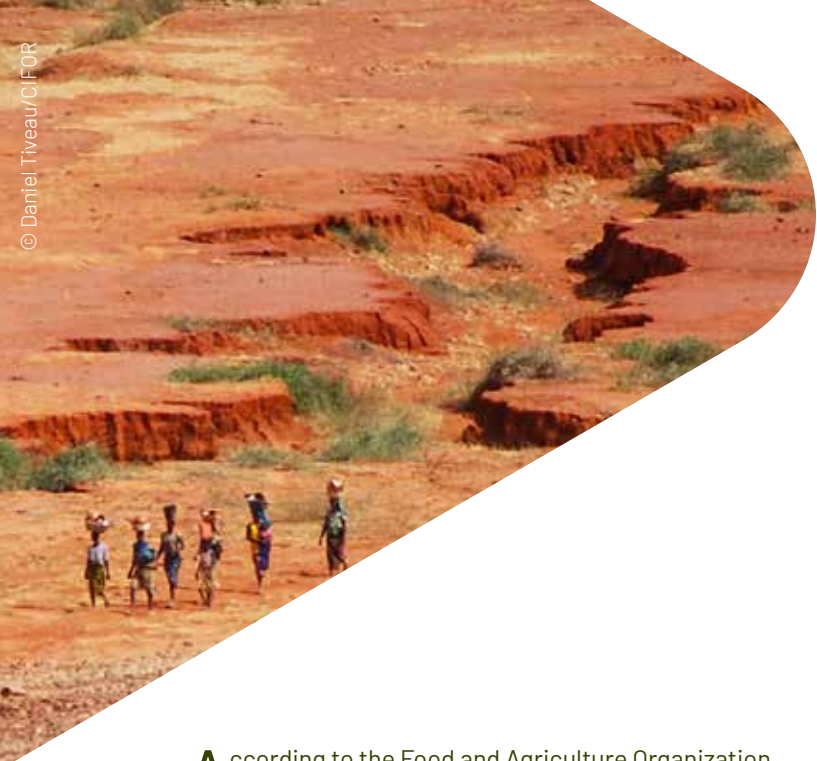




CONCEPT NOTE

AFRICA'S DRYLANDS

A RESTORATION ROAD TRIP



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According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), almost half of Africa’s surface is categorized as drylands, which are home to about 50% of the continent’s population. Drylands provide jobs and livelihoods for millions of people, including a growing youth population that’s projected to reach 1.2 billion by 2030.

However, Africa’s drylands are particularly prone to degradation due to intensification of agricultural production, mining, infrastructure development and urbanization, which is further exacerbated by climate change.

For this reason, and in view of our current position at the outset of the **2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**, there is a growing number of young people on the continent who are interested in engaging in restoration activities. Young people represent the largest demographic in Africa, and an increasing number of them are engaging in learning programs about restoration. They are often more willing than other demographics to take action, and to bring their skills and knowledge into practice to restore their landscapes. However, despite this passion and commitment, many young people may still be asking themselves: “how/ where do I start? How do I get ready to restore”?

That’s why the **GLF** and **Youth in Landscapes Initiative (YIL)**, in collaboration with the **Wageningen Centre for Development and Innovation (WCDI)** and **World Agroforestry (ICRAF)**, are co-creating a digital program for students and young professionals who are interested in restoring Africa’s drylands. The program will take place during the lead-up to the GLF Africa conference, and run concurrently to the launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

WHY DRYLANDS?

Drylands are particularly vulnerable to climatic variations and climate change, as well as human activities such as deforestation and overgrazing. That’s because dryland soils have relatively low fertility, and are particularly susceptible to erosion and nutrient loss. However, these soils sequester millions of tons of carbon every year, contributing significantly to the global fight against climate change. Restoring Africa’s drylands is pivotal to securing the health, livelihoods, homes and futures of the millions of people living in these unique landscapes, while protecting their food and nutrition security.

THE PROGRAM

The learning program “**A road trip to restoration**” will take place in May 2021, and aims to explore with students and young professionals what it means to be “ready to restore” – and how to get there. In five interactive meetings, participants in drylands across Africa will be supported to address key questions such as: what should I restore? Who else should I involve? How should I go about it?

The program is for people between 18 and 35 years old, who have a strong interest in their landscape and are concerned about its degradation, with a specific focus on drylands. At the end of the program, we expect participants to have a deeper understanding of the steps that need to be taken in order to start restoring.

The program targets both those that are aiming to start a restoration project, and those that are already involved in a restoration activity. Eighty percent of participants will be drawn from the African continent, and the remaining 20% will come from other areas of the world, but have a background or an interest in drylands.



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WEEKLY MEETINGS

The weekly interactive meeting sessions will be divided into three parts:

- a theoretical component, where the participants will explore how they can get ready to restore by answering the questions: what to restore? Where to restore? And how to restore?;
- a practical component, where participants will engage in practical examples with experts on the ground, and familiarize themselves with useful restoration tools; and,
- a group work component, where participants will put their learning into practice in a case study.

Participants who attend at least four of the five sessions will receive a certificate of course completion, a voucher for a Landscape MOOC with certification, and an all-access pass to GLF Africa in June. The following table provides an overview of what will be covered in each session.



May 6th | 14:00 - 15:30 CEST

**Introduction to the program;
networking**

In the first meeting, we will provide a short introduction to GLF, YIL, and the other partners that are involved in the program. We will then have a chance to get to know each other and share our expectations for the restoration road trip through facilitated networking activities.



May 10th | 14:00 - 16:00 CEST

Where and what to restore?

In this meeting, we will explore the issues and causes of land degradation, and what kinds of impact it has on our landscapes. Alongside gaining some theoretical background on the issue, we will also hear from practitioners on the ground about their restoration work.



May 14th | 14:00 - 16:00 CEST

Who restores?

Restoration is not only about soil, seedlings and trees – it is also about social and economic benefits. To be sustainable, restoration cannot be conducted in a top-down manner; it needs to be done using a bottom-up approach that includes everyone who is part of the landscape. During this meeting, we will explore how to identify the key stakeholders that need to be engaged in restoration projects.



May 21st | 14:00 - 16:00 CEST

How to restore?

After exploring what to restore and who to involve in the process, in this session we will cover the basics of *how* to restore. This means we will explore different restoration techniques, and emphasize the importance of understanding the reasons behind restoration actions, and of including local communities.



May 24th | 14:00 - 16:00 CEST

Let's start restoring!

In our final session, we'll bring all of the previous information together, and explore examples from the ground of successful restoration projects.

MASSIVE ONLINE OPEN COURSE (MOOC) – LANDSCAPE LEADERSHIP: CATALYSE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LANDSCAPES

During the MOOC on Landscape Leadership, you will learn about the relationship between leadership and landscapes from real-life leaders, find out how they are changing their landscapes, and learn how to take tangible steps towards tackling and managing landscape challenges across the globe. After completing this course, you will be well-prepared to take the lead on positive change in your local landscapes.

Click [here](#) to find out more about the MOOC.

GLF AFRICA CONFERENCE: RESTORING AFRICA'S DRYLANDS

At the end of the restoration road trip, you will be ready to join and make the most out of the GLF Africa conference. Some of the youth program participants will be actively involved in this two-day global event, for example by running sessions, volunteering, and inspiring others as plenary speakers.



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