



Members of the ENVIU research team, MISR March 2026

Welcome to ENVIU

Our first newsletter!

We have launched our research project “Everyday Violence and Environmental Change in Uganda” – ENVIU.

With ENVIU we seek to explore how and to what extent relations between local communities and public authorities become violent amid environmental degradation and change.

For Instance, what forms of everyday violence is happening when the fish are disappearing and fishers, fish inspectors, as well as crocodiles seek towards protected fishing grounds, where the last fish are breeding?

We have formed strong partnerships between researchers and NGOs to study such dynamics across diverse socio-environmental fields – from grasslands to urban settlements and lakesides.

We will utilize these research-based, grounded and bottom-up insights to inform climate justice debates in Uganda and beyond, while keeping a persistent focus on the everyday lives of the cattle herders, urban youth, forest guards, or land inspectors, who experience these challenges on a daily basis.

You can read more about the project on our website: <https://enviu.net/>

Our First Colloquium: 23rd -27th March 2026

ENVIU is organized around a series of biannual colloquiums, which constitute a central driving force of the project. The colloquiums include a series of dynamic workshops and seminars on research practice, concepts and methods. The first colloquium focused on strengthening collaboration and partnerships and on publicly launching the project, while exploring our methodology and sharpening our analytical scope in conversation with colleagues and peers.

During the colloquium week we:

- Aligned research priorities, outputs, and decided on the initial field sites.
- Introduced the MISR PhD cohort to the project's aims, structure, and expectations.
- Discussed key research themes, including environmental change, public authority, and everyday violence.
- Contributed to MISR's Wednesday Seminar.
- Conducted training on scientific engagement and research impact.
- Strengthened project coordination between MISR, LEMU, and DIGNITY.
- Discussed the project's future direction with the participating Advisory Board members.

Throughout the colloquium the strengthening of partnerships, research methods, and conceptual frameworks was the main objective. The following four examples serve as a few selected highlights from our colloquium week, that had both a transformative and inspiring effect on the team, and that will shape our ongoing research.

The field: A walk down Nakivubo Canal

All three research groups have been on preliminary field visits in Kasese, Kiryandongo, and Kampala respectively. The colleagues from the 'Settlements and Towns' research groups, for instance, went to Nakivubo Canal that runs through Kampala. It is one of the two field sites that the team will focus on. For us, the walk testified to the importance of our research. The canal is green at first, then more concrete and finally, it is completely covered by a massive new structure, virtually dividing the city into two. The taxi rank, always busy, is even more cramped, as access roads are blocked. The makers of the building covering the canal, a new shopping mall, insist that the concrete structures will ease the flow of water, but the markings on the wall that indicate where the water reached in the last flooding tell a different story.

The changing environment and the urban development practices of Kampala converge to create tensions, displacement and wealth all at once.

See more at: <https://enviu.net/socio-environmental-fields/>

The new ideas: Interactions with the PhD cohort

A central part of ENVIU is to involve the amazing PhD students of MISR in the project. We do this through small research grants for the students to use during their teaching-free period from September to December. We spent time with the first and second-year students, listening to their ideas and discussing how and to what extent their research interests resonated with the ENVIU project.

Their ideas were intriguing and displayed their genuine engagement and competence. They comprised ideas, issues, and problems about nature, politics, nationalism, poetry, films, gender, urbanity and religion. All students engaged in discussions about the topics of everyday violence, the environment and politics in innovative and creative ways.

To work with the PhD cohorts promises to be one of the most important and beneficial avenues of collaboration and research capacity building, hopefully for the students and certainly for the ENVIU team.

The Conversations: Engaging with peers

We benefitted greatly from the generous participation from Advisory Board members Dr. Babara Nakangu and Dr. Adam Branch. A powerful paper – *State Craft in the Evolution of Natural Resources Management Structure of Uganda* – was presented by Dr. Nakangu at the MISR Wednesday seminar. This paper engendered an intense debate, for instance on to the extent which the colonial state can be seen to stabilize sovereign power through natural resource governance.

The colloquium also gave us opportunity to learn from peers. For example, from Dr. Sylvie Namwase from the Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC). Dr. Namwase shared experiences from her work on the DFC-funded project - *Militarisation, Sustainable Growth and Peace in Uganda* – most notably on the challenges and opportunities involved in building meaningful engagement with authorities, policymakers, civil society actors, and affected communities.

At the public launch colleagues from academia and civil society actively joined the debate and pushed us to reflect on what we mean by everyday violence, and whether we take an eco- or anthropocentric approach to our work. These conversations are crucial to position ENVIU within relevant academic debates and to consolidate our future contributions to the field.

The challenge: Remembering the ecology

We situate ENVIU within the field of political ecology. Political ecology has emerged as a field of study that encompasses the nexus between politics, conflict and the environment. We are sure that we have contributions to make in the broader field of environmental change through our focus on everyday violence, politics and state formation. However, as member of the Advisory Board, Adam Branch, succinctly asked in the public seminar, 'Where is the ecology in your

understanding of political ecology?’ Or to put it differently, where is our environmental interest and competence?

The point is well-made, and we will focus on balancing the ecology and the political throughout the project’s life cycle as we embark on our fieldwork by looking at the water in the Nakivubo canal, the climate mitigation in Nansana, the settlements in Kyriandongo or the cattle keepers in Kasese. It will remain a key point of attention for us to strike this balance in an innovative way.

Meet the team member:

Tomas Martin

**Principal Investigator on
ENVIU and Head of
International Research and
Learning at DIGNITY**



My name is Tomas Max Martin. Throughout my career I have specialized in anthropology of the state with a focus on violence prevention – mostly in prison settings. I bring this experience on mundane relations between people with and without uniforms to bear on our study of environmental change and everyday violence.

Together with Anitah Atwijuka and Yahya Sseremba, I am a part of the Forrest and grasslands research group exploring the socio-environmental field of Kasese. My own sub-project explores how fishing communities experience environmental change, and how this affects contestations and relations with public authorities across ethnic, generational, and gendered faultlines.

With reference to the sharp and inspiring critique by Adam Branch, I have recently been diving into literature pertaining to the relationship between politics and ecology. Our team should be able to answer in the affirmative, when asked if we are addressing ecology as more than as a context! In line with Adam Branch's reading tips, I have recently been getting inspired by Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga's *The Mobile Workshop: The Tsetse Fly and African Knowledge Production* from 2018, and Lesley Green's *Rock Water Life* from 2020. I am sure these powerful books will come to bear on our discussions at the next colloquium in August!

News and Upcoming Events:

Our next colloquium will take place in **mid-august 2026**, where we will launch our PhD stipend process. We look forward to reading the students' project proposals and jointly facilitate that their new ideas take form in the coming semester.

Together with the VUCCA project we are also planning to organise a joint workshop at Gulu University on balancing politics and ecology in climate change research. We are excited to continue building on the momentum from the March colloquium with our colleagues and peers. See more about the VUCCA project at: [VUCCA: Vulnerability and climate change adaptation in conflict-affected regions | Roskilde University](#)

Finally, we will be attending the Danina fellowship Centre climate conference in Tanzania in **October**. This will no doubt give us food for thought and bring value to the broader ENVIU project.

ENVIU newsletters will be published **twice a year**. Follow upcoming news and publications on: www.enviu.net

See more at: <https://enviu.net>

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