



Global  
Landscapes  
Forum

Restoration Education

# A Call to Collective Action

©Axel Fassio/CIFOR

A diversity of practitioners, youth, policymakers, educators, capacity developers and others from across Africa and beyond gathered on 3 June 2021 to call for immediate action to restore Africa's landscapes. These individuals were brought together in a session titled "**Enhancing Restoration Capacities in African Drylands: A Decade for Action**," organized by the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations** (FAO), in collaboration with the **International Union of Forest Research Organizations** (IUFRO) and the **Global Landscapes Forum** (GLF). This session was part of the larger **GLF Africa 2021** digital conference. Participants, seeing the urgent need to restore Africa's landscapes, concluded that such a massive restoration effort demands the mobilization of existing capacities from across the continent. Educational institutions – from schools to colleges and universities – have a significant role to play. In addition, there are many training opportunities for professionals.

Yet there are also key barriers to be confronted, including regional differences in restoration curricula and extension programs; poor integration of restoration capacities in regional and national knowledge and learning action plans; disparities in community access to finance and learning opportunities; limited evaluation and integration of indigenous restoration practices in curricula; and a lack of risk-mitigation tools necessary to attract private investment in local restoration projects.

These concerns set the scene for session participants to agree on a fervent ***Call to Action***, emphasizing the urgent need to align capacity development and educational efforts across disciplines. This must be combined with the mobilization of existing capacities, enhancing these with the latest insights and technologies for both online and face-to-face learning. The result will be to mainstream restoration in education programs at all levels, for a future generation of producers, professionals and volunteers who are trained in all aspects of restoration efforts.

## Call for Collective Action

We, the participants of this workshop, are very aware that we have only one generation in which to turn around the planetary environmental crises. We must convert our words into action at scale. We therefore unanimously state that the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration will only succeed if it is based on system-wide capacity development rooted in country ownership and commitment.

We, therefore, call for a systemic approach to capacity development that enables people and their organizations to restore the landscapes in which they live, work, or are otherwise connected. Such an approach will not only strengthen technical knowledge and skills to restore forests, drylands, wetlands, and coastal zones, but also strengthen formal and informal initiatives, networks and partnerships representing effective governance capacities across national and sub-national levels. Such a systemic approach will engage all actors, including farmers, herders, women, men, youth, and other inhabitants of landscapes who play a role in restoration.

Furthermore, it will strengthen networks and partnerships of citizens, private companies and governments that are implementing restoration projects within the landscapes. Ultimately, it will strengthen national and continental policymakers who must develop a coherent policy environment to make restoration work.

In practical terms, we propose the following short-, medium-, and long-term actions to:



### 1. Raise the restoration capacities of individuals

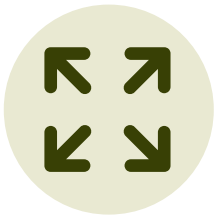
Coordinated capacity development is necessary for all actors: across sectors, scales and disciplines, without duplication or inefficient allocation of funds. Mobilizing the capacities of producers, communities and professionals, especially youth and women, is quickly needed, to scale current restoration practice. Restoration needs to be integrated into the curricula of schools, colleges and universities, to raise a future generation of producers, professionals and volunteers trained in restoration in all its aspects. More inter-university collaboration in curriculum design has already started, and should be intensified.



### 2. Raise the capacities of organizations and networks

Strengthened efforts are needed by formal and informal initiatives, networks, partnerships and educational institutes working within the same landscape, to share experiences and work together. If based on **good practice** (ref. <http://www.fao.org/3/CA0156EN/CA0156en.pdf>), these multi-stakeholder mechanisms can learn from each other and coordinate restoration action on the ground. Competition is not needed. Capacities to develop sustainable businesses and financial models must grow, and keep pace with increased capacities, remaining sensitive to tenure rights, social issues, gender and youth inclusion at all levels.





### 3. Raise the capacities of wider governance system

Policymakers and politicians must learn to open their ears, eyes and hearts to land-users, farmers, herders, women, men and youth who are already protecting and restoring their landscapes. Policymakers should be more actively engaged with existing multi-stakeholder initiatives, networks and partnerships, to harness synergies between themselves, practitioners, and financing institutes. Increasing the collective understanding of how Africa's drylands function will help to build more coherence between sectoral policies, and align investments in forestry, food, health, infrastructure and urban planning, to bring restoration to scale.



### 4. Leverage the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

We must work alongside the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, sharing new knowledge while we embrace a system-wide capacity development approach that goes beyond "business-as-usual". This includes strengthening networks, multi-stakeholder processes at national and subnational levels, and embracing a polycentric governance approach. We must support the creation and use of transparent information channels and sharing knowledge gained through the efforts made by multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships based on good practices. Furthermore, improved access to existing knowledge products is necessary to identify what is needed, and what must be developed. It is important to foster a bottom-up approach in restoration efforts. Putting schools, colleges, universities and capacity development organizations at the forefront will help in accelerating action on the ground.



The participants of the GLF Africa event – all practitioners, teachers, trainers and capacity developers – are fully committed to the above. We are all willing to invest time in working out this Call to Collaborative Action in more detail, to initiate a process of systemic change.

#### Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihoods, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UNEP and the World Bank and Charter Members.

**Charter Members:** CIAT, CIFOR, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, Ecoagriculture Partners, The European Forest Institute, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, The International Livestock Research Institute, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, Rights and Resources Initiative, SAN, TMG-Think Tank for Sustainability, UNEP, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation part of Wageningen Research, World Farmer Organization, World Agroforestry, World Bank Group, World Resources Institute, WWF International, Youth in Landscapes Initiative (YIL)

#### Funding partners



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development