

# RECIRCULATE Update

## March Newsletter

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Welcome to the March update from RECIRCULATE. This month, in addition to the latest news on the project's research and capacity building activities we've introduced a new "Meet the researchers" feature. Here each month we plan to shine the spotlight on our brilliant team of researchers in Ghana, Nigeria and the UK, starting with Alfonso in Lancaster and Patience in Accra, Ghana. If you'd like to be put in touch with any RECIRCULATE researcher please contact [recirculate@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:recirculate@lancaster.ac.uk) and we'll pass on your message.

So, please, enjoy reading the newsletter and if you have any feedback, contact our Project Officer [Dian Velkov](#).

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## Celebrating World Water Day article

Monday 22nd March 2021 was [UN World Water Day](#) and this year's theme is "*Valuing Water*", so we decided to ask some of the RECIRCULATE family in Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, United Kingdom and Zambia to tell us how important water is to their home and family life, livelihood, cultural practices, wellbeing or local environment. Here is what they said...

[Read more](#)



## Research Highlights

### The ethics of safeguarding in research

Balancing the opportunities and risks of research with the needs of individuals and communities is a challenge addressed by researchers from the RECIRCULATE's "Water for Sanitation and Health" team.



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## The birth of an idea...

Prof. Alastair Martin, researcher in RECIRCULATE's "Water for Energy Production" team, shares his personal journey as a chemical engineer into RECIRCULATE, and how the idea of "safe digestate" is coming to life through the project.

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## Capacity Building



## International Funding Webinar

On 29th March our [International Funding Webinar](#) answered the question "Can Africa fund its own research?" by exploring challenges and opportunities for "effective funding of research" in Africa and showcasing the principles for winning international funding. Moderated by Dr Akan Odon and the RECIRCULATE team, the webinar featured specialists from Ghana, the US and the UK.

[Watch the webinar](#)

## Communication blog

In her highly commended entry to the [FLOW](#) "Write a Blog" competition, Dr Otlhapile Dinakenyane, a computer scientist at [Botswana International University of Science & Technology](#), highlights the challenge of the "first step" in communication between

business, community & universities and calls for more collaboration.

[Read more](#)

## A new world...

Dr Noimot Balogun, a health strategist & founder of [Linka.ng](#), reflects on a lesson learnt in a very difficult COVID-19 year in her highly commended entry to the [FLOW](#) "Write a Blog" competition. She calls for more communication to foster teamwork and a world of "togetherness".

[Read more](#)

## ACTUATE progress

One of the first robust waste to energy plants to be established in a Nigerian University is underway at the [University of Benin](#). The unique model would address waste, energy and food within a campus setting while providing practical training for students.

This Nigerian waste to energy demonstration plant has a capacity to take on about 7500 kg of bio-waste per feed from the university student and staff accommodation, generate about 30 cubic meters of gas and produce about 6.5 kVA of electricity which will power some laboratories and office buildings. The resultant digestate will then be used as an agricultural fertilizer for farming on campus.

[Read more](#)





## Meet the researchers

Dr Alfonso José Lag Brotons is a post-doctoral researcher within RECIRCULATE Work Package 4 [WP4] "Water for Energy Production" and a senior research associate based at Lancaster University, "in-between" Lancaster Environment Centre and the Engineering Department. His current research activity within WP4 focuses on how to manage organic waste streams for and after the anaerobic digestion process. Before RECIRCULATE, he worked on the "Adding Value to Ash and Digestate (AVAnD) project" which aimed to develop fertilisers/soil conditions from bio-energy residues.

His work contributes to the achievement of UN-SDGs – Zero Hunger (2), Good Health & Wellbeing (3) and Life on Land (15). Alfonso's research focuses on helping the soil to provide the nutrients/nurturing that crops might require, in this case by using waste sources derived from bioenergy production. Additionally, he also tries to understand and reduce the risks associated with potentially undesired organic or inorganic elements that could be present in the (organic) waste streams of consideration.



"In short, being part of a large interdisciplinary team is thrilling and challenging. You are constantly interacting with many different individuals of varied backgrounds throughout the life of the project (and likely beyond). I think this is enriching and represents an outstanding opportunity to expand your professional (and perhaps personal) network. In addition, it is fundamental to understand the other core element of RECIRCULATE, which is capacity-building.

If I have to pick one aspect of my project experience that I enjoyed the most, I would say being able to carry out research as a multidisciplinary team. This translates into meetings with different experts (microbiologist, chemical engineers, environmental scientist, etc) to design experiments that (to me) are more valuable than others I have been part of or I have seen in the literature, mainly due to the shared work that creates unique synergies/opportunities. I think it has been an enriching experience that I would have missed if I would not have been part of the RECIRCULATE team."



Patience Agbedor is a social science team lead and researcher within RECIRCULATE Work Package 2 [WP2] "Water for Health & Sanitation" and a research scientist based at CSIR Ghana. She plays a key role in community entry activities to seek the consent of the Chiefs to ensure the involvement of the opinion leaders and the participation of community members in the project. Before RECIRCULATE, she did some departmental database management and data analysis work and played a crucial role as a team member in proposal writing and research.

Her work contributes to the achievement of UN-SDGs - Good Health & Wellbeing (3) and Clean Water & Sanitation (6). Patience's research is focused on engaging the community in identifying the challenges associated with water use and sanitation and finding the solutions together. She is particularly focused on tackling the SDG 6 target "Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation".

"Working in a large interdisciplinary team has given me a wide range of experience and has opened my eye to a lot of things such as working with maps to navigate through a community and how to use change agents to educate community members.

The project has brought about a paradigm shift in my career and the way I do my work. The challenging nature of the work is what I find very fulfilling since my usual work was not that challenging. As I was made the social science team lead it was very difficult at the beginning but a short training in Lancaster University and a lot of support from the WP2 PI and other colleagues in the University being able to do the work. I also find it very fulfilling to see people from such low-income communities expressing gratitude for receiving assistance to improve their environment and health."

## International Partnership Month April - upcoming events

- Tuesday 20th 10:00am - 12:00pm - "[International Partnerships Webinar](#)" hosted on Microsoft Teams, to register your interest click [HERE](#)

## To interact with us:

Twitter: [RECIRCULATORS, ACTUATE](#)

Instagram: [RECIRCULATORS](#)

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LinkedIn: [Group RECIRCULATORS](#)

## Useful resources

Have you visited the [UN-Water SDG 6 Data Portal](#)? Find data on the 11 global indicators used to track progress towards SDG 6 for any country based on data compiled and verified by the United Nations agencies responsible, sometimes complemented by data from other sources.

## The last drop...

RECIRCULATE's capacity building activities have delivered over 2,700 person training days since January 2018.



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We send information about funding opportunities, news, and events to our contacts to foster collaboration. We hope this has been of interest to you, if so please add us to your contact list. However, if you do not want to receive our monthly RECIRCULATE Newsletter, just click "unsubscribe" below and we will remove you from our newsletter subscription list, or if there is someone else within your organisation you can recommend that we liaise with, just let us know and we will update our database, thank you.

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