

Working Spaces – Results, 20th September 2023

Forests and Education: Empowerment and Participation

The working spaces focused on Education for sustainable development (ESD) in various thematic areas: (Flying) Experts from EU and non-EU countries created and collected ideas with the participants in small groups.

Working Space 1:

Main question:

Pan-European high-level political process (Forest-Europe):

How should Forest ESD be integrated in the European Policy Forest Process?

Flying Experts

Christoph Rullmann, Managing Director, Forest Expert, SDW

Vera Steinberg, Forest Europe, Liaison Unit Bonn

Juliet Achieng, European Forest Institute and Forest Europe, Liaison Unit Bonn

Results of the discussion:

Forests play an important role for ESD. Also, Forest ESD can support the sustainable development goals. It is important to raise awareness for forests and their functions.

Education in forests and with the topic forest can foster competencies to create the future.

To raise awareness of the importance of Forest ESD it is necessary to speak with “one voice”.

We must direct our educational offers to all target groups. The activities should be offered continuously.

It is important to point out that there is a difference between forest education and Forest ESD. Forest education has so far only been seen as formation of forest related jobs like foresters and other green jobs. But Forest ESD is also education for the whole society, e. g. for all school children, to raise awareness for the importance, the protection and sustainable use of forests.

In short:

- Forest-based ESD should start at an early age and continue through one’s lifetime since there is no end to learning.
- New learning models are needed, which give pupils and students sufficient time to interact and learn about forests. The curriculum should also offer opportunities for more outdoor activities and other extracurricular activities.
- Forest-based ESD actions and initiatives should be streamlined to amplify the voices of the actors and increase impact.
- The policy process is perceived as slow and difficult to influence but proactiveness in communicating the needs for ESD is needed to ensure that the messages reach the policy makers. This can be achieved by e.g., producing summaries for policymakers and actively approach them.
- Always build on existing initiatives or political agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals and build partnerships across departments, ministries, states, regions, and countries.

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Working Space 2:

Main question:

Building partnerships: Steps and requirements to form Forest ESD initiatives (education landscapes, cooperation with institutions/organisations)?

Flying Experts

Jonas Schatz, University of Applied Sciences Eberswalde, PEM-Model (Pragmatic-Enlightened Model) for corporate forests

Tadeo Miguel Ramil Dequit, Escola de Capataces Forestais de Lourizán, Spain

Christian Schweihofen, Oberstufenkolleg Uni Bielefeld

Input Jonas Schatz: Approach: educate citizens AND involve them in plannings, Best Practice: Bürger:innenrat Stadtwald Biesenthal, PEM-Modell: Pragmatic-Enlightened Modell

Input Christian Schweihofen: 10 schools, 10 countries, 10 years – A European cross country assisted migration approach, using the Miyawaki-Method

Results of the discussion:

To build partnerships for Forest ESD the following steps and requirements are necessary:

Long-term planning: Start with a long-term perspective. Together with your partners, develop a strategy that considers not only short-term goals, but also long-term visions and results.

Clear goals and milestones: Define clear, measurable goals and milestones to be achieved over time. This makes it possible to track progress and focus on long-term results.

Partnership agreements: Create written partnership agreements or memoranda of understanding (MoUs) that clearly define the responsibilities, resources and commitments of all partners. These documents can serve as a reference point for long-term cooperation. Contracts and agreements between organisations (not only between persons).

Monitoring and evaluation: Implement a system to continuously monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of your partnership and initiatives. This data will allow adjustments to be made and success to be assessed.

Inclusive participation: All relevant stakeholders should be included in the planning and decision-making process. This creates a sense of belonging and promotes cooperation. Identify the group to know better how to involve the people, to do projects together.

Community Engagement: Actively involve the communities affected by your forest ESD initiatives in the decision-making process and implementation. Communities that identify with the initiatives are more likely to participate in them in the long term.

Adaptability: Be ready to respond to changes in the environment and in the needs of your target groups. A flexible approach allows you to adapt and make your initiatives sustainable.

Transparency and communication: Maintain open and transparent communication both internally and externally. Keep all stakeholders informed about developments and actively involve them. Diversify the communication channels. Establish a communication network at a local, national and EU-level.

Continuity of leadership: Ensure continuity in the leadership of your partnership. The change of leaders or key persons should not cause disruptions.

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Working Space 3:

Main question:

Sustainable Development Goal 4 - High quality education: What do we need in our country to provide high quality Forest ESD?

Flying Experts

Janet Martires, Kids-to-Forest Asia, Philippines

Eray Özdemir, General Directorate of Forestry, Türkiye

Esra Türkyılmaz, General Directorate of Forestry, Türkiye

Results of the discussion:

National differences create different prerequisites and conditions. Nevertheless, the educational mission applies across national borders. How can we support the development? How can professionalisation be improved?

In contrast to other countries, Germany already has a forest education certificate that includes a training standard. In addition, there are more resources for implementing forest ESD than in other countries.

What we have to foster in other countries:

- Methods to monitor and evaluate what has been done and achieved.
- Space, where people can share and exchange their experiences and talk about the challenges they face.
- Useful pedagogic/didactic materials.
- Resources for equipment/clothing for educators and children (e. g. for wet and cold weather).
- Regular meetings, training, (facilities).
- Support from government and high-level institutions (how can we reach these institutions?) so that forest ESD can be established and continue and not be tied to individuals or groups that may one day cease to exist.
- Basic education at university/college level to integrate ESD and forest ESD into the curriculum of students who are studying teaching/education.

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Working Space 4:

Main question:

Forest ESD as a modern profession:

What challenges do Forest ESD face today? How does Forest ESD become transformative education?

Flying Experts

Dr. Rolf Jucker, Silviva, Switzerland

Inga Feuser, Teachers for Future Germany

Results of the discussion:

With a special model from Switzerland (ellipse model) the group started to think about different action levels concerning the main question: First they started regarding themselves, then they went to the organization level, they continued with the country level and return to themselves. These are the ideas they collected:

1. We should shift values by long-term experiences in nature.
2. Cooperations with schools also by long-term collaborations
3. Self-efficacy works in a group (against the tendency to despair or deny the crisis)
4. In school implement outdoor classes regularly
5. Create participation and democratically structures in schools.
6. Check out your spheres of influence/find the brave ones!
7. Zusatz: Qualifikation, Supervisionsfähigkeit stärken und ermöglichen

The main outcome was: We need gather first in our organisations the brave ones!

They also talked about the concept of transformative ESD and resumed it with the following key words for what it stands for:

- Breaking planetary boundaries
- New hypercomplex reality (YUCA) → multiple crises
- Mental health crisis in young adults
- ESD: knowledge skills, values & agency for transformation action
- Empowerment necessary
- ESD in Action = citizenship in Action
- When is ESD truly transformative?
- Focused on economic & social structures (not individual behaviour)
- Emancipatory & power critical (hope in action, self-efficacy, action orientated)
- Change social norms and values
- Redefine relationships with human beings and the natural environment (participatory)
- Develop a vision of a better world

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Working Space 5:

Main question:

Communication in Forest ESD/target groups: Which target groups do we reach most and how can we reach all? How can we support action?

Flying Experts

Dr. Anke Blöbaum, Institute of Psychology, University of Magdeburg

Dr. Stefanie Steinebach, University of Applied Forest Sciences, Rottenburg

Results of the discussion:

The group used a special method to analyse target groups. They wanted to find out how they can motivate persons and what kind of action could fit for them.

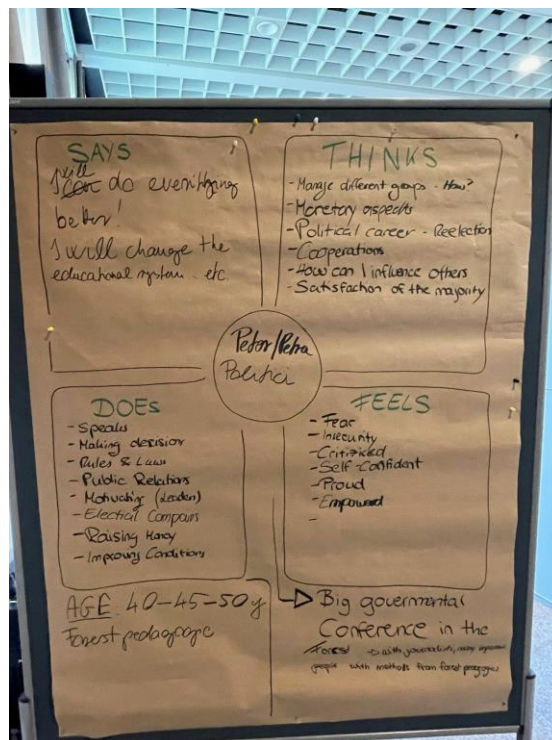
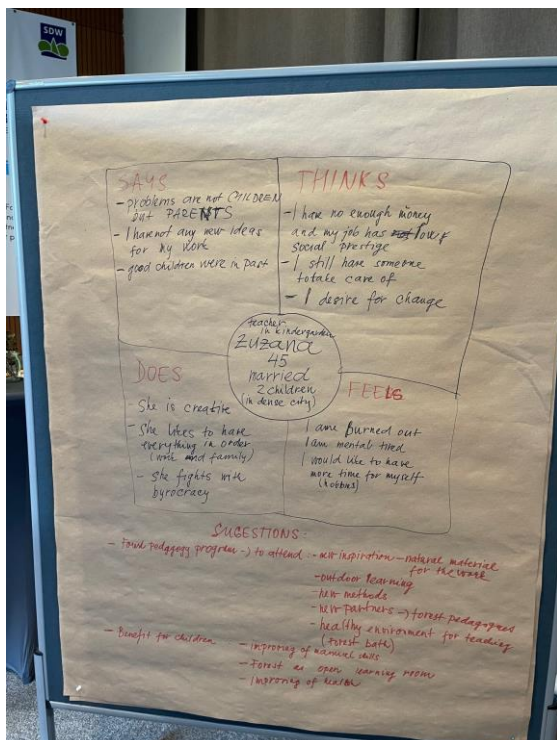
By using a fictitious person (avatar) as an example, they analysed the following:

How do the person feel, act, and what do they think. What are their living conditions? The matrix shows the four aspects they analysed: says, thinks, does, feels.

After this they develop activities, that fit with their living conditions and their life reality.

Avatar 1

Avatar 2



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Working Space 6:

Main Question:

Topics for Forest ESD: On which topics or themes should we focus for future activities?

Flying Experts

Ulrike Schuth, SDW Education Expert, FCN-Subgroup Forest Pedagogy

Ajša Alagić, Slovenian Forestry Institute Slovenia, FCN-Subgroup Forest Pedagogy

In this session the group collected the following topics in this field:

1. Conflicts in forests
 - Trying to understand different points of view
 - Find a balance for everyone as a task of forest pedagogues, supporting and moderation this process
 - Human and wildlife conflicts
 - Usage conflicts (Groundwater, Agriculture, etc.)
2. Forests and climate change
 - Urban forests
 - Forest and water
 - Forest health (for forests and for people)
 - Positive action for climate change/empowerment
 - Soil of forests (linked to the forest managing)
 - Extreme weather events (fire, wind, ice...)
 - Forests as victims and rescuers
3. Forest management (transfer this knowledge to children and adults in a proper manner)
 - How can we plant trees?
 - How do we cut trees?
 - Why do we cut trees?
 - Managing forests in a sustainable way (what does this mean for each country?)
 - Agroforestry
4. Lobbying
 - To bring Forest ESD more in schools (formal and non-formal together)
 - Influence forest politics (on local, regional, national level and worldwide)
5. Awake emotions
 - Arise this value in children
 - What can I learn from forests/nature for my own life?
 - Connection with forest through all senses (value, preserve)
6. Learning by exchange
 - Compare regions, learn from others, learn together, learn from mistakes/experiences
 - Good practices in biodiversity
 - Forest as a heritage
 - Reflect what is no longer working
7. Align to implement structure for quality forest pedagogues in every country, what do we want to convey?