



3-11 February 2025

The Human Dimension of Biodiversity A Visual Approach

Workshop

MaRHE Center – Magoodhoo, Faafu Atoll, Republic of the Maldives



Introduction

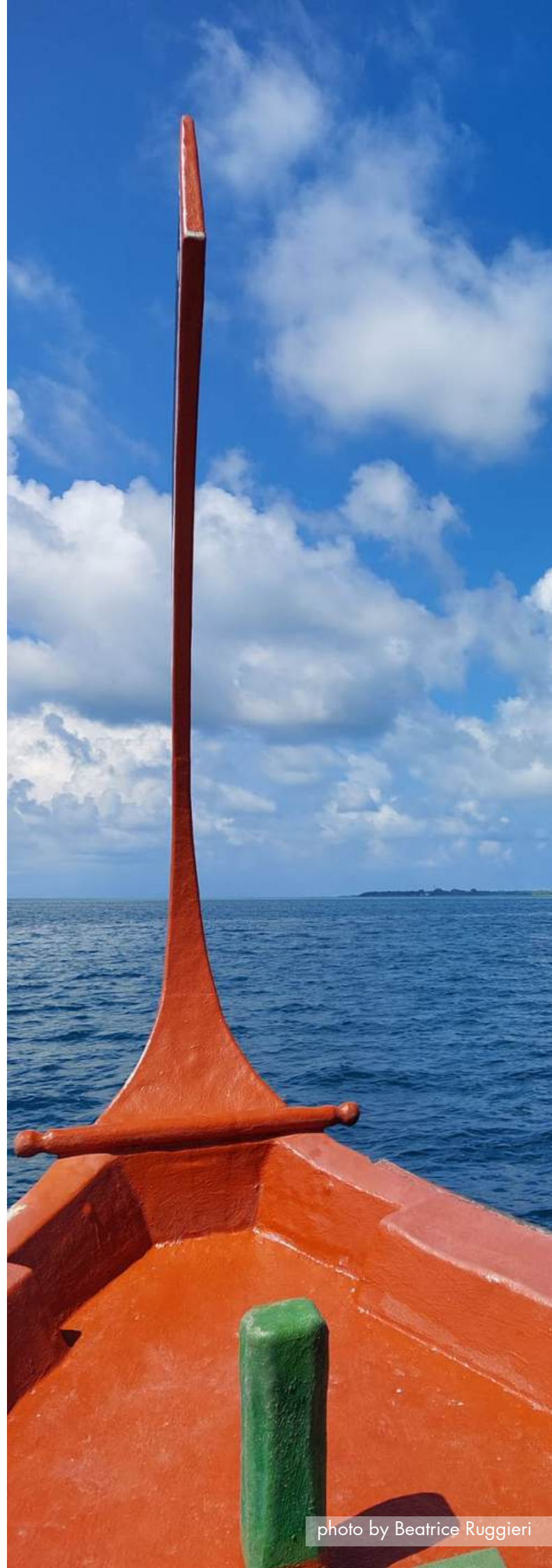
Human activities are rapidly transforming ecosystems, and this is especially evident on small islands. From land reclamation to biodiversity loss, these changes affect not only the environment but also local communities and cultures. Understanding the human dimension of biodiversity involves exploring anthropogenic causes as well as how ecosystems evolve, species disappear, and the impact these changes have on the people living across the globe.

The core of this interdisciplinary international workshop held at the Marine Research and High Education Center (MaRHE Center) offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the environmental, social, and cultural dynamics of the Maldives. You will engage in fieldwork within some of the world's most stunning coastal and marine ecosystems. Through this hands-on experience, you will gain insight into critical global issues such as climate change adaptation, community resilience, and sustainable development.

By studying marine and land ecosystems like coral reefs and mangroves, you will see firsthand how biodiversity influences both island life and global environmental connections. You will also learn about national conservation policies and discover the key role that iconic species, such as corals, play in preserving biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Whether you are an experienced photographer or just have a smartphone, this workshop will teach you how to use visual storytelling to document and communicate ecosystem changes and human impact. No prior photography skills or professional equipment are required.

The course consists of a series of lectures and field activities, led by expert researchers and professors. The lectures will take place at the Marine Research and High Education Center in Magoodhoo Island, and all activities in the sea will be conducted through snorkeling.



Why Apply?

- Immerse yourself in practical fieldwork studying island ecosystems, witnessing firsthand how biodiversity affects both local island life and broader global environmental systems;
- Study the ecological, social and cultural aspects of biodiversity loss and conservation in island contexts;
- Learn from leading researchers in an international context.

What you will learn?

- How human activities are transforming island ecosystems;
- How critical global issues such as climate change adaptation, sustainable development, and community resilience manifest on small islands;
- The role of national conservation policies in preserving biodiversity and cultural heritage;
- How to document and communicate environmental and human impacts through visual storytelling.

Target

Master, PhD international students, government and NGO members



Preliminary program

Day 1

- Arrival to Malé International Airport;
- Transfer to Magoodhoo (by Speed Boat);
- First Briefing;
- Guided Field Tour of Magoodhoo.

Day 2

- Lecture: Biodiversity protection regulations in the Maldives;
- Activity: Snorkeling around Magoodhoo.

Day 3

- Lecture: Decolonising visual approaches in Island Studies;
- Activity: Biodiversity loss and ecosystem services – Tour of Magoodhoo Island, followed by a workshop on visual elements of biodiversity loss.

Day 4

- Lecture: Corals as heritage;
- Field trip to Nilandhoo Island (coral mosque);
- Teamwork.

Day 5

- Guest Lecture: Biodiversity Loss and Conservation in the Maldives;
- Activity: Use of drones to map biodiversity loss;
- Teamwork.

Day 6

- Lecture: Land reclamation and gender dimension;
- Debate;
- Teamwork.

Day 7

- Field trip to Filitheyo Island Resort and the surrounding marine protected area;
- Activity: Snorkeling to “Map the Giants”;
- Teamwork.

Day 8

- Excursion to visit Adanga island;
- Teamwork presentation.

Day 9

Departure to Malé.

Please note that the program's agenda may change slightly during the workshop

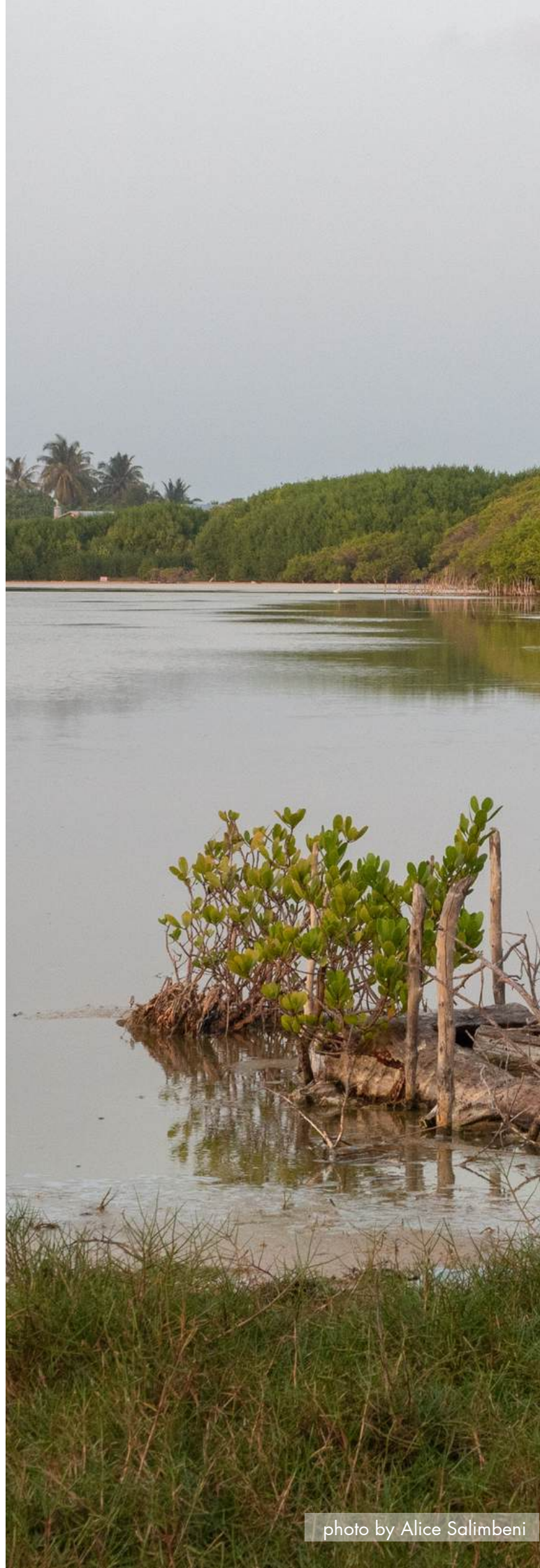


photo by Alice Salimbeni

Fee

1500 euros per participant.
(If strictly necessary, it is possible to pay in two installments: 750+750 euros).

The fee includes: Maldives entry visa; Insurance coverage (The insurance included with the Business Visa does not cover COVID-related costs and has a cover limit of 100.000 Maldivian Rufyiaa (MVR), approximately 6.500 US\$, for health issues. It is, therefore, up to you to decide whether to purchase additional private health insurance); Boat transfer to/from Malé airport; Transportation for all activities included in the program; Full board accommodation at the MaRHE Center in Magoodhoo (three hours by speedboat from Malé airport), with lodging in a shared room; Lessons and activities included in the program; Use of the boat for excursions from Magoodhoo.

The fee does not include: Round-trip airfare; Any passport renewal expenses; Anything not specified above.

Deadlines

Applicants must submit their request by **November 20, 2024**.

Once the minimum number of participants (18 participants) has been reached, we will send you the invoice and the PagoPa payment slip via email with instructions on how to pay the workshop fee. The invoice must be paid within 10 days of receipt. We will give you the go-ahead to purchase airline tickets after registration. The purchase of the flight will be at your own expense. The choice of the airline is up to you, the important thing is to be at the airport on the specified date and time (we will provide the details once you are registered). This means that you can arrive before the start date and depart after.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Following the payment of the fee, reimbursements for cancellations will be subject to 10% admin fee. In case of cancellation from the workshop after January 3, 2024, no refund will be possible.



Passport

To enter the Maldives, you must have a passport valid for more than 6 months from the date of entry.

If you do not have a passport, we encourage you to apply for one promptly, as the waiting times can be long.

Additionally, we need to have a JPEG colour copy of your passport by the end of November in order to proceed with the entry visa application, which we will handle entirely. Please, send it to workshop.marhe@unimib.it.

To proceed with the registration, you will have to fill in the following Google Form

<https://forms.gle/taBPTgLMr7DNuGH29>



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Clothing and Equipment

The air temperature is around 28-29°C (Figure 2). The climate is always pleasant, even during the rainy months.

Please note that a large part of the day will be occupied by field activities, seminars, and exercises, so comfortable and sporty clothing is recommended.

We advise avoiding overly revealing clothing since the island of Magoodhoo is not a tourist resort, and the local customs reflect those of an Islamic country.

Please, be advised that diving is not permitted. For field activities at sea, you will need the following gear in addition to a swimsuit and towel (further details will be provided before departure):

- Mask (no full-face masks);
- Snorkel;
- Fins (with booties);
- Wetsuit or shorts and lycra shirt;
- Underwater camera (optional but recommended);
- Watch.

Accommodation and Meals

During the workshop, you will stay at the Center, in shared rooms with services, with full board (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). Sheets and towels will be provided.

The food is prepared according to local customs, so it will largely consist of fish, chicken, rice, and variously prepared vegetables. If anyone is vegetarian, vegan, or has allergies, please inform us in advance. Single rooms are not available.

Health

No vaccinations are required for travelers from Italy to the Maldives. However, it is a good practice to check the validity of your tetanus vaccination by verifying the expiration date on your local health authority's health card. If it has expired, it can be renewed in time.



Safety

Any field activity inherently presents risks and dangers, and there are some basic rules to follow in order to minimize these risks.

Currency

The Maldivian currency is the Maldivian rufiyaa. Euros and US dollars are generally accepted but must be new and undamaged.

1 Euro = 17 rufiyaa; 1 Dollar = 15 rufiyaa.

Time

There is a three or four-hour time difference between Italy and the Maldives, depending on daylight savings time.

Communication

A wireless network is available on the island, which can be used with your own laptop for educational purposes.

It may also be possible (depending on logistics) to purchase a local SIM card with data.

Insurance Coverage

Health Insurance: Mandatory Maldivian health insurance is included in the cost of the entry visa (Business Visa) for the Maldives: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bqqMusDfFexSzSVxfkGLylutN-NeYgl/view>).

Liability and Accident Insurance

The university has the following worldwide insurance policies in place for workshop participants. You can find more information on the university's website at the following link: (<https://www.unimib.it/servizi/studenti-e-laureati/opportunita-e-facilities/assicurazioni>).

Students must comply with the provided regulations on prevention and safety. In the event of an accident during program-related activities, students must immediately inform the university by contacting the Welfare and National Health Service Relations Department via email at assicurazioni@unimib.it.



Looking forward to meeting you!

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