International Conference on Forest Education, 22-24 June 2021

Breakout Group Briefing Note: 1.1
“Planting the seeds: the importance of early forest education at the primary and secondary levels to inspire young minds”

Organizers: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Moderator: Christoph Rullmann, Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald
Facilitator: Theresa Leoffler, FAO
Rapporteur: Jill Hannon & Greta Castelli, FAO

Dates and times:

Meeting 1: 22 June, 15:15 – 16:45 Central European Summer Time (CEST)
Meeting 2: 23 June, 08:30 – 10:00 Central European Summer Time (CEST)

Breakout group description:

To create a more sustainable world and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, individuals must become sustainability change-makers with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will empower them to contribute to sustainable development. The now well-established approach of Education for Sustainable Development empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations.

Education for Sustainable Development must be understood as an integral part of quality education, inherent in the concept of lifelong learning: All educational institutions – from preschool to tertiary education and in non-formal and informal education – can and should consider it their responsibility to deal intensively with matters of sustainable development, including the sustainable management of forests, and to foster the development of sustainability competencies.

Yet, as evidenced in the recent Global Forest Education Survey, forest education is frequently inadequate and topics related to forests and their sustainable use is often absent from school curriculums entirely. Furthermore, young people tend to regard forestry careers as having poor status and image. To counteract these trends, it is essential to bring forests into the lives of children from an early age.

This breakout group will look specifically at the status of forest education at the primary and secondary levels and at how children can be provided with a foundation to better understand the vital role of forests as a critical step in safeguarding our natural resources.

We must encourage tomorrow’s adults to make conscious and responsible decisions for a sustainable future. As the world slowly recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, building back better and addressing the great sustainability challenges of our times are more crucial than ever. Today’s children will need to take up the reins on many of these challenges.
Questions to be addressed by the breakout group:

1. How can early forest education be used to inspire future generations of foresters?
2. Where are the gaps in primary and secondary forest education?
3. Where have there been successful efforts to fill these gaps?
4. How can forest education be better incorporated at the primary and secondary levels in a way that is meaningful and relevant to the local context?

Speakers:

**Meeting 1: 22 June, 15:15 – 16:45 Central European Summer Time (CEST)**

1. Bernard Combes, Programme Specialist, UNESCO, Education for Sustainable Development Learning Objectives and their importance for SDG 15, Life on Land
2. Siima Bakengesa, Director, Tanzania Forestry Research Institute, FAO forest education project in Tanzania
3. Virgilio Viana, Director General at Sustainable Amazon Foundation (UNESCO-Japan ESD Prize 2019)
4. Cindy-Lee Cloete, LEAF National Operator in South Africa and General Manager of the Schools and Youth Unit at WESSA
5. Boštjan Hren, Slovenia Forest Service forestry engineer, Leader of the Forest pedagogy group of the SFS communication team

**Meeting 2: 23 June, 08:30 – 10:00 Central European Summer Time (CEST)**

1. Bernard Combes, Programme Specialist, UNESCO, Education for Sustainable Development Learning Objectives and their importance for SDG 15, Life on Land
2. Siima Bakengesa, Director, Tanzania Forestry Research Institute, FAO forest education project in Tanzania
3. Angelica Dao, Kids-to-Forest participant, Success stories in the Philippines
4. Cindy-Lee Cloete, LEAF National Operator in South Africa and General Manager of the Schools and Youth Unit at WESSA
5. Boštjan Hren, Slovenia Forest Service forestry engineer, Leader of the Forest pedagogy group of the SFS communication team

Supporting information:

1. [Education for Sustainable Development](#)
2. [Global Forest Education project](#)
3. [SDG Resources for Educators - Life On Land](#)
4. [UNESCO learning objectives for SDG 15](#)
5. [Learn for our planet: A global review of how environmental issues are integrated in education](#)
6. [Forests Challenge Badge](#)
7. [The Youth Guide to Forests](#)