tracking during my masters helped me to develop my career and all these knowledge are very useful in developing timber legality assurance system for Thailand,"** said Utharat.

After her early retirement in RFD, she is now working as the National Project Manager for Thailand in the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP) project funded by the European Union and Implemented by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.

As an alumna of ASP, Utharat shared important suggestions for the operation and improvement of the alumni network. "If APFNet could organize regular events with the participation of alumni members, it would be a great opportunity to interact more closely with each other to strengthen alumni relationships," shared Utharat. She is also looking forward to maintain friendly relationship with other alumni members and support each other whenever needed.

APFNet ALUMNA EARNED HER Ph.D. IN SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



Siriluck Thammanu, an APFNet alumna from Thailand who obtained her master's degree in forestry economics and management in 2014 at Beijing Forestry University, just reached another milestone in her academic career as she completed her doctorate degree at Seoul National University. She earned a Ph.D. in Forest Environmental Science where her dissertation is focus on the effects of community forest management on biodiversity utilization of non-timber forest products in Northern Thailand.

While studying for her doctorate degree she was able to published three research articles in various forestry journals. Along with it, she was able to present these research works in several scientific conferences in the United States of America, Sri Lanka, Japan, South Korea, and China. Her success is an important addition to the growing number of APFNet Alumni who are pursuing their respective doctorate degrees globally.

This doctoral education opportunity was offered by Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO), another regional forestry organization, she's been grateful to the two organizations, without their help, she wouldn't be able to follow through her academic pursuit successfully. The on-going pandemic has affected her study journey one or another but she was able to surpassed all the challenges with optimism and hard work. Indeed, it is a great inspiration and motivation for APFNet students to finish their studies in spite of the rigorous journey of the academic world.

"Looking forward for a future forestry collaboration between Thailand and other economies. APFNet provided the first step to pursue my academic goals"

APFNet STUDENT AWARDED AS AN ELITE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN JIANGSU, CHINA

Annually, the Nanjing Forestry University awards the "Elite International Students Scholarship". For 2020-2021, an APFNet student was one of the awardees. His name is Nay Aung from Myanmar.

"Since my student days at the University of Forestry and Environmental Conservation in Myanmar, I was determined to further extend my forestry studies," said Aung. He joined the Myanmar Forest Department in 2015 after completing his bachelor's degree. He was assigned as a Range Officer under the Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System Section. In his work, he often involved in several public awareness activities, and had the opportunity to assessed the forest cover changes of Myanmar for Forest Resource Assessment in 2015.

During his working period at the forest department, he was selected to participate a training on sampling designs for forest inventory in Finland. "During my training in Finland I co-authored a scientific research paper which drawn my attention in conducting research related to forest resource inventory," shared Aung.

After his stint in Forest Department, Aung was transferred to Forest Research Institute and assigned as one of the core members of REDD+ Myanmar and collaborated in the FD-ICIMOD project of developing and using experiences in implementing REDD+ in the Himalayas. His participation during the Asia-Pacific Regional Knowledge Exchange Event in 2018 had given him the venue to participate in drawing the REDD+ Action Plan for the Shan State in Myanmar.

According to Aung, there is a limited number of senior experts in Forest Resource Inventory (FRI). Hence, it is important for him to upgrade his knowledge and gain skills by studying abroad. Currently, he is conducting his research study amidst the on-going pandemic. Although, he is facing some hindrance in the process but he remained optimistic and hoping to complete the study program as scheduled.



"The award I got has fueled me to do more research and apply the knowledge and skills in my work at the forestry sector in my country"

RESEARCH CORNER

Prabal Bir Jung Rana

I am Prabal Bir Jung Rana from Nepal currently pursuing my master's degree in Nanjing Forestry University. In Nepal, I have been working as a freelancer doing various research works under different organizations mostly in the field of wildlife and community forest.

I joined my supervisor's team in June 2020 where I was introduced for the first time with biochar and its implication on soil productivity. After that, my interest grew about the topic. Currently, I am working on my research focus on the effects of hydrochar application on nitrogen losses from soil systems. We have been doing the experiment since June of 2020. The experiment was carried out by planting rice and applying different nitrogen fertilizer rates to evaluate the rate of nitrogen losses by leaching or by nitrous oxide emission. Also, the impact on the yield and similar experiment is being carried out using cabbage.

The main objective of my research is to determine the influence of biochar application on nitrogen losses from paddy soil and vegetable soil systems. It also seeks to investigate the impacts of biochar application with and without nitrogen in different rates into the soil and its effect on yield.

So far, I am enjoying my research work and the time I spent in the laboratory. My supervisor is very cooperative and friendly so I am not having any problems with my research. I am delighted to be learning something new and can contribute information on the reduction of the use of nitrogen fertilizer. Exploring other alternatives in soil can contribute in combating climate change, and achieving environmental conservation and protection.



"I am grateful to be learning something new and can provide useful information in fighting climate change"

RESEARCH CORNER

Milon Barmon

Milon Barmon from Bangladesh studied his undergraduate at the National University. After completing his bachelor's degree he worked as a scientific assistant in fodder research and development project in Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI). In 2019, he was one of the awardees of ASP where he is underdoing his master's degree in soil and water conservation and desertification control at Northwest AF University (NWAUFU).

The love for higher study and new technology has always pushing him to acquire new knowledge and skills. "To contribute to humankind and accomplish my interest in science and research is a dream of mine. Both the APFNet and NWAUFU made it possible," said Milon. Studying under the ASP has helped him gained knowledge on soil conservation techniques from skilled faculties. The support from the international college of NWAUFU and distance learning arranged by UBC for APFNet students was fruitful time during the pandemic.

"Before the pandemic, I was lucky to participate a seven day internship program in Guangxi, China," shared Milon. The experience gave him a useful insights and knowledge on the sustainable forest management in a tropical landscape. Also, the exchange of ideas and the multi-cultural environment are helpful in his personal development.

Talking about his research interest, he is now working on a research about soil fertility specifically on determining the availability and changes of Phosphorous fractions in soil. The study area is a located in the long term experiment field of Losses Plateau in China. "My research aims to develop the best management practices and utilize alternate resources management for sustainable agriculture and environmental protection," said Milon. He is also hopeful that his research can contribute information in promoting both sustainable forest and agricultural management in his own country.



"I feel like through this study program my academic goals will be achieved and apply the gained knowledge for the betterment of my country"

CURRENT STUDENTS

Rizwana Edris Jyoti (Bangladesh)

I am Rizwana Edris Jyoti from Bangladesh. At first, I would express my heartfelt gratitude to APFNet for providing me the scholarship to pursue my doctorate degree on economics and management of agriculture and forestry at Northwest Agriculture & Forestry University. I took my master's degree at Jiangxi University of Finance & Economics, China. Presently, I am staying at home and taking online courses offered by the university. APFNet has created an exclusive platform for developing Asian students to explore their study area broadly. Moreover, Agriculture and Forestry contribute a lot in building sustainable economy in a country. Thus, research is required to explore and sustainably manage these resources. I believe that in the future APFNet will enhance and facilitate this program enormously as it doing now to favor the developing Asian countries and the students.



Le Thi Hanh (Viet Nam)

I got awarded with the ASP in 2020 for my doctorate degree in Silviculture at Nanjing Forestry University. Prior to my studies, I worked as a researcher in the Silviculture Research Institute of the Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS), Viet Nam. The projects that I was involved were focused on improving productivity and promoting sustainable management of plantations through certification systems, and restoration of degraded natural forests. I expect that this scholarship will allow me to learn various research skills. Also, this could give me a chance to learn forest restoration methods not only in China but also from other economies in the region. I hope to build a professional network with scientists in China and other countries. As a new student, I started my semester by distance learning at the comfort of my home due to the on-going pandemic. It is undeniable that online learning causes certain difficulties such as unfamiliarity with learning tools, low interaction, and financial concerns. The support from Professors, classmates, and advance reading of lessons are important for me to cope up with the online learning. However, there is still a need to learn practical knowledge through workshops and internships. Therefore, I hope APFNet organization will soon have a great solution to ensure conducive learning and to learn directly at NFU.



CURRENT STUDENTS

Lin Htike (Myanmar)

I was thrilled the moment I got the APFNet Scholarship. It means so much to me. I appreciate the generous financial support and the opportunity to pursue my master's degree. The scholarship is a gift that assists my financial needs in the present, and at the same time ensuring my future success. My vision is to address sustainable development challenges for my country by learning effective and efficient natural resources management strategies. After graduation, I hope to give back to my country in achieving a low emission and resilient society through ecologically balanced practices. Besides, I wish to contribute to the improvement of the implementation of forest conservation and rehabilitation practices in forested areas in Asia-Pacific region. Also, I want to improve my academic horizon and professional career by working with professors, experts, and international students from the University and global communities in a research-oriented manner. Moreover, I hope to contribute to implementing APFNet strategies in targeted areas in Asia and Pacific region in the future.



Aye Thet Htar (Myanmar)

Being a government staff, I had to undergone and pass several steps before I could apply for the APFNet Scholarship program. Since I was in my university days, I have been dreaming of studying abroad. The moment I got the admission notice, it felt like I was in a cloud and finally having the chance to pursue my academic goals. This scholarship will provide me with a new and experience in life. Moreover, it would be a great opportunity to interact with other scholars from diverse cultures and backgrounds. However, due to the on-going pandemic, I cannot be able to come to campus. I feel sorry because I can't experience student life completely but I am hoping that everything will be back to normal soon. I am very grateful to APFNet and Beijing Forestry University for allowing me to learn and achieve my academic dream.



CURRENT STUDENTS

Phyu Phyu Thinn (Myanmar)

I am Phyu Phyu Thinn from Myanmar and currently working as Range Officer at the Forest Department. I earned my master's degree in economic analysis of agroforestry at the University of Forestry and Environmental Science in 2018. I am eager to pursue a doctoral degree to improve my skills and knowledge in forest economics and management. APFNet scholarship supports qualified students in completing advanced degree programs related to sustainable forest management. As one of the awardees to study at Beijing Forestry University, I do believe that this will be an opportunity for me to enhance my knowledge in forest economics and forest management from various perspectives. Also, I can get more experience in making new friends from different countries and learn about different cultures and traditions. Because of the current health crisis, all my courses are being taught online using online teaching applications like VooV Tencent Meeting and Classin. I hope to make social interaction with new friends once the current situation will be better. I would like to express my deepest acknowledgment to the APFNet for granting full scholarship because I couldn't afford it myself



Monthuda Suddhibongse (Thailand)

Since I got a scholarship I was so excited because I had a chance to visit BFU before and It is beautiful and there are so many interesting things such as a museums. When I came back to Thailand about a few months later, I heard about the APFNet scholarship I decided to apply and after I know I got a scholarship my question is "How can I go to China?" because we are facing a COVID-19 situation. And this is my feeling when I know I got a scholarship from APFNet and it would be great if we could go to China nearly soon.

