



Global Landscapes Forum

Paris, 5-6 December 2015

IFSA Report



IFSA Delegation - Photo Credit: Bente Oetken

IFSA Background

The International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA) is a global, student run network which connects tertiary level students in forest sciences. Along with promoting forestry education, one of IFSA's key roles is to facilitate youth attendance at forestry conferences, workshops and other events to encourage youth engagement with international forestry and policy processes.

2015 Global Landscapes Forum

The 2015 [Global Landscapes Forum](#) (GLF) was held across two days, December 5 and 6, in Paris, France. Coordinated by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)—one of IFSA's formal partners—in collaboration with other international organisations including the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Program, and the United Nations Development Programme, the event ran alongside the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21). As part of CIFOR's effort to involve youth in the 2015 Global Landscapes Forum, IFSA was invited to send a formal delegation of 50 IFSA members.

As the largest side event to COP21, the GLF brought together thousands of individuals and organisations to share dialogue and advocacy for integrated landscape issues relevant to international agreements on climate change and sustainable development. Overall it was attended by more than 3,200 participants from 135 different countries, including 19 Ministers and Heads of State, and 148 organisations.

Since the first forum in 2013, the GLF has been a strong supporter of the propagation of youth knowledge and innovation, and recognises the importance of active youth participation in international conferences and policy processes. There is increasing pressure for the presence and voice of youth to be heard in international discussions and policy development to provide innovative solutions to the challenges we face today. GLF provides an opportunity to gather the skills necessary to actively facilitate this engagement.

A component of this engagement included the successful [Youth in Landscapes Initiative](#) - a partnership between YPARD (Young Professionals for Agricultural Development), GAEA (the Global Agroecology Alliance) and IFSA. Through this initiative, these three global youth organisations came together to design and implement an inspiring youth program at GLF 2015, encompassing leadership and challenge based workshops and sessions, a youth-professional mentoring program, and promotion of youth leadership roles during the forum's sessions.

The IFSA delegation to GLF 2015 engaged 52 bright minded young people and provided them with an opportunity to share their ideas, gather new ones and build their networks. This report provides a summary of our delegations engagement with the GLF 2015 event.

IFSA Participation

With significant interest in the 2015 GLF program, IFSA was able to attract a high number of applicants for its official delegation. Thanks to IFSA's informal status as an Implementing Partner of the GLF, IFSA was granted 50 fully subsidised registration places. Fortunately IFSA was able to send a total of 52 official delegates. While many of our participants came from within Europe, we had many from Africa, North and South America, Asia and Australia!

A number of IFSA delegates were actively involved across multiple initiatives or took on additional leadership roles while in Paris. These included 10 members of IFSA's official COP21 delegation which took place either side of GLF, eight 'Youth Innovators' taking part in the Youth in Landscapes Initiative Landscape Challenge workshop which took place in the week leading up to GLF, and more than half of our GLF delegation assisting in the Social Space booth through the event. On an individual level, IFSA delegates included:

- Dylan Goff and Mayte Lopez – REDD+ Thematic Pavilion
- Olivia Sánchez Badini – Master of Ceremonies for the opening and closing plenaries
- Salina Abraham – Speaker and panellist during the closing plenary
- Jesse Way, Fanny Olsthoorn, Anna Stemberger, Alexandra Jewel Rosas, Salina Abraham, Karen Veridiano, Novia Fadhilla Sari, Olivier Rousselle – Participated in Landscape Challenge workshop
- Jesse Way and Karen Veridiano – Speakers/pitchers during the youth dragon's den session
- Olivier Rousselle and Simeon Max – Participated in the mentoring program.

This is only a small snapshot of the IFSA and youth participation in GLF, but it does demonstrate the active participation and the role of youth in landscape management.



Social Space Booth – Photo Credit: Simon Lhoest

Discussions forums and plenaries

The discussion forums were a key attraction for our delegates, and they definitely didn't disappoint. These forums, which ranged from plenaries to complex subject matter discussions, provided participants with the opportunity to learn about the latest trends and key issues in forest and landscape management and to identify key contacts for future engagement.

Many of our delegates reported that these discussions were inspiring, and this was perhaps a result of the diversity of the topics, presenters and the broader audience. Within these sessions we had a number of IFSA delegates deliver inspiring presentations to audiences from around the world. Three notable highlights included:

1. [Andrea Vasquez](#) – Discussing the definition of development and drew on examples from the Amazon to unpack various assumptions underlying existing definitions.
2. [Youth dragon's den](#) – Bringing together 50 youth professionals to pitch solutions for five landscape challenges.
3. [Salina Abraham](#) – Asked to speak at the closing plenary session, Salina delivers a passionate speech to encourage all stakeholders to integrate youth in discussions but also provide nurture them in their journey.



Salina Abraham delivering her closing plenary speech - Photo Credit: Simon Lhoest

Networking

Each of our delegates identified networking as a key highlight from their time at the 2015 GLF. The Pavilion area and social networking booth provided all participants an opportunity to meet new and existing faces including fellow IFSA members, staff from participating organisations, country officials and, in a few instances, negotiators from COP21.

These opportunities allowed participants to more intimately discuss the opportunities which GLF can afford, the role of forests in future demands of climate change and how greater youth involvement can be facilitated. This provided delegates with a chance to showcase their knowledge and ideas, to upsell the capacity for youth to increase their engagement in the discussion. The discussion for addressing the global landscape challenges, in mitigation and adaptation on climate change, and for working to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Youth session

A number of our delegates took part in the Youth in Landscapes Initiative, which culminated in a [dragon's den session](#) during the GLF program. Overall there were 50 young professionals in the Youth in Landscapes initiative (separate from the IFSA delegation) who came together to provide real world solutions to tackle the following landscape challenges:

- Measuring success
- Education
- Landscape restoration
- Rights and tenure
- Finance and Trade

IFSA took on a key role in developing and implementing this youth program, and was an official youth partner. There was strong IFSA representation (past and present) on the youth steering committee which included: Sarah Dickson-Hoyle (former LO CIFOR and current head of Mentorship Sub-commission), Natalia Cisneros (Vice President), Florent Kaiser (former President), Sekar Ayu Woro Yunita (Asia Pacific RR), Gabrielle Schittecatte (Councillor) as well as representatives from YPARD, GAEA and other youth leaders.

Over several months, the parameters for this initiative were designed and tested before kicking off with the week-long Landscape Challenge workshop prior to GLF. This culminated in an hour and a half dragon's den session where the teams presented their idea to address their landscape challenge, and hear responses from key stakeholders.

This approach was highly successful, with IFSA delegates supportive of the approach and eager to secure participation in similar sessions in 2016. Raising the profile of IFSA and broader youth perspectives, this event provided a key step in ensuring continued youth engagement for future events.

Delegate feedback

Following the completion of the 2015 GLF, it was important for us to consider feedback from our delegates. Feedback is important in understanding the strengths and weaknesses in both the organisation of the delegation and the event itself.

The feedback for the event as a whole was very positive, and ultimately demonstrates a deep interest and understanding from our delegates in the global landscape challenges we face.

What key sessions did you attend at GLF? What did you learn?

IFSA's strong partnership and involvement with GLF allows our participants to engage with areas they feel passionate about. In these two separate comments, participants found great value in the *Pixel perfection for carbon detection* presentation, and for two completely different reasons.

'Two sessions were particularly interesting for me and in relation with my PhD Thesis; "*Managing and restoring natural tropical forests – Ensuring a sustainable flow of benefits for people in the context of global change*" and "*Pixel perfection for carbon detection – How technologies and communities can curb global emissions from land-use change*". I learnt during those sessions important key concepts linked my PhD focusing on ecosystem services assessment in African tropical forests.

'I really enjoyed a session called: *Pixel perfection for carbon detection: How technologies and communities can curb global emissions from land-use change*. It was very informative in terms of the introduction of remote sensing methods in carbon detection, especially recited by Matthew Hansen. Additionally this session included, as in person of Abdon-Nababan, an insight on the (potential) role of indigenous people in tropical forest monitoring.'

One through key concept linkages to their PhD studies, and the other through matters close to home by way of indigenous involvement in land management and the implementation of technology.

For others it wasn't about just identifying key challenges or initiatives which they are already aware of, but rather exposure to a greater range of activities which they could not have previously imagined:

'The most valuable thing I learnt was that there are much more going on than we are accustomed to think. There are a lot of projects going on at the same time throughout the world and there are many stakeholders involved.'

What were your thoughts on the IFSA/youth presence and our role at GLF?

The general feedback was one of positivity towards youth engagement at the event, and this was reiterated by strong engagement in presentations (such as Salina's speech during the closing keynote) and the youth dragon's den event. Broadly there were concerns that the overall length of the event limited opportunities for even greater engagement, but this perhaps provides greater avenues for post-event engagement with contacts.

Some delegates suggested that more opportunities for meaningful engagement with the event could have been offered (i.e. outside of the dragon's den event). This is encouraging to hear, as it demonstrates the hunger for youth to engage in the conversation.

How can we improve the experience for IFSA delegates, and broader youth participants, at future events?

While many of the delegates identified pre-GLF communications and the initial briefing on the eve of the event as beneficial, others identified areas for improvement. These included better pre-briefing materials surrounding the role of CIFOR, the landscape challenges and IFSA's role at the event, as well as better coordination of the initial briefing to familiarise themselves with the IFSA delegation.

Outcomes

The capacity for youth to actively participate in and contribute to international forestry and policy processes is becoming clearer, as various stakeholders identify the opportunities for greater engagement. The call has been put out to engage the youth in these processes, but this is to be

supported by knowledge and information sharing to build the capacity of youth to provide meaningful dialogue. The 52 members of the IFSA delegation have broadened their knowledge and have planted the seeds with new contacts for greater engagement in the future.

IFSA continues to strengthen our meaningful partnerships, such as that with CIFOR which afforded this opportunity, and it is through these that youth will gain their opportunity to put forward their case and earn their engagement in these fora. The youth dragon's den session showed that there is capacity for youth to provide real solutions to real challenges, and the engagement in this session reinforced the benefit of holding such events. It is important to build upon these opportunities to engage across a raft of international fora, year round, to build our profile, demonstrate our skillset and showcase our willingness to engage and, most importantly, learn.

Salina's closing keynote provided an excellent summary of these opportunities and challenges which youth face. But perhaps most importantly, it shows that the door is already open for greater engagement. As such it is imperative that we ensure we come better prepared for these events, to allow all members of the delegation to engage and promote the values for which IFSA stands for. This may require refinements in the way we prepare for such delegations, including identification of the outcomes we want for ourselves and our supporters.

The conclusion of the [2015 GLF Outcome Statement](#) states:

'The global community – made up of civil servants, politicians, teachers, NGO workers, farmers, researchers, retailers, manufacturers, lawyers, consumers and many more – must look for opportunities to contribute to something greater.'

In 2016, we need to ensure students and youth are included in that statement.



Olivia Sánchez Badini at the GLF Social Space - Photo Credit: Simon Lhoest