

Title: Bridging the education–practice gap through the forthcoming Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Gender equality and diversity in forest-related sectors (forGEDi)

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Abstract

Bridging the education–practice gap through the forthcoming Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on gender equality and diversity in forest-related sectors

Gender equality and diversity are crucial elements of sustainability transitions that are gaining increasing attention (e.g., SDG No. 5). Despite the rising importance, gender equality and diversity remain underrepresented in forest curricula, partially due to gender insensitivity, limited number or complete lack of competent educators and trainers worldwide. Hence forestry professionals without capacities to assess, articulate, and address gender equality and social inequalities embedded in forestry and forest-related domains (e.g., climate change, bioeconomy, rural development). Such a serious mismatch compromises the relevance of forest science education and practices across the globe. The need for gender-sensitive forest curricula and training was also recently voiced through the International Forestry Students Association Open Letter.

The IUFRO Task Force on Gender Equality in Forestry strives to reduce that educational gap by developing the first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Gender Equality and Diversity in forest-related sectors (ForGEDi) under the sponsorship of SLU Global and the University of Padova. Since the COVID pandemic, training and education have changed with a drastic increase in online education which has shown to be as effective as face-to-face learning. This represents an opportunity to make the best competencies within the IUFRO Task Force openly available to a worldwide audience of forestry students and professionals.

Due to the module-based structure, ForGEDi materials will be easily adaptable to be integrated in universities' own curricula. The practical learning outcomes will also facilitate the use of materials by professionals in vocational education and training. The MOOC will be offered via the FutureLearn platform, in English and other languages* starting in March 2024.

Keywords: forestry education, innovative teaching, capacity building, Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals

**Depending on the resources and capacities available*

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