



EU forest education in Alnarp

Through the EU, students from around the world learn about Swedish forestry. They are part of a growing international network with Alnarp as a key link.

Babatunde Abimbola Dosumu decided to complete his forestry education with a year at SLU in Alnarp.

“The courses seem just right and I’m looking forward to learn more about Sweden. In the future I hope to complete a PhD and then work with questions about the environment and sustainable use at home in Nigeria.”

We meet Babatunde at the Tönnersjöheden Experimental Forest where the students are learning about silviculture of spruce. The participants come from India, Denmark, Kazakhstan, Italy, Nigeria, Vietnam, Germany, Brazil and Ethiopia.

THEY are all students in the SUFONAMA course, short for

Sustainable Forest and Nature Management.

The two-year master’s course (students must already have a bachelor’s degree to enroll) is a part of the EU’s huge Erasmus Mundus education program.

It is partly targeted to EU citizens and partly to universities outside the EU whose students get stipends that cover nearly all costs.

A MOTIVE of the EU, beyond dissemination of knowledge, is to promote collaboration among EU universities. Thus, the course is a collaboration among universities in Copenhagen, Bangor (UK), Göttingen (Germany), Padova (Italy) and SLU in Alnarp.

The education is split among



Ulf Johansson, Tönnersjöheden experimental forest, gives insights into spruce silviculture.

two of the five universities, with one year at each. This results in what is known as a double degree.

“It is important to take opportunities offered by the EU. We have a lot of knowledge to communicate to the students and they are of course an asset for us,” says Per Magnus Ekö.

He was involved in starting the program ten years ago, together with colleagues from the four other universities in the Erasmus forestry program.

“Some of the previous Sufonama-students have stayed in Alnarp for a PhD and now work as teachers and researchers in our department. There are several good examples, but it should be possible to attract even more people here.

“Another reason for hosting students in Alnarp is that more will learn about our forest management model. We need to realize that Finnish and Swedish forestry is distinct from other parts of the world, where other types of near-nature forestry are predominant.”

THE students choose their two universities before the teaching begins, so it is important to catch their interest in the beginning of the process.

Regardless of which universities they choose, joint study trips give insights into several countries’ forestry practices, hence the trip to Tönnersjöheden, where members of Södra, a Swedish forest owners’ association, talk about their activities.

THE annual enrollment in the master’s program is around 30 people.

“Interest from outside the EU is strong. There are about ten applicants for each available place,” says Niels Strange, a professor at Copenhagen University.

“After the course we maintain contact among a growing network of about 250 students.

“These contacts are important both for the students’ careers and increasing worldwide awareness of the EU’s management of forests and nature.”



Babatunde Abimbola Dosumu, Nigeria

“I look forward to Alnarp and perhaps continuing on to a PhD.”



Runa Bjerre Henriksen Denmark

“These questions interest me and it is good to see them from a new perspective.”



Athira James India

“I want to build on my forestry degree with knowledge about the environment, forests and climate.”



Desalegn Yadeta Wedajo, Ethiopia

“In my work on rural issues, sustainable forestry is of great importance.”

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