

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Gender parity among 2015 fellows

The annual 20 week post-graduate studies diploma programme (30 ECTS) in international gender studies took place from January to end of May 2015 for the eighth time. During the



semester-long programme, ten fellows received interdisciplinary education by specialists from all over the world with the goal to strengthen their capacity and the institutions they represent for advancing and implementing gender sensitive projects and policies in their respective countries.

In 2015, gender parity was reached for the first time when five women and five men from five countries graduated with a Post-

UNU-GEST fellows 2015

graduate Diploma in international gender studies, jointly from UNU-GEST and the University of Iceland.

The Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Award

Mrs. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the former President of Iceland and Matron of the UNU-GEST Programme, presented the Award for an Outstanding Academic Achievement to Mr. Tony Bero for his project, *Strengthening gender-based violence preparedness and prevention in emergency situations in seven UNRWA refugee camps in the North Area of West Bank, Palestine*. Information on all final projects of the 2015 UNU-GEST fellows can be found on [our website](#).

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On behalf of the graduates, Nkumba Willy from Uganda gave a stellar speech at the graduation ceremony



Mrs. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir presents Tony Bero from Palestine with the award for outstanding academic achievement

"Goodbye - see you soon"



Victor Kondwani Maulidi from Malawi played the guitar

This year's graduates turned out to be a group full of hidden talents as they performed an original farewell song to all present at the graduation, led by Victor Kondwani Maulidi from Malawi. The song, *Goodbye, see you soon* can be found on [YouTube](#).

To the graduates of 2015, the UNU-GEST team says:

Goodbye, see you soon and we wish you all the best in the future!

Follow us!

The UNU-GEST website was re-designed in February 2015 and launched under the UNU domain www.gest.unu.edu

UNU-GEST is also on Twitter
[@unugest](#)

and on [Facebook](#)



UNU-GEST LECTURE SERIES 2015

UNU-GEST established lecture series, with the aim of disseminating and sharing knowledge within the field of gender equality and development. The following events were part our series in 2015:

From Water to the Market: Weaknesses, Strengths and Gender Roles within the Value Chain for Fish from Lake Tanganyika, Tanzania

Dr. Pétur Waldorff, UNU-GEST senior researcher introduced the methodologies and preliminary results from a gendered value chain analysis applied to assess the gendered dimensions within the value chain for fish from Lake Tanganyika as the product is tracked from the water to the market. The research was carried out in collaboration with UNU-FTP and the Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D (Matís) in Iceland.

Gender transformative approaches for sustainable rural development: Experiences from Sub-Saharan Africa

Clare Bishop-Sambrook, gender specialist at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, visited UNU-GEST in May. She gave a public talk where she discussed the importance of ensuring a gender perspective when implementing projects on rural livelihood and food security in IFAD's work in sub-Saharan Africa.

UN Peace Operations and the Use of Force: Issues, Lessons and Prospects

Dr. Mats Berdal, Professor of Security & Development at King's College London, and UNU-GEST board member, discussed one of the principal issues facing the High-Level Panel on UN Peace Operations, which was set up in 2014: whether or not UN forces should prepare for, and engage in, more robust peacekeeping, perhaps even be prepared to take on a war-fighting role. The lecture placed current debates about the future of UN peace operations in a historical context.

Ms. Fatima Hossaini, UNU-GEST alumni (2010), spoke at an open seminar in Reykjavik 10 December 2015 on the education and empowerment of women in Afghanistan. Ms. Hossaini discussed child marriages in Afghanistan within the context of education.



The seminar was organized by UNICEF and UN Women in Iceland, in collaboration with the Prime Ministry and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Welfare in Iceland. The three Ministries are joint partners in a 9M ISK project to support education and empowerment of girls and women in Afghanistan, as well as to introduce these issues in Iceland.

Speakers discussed the obstacles facing Afghan girls when pursuing education and was particularly timely on the [UN Human Rights Day](#), 10 December, which also marks the end of [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign](#).

Visit from Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka visited Iceland and spoke at the Centenary Celebration Conference of Women's Suffrage in Reykjavík, October 23rd 2015. During her visit she met with the UNU-GEST team. The synergies between the work of UNU-GEST and UN Women worldwide and the importance of collaboration was stressed. Madame Phumzile underlined how education and training, especially for young people is vital and a real prerequisite for increased gender equality and improved status of girls and women. The fruitful discussions will pave the way for increased collaboration between UNU-GEST and UN Women on several fronts, including policy-relevant research and training on gender equality.



Alumni activities

Alumni Associations in the making

UNU-GEST alumni met in Uganda and Palestine this year. Dr. Irma Erlingsdóttir, UNU-GEST Director, visited Palestine in May and met with alumni on the West Bank on May 11 where eight UNU-GEST alumni gathered for an afternoon seminar discussing the best way forward in establishing a formal alumni association in Palestine next year.

During her visit to Uganda in late May, Erla Hlín Hjálmsdóttir, met five alumni members in Kampala for the same purpose.

UNU-GEST staff is currently forming a new alumni strategy to support and enhance the network between former fellows. As a part of these endeavours, formal alumni associations will be formed in Malawi, Uganda, Mozambique, Palestine and Afghanistan in 2016.

When you attend the UNU-GEST programme, you don't only make friends for life; you also become a member of a valuable network of professionals that we want to make the most of. To be actively involved in alumni work can be an enriching experience, beneficial and fun.

If UNU-GEST alumni members wish to contribute to the formation of alumni associations, have an input or ideas, please contact Marta Birna Baldursdóttir, mbb@hi.is.



RESEARCH

Exploring the gendered dimensions of the value chain in small scale fisheries by Lake Tanganyika, Tanzania

UNU-GEST, UNU-FTP and the Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D institute (MATÍS) joined efforts for the research project "Gendered Value Chain Analysis of Small-scale Fisheries and Fish Processing".



Fish on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, Tanzania

The research project explores the gendered dimensions of the small-scale fisheries sector in Kigoma on the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Western Tanzania using gender-responsive value chain analysis. Its goal is to supplement the knowledge of gendered aspects of small-scale fish processing, which traditionally has primarily been the role of women in Tanzania. The research is led by Dr. Pétur Waldorff, a senior researcher at UNU-GEST.

Preliminary results indicate that the value chain is highly gendered with formal and informal rules and institutions affecting people's positioning

within the value chain, supplemented by distinctive structural and individual constraints and opportunities for men and women to upgrade from lower to higher links within the value chain. The upcoming 2016 field research will focus on the socio-economic effects of the introduction of a new and improved fish smoking kiln into the value chain.

New members of staff



Ms. Kristjana Sigurbjörnsdóttir (MSc) was recruited to the UNU-GEST as a project manager and is the module leader for Health and Bodily Integrity.



Dr. Pétur Waldorff received a post-doctoral grant from the EDDA research center at the end of 2014 and now holds a part-time position as a senior researcher within the UNU-GEST team.



Ms. Marta Birna Baldursdóttir (MPA) is now formally a part of our UNU-GEST team but she also runs the EDDA Centre of Excellence at the University of Iceland.

2016 COHORT OF FELLOWS

The UNU-GEST team is now busy preparing for the arrival of the 2016 cohort of fellows. The programme will welcome 15 fellows from six countries next year. Participating countries include Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique and Palestine, in addition to Ghana and South Africa who will join the programme for the first time. We look forward to welcome this group of promising professionals to Iceland!

SNAPSHOTS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

The collage includes several social media posts and photos:

- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "ITCILO launches its global gender training. Gender experts learn share lessons and tools. #GenderAcademy2015"
- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "Experts debate gender indicators. The Human Development Report Office at the UNDP convened an expert group meeting in partnership with UNU-GEST on 'Gender Equality in Human Development - Measurements Revisited' in Reykjavik."
- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "UNU-Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme. Published by Kristjana Sigurbjörnsdóttir. July 7"
- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "Visit of the Rector of United Nations University (UNU): Dr. David Malone. Rector of the UNU, was warmly welcome director and staff of the UNU-GEST programme today."
- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "UNU-GEST aims to achieve gender equality. Know your #GSDGoals. @UNU_GEST #SDG #SustainableDevelopmentGoals"
- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "UNU-GEST director gives a talk on #GSD at our programme."
- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "UNU-GEST invites new nominations of candidates for post-graduate diploma post.unu.edu/en/education/9"
- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "Our sister, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, is 85 years old today. Congratulations Vigdís. #congratfinnbogadottir #UNU_GEST"
- A tweet from @UNU_GEST: "GOALS 5. ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS."



Dr. Anne Flaspöeler received a post-doctoral grant from the EDDA research center late 2015 and will join the team in Iceland in 2016.



Gender Equality in Human Development – Measurements Revisited

The Human Development Report Office at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) convened an expert group meeting in partnership with UNU-GEST titled “Gender Equality in Human Development – Measurements Revisited” in Reykjavík in June 2015. The meeting reviewed several of the most prominent composite gender-related indices in the Human Development Report (HDR) and elsewhere, discussing strengths and weaknesses. These reviews are especially timely given the emphasis on eradication of gender based inequalities in the new 2030 agenda, and manifested in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The Director of UNU-GEST, Dr. Irma Erlingsdóttir joined female political leaders, academics, managers and members of civil society in discussions on advancing women’s empowerment and agency on national and international levels at the [World Assembly for Women \(WAW!\) 2015](#) conference held in Tokyo, Japan in August.



Note from the Director

UNU-GEST existence owes a great deal to the inspiration and practices of women’s movements in Iceland and worldwide. This year, the celebrations of the centenary of women’s vote in Iceland not only served as a reminder of how the power of solidarity among women can lead to fundamental changes. It also underscored that the struggle for gender equality is an ongoing process in constant need of rethinking strategies, readjustment and adaptation. There is no single way to achieve this goal; no blueprint to follow. This is the core understanding of UNU-GEST: to analyze the structural causes of gender inequality and to identify potentials for change.

2015 also marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Further, the UN Member States adopted a new sustainable development agenda with the Sustainable Development Goals, which sets a framework for global development policy over the next 15 years, a framework in which gender has a central role to play.

As the year is coming to an end, we are bound to reflect upon these milestones and achievements and simultaneously to assume responsibility – to act and interrupt the present for alternative future possibilities.

To all former fellows, instructors, partners and friends of UNU-GEST, I wish you a happy new year.

Dr. Irma Erlingsdóttir

Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs meets UNU-GEST alumni in Malawi

Mr. Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, the Icelandic Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited Malawi in July. During his visit in Lilongwe, the Minister met several UNU-GEST alumni from Malawi at dinner. The Minister expressed his pleasure of meeting this group of outstanding professionals and learning about their accomplishments.

The alumni group who met the Minister work with gender issues in various fields in Malawi. They are Chikondi Lydia Manyungwa (2013 graduate); Thandiwe Bwanamdoko (2013 graduate); Emmanuel Likoya (2014 graduate); Joseph K. H. Kazima (2014 graduate); Yananda Nana Madhlopa (2014 graduate); and Victor Kondwani Maulidi (2015 graduate).

Visit of the UNU Rector to Iceland

In early July, Dr. David M. Malone, the rector of the United Nations University visited UNU-GEST and other United Nations University programmes located in Iceland, the [Fisheries Training Programme](#); the [Land Restoration Programme](#); and the [Geothermal Training Programme](#). Mr. Malone emphasized the value of UNU-GEST’s efforts to promote gender as a cross-cutting theme in development and post-conflict reconstruction.

UNU-GEST Participation in CSW59/Beijing+20



CSW59

Commission on the Status of Women
9 – 20 March 2015

IMPLEMENTING THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

UNU-GEST staff participated in the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March. Dr. Irma Erlingsdóttir, the UNU-GEST Director spoke at a side event entitled “[Cool Feminism: Exploring Ideas from the North](#)” where she highlighted UNU-GEST’s promotion of women’s rights through education and transnational dialogue.