

Community Woodlands... Springboards for Youth Employability & Entrepreneurship?
Sharing learning from a case study by
Dr Lalith Welamedage, UHI Centre for Living Sustainability

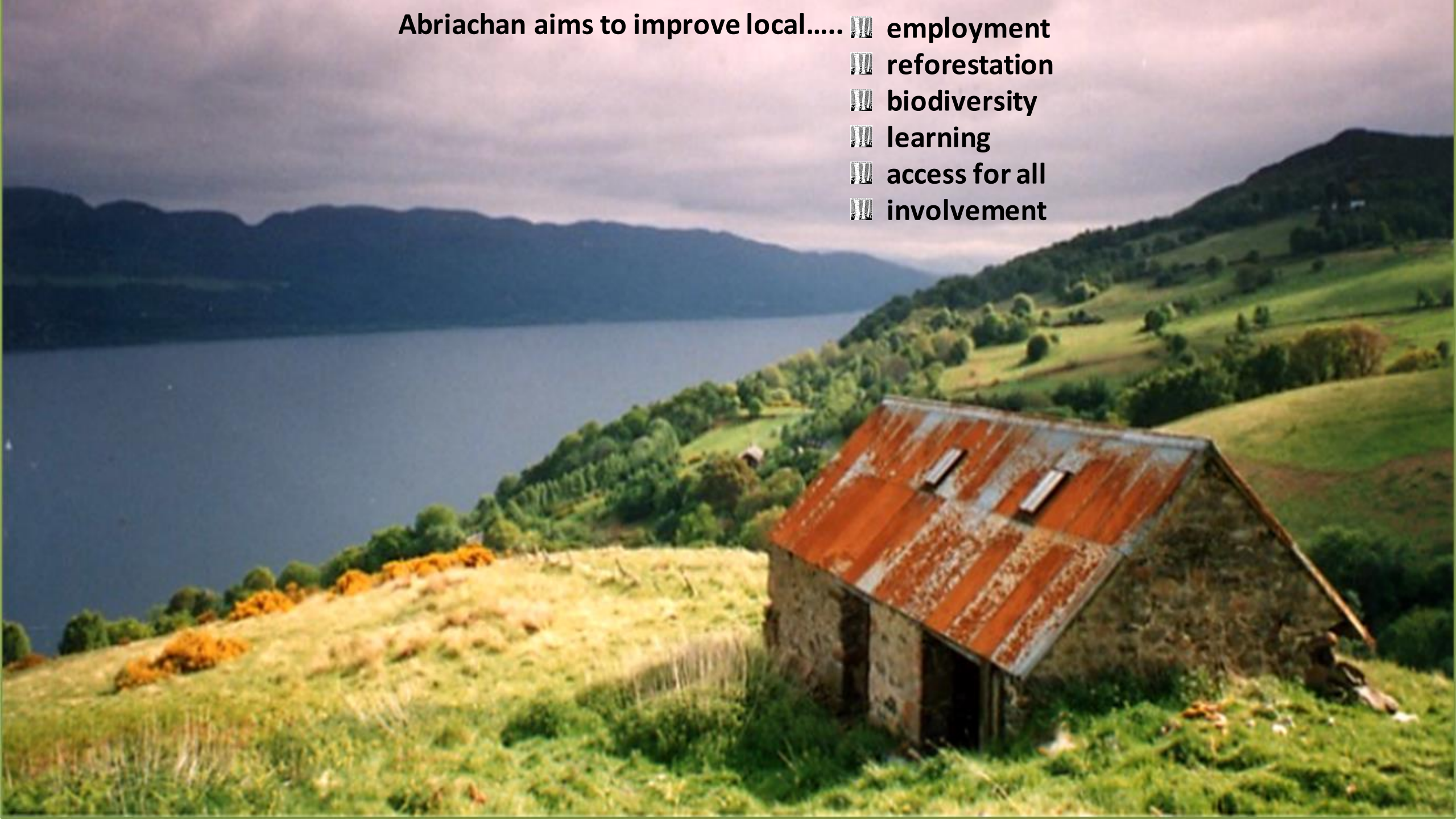


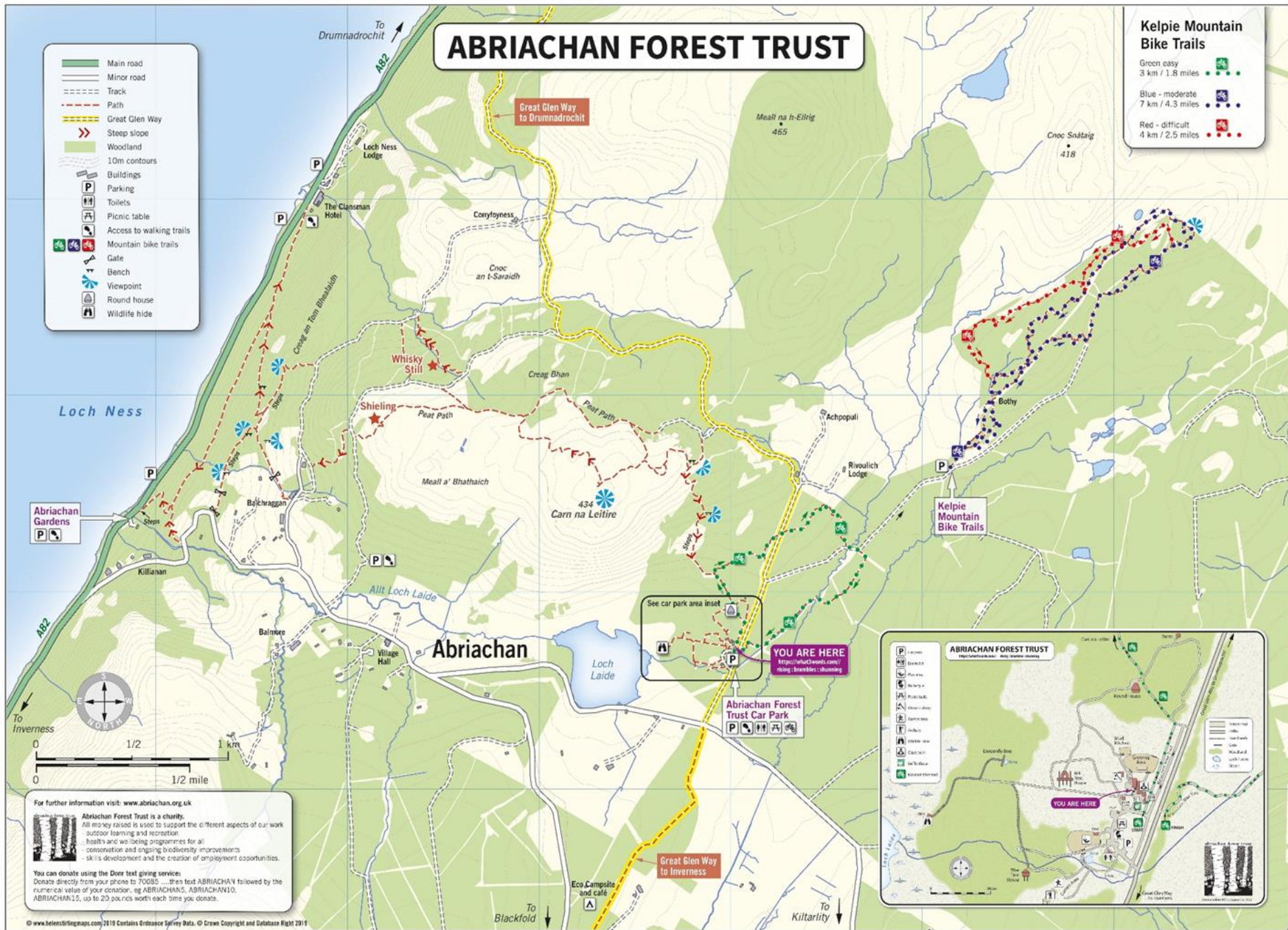
Youth on board



Abriachan aims to improve local....

- employment
- reforestation
- biodiversity
- learning
- access for all
- involvement





- 15km south west of Inverness
- 540 hectares mixed woodland and open hill
- 25 years of ownership and management by our community
- Forestry is a long game
- Supporting learning takes time to get results too



**New skills for
life and work**



Sustain their involvement...



...it's their land, their hill, their loch, their home and everyone's responsibility.



Make it fun



Catch the Curriculum



Catch THEIR curriculum.....



Organise events...in their own areas of the woodland environment



Involve them in buildings, shelters, dens...



...shieling, tree houses,
tarp shelters, still,
birchwood site, yurt,
bridges and more
bridges.... all
advantages of
community ownership.





Lifelong stewards of their own planet.....

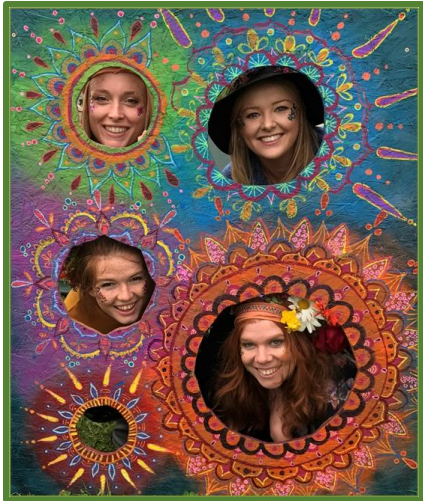




Leave a legacy....



Then and now.....





Make it fun, keep our young people involved and they will come back with great new ideas and the next generation of Highlanders. Encourage their entrepreneurial ambitions....



**New skills for
life and work**



Community Woodlands as Springboards for Youth employability and entrepreneurship



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- Funded by UHI Knowledge Exchange Programme, this research was undertaken by Centre for Living Sustainability at UHI Inverness in collaboration with Afriachan Forest Trust (AFT) between November 2022 to August 2023.
- The research focused on young participants within AFT's youth programme, aiming to document their learning journeys and the support they receive for employability and entrepreneurship skill development.
- It explores how youth entrepreneurship in land-based enterprises can contribute to achieving global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasising the program's broader societal importance and impact.
- Alongside the researchers are CLS, experienced AFT trainers/instructors took on the role of researchers, collaborating closely with young learners to highlight their skills development and support experiences, ensuring a robust research process.

Research highlights

- Objective was to capture the learning experiences of young participants in the AFT youth program, documenting support for employability and entrepreneurial skills, and exploring youth entrepreneurship's contribution to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Abriachan Forest Trust, an early land-owning community, demonstrates how youth entrepreneurs and land-based entrepreneurship can empower local and marginalised youth. Aligned with SDGs it showcased the broader impact on sustainable development.
- The research involved collecting qualitative and quantitative data from AFT personnel, evaluating skills enhancement and the supportive environment, analysing community and stakeholder perspectives, and exploring how youth entrepreneurship in land-based enterprises can benefit community projects at both regional and global levels.
- Research offers specific recommendations derived from the Abriachan case study to support youth entrepreneurship and advocates for the broader implementation by the woodland communities.

Discussion & Feedback