



MASTER OF
**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
PRACTICE**

FALL NEWSLETTER 2018

*Integrating knowledge and skills to prepare a new generation
of development practitioners*



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Edited by Daniela Lizano

Director's Note

In this newsletter, we provide an update on the University of Florida's Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) Program. As you will see in the following pages, it has been an exciting period of discovery and accomplishment for our students, thanks to the generous support of faculty, scholarship programs, MDP alumni and partner organizations.

Over the summer (2018), 12 of our students conducted their field practicums in nine countries and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (see page 9 for details). While the focus of each field practicum was quite distinct, they required that each student put into practice an array of knowledge and skills they have been developing as a cohort since initiating the MDP program. It is precisely this opportunity for practice that attracts many prospective students to our program.

Now that the global MDP Program is nearing its 10th anniversary, the MDP Global Association made the decision to revisit the original report of the International Commission on Education for Sustainable Development Practice that gave rise to the Program with support from The MacArthur Foundation. The MDP Secretariat in Columbia University received a grant from the Cheah Foundation to review and update the original report taking into consideration important developments like the approval and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the cumulative experiences amassed by universities participating in the MDP Global Association. As part of this effort, the University of Florida MDP Program received a sub-grant from Columbia University to coordinate a study targeting North American MDP alumni to ascertain their perspective regarding key knowledge areas and skills for development practitioners in the current job market and also looking to the future.

While many areas were mentioned, knowledge that enables abstract and cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral thought topped the list, indicating that practitioners should comprehend how development challenges often span different



disciplines and sectors. Next, systems-thinking was emphasized, recognizing the utility of this approach to gain a broader, more holistic understanding of development challenges and the contexts in which they play out. Sustainability and environmental topics, with a marked emphasis on climate change (adaptation, mitigation, resilience to) and governance at different scales rounded out the most frequent knowledge areas highlighted by MDP alumni.

With regards to key skills, MDP alumni emphasized three broad themes (and many others to a lesser degree): research-related analytical skills, cultural sensitivity, and communication skills and critical thinking/problem solving. Project management skills and experience in monitoring and evaluation were also seen as particularly invaluable to development practitioners. Clearly, this study, led by MDP alumni, will be a rich source of information to improve our programs in the coming years.

MDP faculty make a concerted effort to nurture the development of knowledge and skills in our program, and it is in the field practicum alluded to above that students put them into practice in a real world context. Invariably, MDP students discover that knowledge and skills must be accompanied by flexibility and adaptability, resourcefulness,



high ethical standards, cross-cultural sensitivity and interpersonal skills to be successful, as stressed in a recent report by Devex that surveyed 2,500 development professionals. It is precisely a balance of knowledge, skills and “soft skills” relating to professional behavior that we seek to cultivate in our students, and they have made us proud both as students and as graduates of the program.

In the fall semester we welcomed 14 students to the program, evenly divided between domestic and international students (Indonesia (2), Colombia (2), Ecuador, Bolivia and Haiti). They bring with them considerable experience, both international and domestic, in areas like community forestry, education, migrant rights, conflict and development, community-wildlife relationships, environmental awareness and conservation, corporate social responsibility, sustainable missions, food security and sovereignty, telecommunications, fair trade, and agroforestry, among others. They are currently planning the field practicums they will take on in the coming summer months. We are grateful for the support provided by Fulbright and Colfuturo (Colombia) that made possible the enrollment of our new students from Indonesia and Colombia.

We are happy to report on the graduation of two more students from our program in the Fall semester (see page 5). In addition, we report on a new seminar series that was offered to provide MDP affiliate faculty the opportunity to share a sampling of their research and development work with our students (see page 8). This initiative responded to a recommendation made by our students in our biannual Curriculum Committee. It was quite enriching to become more aware of the exciting work being carried out by a group of our affiliate faculty and we thank them for agreeing to take part in this seminar series.

I am quite pleased that in our Faculty Spotlight, Dr. Becky Williams agreed to patch in during a recent mission to Nepal to be interviewed. We are very fortunate that Becky generously supports the MDP program as a contributor to MDP courses and as member of student supervisory committees. As you will note, Becky has a unique background spanning a degree in music, a Master’s in Instructional Design, a

Peace Corps stint in Honduras and a PhD in Interdisciplinary Ecology. She has a vocation for teaching and for carrying out research applying participatory methods. Her rich experience enables her to provide invaluable insights to our students to help prepare them for their field work and to extract meaningful results from their data. Presently, she is exploring complex linkages between climate change and lack of opportunities in rural Honduras and how these factors increase violence and migration. Here, I would like to express my appreciation to Becky for her generous support to the program.

In closing, many thanks to Daniela Lizano for her leadership in the preparation of this newsletter and to all who contribute to the MDP program. Although belated, a happy and successful 2019 to all our readers as well.

Welcome Cohort 9!

This fall the MDP program welcomed 14 new students!

Two from Indonesia are sponsored by Fulbright, and Colombia's COLFUTURO continues to support MDP with two more beneficiaries in this cohort. They join three other international students from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Haiti; and US citizens with varied national and international experience. As usual their backgrounds and interests and experiences are also extremely diverse--ranging from forestry and wildlife to migration to engineering and telecommunications to indigenous community development and education. They have worked for non-profits and faith-based organizations; as activists; for Americorps and government Ministries and the United Nations; and for the private sector. You can review their profiles at:

<http://mdp.africa.ufl.edu/people/current-students/>



Fall Graduates 2018

Congratulations and our best wishes to Sheila and Nazmi!

Student	Location	Project Title	Committee Members	Specializations
Sheila Nyokabi Maingi	South Africa	Strengthening efforts against gender-based violence through entrepreneurship training in Gauteng, South Africa	Agnes Leslie (Afr Std) Renata Serra (Afr Std) Glenn Galloway (MDP)	Monitoring & Evaluation, African Studies, TCD
Nazmi Ahmed	Bangladesh	Urbanization and Equitable Service Delivery: An Analysis of Water Supply in Korail Slum, Dhaka, Bangladesh	James Jawitz (SWS) Ignacio Porzecanski (SNRE) Chris Silver (DCP) George O'Connor (SWS)	Urban and Regional Planning, Soil & Water Sciences, TCD



Development Practitioner Forums: Dr Thaisa Sobreiro and MSc. Oscar Maldonado

This semester we had the opportunity to engage with two Development Specialists, Dr. Thaisa Sobreiro and MSc. Oscar Maldonado, who generously shared time with us.



As part of joint activities between MDP and TCD, Dr. Sobreiro shared with students and collaborators her experience working in the Rio Negro Program at the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA). ISA is a Brazilian NGO whose mission is to propose integrated solutions to social and environmental issues, focusing on the defense of the environment, cultural heritage and human rights.

Dr. Sobreiro discussed practitioner challenges in conservation and development topics related to indigenous peoples in the Amazon region, and her transition from academia to working in an NGO.



MSc. Oscar Maldonado, Consultant in Conservation Planning and Adaptive Management, led a session on adaptive management and conservation projects with our 2nd year students, as part of the Development Administration course. For many years Oscar has designed and implemented adaptive management strategies for conservation projects in Africa and Latin America.

Student Participation in Conferences

Fiona Hogan (Cohort 7) and Daniel Acosta (Cohort 8) attended the Sixth International Conference on Sustainable Development at Columbia University in New York (September 2018).

Fiona participated in the Panel on Climate Change Adaptation in Coastal Towns and Small Cities.

Daniel presented a poster on behalf of the UF-USAID Feed the Future Livestock Innovation Lab Team of which he is a member (see photo below).

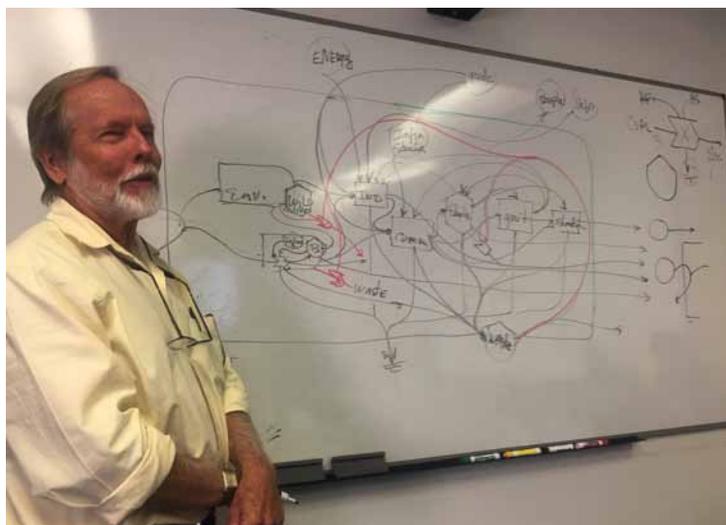
Daniel also participated in the American Academy of Pediatrics Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida (November, 2018).



MDP Faculty Seminars - Fall 2018

We would like to extend our appreciation to the faculty members who graciously offered to present and share a sampling of their experiences with our students in our new Seminar Series.

Faculty Member	Presentation Title
Leo Villalon , Dean, UFIC	Interdisciplinary approach of the Sahel Research Group.
Michael Morris , Emeritus Professor, Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation	Long-term efforts to strengthen entrepreneurship in South Africa: approaches used and lessons learned.
Sandra Russo , Director of Program Development, UFIC	Practicing development in the Middle East: What works?
Becky Williams , Livestock Systems Innovation Lab and UFIC, Office for Global Engagement	Innovative integration of different methods to research on youth violence in Western Honduras.
Marianne Schmink , Professor, Center for Latin American Studies and TCD	Qualitative (Community-Based Social Marketing) and quantitative analysis of the impacts of the Community Weatherization Cooperative (CWC) in Gainesville, FL.
Bob Buschbacher , Coordinator, Amazon Conservation Leadership Initiative, SFRC	Community workshops as a source of information for the analysis of resilience and governance in the Brazilian Amazon.
Steve Perz , Professor, Sociology and Criminology & Law	Collaborative data collection and analysis to further development processes.
Randy Cantrell , Assistant Professor, FYCS	Housing and Community Development in Niamey and Niger: Young Migrant's Hope for their Present and Future.
Rick Stepp , Associate Professor, Anthropology and Latin American Studies	Conservation of biocultural diversity.



Dr. Mark Brown's presentation about System Thinking

Field Practicum Experiences: Summer 2018

Here, an overview of the Field Practicums carried out by our students in Summer 2018. Presently, they are finalizing their final reports for their upcoming defenses, prior to graduation.



Angela Melidosian

“Deathics: the psychosocial ethics of death and dying within palliative care centres in Buenos Aires, Argentina”

Country: Argentina

Host Organization: Asociación Latinoamericana de Cuidados Paliativos



Carlita Fiestas

“Solid waste management and environmental education”

Country: Brazil

Host Organization: Unisinos, Associação dos Ilhéus Ecológicos



Daniel Acosta

“Supply chain analysis to reduce cost and improve availability of PPR vaccine in Karamoja, Uganda”

Country: Uganda

Host Organization: Livestock Innovation Lab / Makerere University

Field Practicum Experiences: Summer 2018



Daniela Lizano

“How are indigenous quality of life plans influencing conservation and rural development in the Ampiyacu-Apayacu region of Peruvian Amazon?”

Country: Peru

Host Organization: Keller Science Action Center / The Field Museum



Dylan Rigsby

“Coffee Talks: Climate change, Communication, and local coping strategies”

Country: Guatemala

Host Organization: CIAT / Hanns Neumann Stiftung



Emma Lannon

“Assessing the Expanding Role of Female Entrepreneurship in Ecotourism in Arusha, Tanzania”

Country: Tanzania

Host Organization: African Queen Adventures

Field Practicum Experiences: Summer 2018



Fiona Hogan

"Khanimambo: Community participation in the conservation of Maputo Special reserve, Mozambique"

Country: Mozambique

Host Organization: Peace Parks Foundation



Jesse Cosme

"Foreign in a domestic sense: social movement approaches for a nation on the move"

Country: Puerto Rico

Host Organization: Universidad Sin Fronteras



Christine Mavrick

"Youth in Timur: Collaborative Curriculum Building for International Learning"

Country: Taiwan

Host Organization: Timur Youth Mobile Classroom

Field Practicum Experiences: Summer 2018



Maria Waked

“Contemplative pedagogy and environmental education for ecotourism and empowerment of nature guides”

Country: Argentina

Host Organization National University of Jujuy /
Institute of Andean Ecoregions (INECOA)

Here you can access an article about Maria’s work
in Argentina, from a Jujuy newspaper:

<https://www.eltribuno.com/jujuy/nota/2018-7-20-0-0-0-una-experiencia-aplicable-al-turismo>



Mary Vasilevsky

“Analysis and Recommendations from Conducting a Risk Assessment for an Environmental Peacebuilding NGO Operating in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan”

Country: Israel

Host Organization: EcoPeace Middle East

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Becky Williams

Thank you so much for connecting with us from Nepal! We MDP students are very grateful to have you Becky, and to have your support. You have been a very important part of our process as MDP students.

Oh, That's really sweet.

What is your background—how did you get to UF?

I always say that Hurricane Katrina brought me to work to UF. I was an elementary school music teacher in Ocala, but living in Gainesville because my partner at that time was a UF Student. Hurricane Katrina drove gas prices so high, close to \$5 a gallon, that I could not afford the commute on a teacher salary. Gainesville had no music teacher positions open. While I was teaching in Ocala, I earned my Master's Degree in Instructional Design. UF has a position open in this field and they hired me to help faculty develop online classes and educational games. After four years I joined the Peace Corps in Honduras, and then I returned to study under Sandra Russo.

My PhD is in Interdisciplinary Ecology from the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE), with Certificates in Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) and Gender and Development. My dissertation research in Honduras evaluated improved cook stoves to see if they saved women time and if women in turn were able to use that time in some way that was empowering for them.

What are you working on now? What do you like the most about what you do?

I have worked with the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems for the past couple of years: the Capacity Development and the Gender Teams. The purpose of the Lab is to improve food security and promote animal source food as a source of nutrition, especially in countries where people rely heavily on pastoralism like Niger, Burkina Faso and Nepal. For each country we develop with the host country partners a set of activities that will help build their capacity, and we help them bridge extension and



research, for example through a Community Outreach Strategy which is one of our activities with our partners in Nepal.

I am also very excited to continue my work in Honduras, with USAID support to examine how climate change is influencing rural livelihoods, and how a lack of opportunities in rural areas is leading to increased violence and migration. The results will guide USAID programs in Honduras for the next five years.

What I love the most is traveling and meeting people and new cultures, especially at the community level, and working with them to help them figure out from different perspectives how they can solve problems. I really love teaching so whenever I have the time back in Gainesville I teach. I particularly enjoy teaching and mentoring MDP students in classes and as they work with partner organizations.

How did you get involved with our MDP Program?

When I was a student I regularly crossed over with MDP people in my TCD classes. They were my friends and they reminded me a lot about my time in Peace Corps. I always have MDP students in my mind. What they do is different than research; it is a different kind of experience. And I think MDP students need to have faculty who have had similar experiences so that we can help with some of the challenges that are unique to the program, like trying to do development when you are new

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Becky Williams

to the culture, or maybe your language skills are not that strong, or maybe you are missing home and you feel isolated. These are problems that field researchers have, as do MDP students while working with a partner organization. At Peace Corps I had a similar experience, and because of that I went to Glenn and I told him I wanted to get involved as faculty and that I would love to teach and mentor. I honestly love to talk to students and help them figure out what they want to do and how, because I have been through that myself.

The Program is really unique. There are people from so many parts of the world with such different backgrounds, and they form a Cohort and work together for that period of time, and they bring to the table all of these different perspectives and backgrounds. I would say the MDP Program is a group of people that really want to make a positive impact in the world and are trying to figure out how to do it in a way that is realistic--really big hearts, people who really want to make a big change in the world and are figuring out how to do it.

What does Sustainable Development means to you?

Sustainable Development is, to me, directly related to the need to improve overall lifestyles. There is development in resources, infrastructure, and knowledge... But there is also development in a sense of personal satisfaction, and wisdom, and peace. Our Western definition of development does not get to the latter. How can we help people within their own contexts to live a good life in terms of their health and education and opportunities; and how can we value their culture and wisdom and respect that as well? We are running towards the edge of a cliff and I am really concerned. I think we need to rethink what Sustainable Development means for us, and to think whether what we are doing is sustainable, too. Development ultimately is about looking for a sense of inner peace. I think that is what humans are looking for. We have to figure out ways to champion that, and what to provide to people to help them get to that point.

What is your advice to all your MDP students, in one phrase?

The mantra: "*Peace and loving kindness*". Let compassion drive you. Compassion is empathy in action, not just feeling empathy, but doing something. And MDP students should take action in a way that is empathetic to other people. But do that and be flexible: go with the flow but fight the good fight when it is appropriate, when it is right. You all will know when it is time to put your foot down and say: "no, we need to change the way we're doing this." And be willing to fight that battle.

Please Becky, tell us that as much as you can.

Please tell it back to me too, guys!.

Alumni Updates!

Jackie Allegra Curnick (Cohort 7) Film Screening: Pulling Teeth From A Polar Bear

September 29, 2018 at the Harn Museum of Art

This documentary based on Jackie's 2017 field practicum takes viewers to remote St. Lawrence Island in Alaska to hear from members of the Yupik community who have been affected by toxins in the environment. This film project was supported by the Mary M. James Inspiration Fund of the Harn Museum of Art.

Derek Sindler (Cohort 7)

Derek Sindler published his field practicum, jointly with his advisers from AgroFrontera, ArroEcoZ and the University of Florida:

Derek Sindler, Pilar Useche, Catherine Tucker, Xin Zhao. 2018. Moving toward Sustainable Rice Production in Northwest Dominican Republic. *Natural Resources* 9:468-504. <https://www.scirp.org/journal/PaperInformation.aspx?PaperID=89678>

Grace Palacios (Cohort 7)

Grace is collaborating with the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) based in Peru. She is part of the coffee and cocoa and value chains research team. Through the value chains project, ICRAF is trying to identify the bottlenecks along the whole value chains, creating more benefits for small coffee and cocoa producers.



Alumni Updates!

Max J. Gelber (Cohort-7)

Program Manager Sustainability Minor Program The George Washington University

“Sustainable GW is a one-stop-shop for sustainability initiatives on campus - academics, research, and operations. My job is quite dynamic; I manage daily operations of the Sustainability Minor, lead outreach to students around sustainability academic program offerings, internships, and career opportunities, and work across campus to develop sustainability curriculum, programs, and strategy. The workload is never-ending, but so too is that gratifying feeling I get every time a student gets an awesome internship, learns something totally new, or takes initiative in something they truly care about.

Last week I put on a panel about the artisan economy, indigenous intellectual property, cultural appropriation, women entrepreneurship in Guatemala, and sustainable textiles, fashion, and production. From left to right: Max Gelber, Program Manager at Sustainable GW, Alejandra Valdez-Rivas, interpreter; Ana Mesia, Guatemalan artisan, teacher, and leader of La Puerta Abierta’s Mothers’ Artisan Group; Amanda Zehner, Founder and CEO of Living Threads Co.; Amanda Flayer, Co-Founder of La Puerta Abierta.”



Students Activities: Outside the Classroom

When students reflect on their master's program, they often emphasize the academic dimensions. However, students also take part in array of exciting extra-curricular activities outside of the classroom, Here we highlight a sample of these activities to show the wealth of experience MDP students gain while enrolled in the program, as well as their service to the community.

Cohort 7

Carlita Fiestas: Family Nutrition Program IFAS/Extension staff

Nazmi Ahmed: Teaching Assistant- Sustainability Studies Program

Christine Mavrck: Volunteer at CWC Climate Weatherization Coalition (Gainesville NGO)

Fiona Hogan: UF Sustainability Office

Breton Homewood (: Peace Corps Recruiter - UF Campus

Sheila Maingi: African Studies Quaterly Book Review Editor / MDP SAAC Representative

Maria Waked: Spanish and Portuguese Studies Department Teaching Assistant

Cohort 8

Nick Diaz: Mercy Corps consultant (Uganda)

Emma Lannon Coordinator / Student Athletes Tutoring

Daniel Acosta): UF Livestock Lab Assistant / One Egg Project - Honduras / MDP SAAC Representative

Daniela Lizano: MDP Graduate Assistant / Amazon Infrastructure-Governance Working Group

Jesse Cosme : Gainesville Labor Coalition / Teaching Assistant - Public Speaking

Dylan Rigbsy: : Division of Enrollment Management-Communications Graduate Assistant

Mary Vasilevsky: Gender and Development Working Group co-Coordinator

Angela Melidosian: Gender and Development Working Group co-Coordinator



Students Activities: Outside the Classroom

Cohort 9

Colleen Abel: Graduate Assistants United - Graduate Assistant

Haaris Saqib: Agricultural Education and Communication Graduate Assistant

Manuel Morales: TCD Graduate Assistant

Pierre William Blanc: Languages, Literatures & Cultures Teaching Assistant (Haitian Creole)

Stephanie Muench: Dean of Students Graduate Assistant

Jessica Mostacedo: Amazon Infrastructure and Governance Working Group

Fall Socials!





MDP UF Foundation Donations

We have all been witness to the invaluable work being carried pout by MDP Students with broad, cross-departmental faculty support and by our growing body of alumni.

Now this is an opportunity to contribute to our exciting program! The MDP UF Foundation Account will support MDP students, fro example, in ther ealization of their capstone field practicums and to attend relevant conferences where they can present their work and engage with other practitioners. Donations can be made online at:

<https://www.uff.ufl.edu/OnlineGivig/FundDetail.asp?FundCode+020485>

Thanks for your support!