

Ad Astra Bursary Funding – Summer 2023

Laoise Ní Mharcaigh

BSc Sustainability with Social Sciences, Policy and Law – Stage 3

Link to a blog post about my work with LANDPATHS: [News - LANDPATHS \(uu.se\)](https://www.uu.se/news-landpaths)

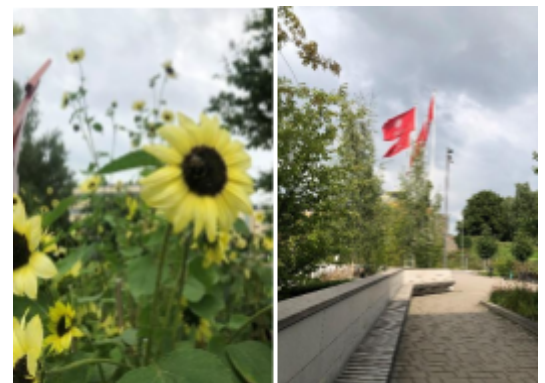


Department of Earth Sciences, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Thankfully, I was again given the opportunity to apply for Bursary funding from the Ad Astra Academy. Following a successful application, I received confirmation from the Academy that I had been awarded funding to undertake some research in Sweden during the summer of 2023.

With an interest in biodiversity conservation, environmental education and citizen science, I decided to approach Associate Professor and Senior Lecturer, Malgorzata Blicharska, who works at the Department of Earth Sciences at Uppsala University in Sweden. Project coordinator of the LANDPATHS research programme at Uppsala University, Malgorzata invited me to the University to meet with other members of her research team while also getting the opportunity to contribute to a literature review of papers relating to the LANDPATHS project.

From July 2023, I was tasked with reading and reviewing a set of academic articles about a range of aspects relating to multifunctionality in Swedish landscapes. The aim of this work was for me to provide a concise academic summary of the barriers and opportunities for multifunctional biodiverse landscapes in Sweden. While in Uppsala, I was able to continue my work for the literature review, while also getting the chance to learn more about further postgraduate research opportunities available in Uppsala University. Towards the end of my week in Uppsala, I presented and discussed my work with Malgorzata and Jayne Glass, another researcher on the LANDPATHS team. During the meeting, I identified some of the recurrent themes in the reviewed literature which helped to further their work on multifunctionality in LANDPATHS.



Photos from my trip to Uppsala University.



Photo outside of the Geocentrum Building, Uppsala University.

Without the support of the Ad Astra Academy, I would not have been able to undertake this experience. The provision of financial security to complete voluntary research work is something that I was hugely fortunate to receive, and something that I am truly grateful to the Academy for. While in Sweden, I not only got the chance to gain real-life practical experience in the life of a researcher, I also got to broaden my horizons by making connections with other faculty staff and students who work within the realm of sustainability.

Each year, I increasingly come to appreciate the supports provided by the Ad Astra Academy. From workshops and interactive talks which focus on topics ranging from professional development to presentation skills, I have been encouraged to realise the importance of making connections and gaining work experience in an effort to progress my personal, professional and academic goals. With the hope of undertaking a Masters in Sweden following the completion of my degree, I am very grateful to the Ad Astra Academy for providing me with both the support and means to undertake this opportunity.