Learning about forests and climate change through play

Interview with:

Professor Sandra Rodríguez, Autonomous University of Chihuahua, Mexico, and Co-Coordinator of the Joint IUFRO-IFSA Task Force on Forest Education,

and

Dr. Marie-Ange Ngo Bieng, researcher at CIRAD, the French agricultural research and international cooperation organization. Second prize winner Global Competition on Best Practices in Forest Education 2.0 by IUFRO-IFSA Joint Task Force on Forest Education

Professor Rodriguez, why is forest education so important?
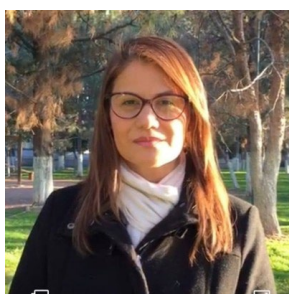
As a society we are currently facing several challenges with climate change being the most pressing one. Under this scenario, forest education serves as a tool to enhance the understanding of forests as ecosystems that are crucial to mitigating climate change while providing other goods and services such as timber, firewood, food, medicinal plants, space for recreation, and genetic resources, which are, among others, important for human thriving. **Forest education is an important ingredient for sustainable prosperity.**

Why did you launch the Global Competition on Best Practices in Forest Education?

The Joint IUFRO-IFSA Task Force on Forest Education wants to appreciate the important contribution that teachers and professors at all levels of education are making to promote knowledge about forests. We know that there are many good teaching practices around the world, and we want to provide a space for them to be known and adapted by other teachers. In this competition, we focused on creative material used during and after COVID-19. Teaching forest science is a challenge if you don't have the opportunity to visit the forest in person.

Dr. Ngo Bieng, congratulations, you are one of the winners of the 2024 competition with the board game Climate Rush. What has been your motivation to develop this game?

Thank you, I am so proud of the prize. I am a tropical forest ecologist; I am personally and professionally concerned about the increased climate vulnerability of natural ecosystems, from which tropical forest ecosystems. I developed the "Climate Rush" to communicate in an innovative and alternative way about tropical forest vulnerability to the global warming scenarios predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC. Also, I wanted to provide in a friendly and accessible way information on potential mitigation, adaptation and compensation actions that anyone could afford, from the youngest to the eldest. In fact, **I am looking for allies with the aim to modify the current trend toward tropical forest extinction,** and I believe education and information are the basis of awareness and potential commitments.

What is unique about the game?

"Climate Rush" is unique as people of different ages learn about urgent current challenges on tropical forest by playing! They players are challenged in a playful way to carry out simple actions to mitigate the human impact on rising temperatures, and therefore could act as potential heroes, decreasing the vulnerability of a tree community that they have to preserve.

Based on science, the knowledge gained is related to:

- climate change scenarios, and impact on natural ecosystems vital for human being

- the great diversity of tropical forests, with an emphasis on tree diversity: we put in play some tree models, associated to species ID cards, presenting tree species selected according to their climatic vulnerability, but also according to their uses by human communities (therefore we link diversity to a range of ecosystem services provides by these vital ecosystems)

- climatic vulnerability of tropical forest species in a simple and entertaining way: the thermal optimum of each species, far from the predicted temperatures according to various predicted climate scenarios

Invitation:

At the IUFRO World Congress, you can meet Dr. Ngo Bieng who will present the Climate Rush game within the Green Job Arena on Tuesday June 25th in the afternoon.

Professor Rodríguez will not be at the Congress, unfortunately.

More:

The **first prize** in the Global Competition on Best Practices in Forest Education 2.0 by IUFRO-IFSA Joint Task Force on Forest Education went to **Dr. Piyawat DILOKSUMPUN and a team from the Department of Forest Engineering, Faculty of Forestry, Kasetsart University in Thailand**.

Visit: [IUFRO: Global Competition on Best Practices in Forest Education 2.0 / Joint IUFRO-IFSA Task Force on Forest Education / Task Forces](#)