

APFNet ALUMNI NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE

Alumni Network Mechanism – 1

ASP Intakes 2019 – 2

1st Asia Pacific Forestry Youth Forum – 3

Internship in Guangxi, China – 4

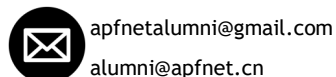
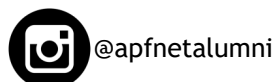
New Year Gala – 5

Alumni Stories – 6-7

We're online! Please follow our official social media accounts for upcoming events and updates!

Got news? Received a promotion? Given an award?

We'd like to hear from you! Send us an email to our official account down below!



Launching of APFNet Alumni Network

In 2019, APFNet is making a great stride by bringing closer ties and communication among Alumni and current students through the launching of APFNet Alumni Network. The mechanism for the creation of Alumni Network was formally introduced during the 1st Asia-Pacific Forestry Youth Forum held on December 8-11, 2019 in Beijing Forestry University which was attended by APFNet alumni and students.

During the forum, Ricmar Magarin, APFNet scholarship student from Beijing Forestry University and also one of the Alumni Relations Assistants presented the strategies on how to successfully build and maintain an active alumni network. The Alumni Network has four main strategies these include: 1) building linkage among alumni; 2) culture of engagement; 3) information sharing; and 4) awards and recognition.



APFNet Alumni and Students during the presentation of the Alumni Network Mechanism

Currently, APFNet scholarship program has 103 alumni across 19 economies across Asia-Pacific region. These alumni acquired master's degree in field of forestry, forestry economics, soil and water conservation, forestry engineering and environmental engineering. After graduated, these alumni continue government agencies, research institutes, international organizations, NGOs and some are pursuing doctorate program.

The Alumni Network is crucial considering that the number of APFNet scholarships has been increasing every year. This will serve as self-governing platform which aims to further enhance knowledge and experience sharing as well as to strengthen communication and coordination between Alumni in promoting regional forestry development and collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region.

APFNet Scholarship Intakes 2019

The APFNet Scholarship Program was started in 2010 which aims to support capable forestry officials and researchers in the Asia-Pacific region to pursue higher academic degrees in the field of sustainable forest management. The scholarship program is offered in partnership with three leading universities in China such as Beijing Forestry University, Nanjing Forestry University and Northwest Agriculture & Forestry University.

For over a decade, the APFNet Scholarship Program was able to support a total of 159 students from 20 different economies across Asia-Pacific region. Out of these, 63 are female and 96 are male. These students are working in the government agencies, research institutes, international organizations, NGOs and academes in their respective economies. The study program of the APFNet scholarship students are in the field of forest science, forestry economics and management, environmental engineering, forest protection, soil and water conservation and desertification control.

For 2019, a total of 34 new students have been awarded with the APFNet Scholarship program and was officially enrolled to the three host universities. It also a monumental for APFNet scholarship since it is the first time that the scholarship program started supporting Ph.D. program students. A total of 29 students are currently taking their master's degree and 5 students under the Ph.D. program. These new students came from the economies of Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

APFNet just recently inked a cooperation with Chulalongkorn University in Thailand for its scholarship program that will support two students annually. This milestone is a good start to expand the coverage of the scholarship program. Currently, there are two students studying in Chulalongkorn University taking their Master's Degrees under Environment, Development and Sustainability program.



APFNet scholarship students Batch 2018 and 2019 together with Professors and ECTF personnel in Pingxiang, Guangxi, China

1st Asia-Pacific Forestry Youth Forum

In December 9-11, 2019, the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation and the School of Economics and Management of Beijing Forestry University organized the 1st Asia-Pacific Forestry Youth Forum which was held in Beijing, China. The forum served as venue for young professionals in the field of forestry to discuss and share ideas on the different key issues with regards to the implementation of sustainable forest management within the Asia-Pacific region. The forum was participated by the APFNet Scholarship students and alumni from Beijing Forestry University, Nanjing Forestry University and Northwest Agriculture & Forestry University.

Several keynote speeches were given by experts on the green development in Asia-Pacific and forest rehabilitation and livelihood projects funded by APFNet in the region. In addition, trends in forest trade with Asia-Pacific economies and new forest plantation experiences from World Wildlife Fund (WWF) China were also presented.

Alumni and student from different economies of Cambodia, China, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam presented their respective experiences and researches in field of community forestry, forest ecosystem services, wildlife conservation management, and forest protection.

Participants of the forum also took part in panel discussion on the key issues of forest restoration and sustainable management in Asia-Pacific, and how to achieve effective conservation and sustainable development on a global scale. The forum was concluded with participants signifying their intentions to take active participation for the attainment of sustainable development in the region with high hopes that it will be achieved in the future.



Participants during the opening ceremony of the 1st Asia-Pacific Forestry Forum



Ms. Sililuck Thammanu one of the alumni presented her research work conducted in Northern Thailand.

“VICTORY! As young professionals in the forestry field we are optimistic that sustainable forest management in AP is achievable and we vow to take part!”

Internship in Guangxi Province, China

The APFNet scholarship students from three host universities participated the internship program in Piangxiang, Guangxi, China on November 18-24, 2019. The field study provided the opportunity for the APFNet studies to learn the “Models of Sustainable Forest Practices in Southern China”. The internship aimed to provide useful sustainable forestry learning to APFNet scholarship students through series of academic lectures, field visits, as well as the exchange of ideas and experiences among students.

The internship was made possible through the cooperation between APFNet, Experimental Center of Tropical Forestry, Chinese Forestry Academy, Beijing Forestry University, Nanjing Forestry University, and Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University. A total of 50 APFNet scholarship students participated the internship from from 13 different economies of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Peru, The Philippines, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

During the internship, series of lectures on forest restoration and rehabilitation experiences in Southern China were discussed by experts focused on the efficient management of planted forests, close-to-nature approach, and relevant researches in tropical forest landscape. Also, the students visited experimental centers, demonstration projects, and forest-based industries as well as interacting with different stakeholders.

Another important highlight of the internship was the workshop which gave room for students to discuss on their learning and shed light on the forest management issues



APFNet scholarship students from BFU, NFU, & NWFU visited a demonstration project during the internship

from their respective economies. Forest management issues that were identified by scholarship students include forest fire, illegal logging, forest encroachment, land tenure conflicts, limited man power with lack of technical skills, and weak enforcement on forest laws.

APFNet scholarship students also recommended strategies to address the identified key issues on forest management such as active partnership with international forest cooperation, formulation of research-based policies, promotion of forest-based eco-tourism, mainstreaming of climate change mitigation and adaptation, strengthening of law enforcement, and intensify the research and development in sustainable forest management in the region.

The internship was a success which served as a venue for the students to learn new knowledge and experience about sustainable forest management which will be helpful and applicable to their respective economies. APFNet scholarship students expressed their gratitude and thanks to the ECTF, APFNet, Universities and all the people involved.

Scholarship Students New Year Gala

On December 22nd, 2019, Dr. Lu De (Executive Director of APFNet) together with APFNet secretariat paid a visit to Nanjing Forestry University for New Year Gala. The event aimed to strengthen the cooperation between APFNet and Nanjing Forestry University for its scholarship program which was attended by professors, staffs, and scholarship students.

Nanjing Forestry University (NFU) has been the host for APFNet scholarship holders since 2014. To date, there are 33 students from 11 economies who completed their master's degrees. Currently, there are 28 students studying in the university of which two students are doing Ph.D. program and other under Master's degree program.

Dr. Zhu Jiangang (Dean of the College of International Education, NFU) welcomed the the APFNet Team. Dr. Zhu extend thanks to APFNet for its constant support to NFU as well as grateful for the strategic collaboration with APFNet in promoting forestry education. "NFU will closely focus on international students from "Belt and Road" member countries to promote cooperation and internationalization of the university and contribute to the development of the forestry sector in the Asia Pacific region and globally" said Dr. Zhu. He further added that "New Year is a family gathering so this events is for APFNet family in NFU to gather and enjoy having dinner together".

Mr. Suwash Kunwar, a Master student from Nepal expressed his appreciation for the visit of the APFNet team. Mr. Kunwar was grateful for the opportunity that APFNet had given to him to pursue his Master's degree in China and learn more about Chinese culture and people. Moreover, Mr. Kunmar assured that he will be focused on his studies and hopefully bring back the knowledge to contribute in promoting sustainable forest management in Nepal.



APFNet Scholarship Students of Nanjing Forestry University together with the APFNet Executive Director and NFU Professors and staff posed for a photo during the New Year Gala.

During the event, scholarship students from Myanmar performed their country's traditional dance, and everyone had joined. The activity had been amusing and pleasant.

Dr. Lu De raised a toast wishing Happy New Year 2020 to everyone. Dr. Lu expressed his gratitude to NFU professors and staff for organizing the event and applauded the commitment of NFU in promoting the quality forestry education not only in China but on a global scale. The Executive Director hopes to see the scholarship students to continue doing an excellent job in their studies as well as working in the forestry sector of their respective economies. Dr. Lu also inspired all young forestry professionals to take active part in expanding the forestry network across Asia Pacific region and around the globe. The forestry network is vital in promoting sustainable forest management and rehabilitation and the exchange of strategies and experiences.

The event was concluded on a high note, Dr. Zhu Jiangang and NFU staff gave a red scarf present to all attendees which signifies good luck and bountiful year ahead. After that, everyone took a group photo for the memory. This is the first time that NFU has experience a memorable visit from APFNet and looking forward for more important events in the future.

Alumni Story: Jeremiah Haron's Experiences



Mr. Jeremiah Haron, APFNet Alumni of Beijing Forestry University from Papua New Guinea

“APFNet scholarship holders are family to me. The scholarship helps me both professional and personal life. It helps me improve my career path regarding trade, forest economics, and policy. These areas are new and crucial for my country. Besides, I have a chance to meet a friend from the Asia-Pacific economies, which has a different culture and language” these are some words from one of the pioneers of APFNet scholarship program.

Mr. Jeremiah Haron is one of the pioneer students supported by APFNet Scholarship Program. He is from Papua New Guinea and completed his master's degree in forestry economics and management at Beijing Forestry University in 2012. Currently, he holds several positions in the government this include Deputy Head of Forestry Department—PNG, university lecturer, and an oversea inspect trading agency.

Before applying for APFNet Scholarship program, Mr. Haron realized the importance of establishing network and cooperation between China and Papua New Guinea. According to him PNG's forestry sector has contributed a lot to the country's economy by exporting wood products of which China is the huge market. That is why it is important to establish connection and cooperation between the two economies.

Mr. Haron described his learning experience in Beijing Forestry University under APFNet Scholarship Program as unique learning experience that provided him the opportunity to participate to different international conferences, meetings and symposiums. Aside from that, it provided him the platform to communicate and exchange ideas from various people with the same profession on the sustainable forest management practices in Asia-Pacific.

However, Mr. Haron revealed that his study experience in Beijing Forestry University has upsides and downsides. The most benefit that he got was able to become more self-independent and he enjoyed meeting new friends from different cultural backgrounds. The main challenge that he experienced is the communication barrier however it pushed him to be motivated in life. Mr. Haron also emphasized the importance of having a strong bond of support from friends when studying abroad. Through this student will be able to overcome all challenges and be able to established life-long friends.

According to Mr. Haron “the establishment of APFNet Alumni is truly groundbreaking through this platform I will be able to reconnect and engage into meaningful discussions”. And he is excited for the future engagements with the Alumni and current students through the help of the established platform.

“I became more self-independent because of APFNet Scholarship Program, and I view this as one of the great rewards in life”

Alumni Story: A Journey to Doctoral Dream



Mr. Kho Chesda, APFNet scholarship student in NWAUFU from Cambodia

The year 2019, marks another milestone for APFNet Scholarship Program as evidence is the most number of intakes since 2010. With such large group of new students means diverse cultural backgrounds and interesting stories waiting to be heard and shared to everyone. On that note, in this issue we would like to hear from one of the new students about his study experiences under the program.

Mr. Khot Chesda is one of the new students awarded with the scholarship program. He is currently taking his Doctorate degree at Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University with the major in the field of Forestry. He is from Cambodia at the same time working as Government Official in Forest Administration-Cambodia. His education background includes both Bachelor's degree in Forestry at Royal University of Agriculture in Cambodia and Master's degree in Tropical Forestry at Vietnam National University of Forestry.

According to Mr. Khot studying under APFNet Scholarship program does not only preparing him for professional life but also a formative time in his life by gaining knowledge and experiences from internships and seminars.

“The reasons for me to decide to study at Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University (NWAUFU) under the APFNet Scholarship program include 1) good reputation of the university in the field of forestry; 2) to acquire knowledge for future career development; 3) the opportunity to participate in various international conferences” said Mr. Khot.

With regards to the course content of the study program, He expressed that it is interesting, meaningful and has clear applicability in addressing key issues in forest management which allows him to engage in collaboration and rich discussion with other colleagues in the Asia-Pacific region. He also expressed that as forester and researcher the program has provided him to develop and implement large-scale projects and be part of the solution to forest management issues not just in his home country but on a global scale.

Mr. Khot encouraged young professionals to choose the field of study that interests them for his case he choose forestry related majors due to large array of researches especially in tackling environmental issues that humanity are experiencing right now. And finally Mr. Khot expressed his sincerest gratitude to APFNet Scholarship program for being an instrument that paved way to achieve his academic endeavours.

“The opportunity to leave your comfort zone for the whole academic term and be thrown in deep end is the most impactful and valuable experience, both professionally and personally.”

APFNet Scholarship Host Universities

Beijing Forestry University

Beijing China

<http://www.studybeijing.com.cn/>

Nanjing Forestry University

Nanjing, China

<http://www.eng.njfu.edu.cn/>

Northwest A&F University

Xi'an, China

<http://www.en.nwsuaf.edu.cn>

Chulalongkorn University

Bangkok, Thailand

<http://www.chula.ac.th>

The mission of the APFNet Alumni Network is to:

- Establish robust communication among alumni
- Create a lifelong pride and commitment among alumni
- Disseminate information on the recent development of Alumni and students
- Provide opportunities to Alumni and students for their professional, social, and intellectual growth

APFNET ALUMNI NETWORK

Alumni Relations Assistants

Ricmar P. Magarin

Beijing Forestry University

Atcharaporn Daisai

Nanjing Forestry University

Fayzmamad Davatbekov

Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University

