

Welcome to the MEG Newsletter 2017

Editor

As the leaves fall and the latest generation of MEG students settle into the class routine, this newsletter offers an opportunity to check in with the MEG community—past, present, and future.

It begins with a series of articles chronicling recent extracurricular experiences MEG students and alumni, from simulation games in Berlin to conferences in Fiji. Next, it turns to more personal reflections from several students exploring the ways in which they can best share their stories with the MEG community and the world at large. Finally, it concludes with updates about the state of the curriculum and several notable changes to the MEG staff.

The talent of members of the MEG community is surpassed only by their graciousness in sharing their perspectives and achievements. We thank them for their contributions to this newsletter, and look forward to another year of MEG adventures.

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Albert-Ludwigs-Universität
Faculty of Environment
and Natural Resources

Program Director
Prof. Dr. Heiner Schanz

Program Management
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz,
Ms. Barbara Degenhart

Edited by Ahren Stroming

79085 Freiburg i.Br.
Germany

www.meg.uni-freiburg.de

MEG students win funding and start turning theory into practice

Laila Berning (MEG 12)



In August, three MEG-12 students, one MEG-9 alumni and one student of Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) at the University of Freiburg launched OneLife. The mission of OneLife is to foster global sustainability (social, economic, ecological) through the creation and facilitation of partnerships between companies in Germany and the Global South. The vision of OneLife is to facilitate economic, informational, and technological transfers in order to positively contribute to sustainable development in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 17.

OneLife is a prize winner of the campusWELTbewerb 2017/2018. This competition is initiated and coordinated by finep and funded by the State Ministry for Science, Research and Arts Baden-Württemberg and the State Ministry **SHAPE. COMPLEX. FUTURES.**

for Environment, Climate and the Energy Sector Baden-Württemberg.

The multidisciplinary team includes members from Germany, Latin American and Arab backgrounds. The team shares a vision of providing bridges to accelerate North-to-South and South-to-South cooperations in the private sector. Connecting SMEs working in green and decent businesses will enable sustainable trade and investment between smaller businesses which usually lack the capacity or network needed to achieve higher-level cooperation. OneLife will benefit from the MEG and LAS alumni network to identify prospective partners for the project in Germany and abroad, and will enrich these networks by openly sharing the knowledge gained from developing north to south and south to south partnerships.

The project's name, OneLife, stems from the vision and understanding that every life should be equal and have the freedom to prosper in a healthy environment under decent working conditions. Even small projects can yield significant improvements in terms of dignity of life of a single person and their local community. Partnerships are good, but equal partnerships are even better. OneLife is thus working towards building a network of partners who trust their ability to present them with mutually beneficial proposals.

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We invite you to visit our website and to contact us if you would like to share information or engage with us:
www.one-life.co

MEG students participate in climate negotiation simulation

*Luis Miguel Jiménez Ramos and
Renuka Srinivasan (MEG 11)*



Seven MEG students joined with other Masters students from universities across Germany to engage in a two-week simulation of the next Conference of Parties (COP) negotiations on the future of international climate policy. Part online game and part in-person workshop, the simulation challenged students to think about how the framework of the Paris Agreement can be translated into concrete policy. Each student was assigned a country to represent, and then student engaged with one another on topics like climate finance and technical innovation. Below, two MEG participants respond to questions about their experience:

What drew you to participate in the simulation game?

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The opportunity to step into the shoes of an official from a foreign country, and represent views that you yourself do not necessarily hold, is a challenging but rewarding experience. The simulation game also sounded much like a Model UN conference, which some students may have participated in high school, (and which was also part of the appeal). A trip to lovely Berlin was certainly an added bonus.

What was the most enjoyable part of the experience?

Being able to negotiate under real life simulated conditions. The game was pretty realistic, and we worked with real figures the whole time, which made it really enjoyable at the same time as challenging. Besides, it was also good to get to know students from other masters in environmental studies around Germany from very diverse fields of study. This complemented the negotiations themselves, in the sense that every delegation had people from different professional backgrounds.

Given your experience in the game, what do you anticipate as the biggest challenges for international climate negotiations moving forward?

During the game, the biggest challenge was keeping every delegation on the same page, given that consensus is a vital rule for any final decision, and having in mind that we had limited time to achieve a new document. Therefore, the fact that

the US Delegation played (very realistically) its current role of having no interest in pursuing the Paris Agreement, made negotiations really difficult in the sense that various delegations used this lack of commitment as an excuse to raise its own concerns and forget the "general interest". On the future, this will be definitely the biggest issue for the coming climate change talks, since although the US is not anymore the world's biggest CO2 emitter, its contributions are still very important, especially for the money Obama had promised for the Green Climate Fund. Another danger would be withdrawal of other countries, following the US, although it is still too early to make such a statement.

What do simulation games (as opposed to a more general conference, discussion, or webinar) offer to the policy development process?

Simulations have the huge advantage of being perhaps the best way to put in practice the policy development knowledge you have, since they are thought to be a copy of the "reality outside", although of course adjusted to classroom conditions. Whereas on a discussion or a seminar the aims might be more related with understanding the concept itself (reflecting on ideas, or debating them), on simulations everything you know has to be put in practice so as to achieve a determined goal, as it would be the case on the real negotiations.

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Do you have any plans for follow-up with the game itself or more generally with what you learned participating in the simulation?

It would be really interesting to see how the negotiations evolve next year, given the very recent events of the EU and China trying to be "climate leaders" without the US, but also the formal announcement of the withdrawal; both things which happened literally the following week of the simulation game. Likewise, it would also be very interesting to assist to real talks in Bonn (for example), and see how actual negotiations happen with much bigger delegations, and much more actors as we had simulated during the game.

Inspiration and Opportunity at the Climate-KIC Urban Transitions Workshop in Bologna

Brendan McGill, Andrew Bonneau and Paloma Reyes (MEG 11)



On May 17th, we travelled to Bologna, Italy to take part in an Urban Transitions III workshop sponsored by Climate-KIC. The aim of

the workshop, as stated by the organizers, was to “share knowledge and build consortia for low-carbon projects and zero-waste solutions in cities” and was hosted free of cost for attendees. Climate-KIC is one of the EU’s largest public-private partnerships and organizes a vast number of climate-mitigation programs, from summer schools hosting graduate students who seek business knowledge, to startup accelerators which seek to bring the most innovative climate related business ideas to reality.



The workshop brought together a diverse group of people from across the private and public sector. Among those in attendance giving presentations were Roland Hunziker, Sustainable Development Director at the World Business Council; Enzo Favoino, chair of the scientific committee at Zero Waste Europe, and Climate-KIC’s Sustainable Production Systems Director Sira Sacconi. In addition to inspiring presentations from the aforementioned figures and others with imaginative startup ideas, the event provided many **SHAPE. COMPLEX. FUTURES.**

opportunities for networking and getting to know those in the business of fighting climate change - particularly within the domain of urban resiliency and adaptation - from data scientists to entrepreneurs to urban planners.

The workshop itself was masterfully organized and executed. As MEGs with numerous presentations and moderated discussions under our belts, we could fully appreciate the enthusiastic and attentive moderation provided by Brian Kilkelly, founder of the World Cities Network. Not to mention the creative breakout sessions & collaborative posters in between presentations - these being fundamental to achieving Climate-KIC’s goal of linking different sectors, experts, cities and business together.

Perhaps the most noteworthy observation of ours was of the level of optimism and positivity consistent throughout the entire conference. We as students are accustomed to discussions that frame environmental challenges by their destructive and irreducibly complex characteristics, and by the many obstacles on the path to solving them. In Bologna, however, it seemed as if each obstacle is simply another opportunity to share success stories, to innovate, to form partnerships or even profitable new ventures. A refreshing and motivating atmosphere to be in!

Indeed, the workshop was fruitful for us as students who are keen to explore potential career paths. Only by talking and hearing from so many different fields of expertise, does one realize how much employment opportunity truly lies within the broad category of sustainable transitions, and how many ways we could apply our own passion, knowledge, and skills.

We only spent 3 nights in Bologna, but the workshop has had a lasting impact. Only 2 weeks after the workshop, moved to action Climate-KIC's call for innovative ideas that utilize waste-heat for biological production, Andrew and Brendan managed to complete and submit a comprehensive proposal. By combining Andrew's quantitative skills in life cycle assessment and modeling resource flows, and Brendan's hands-on experience with beer brewing, we drafted a proposal for a waste-heat-powered brewery. In July they were informed that our proposal has been accepted to the next stage of the competition. Climate-KIC will provide business pitch training as well as access to a valuable network of sustainable innovators - all in preparation for heading to Sweden in October to pitch the proposal!

Meanwhile, Paloma, has kept in contact with Enzo Favoino after being inspired by his presentation and work with Zero Waste Europe. Working as a volunteer organizer for an

international congress that is hosting an event in Freiburg, she has found Enzo's advice quite beneficial in crafting a proposal to reduce the environmental impact of the event!

Regardless of whether or not the workshop leads to careers in sustainable beer brewing and green event planning, it was well worth the €150 bus and hostel cost, and we highly recommend MEGs look into future Climate-KIC events and workshops.

MEG meets ASA

Rebekka Frick and Alessandra Grosse (MEG 9)



ASA is a German work and study exchange program that supports students and people with professional qualifications to critically reflect and discuss about today's globalized and interdependent world. ASA gives people studying in Germany the chance to do a one-year learning cycle consisting of training seminars and an internship during which ASA candidates will work together with an organization based in the Global South. After returning from the

internship, students attend a third seminar to critically reflect on global interdependencies and inequalities and to become a multiplier of this acquired knowledge and experiences. Core topics of ASA include development cooperation, colonialism, racism, gender equality and diversity. Through the ASA program, Rebekka got the chance to live and work for three months in Cameroon, while Alessandra recently came back from a six-month ASA internship in Indonesia. Below, they share their experiences with the program:



Rebekka joined the ASA program in her first year as a MEG and did her internship with a small NGO in North-West Cameroon. She joined the GLEN program (a ASA subprogram which fosters the exchange among European countries as well between Europe and the Global South) and her tandem partner was a girl from France. Together they worked on an eco-tourism project with an NGO that focused mainly on social projects, such as orphan care and microcredits for women. The goal of their project **SHAPE. COMPLEX. FUTURES.**

was to create a source of income to fund the organization's social projects and their main tasks were to develop a business plan and to map the local hiking trails. This second task required actually to go on all these hikes which was a great opportunity for Rebekka for indulging her hiking passion while at the same time discovering the beautiful landscapes of the Cameroonian high plateaus. On these hikes she realized how much of the primary rain forests and with it how many species had already disappeared. A main driver for forest loss in the area is agriculture which is the most important source of income for local people. At the same time, large proportions of these lands were owned by only few people and are used for growing export goods such as tea or coffee: Products that are not affordable for the general Cameroonian population and which only provide income for few people. Another critical finding for Rebekka was to discover how people would treat her as someone special even if they didn't know her, only by her being a white girl from a Western country. She reflected a lot why this is so, especially given the circumstance that after only three months—the length of the internship—she left the country, the people she worked with and the project. The ASA program was definitely to her benefit as she learned and experienced a lot but at the same time the question remains on what *she* left there and what use

her stay had to the people in Cameroon.

Alessandra joined the ASA program right after handing in the Master Thesis and used the internship to broaden her professional experiences in the development cooperation. She worked for six months in a GIZ project on climate change adaptation and mitigation in the land-based sector in Java, Indonesia. Together with her German tandem partner, she planned and implemented a pilot project on coffee agroforestry and developed a Payment for Ecosystem Services scheme aiming at promoting sustainable land use practices and reducing soil erosion. "For me ASA is best represented by its spaces for critical (self-)reflection" says Alessandra, "I particularly value the manifold discussions and the chance to critically observe global power structures and how these drive inequalities; I was not so aware of the consequences of power structures on daily lives before." Through ASA she began to compare more critically her experiences from Germany with those abroad and realized how power structures are shaping realities in different cultural context (such as for gender relations) as well as across time. Taking a historical-critical approach, today's development cooperation needs to be seen as embedded in global power structures that shape the relations among countries from the Global North and Global South. A question that remains to Alessandra is to what extent

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development cooperation is somehow perpetuating colonial power structures rather than truly empowering people and nations.

Pacific Island Countries tell Success Stories at UN and Suva Ocean Conferences

Philipp Gassner (MEG 8)



Philipp, currently working at the GIZ MACBIO project – Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Management in Pacific Island Countries – sends his warm wishes from the South Pacific to MEGgies in Freiburg and the rest of the world. Below, he shares the an article he wrote, published originally on the MACBIO project website <http://macbio-pacific.info/2017/06/14/pacific-island-countries-tell-success-stories-un-suva-ocean-conferences/>

"The Ocean Conference has changed our relationship with the ocean. Henceforth none can say they were not aware of the harm humanity has done to the ocean's health. We are now working around the world to

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restore a relationship of balance and respect towards the ocean.”

–President of the UN General Assembly Peter Thomson, Fiji, at the closing of the UN Ocean Conference.

The high-level Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017 was co-hosted by the Governments of Fiji & Sweden.

The 193 Member States of the United Nations unanimously agreed to a set of measures that will begin the reversal of the decline of the ocean’s health as the five-day Ocean Conference concluded. The outcome document, together with more than 1,300 commitments to action, marks a breakthrough in the global approach to the management and conservation of the ocean. Recognizing that the wellbeing of present and future generations is inextricably linked to the health and productivity of the ocean, countries collectively agreed in the Call to Action “to act decisively and urgently, convinced that our collective action will make a meaningful difference to our people, to our planet and to our prosperity.”

That the second highest number of commitments comes from the South Pacific highlights not only the importance of the ocean to Pacific Island Countries, but also their commitment to “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and

marine resources for sustainable development” (SDG14).

Thus, Pacific Island countries also raised their voice at the Pacific Voices for a Global Ocean Challenge Conference in Suva, Fiji, 8 to 9 June 2017, as external regional side event to the UN Ocean Conference – joined with the oceanographic schooner ‘TARA’ that berthed in Suva as part of its two-year environmental survey across the Pacific Ocean. Pacific Island Countries made their voices heard at the “Suva Ocean Conference”, telling inspiring success stories of sustainable marine resources management.

The MACBIO project was invited to highlight recent efforts by national governments in Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga and Kiribati, in its support of “Integrated ocean governance through ecosystem service valuation and marine spatial planning tools and processes”.

Today, I Decided to Listen to My Body’s Stories: For More Freedom in Feminism

Seyeon Jeong (MEG 10) and Rhino Rainbow

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In 2015 Seyeon Jeong (MEG 10) decided it was time to share her journey as a feminist. She contacted a leading feminist magazine “Ilda (일다)” about the prospect of publishing her articles. They readily agreed to a regular bi-weekly column. So, in 2016, in addition to her MEG workload of modules, internship, SOE and master’s thesis, Seyeon was moonlighting as a journalist. Her columns quickly garnered the attention of readers with lively online discussions. In May 2016 she was contacted by two different publishing companies to write a book based on her columns. Her book was published under the pen name of “Harita” in June 2017. Harita, which is also a spiritual name, which means “green” in Sanskrit.

“In this time of rebellion, I ask earnestly: “How will women become freer and more expeditious than they are now?” Will it be from the pain and scars of the past or from the way in which we come together when gender

discrimination and violence against women continues today. Or will it come from the perspective of the body, which is the medium through which we express ourselves and our experiences of the world at every moment. I was concerned about the healing, liberation, exploration and growth of women. This book is a record of those troubles.” (p. 6)

The manuscript accompanies a Korean woman on her journey examining and confronting her own upbringing, personal boundaries and traumatic past of sexual abuse. Specifically, it details the process of a survivor exploring her troubled inner world and healing the wounds through psychotherapy and various body liberation projects.

Section 1 starts with the premise that “We are all survivors of sexual violence.” We have become domesticated and complacent through persistent sexual violence in the media and this is why today is the time to embark on a healing journey.

Section 2 is introspective and personal as the author recounts her experience of psychotherapy in Germany. In this comprehensive section Harita guides us through her encounter with her traumatic memories and the exercise of reprocessing them using the method of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR).

The third section presents several methods for healing and maintaining

inner peace through daily practices. Included are introspective exercises for creating mental safety measures and defending against trauma attacks. External release is offered through creative therapies using art, music or writing to solidify the healing process. Finally, stress reduction techniques of mindfulness, meditation practices and simply “letting go” are encouraged.

Body Liberation — “To be fully free, resilient and sexy” is the motto of section 4. It begins with confronting the outdated laws and censorship that still exist in modern society. The narrative continues with a description of the motivation and effects of feminist activism in the form of participation in “Free the Nipple Campaign” as part of a local queer parade and the ongoing, daily “No-Bra Campaign.” Further personal body liberation was achieved via “Rediscovering My Body: A Self-Nude Photography Project.” She demonstrates that a better understanding of menstruation can be great source of power and creativity when women truly know and accept the “Moon” inside them. The final chapter, “Oppression of the Female Body through Sexual Objectification,” presents another perspective on the beauty industry and the desire to live a simpler, organic lifestyle.

“Freedom of Sexuality: Our On-going Life Adventures” is the title of Section 5. Included are discussions about

creating healthy sexual fantasies and empowering female sexuality through masturbation and alternative pornography. The dominant paradigm of gender binary is questioned as Harita shares her personal exploration of homosexuality and discusses other queer gender identities. She challenges us all to try “Experiments Rather than mere Tolerance” in the search for our own individual sexuality.

The book is illustrated with 14 original paintings by local artist, Annika Gemlau. Annika, who is a close feminist companion of Seyeon is a cultural anthropologist as well as co-founder of the Sherazade — Anarchistic Feminist Reading Circle in Freiburg. Based on deep conversations and Harita’s photographs and storylines, Annika created unique images that dynamically change over the pages of the book.



In this book, the author demonstrates through her own experience how feminism can be incorporated in

everyday life. It tells how to live life with dignity without succumbing to the dangers of being consumed by anger or cynicism about the violence omnipresent in our modern society. There is no single answer, no panacea for the soul, but rather it is a book that shows a direction for sexual liberation that is well worth pursuing.

Seyeon or Harita is currently having a book tour in South Korea (summer 2017), and plans to continue her writing projects back in the Black Forest while contributing to the *PaJOYiN* — *Creative Commons*.

The author and illustrator can be contacted at...

Harita: harita-moonrider@posteo.net

Annika:
<https://asombrasdelsur.wordpress.com/>

Why I make videos: Documenting my 10%

Patrick Peura (MEG 12)



The narrative is almost cliché: A corporate employee gives up stability, wealth, and security to follow their heart. They end up having less money, but more time doing 'what really matters' – making them much happier as a result.

This story always caught my attention. I was in a secure corporate job. I had a stable routine. I was paid well. But was the story really like mine? Was I unhappy? I didn't know. I certainly didn't *feel* unhappy, and looking back I still don't think I was. In fact, I miss my 'old life' daily.

In my decision to leave work and come to MEG, I spoke at length with amazing colleagues, friends and family. They encouraged me with the rational arguments you might expect: "you're still young, now is your chance, more education is never a bad thing, you can never go wrong with new experiences."

I heard what everyone was saying. I tried to believe rationality would sway me – but it didn't. No rational discussion would— I could talk in circles and never progress to action. It was the emotional frame that finally did it. I pictured myself at the age of 60 and looking back. I saw my life in a flash like a movie clip: it was mostly sitting at a desk. What if that flash had 10% less desk and a little more of something else? In the end, would I miss 10% of the desk? Or cherish the 10% away from it?

So that did it. I was leaving. Everyone was happy for me. They called me daring. Others later told me stories of taking vacations, signing up for courses, taking paternity leave, or pushing themselves in ways they were afraid to – and that I had inspired them. It felt good hearing this. But a part of me also felt sad that I was leaving the world we all knew, for one that only I would know. Sure, I would share the experience with a new group of amazing people, but what about my life before and the people in it? They would never see what I was experiencing. And what about when I was 60 and looking back, would I even remember this 10%?

I knew then that I had to document it.

Blogs are boring. Pictures may convey a 1000 words, but they end up on a hard drive never to be seen. Videos. They capture so much more: time, space, emotion, feeling. Plus, they are attention grabbing. They can be shared, watched and re-watched. Videos was how I was going to share my new life with my old.

At first, I made a video per week as I travelled across North America with my girlfriend. Then I made one a month as I spent my summer travelling Germany. Then school started. Looking around, I realized that this was as large of a life decision for others as it was for me: my new MEG classmates were giving up careers, moving away from families,

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or living in a foreign country for the first time. All these stories, although unique, would converge to the same view as mine one day: We will all be looking back trying to remember what was it like? Or did it really happen?

So, I decided to keep making my videos for the duration of the MEG program. It hasn't been easy. Editing takes time. Sharing creative work comes with angst. The effort, the desire for it to be liked, sticking your camera in weird places, the 'video face' each person has when filmed. But each time I share a new video, people like them. They appreciate them. Back home, loved ones feel like they are with me. Five hundred megabytes bridge the divide of an ocean more than any other way I know.

With this, I am excited to share the most recent three videos I made. The first tours you around Freiburg. The second dives deep with MEG 12s sharing their perspectives on the program. The third is a highlight of where each MEG 12 is from and what we experienced in our first semester.

You can find them here:
<https://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de/MEG>.

I encourage you to check them out. Whether you are an alum wanting to see how others are following the path you blazed; a current MEG wanting to reflect on all that we have accomplished together; or a

prospective student asking yourself the hard questions that a written program web page can never answer.

I hope you enjoy them.

**Letter to the Editor:
Knowledge Management and
Organizational Learning**

Andrew Zubiri (MEG 3)

I'm always delighted to hear from students and professors alike, and especially about the program's developments or "refurbishments", as Prof. Schanz puts it. I thank and congratulate the MEG Committee and Staff who worked hard and underwent this arduous process of updating the curriculum.

However, I'm disappointed to learn that the Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning (KMOL) elective will be dissolved and partially integrated into other modules.

In fact, more and more development organizations are recognizing knowledge management and organizational learning as critical to an institution's efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and relevance. Subsequently there is a need for KM practitioners to manage the glut of information that is being generated and are already available, and apply this knowledge and information to achieve the goals of an organization.

The perceived low relevance of the course, which I assume is the

ultimate reason it is being dropped, is quite unfortunate. Admittedly, I had a low appreciation for the course during my time as a student. Perhaps it was the way it was delivered or, ironically, my lack of motivation to learn the subject, or both.

Since I started working again after finishing MEG, KMOL has been one of my core skills that I apply to my work. I've mainly took on positions in the area of knowledge management (and monitoring and evaluation) with international development organizations such as the Global Environment Facility in Washington, DC, and UNDP, FAO, and Asian Development Bank in the Philippines. At present, I'm now back in Washington DC as a Learning and Outreach consultant with the Climate Investment Funds under the World Bank. I still find myself using the 'Working the Net' manual I picked up from my visit to the GIZ headquarters in Eschborn, and just a few days ago, I reviewed a powerpoint slide my group prepared on knowledge management and learning tools.

The KMOL module was an opportunity to 'learn about learning'. It provided a venue to be familiar with and analyze alternative modes of learning. The SOE and the successful scientific theater are excellent examples of these alternatives, and I believe the reason they thrive is that they're more innovative and effective in conveying concepts and messages

versus a traditional classroom experience.

I'm aware making any further changes in the program at this point is impractical and difficult. But I hope the MEG Committee will find ways to better integrate KM in the curriculum more than just change management and facilitation skills.

Successful MEG Alumni Weekend

MEG Alumni Association



Alumni from almost all 10 graduated MEG generations gathered in Freiburg from March 10 to 12, 2017 for a variety of activities. The event kicked off with a nourishing dinner – and a beer or two, or three – in Feierling with old and new friends. On Saturday, we experienced and actively shaped the soundscape of “our Herderbau”. The workshop day was a good mix of group work, sound experiments, personal exchange and new insights about the scientific approach of soundecology. During

coffee breaks and lunch, we had time to mingle, chat and think of possible future gatherings. We enjoyed the end of a wonderful Alumni experience over cheese cake and soup in St. Ottilien after a nice hike on a bright and sunny Sunday. Hope to see you next year!

Farewell from Olga

Olga Malets

After two exciting years as a faculty member in the MEG program, it is time for me to take some time off to spend it with my family: my parental leave starts in August.



I joined Professor Schanz’s research group of Environmental Governance in July 2015, and right from the start I was impressed by the high quality of the MEG program, outstanding students and faculty members and their zeal to make the world a better place for future generations of humans, animals and plants.

Formally, my responsibilities in the MEG program include teaching and program management, but in fact, all this time I was learning together with the MEG students. I developed a new

MEG elective on environmental leadership, which is now a part of the Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship module. Together with Heiner Schanz, I reconceptualized the modules on Research Design in Environmental Governance (formerly Research Skills) and Global Environmental Politics. Teaching a sociology part of the module on Environmental Psychology and Sociology together with Michael Pregernig opened new perspectives on human-environmental interactions to me.

One of the most exciting parts of my MEG experience has been supporting students' research projects for their Master's theses, and I am grateful to my students for taking me to places that I am not likely to visit any time soon: Ecuador, Lesotho, Kazakhstan, Vietnam, USA, and Uruguay. As an internship coordinator, I have gotten to know numerous organizations our students work with. The diversity of internship organizations and the range of interests pursued by MEG students during their internships are immense. Just like many MEG students, I have also experienced challenges, but overall my MEG experience has been one of the most productive parts of my academic career so far.

I would like to wish all MEG students who will be leaving Freiburg during my parental leave all the best in their endeavors and look forward to meeting the MEG-13 class after I am

back in Freiburg in Summer Semester 2018.

Introducing Cristina

Cristina Espinosa



This May I joined the MEG team as part of the Chair of Sustainability Governance. However, my story in Freiburg dates back very long. When I was 20, I came to Freiburg for the first time, to do a German course. Later, in 2008, I returned to study the MEG programme as part of the MEG 4 cohort. Although back then we were only 20, our generation was as multicultural and interdisciplinary as current MEG generations. We engaged in lengthy discussions about pressing global challenges, studied hard, but made sure to have enough free time to enjoy Freiburg and its surroundings.

Overall, doing the MEG was a unique opportunity for me. The programme allowed me to approach from various disciplinary angles sustainability and environmental topics – which I “discovered” through my enjoyment

of outdoor activities. My instructors, many of whom continue to offer courses for the MEG programme, were very knowledgeable and inspiring. I also learned valuable lessons from my classmates, many of whom are now my best friends.

The MEG was intellectually stimulating and triggered in me new questions, thoughts, and perspectives. When I finished my degree I decided that I wanted to continue in academia. With funding from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, between 2012 and 2015 I wrote my doctoral thesis about discourses and transnational activism for the rights of nature. In 2016 I received the Erasmus Prize for the Liberal Arts and Sciences from the University College Freiburg for this research project. Between 2016 and 2017 I held a senior research position at the Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institute in Freiburg coordinating the cluster "Politics of Natural Resources" and was the regional expert for Latin America. Besides from teaching in the MEG programme, I have conducted seminars at the IES Abroad centre in Freiburg.

As part of the academic staff of the Chair of Sustainability Governance, I will teach in different modules of the MEG program and will be involved in supervising selected topics and master theses. Additionally, I will conduct my own research, which tackles environmental discourses, social movements, and knowledge

practices in world politics and Latin America. I deploy critical perspectives anchored in the constructivist and interpretivist paradigms of the social sciences and attempt to disentangle the historical, scientific, social, legal, cultural, and political complexities of the relationship between people and nature. My current research interests revolve around the expansion of extractive industries such as oil drilling and large-scale mining into areas of biological and cultural significance.

I feel very honoured for being part of the MEG team beyond my role as an alumna. I am looking forward to meeting MEG 13 and getting to know MEG 12 a little bit better, as they successfully move towards the finalization of their studies.

Introducing Nicholas

Nicholas Buchanan



In Summer Semester 2017 I joined the MEG Program Committee and have already had the chance to participate in the admissions process

for next academic year. In the coming months, I'm excited to meet the incoming as well as current students and to continue my involvement in the PC.

I'm currently part of the Chair in Science and Technology Studies in the University College Freiburg (UCF), where I have been for about a year now. I came there from the University of Minnesota's Program in History of Science, Technology, and Medicine, where I was a visiting Assistant Professor teaching environmental history, the ethics of science and technology, and science and technology studies.

I earned my BA in Geography from the University of California at Berkeley—where I focused on physical geography—and my PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in the Program in History and Anthropology of Science and Technology. There, I wrote my dissertation research on the contested place of scientific experts in environmental decision making.

My fieldwork in the US Pacific Northwest consisted of ethnographic engagement with a native American tribe, government resource managers, farmers and ranchers, and community organizations as they tried to negotiate issues of water use, endangered species management, and cultural survival. I was particularly interested in the ways that environmental laws prescribed "legitimate" ways of knowing the

environment—usually scientific and economic—and what this meant for groups such as Native Americans, who historically have known the environment in other ways.

My current research continues to combine historical and ethnographic methods with my interest in contested expertises in a number of different settings, including efforts to construct biospheres and other closed-system model environments, and interactions between doctors and patients with chronic diseases.

In the MEG program, I saw a reflection of the multifaceted and dynamic concept of human-environmental interactions that has animated much of my work, and I'm looking forwards to getting to know everyone there better.