

■ MScFB Newsletter 2/2011



Picture: Maija Kovanen

Students on a Stora Enso's logging site.

New students settling in

The sixth year of the MScFB programme started in Autumn 2011. This year, 15 new students from around the world (Japan, Peru, Canada, China, Iran, Russia and Camerun) began their studies at the end of August. Additionally, six Atlantis students will spend the Fall semester in Finland.

By the end of October, altogether 19 students have graduated from MScFB programme.

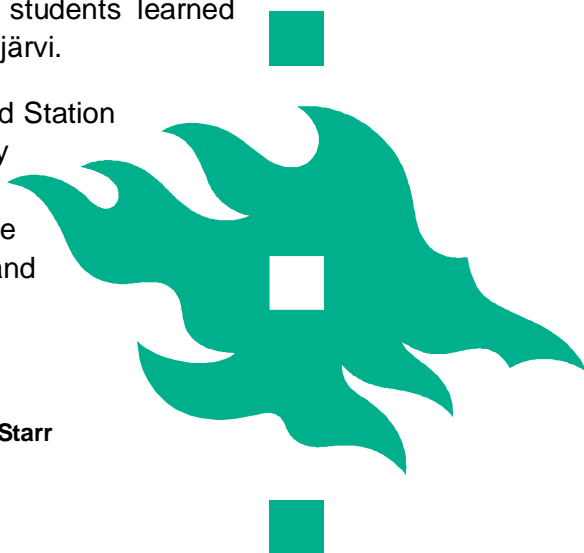
Field trip in August (FOR200)

The traditional field trip for the first year students was organized this year as well. Also two Atlantis students joined the excursion. During the field trip students were introduced with different types of Finnish forests, forest management, silviculture, peatlands and industry. The excursion included visits to the Renko saw in Hämeenlinna, UPM paper mill in Kaipola, Metsähallitus in Vantaa, and Häme Vocational Institute in Evo. At the Department of Environmental Sciences in Lahti, the students learned about urban forests and restoration project of Lake Vesijärvi.

A visit was paid of course to the Hyytiälä Forestry Field Station where students were acquainted with university research activities, including the SMEAR research station (Measuring Forest Ecosystem Atmosphere Relations), but also Finnish traditions such as sauna and sausage by the barbeque.

MScFB Newsletter 2/2011: edited by Maija Kovanen and Mike Starr

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Practical training at Metla (Phuong Hoang)



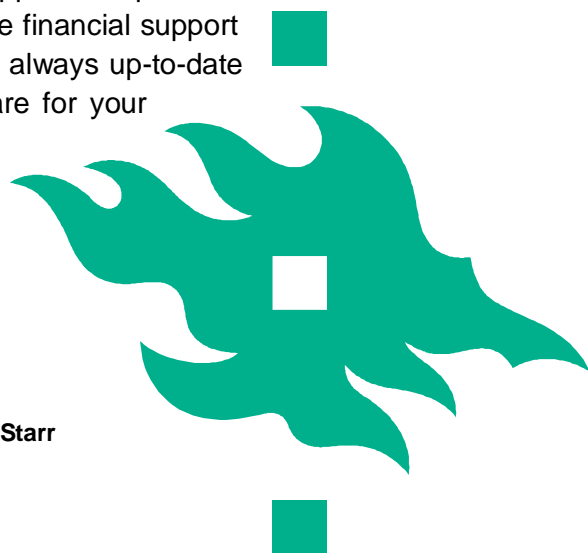
Photo: Lei Wang

In autumn 2010, I did my internship at Metla (Finnish Forest Research Institute). The traineeship was fully funded by the Department of Forest Sciences. At the beginning, I tried to find an internship place by myself but did not succeed. Later on I was contacted by Lei Wang, a PhD student at the department and together with professor Anne Toppinen they helped me to arrange the internship at Metla. I really appreciate Anne's help and the department's effort.

Professor Toppinen also supported me in applying for the Department's funding since my application was late due to the delay in finding the traineeship. A tip for students who want to find an internship placement: try your best to find a place by yourself but also ask around for help from your network (professors, friends, family, etc.). No one can help you if you don't talk about your problem.

My task at Metla involved collecting data on timber imports and exports from Russia. During my work I realized that data from different sources can vary a lot from each other. Therefore, one needs to be critical towards every source of data one has in order to know where the information comes from and whether it's reliable or valid. In addition, various factors, for example new regulation and conflicts, can have great influence on the fluctuation of the figures. I learned that the importance of having reliable data since the accuracy of the results and interpretation will depend greatly on the data one has. My supervisor at Metla, Ms Riitta Hänninen, helped me a lot during the analyzing process. I really enjoyed working at Metla.

Metla is a very good place to get experience of a research environment. Keep this in mind when looking for your traineeship place. Improve your CV and be ready for the professional world. Check the application period for Department's traineeship funding and you might receive financial support for doing your internship. The Department's website is always up-to-date and a good source of information to start with. Prepare for your future by acting right now!



Introducing the staff: Professor Markku Kanninen (Dora Samaniego)



Markku Kanninen is the professor of Tropical Silviculture and the director of VITRI (Viikki Tropical Resources Institute).

How long have you worked at the department?

For the last ten months, but I worked here 15-17 years ago as a part time professor.

How was your experience living and working abroad?

I was in CIFOR (Centre for International Forestry Research) for 8 years and in Costa Rica working for CATIE (Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center) for 7 years. These have been fantastic experiences for me. Being attached to an international organization like CIFOR is an excellent professional experience for a researcher and teacher. Describing this experience for Finns would be like an ice hockey player going to the NHL – going to CIFOR was the same thing: I got to work for a great institute and got to know everyone who is working in the tropics.

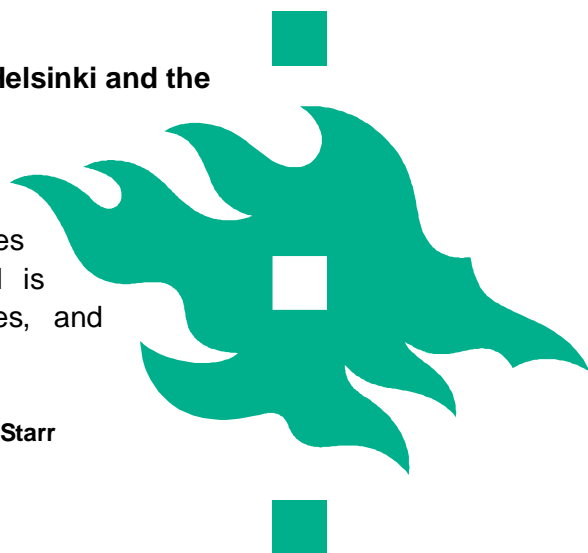
Projects in VITRI

Traditionally VITRI has been involved in projects in Eastern Africa. We are now helping the University in South Sudan establish their own forest faculty since they do not have anything in terms of forestry education. We are helping them develop faculty the curriculum and training of teachers to start educating students in forest management.

We have also other projects. For example research on drylands, and agroforestry in Africa, bioenergy in Cambodia, and the role of forests in adaptation to climate change. So, more emphasis is on dryland in Africa and poor countries, helping people to eradicate the poverty through the wise use of natural resources. But we plan to work with other partners in the future, including Latin American countries.

What is the relationship between the University of Helsinki and the tropics?

I think it is a kind of two-way business. Firstly, the economy is globalised. There are many Finnish forestry companies operating in the tropics, companies such as UPM and Stora Enso. Secondly, Finland is importing a lot of products from tropical countries, and



therefore it would be good to have experts in, for example, forest certification. Globally Finland is very strong in the field of forestry and the University of Helsinki sees it important to have education in tropical forestry – for Finnish students as well as for foreigners. In VITRI, half of the students are Finnish and half are from other countries. I think it's a good combination when students have a strong academic background from our university and knowledge of the local conditions, through field work, for example.

Advices for students

My feeling, after 15 of years living in the tropics, is that many people, and particularly Finns, think that international forestry is about working in Europe. However, I think that much of the action is outside of Europe and in the tropics. There are a lot of interesting things happening there concerning forestry, bioenergy, agriculture, agroforestry, and climate change. That is something that I want to offer to the students: an opportunity to learn about and maybe start working in different countries and fields of research.

Announcements

Upcoming events:

International Master's Degree Programmes: student – staff seminar, November 23 at 10.00 in sr 13.

International Master's Degree Programmes: Christmas party (“Pikkujoulut”), December 15 at 19.00 in Silvica club.

Join the Alumni Campus!

→ Group: Forest Sciences

<https://alumniverkosto.helsinki.fi/>

Grants:

Young researcher's grant (University of Helsinki) 2012.
Application period in January 2012.
<http://www.helsinki.fi/tiedesaatio/grants/index.htm>

