



International Conference on Forest Education, 22-24 June 2021

Breakout Group Briefing Note: 1.8

“10 reasons why you should take a forest job - Changing the public’s perception of the forester through strategic communication”

Organizer:

Forest Communicators’ Network (FCN)

Moderator: Gerda Wolfrum, IUFRO Communications Coordinator (session one); Kai Lintunen, Head of International Communication at the Finnish Forest Association. Leader UNECE- FAO Forest Communicators’ Network (session two)

Facilitator: Theresa Loeffler, FAO

Rapporteurs: Jill Hannon, FAO (lead) & Greta Castelli, FAO

Dates and times:

Meeting 1: Tuesday 22nd June, 16:45-18:15 Central European Summer Time (CEST)

Meeting 2: Wednesday 23rd June, 10:00 -11:30 CEST

Breakout group description:

Join this breakout group to explore why fewer young people are choosing forestry as a career - and how innovative communications strategies could be used to turn the situation around.

The declining interest of young people in forestry as a career poses a threat to the sustainable future of the sector. Part of the problem is that many people still have an outdated idea of what it means to work in forestry. While working in the profession still means being connected to nature in fundamental and important ways, forestry professionals also use the latest technology in their work and are constantly innovating. And while many will link the profession primarily with logging, forestry is also at the forefront of the battle against climate change, one of the greatest challenges of our times, as well as the achievement of a sustainable future for coming generations.

In order to attract the best and brightest young people to consider forestry as a viable career choice, there is an urgent need to change the perception of who a forester is, and what a forester does. There is also a need to redress the image of forestry as a typically male profession, despite an increasing number of women pursuing forestry at university and as a career.

Take part in this breakout group with the Regional Forest Communicators Networks to discuss the perceived barriers to forestry careers, hear from inspiring men and women employed in the sector, and brainstorm innovative and achievable strategic communication approaches that can help capture and outline the realities, and societal importance, of a forestry career – and attract future generations of foresters.

Questions to be addressed by the breakout group:

1. What prevents young people, especially women, from choosing forestry as a career?
2. What elements of forestry careers should make them attractive to young people today?

3. What innovative strategic communication approaches could help change public perceptions of what a forester is and does, in order to attract future generations of foresters?
4. In how far should these communication approaches be tailored to regional and local contexts?

Speakers:

Meeting 1: Tuesday 22nd June, 16:45-18:15 Central European Summer Time (CEST)

1. Ms Kerry Davies (TBC)
2. Ms Mirian Yadira Molina de Cruz
3. Mr Eduardo Rojas
4. Mr John Colmey

Meeting 2: Wednesday 23rd June, 10:00 -11:30 CEST

1. Ms Kerry Davies (TBC)
2. Dr Tatenda Mapeto
3. Dr Magda Bou Dagher Kharrat
4. Ms Apsana Kafle
5. Mr John Colmey

Supporting information:

1. [Outstanding practices in forest education](#)
2. [Women in Forestry South Africa](#)
3. [Forest sector campaign to visit schools thought up by school kids themselves](#)