



International Conference on Forest Education, 22-24 June 2021

Breakout Group Briefing Note: 1.3

“Enhancing practical field training: Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and Farmer Field Schools”

Organizer: Farmer Field School Team, FAO

Moderator:

Meeting 1: Suzanne Phillips, FAO Farmer Field School

Meeting 2: Anne-Sophie Poisot, FAO Farmer Field School

Rapporteur: José Díaz Díaz, FAO Social Forestry Team

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:

This session will present two case studies on how Farmer Field Schools and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) build capacities – knowledge, skills and attitudes – in young and adult populations in a changing forestry sector. To stay relevant, such capacity development need to adjust and improve, for example by increasing ecological literacy at local level. Learning-by-doing and farm-based experimentation are important methods.

The first presentation will discuss how Farmer Field Schools can enable family farmers in advancing knowledge, skills, and social organization needed for more regenerative natural resource management. A Farmer Field School brings together a group of farmers to learn on how to shift towards more sustainable production practices, by better understanding complex agro-ecosystems and by enhancing ecosystem services. This session will reflect among participants the core elements of FFS that can support transformative education and ideas for creating opportunities for a new generation of foresters and farmers towards more regenerative agriculture as a response to climate change and the need of re-discovering human-nature inter-subjectivity.

The second presentation will discuss the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in a rapidly changing forest ‘sector’. Forest and agroforestry landscapes are influenced by local, national and global actors that produce and process forest and tree products for domestic use or for the market, seek to restore forest ecosystems or increase carbon storage. These interests may converge but do often clash. Typically, the person at the front end of such forestry activities is someone with a certificate or degree from TVET institutions, working in forestry/agroforestry advisory services, small and medium enterprises, forestry and nursery operations, conservation NGOs, etc. This session will reflect on how TVET can make forestry more attractive to young people by improving entrepreneurial skills and creating green jobs, while also strengthening innovation capacity in traditional forestry/agroforestry jobs. The talk will highlight the importance of innovative teaching and learning methods in empowering people, and the evolving role of TVET in achieving a green economy and a sustainable forestry sector.

Questions to be addressed by the breakout group:

1. Why is ecological literacy relevant and important for FFS and forestry education (impact on worldview, knowledge-practice, and socio-biological organization)?
2. How does FFS contribute to unlock human potential through self-esteem, critical awareness, and social learning?
3. How could TVET help attract talented young people to old and new jobs in forestry, agroforestry and the green economy? What do they need to do differently?
4. What type of support is required to strengthen TVET and FFS?

Speakers:

1. Ecological literacy in Agroforestry: experiences of FFS. Stephen Sherwood, Groundswell International/Wageningen University.
2. Technical and vocational education and training: how to serve a changing forest sector. Per Rudebjer, FAO Research and Extension Unit (OINR)

Supporting information:

1. <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/ippm/programme/ffs-approach/en/>
2. <http://www.fao.org/research-and-extension/eas-promoting-entrepreneurships/en/>