



Newsletter Fall 2023

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



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&
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Director's Note: Glenn Galloway



Welcome to the “Fall” 2023 newsletter of the Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) Program that provides an overview of significant developments in our program. An exciting new cohort of students from seven countries has joined the MDP program, bringing a rich array of prior experiences and accomplishments; on page 5 you will find a link to their bios summarizing their interests and academic and professional backgrounds. Parallel to the arrival of our new students, second-year students returned to UF after conducting their field practicums in 11

different countries, contributing to ongoing efforts of their host organizations on a fascinating diversity of topics (see table on pages 12 to 14). We are quite proud of their accomplishments and grateful to their supervisory committee members, the organizations that hosted them, and the funding sources that made their travel possible.

You will also find information on our three students who graduated in the Fall semester, including their faculty advisors, the topics of their capstone field practicums, and the specializations they earned along with their MDP degrees. We are pleased to inform that our graduate, Khumo Nicole Senuku was selected to receive the Outstanding Post-Graduate Award, and our other students received the Certificate of Outstanding Merit. Well-deserved congratulations to them. Finally, MDP alumni Sara Ward (cohort 6), Christine Mavrick (cohort 7), and our MDP married couple, Jennifer Johnson (cohort 11) and Omar Hernández Carmona (cohort 12) provide an overview of their professional pursuits and other notable highlights in their lives.

Here, I would like to express gratitude for the vital support of core, affiliate, and other faculty across different departments of UF. In the Fall semester, Dr. Leandra Merz joined the core faculty of the MDP program, after being selected for a two-year post-doctoral appointment. Leandra, an MDP alumna (3rd cohort - 2014) conducted her field



Director's Note (cont.)

practicum on community-based natural resource management in Mozambique. After her MDP, she earned a PhD in Geography in UF and carried out a postdoc with the University of Michigan. She is also a co-founder of IIM International in Zambia, a non-profit that creates opportunities for orphans and vulnerable children to obtain a secondary education. IIM stands for Imiti Ikula e Mpanga, a Bemba proverb meaning “small trees grow to be a forest”. As part of her postdoc appointment, Leandra teaches Development Theory and Practice, the foundational course of the MDP program and is now offering a new course entitled Gender and Biodiversity Conservation. In addition, she and I are co-instructing Design and Methods of Sustainable Development Practice and Conservation and Development Practice, the bookend courses to the capstone field practicum. She will also mentor students and serve on student supervisory committees. We are very pleased and grateful that Leandra accepted our offer to accompany us over this two-year period.

It is fitting indeed that a pioneer of the UF MDP program and past chair of Leandra's MDP and doctoral programs, Dr. Brian Child, is the subject of this newsletter's Faculty Spotlight. Dr. Child participated in the drafting of the original, successful proposal submitted to The MacArthur Foundation that gave rise to the UF MDP program. Dr. Child is widely recognized as a pioneer in community-based conservation, participatory governance, and parks management in southern Africa, focusing on empowering communities and preparing professionals from numerous countries to take on this challenging work. To date, he has served or is serving as committee chair of nine MDP students who have carried out or will carry out their field practicums in Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, and South Africa. Here, I would like to express my appreciation to Brian for all his invaluable contributions to the UF MDP program.

Just prior to preparing this newsletter we received the extremely sad news that Dr. Cheryl Ann Palm, affiliate faculty member of the MDP program, had passed away. Prior to coming to the University of Florida in 2016 with her husband, Dr. Pedro Sánchez, Cheryl had already achieved international recognition for her extraordinary professional accomplishments, focusing on topics such as tropical deforestation and its effects on atmospheric CO₂, tropical soils, land use change, conservation agriculture and sustainability, and measures to enhance the contributions of agriculture to rural livelihoods and well-being. Shortly after her arrival in UF, Cheryl



Director's Note (cont.)

kindly accepted an invitation to become an affiliate faculty member of the MDP program and served as major advisor to two of our students: Mackenzie Goode, who carried out her field practicum on human-wildlife interactions in rural Kenya, and Alejo Sánchez, who worked on smallholder farmer engagement with data-driven agriculture in the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico.

Mackenzie shared the following about her experience with Cheryl:

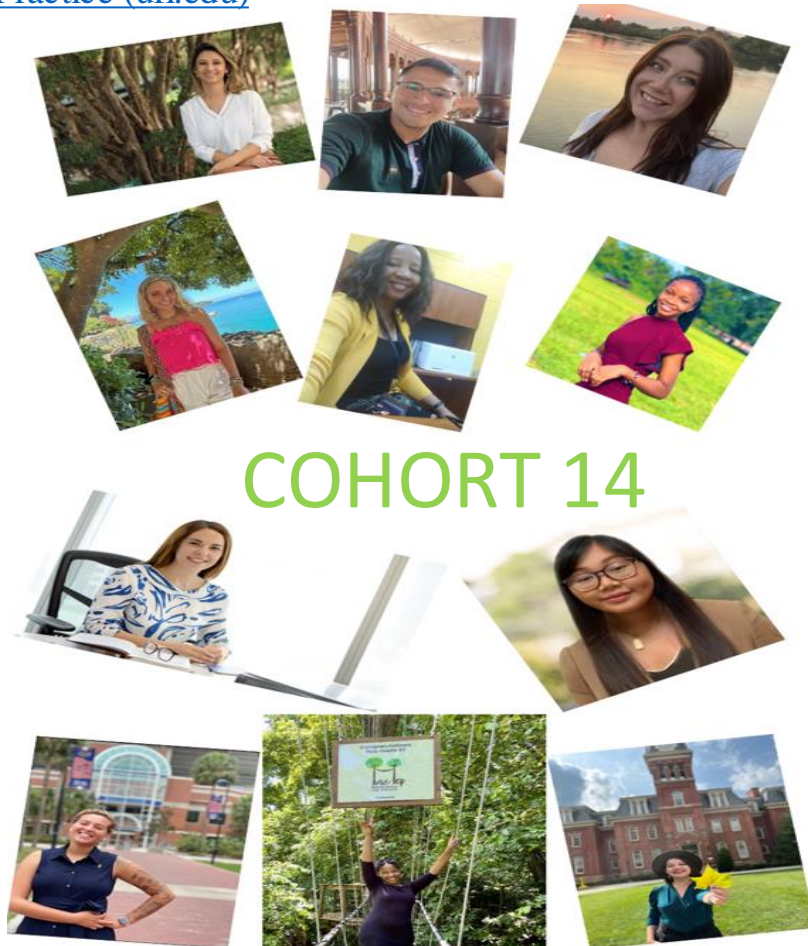
Cheryl's expertise and experience were, of course, instrumental to my success while completing my field practicum in Kenya. Thanks to her warm personality--her openness, her kindness, her humor--she became more than simply an advisor; Cheryl became a treasured mentor and confidante.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to benefit from Cheryl's generous spirit and the invaluable support and guidance she provided to our students. For more information on her remarkable life and career, here the link to her obituary: <https://www.chapmanfuneral.com/obituaries/Cheryl-Ann-Palm?obId=30533279>

Before closing, I would like to acknowledge the support provided to the UF MDP program by the Center for Latin American Studies, the Center for African Studies, the International Center, the Graduate School, the Office of the Provost, and the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) program. My appreciation also to our first-year student, Daneille March, who played a leadership role in the preparation of this newsletter and also prepares our weekly bulletin distributed on the MDP listserv.

Welcome Cohort 14!

This fall the MDP program welcomed eleven new students from Brazil, China, Colombia, Ghana, Jamaica, Tanzania and the United States. As usual, their backgrounds and interests and experiences are also extremely diverse—community conservation, climate change, agriculture and food security, education and training, social entrepreneurship, regenerative leadership, engineering, human rights and advocacy, among others. They have started their own nonprofits and businesses; and worked for international NGOs, government agencies, schools, and the private sector. You can review their profiles at: [Current Students – Master of Sustainable Development Practice \(ufl.edu\)](https://ufl.edu/current-students-master-of-sustainable-development-practice)



MDP Graduates

Summer-Fall 2023

We are very proud of our new graduates, and we wish each one great success in their next steps. Here we provide information about each of our Summer and Fall 2023 Cohort 12 graduates, advisors, and the topic of their capstone field practicums.

Hannah Jo Maier

Specializations: African Studies, TCD

Committee Chair: Sarah McKune (Environmental and Global Health / African Studies)

Committee Member: Renata Serra (African Studies)

Capstone Field Practicum: “Farmer Engagement in Community Based Agroforestry: A Case Study of Kijani Forestry in Northern Uganda.”



MDP Graduates Summer-Fall 2023 (cont.)

Khumo Nicole Senuku

Specializations: Entrepreneurship, African Studies, TCD

Committee Chair: Renata Serra (African Studies)

Committee Members: Jamie Kraft (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate)

John Kraft (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate)

Capstone Field Practicum: “Systems thinking in addressing structural poverty among formerly incarcerated people: Creating equitable and inclusive prosperity for all.”



MDP Graduates

Summer-Fall 2023 (cont.)

Jeantel Cheramy

Specializations: Global Health; Soils, Water and Public Health; Latin American Studies; TCD

Committee Chair: Samuel Smidt (Soils, Water, and Ecosystem Sciences)

Committee Member: Joseph Bisesi, Jr. (Environmental and Global Health)

Capstone Field Practicum: “Analyzing heavy metal removal in point-of-use water treatment systems: GOW & BioSand water filtration.”



Students' Participation in Conferences Fall 2023



Ashley Dukhu: Association of Corporate Citizenship Professionals Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado, October 2023.



Laras Salsabila: American Evaluation Association, Evaluation 2023, Indianapolis, Indiana, October 2023. Presentation on "Assessing Baseline Data for Local Capacity Development in Livestock Systems: A Step Towards Performance Evaluation in Nepal and Rwanda."

Fall Awards

The University of Florida International Center 2023 International Student Awards

The awards highlight and honor students who distinguish themselves not only by their exemplary academic achievements, but also by a wide range of accomplishments and contributions to UF.

Outstanding Post-Graduate Award

Khumo Nicole Senuku

Certificate of Outstanding Merit

Sylvia Adisa

Catalina Baracatt

Laras Salsabila

Khumo Nicole Senuku

Mirian Yadira Molina



Awardees and MDP faculty and
affiliate faculty



Fall Awards



Left to right: Mirian Yadira Molina and Sylvia Adisa



Laras Salsabila



Left to Right: Dr. Serra and Catalina Baracatt



Left to right: Khumo Nicole Senuku and Dr. Larmer

Field Practicum Experiences

Summer-Fall 2023

We are very proud of our twelve Cohort 12-13 students who identified international and local host organizations, planned their activities, conducted fieldwork and data analysis, and made very important contributions to their host organizations' ongoing programs as detailed in the table below.

We are very grateful to our faculty who worked tirelessly to help our students identify these field practicum topics and host organizations and accompanied them throughout the experience.

Name	Theme	Region/ County	FP Placement	Committee
Sylvia Adisa	Assessing the contribution of women to Blue Foods production in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO): A case study of the billfish value chain on the Kenyan coast.	Mombasa, Kenya	Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute	Renata Serra, Nelly Isigi Kadagi
Catalina Baracatt	A gender transformative approach in climate information services in Kenya.	Nairobi, Kenya	International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)	Renata Serra, Sarah McKune
Ashley Dukhu	Understanding the perceptions, attitudes, and barriers of Corporate Social Advocacy and how to utilize CSA to establish trust and confidence within organizations.	US	Association of Corporate Citizenship Professionals (ACCP)	Marcia DiStaso, Jamie Kraft, John Kraft
Genaro Guerrero	Experiential agricultural education for a secondary school in Bombo, Uganda.	Bombo, Uganda	Catholic Relief Services	Sarah Bush, Laura Sanagorski-Warner

Field Practicum Experiences

Summer-Fall 2023 (cont.)

Name	Theme	Region/ Country	FP Placement	Committee
Raymond Hopkins	Rural livelihoods and worldbuilding in Nicaragua.	Estelí, Nicaragua	Friends of the ATC (Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo)	Clate Korsant, William Messina, Fred Royce
Mesly Mata	Documenting monitoring efforts against illegal activities in Indigenous territories of the Brazilian Amazon.	Porto Velho, Brazil	Kinandé	Bob Buschbacher, Steve Perz, Jon Dain
Yadira Molina	Restoring landscapes: a rapid cost-effective analysis of policies influencing restoration practices in Honduras.	San Pedro Sula, Honduras	World Resources Institute	Karen Kainer, Glenn Galloway
Lia Nelson	Environmental practices of the Umbriaverde shooting range and potential measures to improve them.	Todi, Italy	Tori a Volo Umbriaverde Shooting Complex	Brian Child, Jon Dain
Damian Oakes	Understanding migrants' perceptions of environmental-induced migration at the individual level within the West African Sahel region.	St. Louis, Sénégal	Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Migrations et Faits de Sociétés (GERM), Gaston-Berger University	Renata Serra, Cynthia Simmons
Laras Salsabila (Salsa)	Strengthening the livestock research systems and local partner institutions: a formative evaluation of local capacity development (LCD) initiatives in Nepal and Rwanda.	Kathmandu, Nepal and Kigali, Rwanda	UF Livestock Systems Innovation Lab	Sarah McKune, Erica Odera, Nargiza Ludgate

Field Practicum Experiences

Summer-Fall 2023 (cont.)

Name	Theme	Region/ Country	FP Placement	Committee
Matthew Sealy	Agricultural sectoral development in the small island state of Tobago: an assessment of needs and opportunities for sustainable development.	Scarborough, Tobago	Tobago House of Assembly	Renata Serra Glenn Galloway
Khaalil Williams-Frierson	Availability of financial resources for renewable energy: how increased access can lead to a better future.	Gainesville, FL	Climate First Bank	Renata Serra, Kristin Joys, Stephen Mulkey

MDP ALUMNI

Sara Ward (Cohort 6)

Since graduation I have had the opportunity to work as an educator and advisor at the K-12 and collegiate levels as well as provide pro-bono copywriting, grant writing, and social media services to humanitarian non-profits. I have also done work in public libraries, within the literary industry, and as a published children's book author. Finally, I have continued to foster my love for sports by gaining five years of experience as a soccer coach as well as riding, competing, and training athletes as an equestrian professional. My work in the MDP program solidified my interest in providing top notch educational experiences for students of all backgrounds and for utilizing my writing skills in a way that impacts children around the globe. I recently got married to my husband - Matt, adopted a dog - Griffey, and moved to Statesboro for a position at Georgia Southern University.





MDP ALUMNI (cont.)

Christine Mavrick (Cohort 7)

Since completing my MDP in 2019, I moved to the Atlanta area where I work in transportation infrastructure. I currently work as an environmental planner at an engineering firm, specializing in cultural resources and Environmental Justice (EJ). This is my first year on the Academic Collaboration Committee for the American Cultural Resources Association, trying to guide students into consulting through internship programs that focus on cultural resource management. I hope to influence the Committee and the Association towards taking a more holistic look at how cultural resource consultancy and all aspects of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), including cultural resources and EJ, could work together. Currently I am also working with a former colleague to put together a project using stakeholder analysis to create a Section 106 (National Historic Preservation Act) toolkit for disadvantaged communities here in the southeast. The goal is to help communities learn how to advocate for themselves, their communities, and their shared histories in the face of continuing development and redevelopment.



MDP ALUMNI (cont.)

Omar Hernández (Cohort 12) & Jennifer Johnson (Cohort 11)

Omar started with the World Resources Institute in September 2023 as Grants and Finance Specialist for the Food, Land and Water Program, and I started at International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in November 2023 as a Communications Specialist! We have recently moved to DC and have already run into many of our former colleagues at work (and even MDP students - Ana Ugalde was here for a meeting at IFPRI !) We have been putting our MDP training to good use and are really loving it here.



Left to right: Ana Ugalde (Cohort 11), Jennifer Johnson
and Omar Hernández

MDP Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Brian Child



We are thrilled to feature Dr. Brian Child, esteemed economist and Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida, in this edition of our newsletter. Dr. Child earned his Ph.D. from the University of Oxford in Wildlife and Livestock Economics and holds a B.Sc. from the University of Zimbabwe. His passion for community-based conservation, parks management, and environmental/resource economics has shaped Dr. Child's impactful contributions to the field. Dr. Child played a pivotal role in establishing the Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) program as one

of its founding members who helped draft the proposal to The MacArthur Foundation. Over the years, he has taken over 150 students to Africa as part of various projects and research endeavors. Dr. Child champions the active involvement of students in hands-on, practical experiences. He firmly believes that academia should integrate opportunities for practice, and that the two should not exist in isolation.

Daneille: Thank you, Dr. Child, for graciously accepting our invitation to be featured in this Fall's MDP Newsletter.

Dr. Child: It is my pleasure.

Daneille: Please share with us an overview of your current research, conservation, and development projects.

Dr. Child: I am currently conducting research in community governance and wildlife economy. I integrate research in field programs that greatly helps to improve these programs. I am also working to build collective capacity to manage savannahs. My team and I have been developing training courses tailored for students at the



MDP Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Brian Child (cont.)

University of Florida, as well as for community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) practitioners in Africa. I have trained many African practitioners who have gone on to make positive impacts within their communities and professional roles.

Daneille: Is there a specific project or accomplishment of which you are particularly proud?

Dr. Child: I am especially proud of my students who have gone into prominent and leadership positions all over the world.

Daneille: Are there any specific skills or qualities that you believe are essential for success in your field?

Dr. Child: People skills. The ability to effectively communicate, collaborate and connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds is paramount. We must learn to build meaningful relationships and navigate team dynamics.

Daneille: What do you see as the future directions or trends in your field of expertise?

Dr. Child: Our work is focused on the business of empowering communities. We want to ensure communities own wildlife and that it can be used to uplift communities through the greater wildlife economy. Our approach involves decolonizing conservation using the free market to allow wildlife to compete competitively with domestic livestock. We recognize the potential of wildlife systems and the wildlife economy being more viable than domestic livestock and commodity production in dryland savanna ecosystems. We work to commodify wildlife systems to enhance productivity, promote economic growth, and improve community resilience to generate dynamic, community-driven impacts on the ground.

Daneille: Can you recall a particularly memorable or rewarding experience relating to your time in the MDP program?



MDP Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Brian Child (cont.)

Dr. Child: One experience that I immediately think about is when I took eight MDP students for their summer field practicums to Botswana where we developed a wildlife land use program.

Daneille: What advice might you offer to graduate students, particularly those of the MDP program?

Dr. Child: Ask questions.
Engage in fieldwork.
Work well with others.

Daneille: Outside of academia, what hobbies or interests do you pursue?

Dr. Child: I like the outdoors. Some of the things I enjoy doing are cycling, walking, and camping.

Daneille: Dr. Child, it has been a pleasure speaking with you. Thank you for sharing your work with us.



Student Activities: Outside the Classroom

Cohort 12

Jeantel Cheramy: Haitian Creole Teaching Assistant

Khumo Nicole Senuku: Dept. Languages, Literatures and Cultures, Graduate Assistant

Cohort 13

Mirian Yadira Molina de Cruz: TCD Graduate Assistant

Sylvia Adisa: TCD Graduate Assistant

Carla Lissa Nelson: UF Department of Assessment and Research, Graduate Assistant

Lia Nelson: US National Team, Skeet Shooter; 4H Skeet Shooting Mentor

Matthew Sealy: UF Sustainability Studies, Teaching Assistant

Khaalil Williams-Frierson: Climate First Bank, Intern

Cohort 14

Estefany Güechá Sánchez: UF Office of Academic Support, Academic Success Coach

Daneille March: MDP Program Graduate Assistant

Wendy Mesa: UF College of Veterinary Medicine, Community Building and Engagement Program Coordinator

Jennifer Quartey: TCD Graduate Assistant

Rosemary Maro: Center for African Studies Graduate Assistant



MDP Socials



MDP UF Foundation Donations

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

Seize this opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to our impactful program! The MDP Foundation plays a vital role in supporting students through various means, including field practicum assistance and sponsorship 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/giving-opportunities/020485-mdp-program-unrestricted/>

Thank you for your support.

