



Introducing Just Forests



We are the ECO Race - it's a community affair

**i**nteractions  
nterconnections  
mplications

Special Edition (with  
historical facts)  
to mark the launch of  
Just Forests  
first newsletter

April 2025

An action-orientated proposal for  
**Community Groups**

# Thank you for downloading



**RIO-Race Is On - It's a Community Affair**

**P.S.** Please bin and replace any previous versions of this presentation you may have with this **Special Edition**

Great consideration was given to deciding on what to call this project/program. I wanted to make it meaningful and relevant to today's most urgent challenges. There are so many distractions around us it's very difficult to catch people's attention. And for many, while they do care and care very much about social, environmental and human rights matters, they often feel overwhelmed and not sure where to start.

# A Community Affair gift from Just Forests

After more than 30 years working in the development education (DE) sector in Ireland, I have decided to hand over all of Just Forests' education resources to any Community Group in Ireland who wishes to carry on the work I started in 1989.

If, after reading this presentation, you feel your Community Group may be interested in inheriting my education resources and that your Community Group would definitely continue the work, please get in touch - but not before my 76<sup>th</sup> birthday on 19 August 2025.

After that date (19 August 2025) I will meet with any Community Group that expresses an interest.



# RACE - what's in a word?

The word 'race' is used throughout this presentation to refer to the 'human race' as a species. The word race also implies **urgency** or **speed** at which we must **act**.

**Race** – is a categorization of **humans** based on shared physical or social qualities into groups generally viewed as distinct within a given society.

**Race** – a situation in which individuals or groups compete to be first to achieve a particular objective: the race for nuclear power.

The word **RACE** is also used to encourage and support **Radical Active Community Engagement** in issues affecting **all life on Earth**.

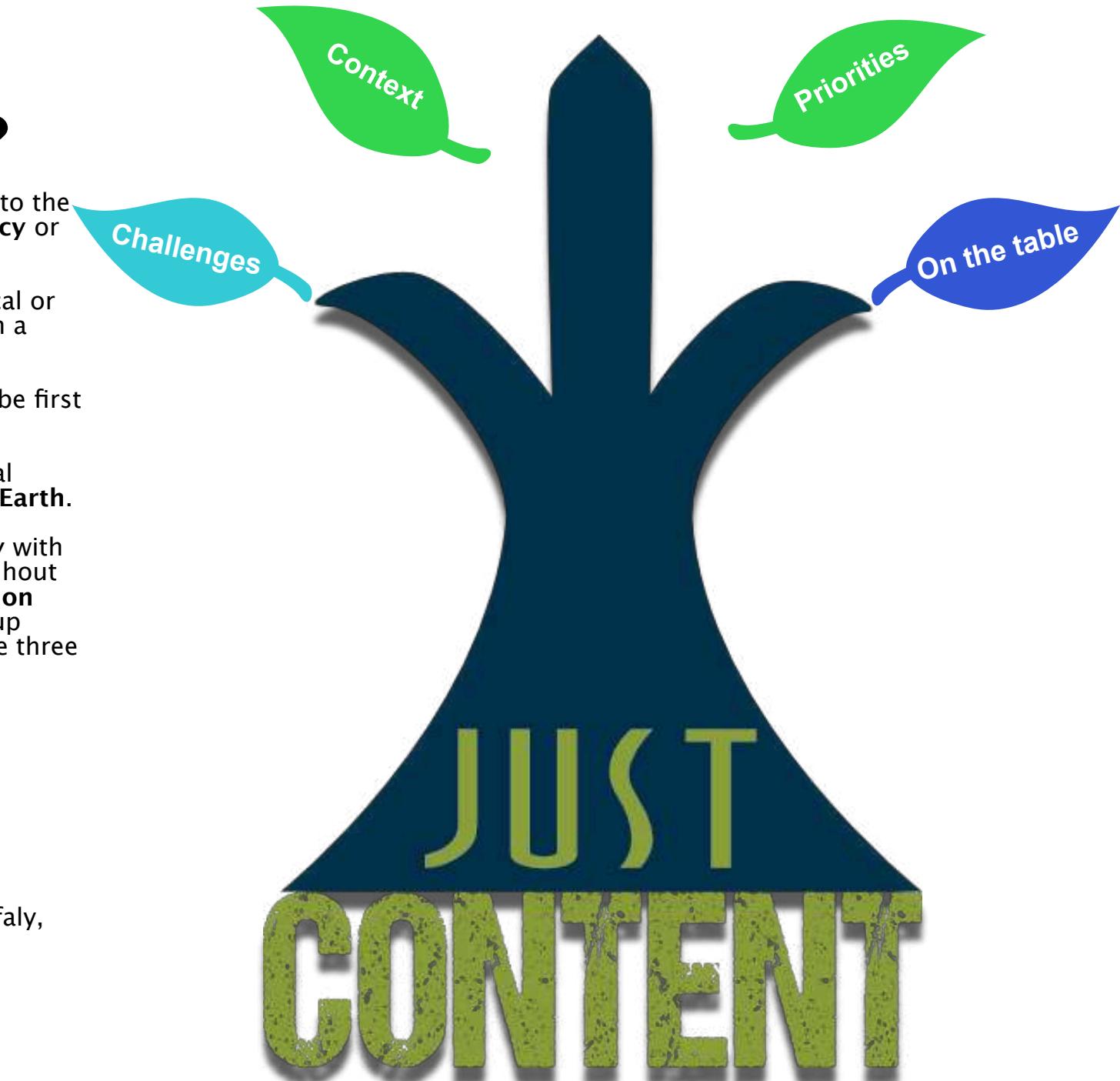
**RIO** is an acronym for **Race Is On**. It emphasizes the **urgency** with which we as a race of **people** must **act**. It is also used throughout this presentation to remind us of the first **World Conference on the Environment** held in Stockholm in 1972 and the follow-up 'Earth Summit' held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 – a mere three years after Just Forests was born.

In November 2025 the UN will host **COP30** in Bélem, Brazil.

## Radical Active Community Engagement

**RIO – Race Is On Series** is produced by:  
Just Forests, Ringfort Workshop, Rathcobicana, Rhode, Co. Offaly,  
R35X527, Ireland.

Website: <https://justforestsnewsletter.org>  
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**Context**  
**Priorities**  
**Challenges**  
**On the table**

# Context

**We're not going to have 'no poverty' and 'zero hunger' until we take Climate Action. We're not going to have an abundance of 'life on land' and 'under water' until we take Climate Action.**

**We're not going to have a bountiful, hospitable and livable planet until we take Climate Action. We're not going to have 'peace' until we take Climate Action.**

On Monday 20 January 2025, Donald Trump, on the first day of his second presidency, declared a 'national energy emergency' in the United States as an excuse to appease his wealthy fossil fuel corporation supporters—like Texaco/Chevron. He has vowed to 'unleash' oil and gas drilling in Alaska, cut back on climate rules and overturn emissions standards.

Universities, the Dócháis Network of International Development Agencies and the broader Community Groups sector, must challenge the mindset that says it's okay to impose further suffering and destruction on nature and on those who have least contributed to climate change, but who will suffer the most because of Trump's policies.

Why? Because we're not going to have 'no poverty' and 'zero hunger' until we take Climate Action. We're not going to have an abundance of 'life on land' and 'under water' until we take Climate Action.

## Context

We're not going to have a bountiful, hospitable and livable planet until we take Climate Action. We're not going to have 'peace' until we take Climate Action.

All my life, I have been committed to the responsible management and conservation of our forests. Not just here in Ireland but across the globe.

Stewardship. It's a word I like. It's about management, protection. Care too. Care for trees. Care for the forests. Care for the people of the forests.

Stewardship. A good word. Both noun and verb. One that frames what I do and how I do it. We, all of us, are but stewards of the natural world, or ought to be. These are our lungs. The air that we breathe.

Sadly, as we all know, that is not always the case. Wanton waste and destructive practices have been the hallmark of the way in which the bulk forests have been and are treated. It is the dominant economic imperative. Slash and burn. Corporate burning for short-term gain. Burning for profit. Not that all those who engage in such practices are to blame. The poor and dispossessed of the world are often left with no choice. No blame rests here.

Over the years, I have thought a lot about these things. Privately and publicly. And over the years, I have become a public advocate for wood. For the forests of the world. For the people of the forests of the world. In 1989, I founded Just Forests, an advocacy initiative that speaks to hands, hearts and minds.

## Priorities

## Challenges

## On the table

I take a 'livelihood' approach to societies dependance on forests by using 'wood' the basic raw material of my livelihood as a furniture maker as the 'hook' for my activism.

This is my political work. Social Justice in a time of climate emergency. I am personally experiencing the effects of that same climate emergency. Storm Éowyn –a 'status red' storm with gusts of 130km/hr is raging around me as I write, leaving 715,000 farms,homes, businesses without electricity including my own.

It is easy to be silent. Turn a blind eye. For me that isn't an option. It's like an itch. Scratching away. This is who I am. God knows I do try but I just can't leave things be.

In November 2025, the UN Conference of the Parties (COP 30) will take place in Belem, Brazil. It is expected to draw scores of world leaders 'though not Donald Trump', according to an article in The Guardian on Tuesday 21 January 'who soon after his inauguration ordered the US's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement.'

In the lead up to COP 30 I have decided to undertake a series of public vigils to highlight the urgency of the need to deal with the climate crises.

So, I hope some members of your community will join me in my series of [monthly vigils at Barrington's Pier](#) in Limerick City leading up to COP 30.

Tom Roche – Founder Just Forests.

January 24 2025

# RIO - a program for people who want...

R adical A ctive C ommunity E ngagement



**“Nobody knows everything, everyone  
knows something, and all knowledge  
resides in humanity!”**

From: Pierre Lévy's concept of collective intelligence

Rooted in meaningful on the ground Activism

# What is ECO Race 2030?

**ECORace2030** is Just Forests new program of activities where Head, Heart and Hands connects to family, community, craftsmanship, stewardship and global citizenship.

**ECORace2030** brings the **Local to the Global** and the **Global to the Local** through a series of hands-on workshops and interactive on-line resources.

Since our founding in Tullamore in 1989, Just Forests has always taken a practical common-sense approach to **Development Education** (DE), **Education for Sustainable Development** (ESD) and **Global Citizenship Education** (GCE).

We examine how our actions at a **local level** can have far reaching impacts at the **global level**. Our daily **interactions** locally are not without **interconnections** and **implications**.

**ECORace2030** also brings the Global Goals – the United Nations ‘blueprint for a just and sustainable world’ to life in a **new and imaginative way**.

**ECO RACE 2030 has four fundamental concepts.**

**1:** ECOlogy considers organisms at the individual, population, community, ecosystem, and biosphere level – we are organisms' dependent on each other and our relationship to our physical surroundings.

**2:** the letters **ECO** are used here as an acronym for **educate, cooperate and outcomes**

**3:** the word ‘**race**’ is used here to refer to the ‘**human race**’ as a species. The word **race** also implies **urgency or speed** at which we must act.

**4:** the date is of utmost importance. **2030** is set by many as the finish line.



# What is Geoliteracy?

**'Geoliteracy is the ability to use geographic understanding and reasoning to make decisions.'**

**Whether we are making decisions about where to live, what precautions to take for natural hazards, or understanding human and natural systems, we are all called upon to make decisions that require geoliteracy throughout our lives.**

**The ultimate goal of geoliteracy is to facilitate students participation in decision making through the use of geographic understanding and reasoning.'**

Dr. Anne Dolan, B Ed, MA, HDip Mary Immaculate College (UL) , Limerick. (Adult and Continuing Education) (NU) & Ed D (Sheffield Hallam University). [Profile](#)



School pupils participate in one of Just Forests **Wood of Life** workshops in Mullingar Public Library. The workshops help pupils to develop knowledge and understanding about just how dependent Ireland is on the wider world for timber.

Through the **Wood of Life** workshops, students get a better understanding of the **interactions**, **interconnections** and **implications** of Ireland's role in such international trade. Pupils become more **geographically literate** through their participation in the **Wood of Life** Workshops.



# You think Just Forests is just about trees?

Right? Wrong. Think again!

The icons used in the design of Just Forests logo depicts the many values and perspectives associated with forests. Forests provide shelter to people and habitat to biodiversity; are a source of food, medicine and clean water; and play a vital role in maintaining a stable global climate and environment. For billions of people, like myself, they are a source of livelihood. All of these elements taken together reinforce the message that forests are vital to the survival and well-being of people everywhere, all 8.1 billion of us.

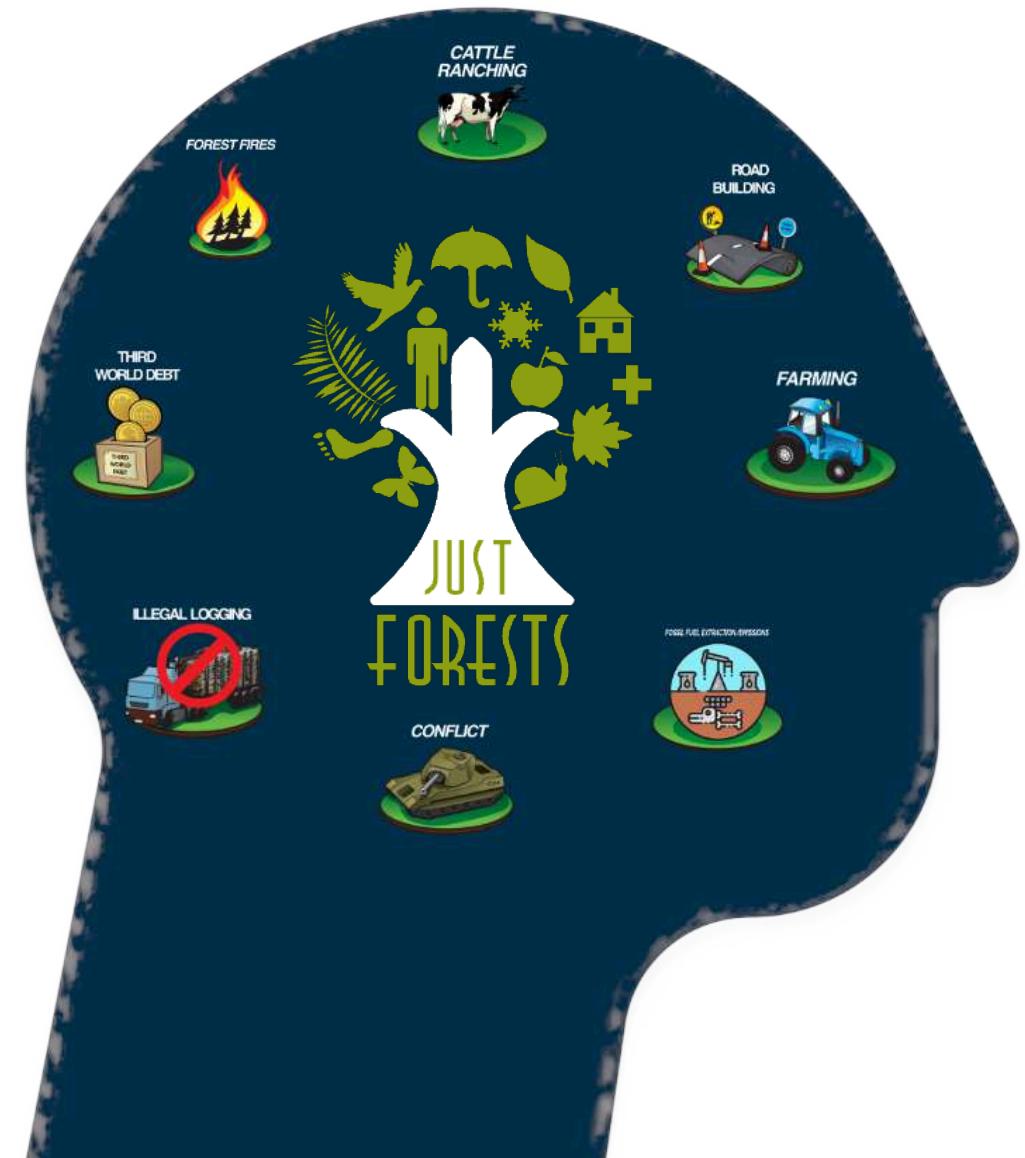
Just Forests is all about people, about families. People just like you and me. About people like New York Attorney and human rights defender Steven Donziger. He won a major court case on behalf of 30,000 small-scale farmers in the Ecuadorian Amazon, who had their lives, their children's lives and their livelihoods destroyed by Texaco - the big oil corporation. Yes, the one that sponsors the 'Texaco Children's Art Competition' here in Ireland – now it's 71st year.

Just Forests is about places - like the tropical, temperate and boreal regions of the world and the goods and services we get from forests - like timber for construction, tone-woods for our beautiful musical instruments, medicinal plants that cure cancers, places for recreational activities, fresh water, wildlife and oxygen.

Yes, Just Forests is about Forests - our vital life support systems. About the families who live in forests and the families who don't live in forests – but are equally dependant on them for vital services.

Since 1989, Just Forests has been steeped in development education and on-the-ground activism relating to forests and the people who live in and derive their livelihoods from forests – highly contentious and often very challenging and controversial issues.

People just like you and me depend on the world's forests just as much as the tribal people of west and central Africa or the Americas. So, let's enter the RACE and help ourselves by helping them. It's a community affair.





# Context Priorities Challenges On the table



# Urgent priorities

- First, a drastic cut in emissions since current policies are leading us to an earth-scorching three-degree temperature rise.

“I urge countries to speed up their net zero timelines, to get there as close as possible to 2040 in developed countries and 2050 in emerging economies.”

- Second, acceleration towards a just, equitable transition to renewables, since a burning planet cannot be saved with a firehose of fossil fuels.

“The 1.5-degree limit is only possible if we ultimately stop burning all fossil fuels. Not reduce. Not abate. Phase out – with a clear timeframe aligned with 1.5 degrees.”

- Third, fulfillment of the long overdue promise of climate justice in an unequal and divided world – a surge in finance, including for adaptation and loss and damage.



“We are miles from the goals of the Paris Agreement – and minutes to midnight for the 1.5-degree limit.”

Earth’s vital signs are failing and to prevent planetary crash and burn, “we need...cooperation and political will”, UN Secretary General António Guterres said on Friday 1st December 2023, challenging world leaders gathered in Dubai for COP28 to show real global climate leadership.

**He went on to say, humanity’s fate is hanging in the balance. “This is a sickness only you, global leaders, can cure,” he said, calling on the leaders to end the world’s dependence on fossil fuels and to fulfil the long overdue promise for climate justice.**

Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144212>



## Context

## Priorities

## Challenges

## On the table

October 2009 - Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General:

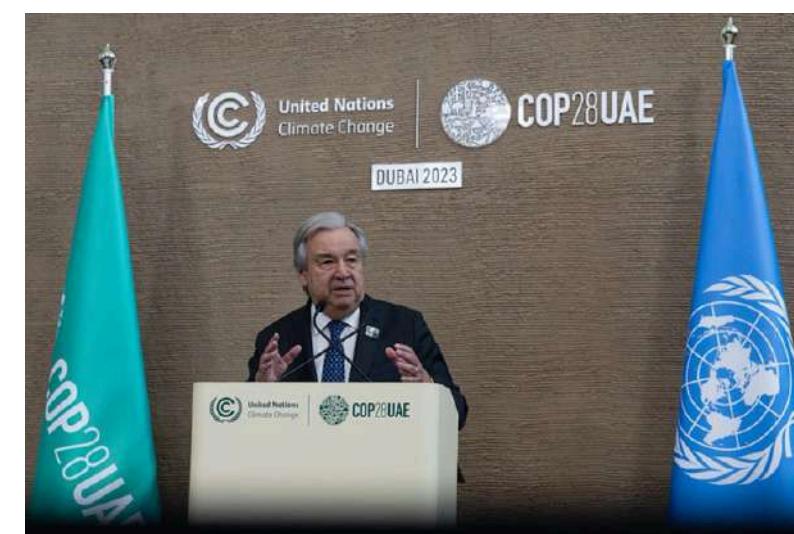
"The nations of the world will gather to seal a deal on climate change. That will take an Olympian effort. We are all running a race against time. But when it comes to fighting for our shared global goals -for a world that is cleaner, healthier, more peaceful, more sustainable and more prosperous -I will sprint like an Olympian. I will ski the steepest trail.

**I will run and run and never stop until we reach the finish line.**

December 2010 - Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General:

"Business as usual **cannot be tolerated**, for it would condemn millions -no, billions -billions of children, women, and men around the world to shrinking horizons, and smaller futures.

**This is a marathon race, not a sprint.** Climate change was not created overnight. It will not be solved overnight either."



Rooted in 'meaningful on the ground' Activism

March 2023 - Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General:

The world faces complex, **interlinked crises** across climate, energy, pollution, biodiversity, gender equality, human rights, finance, and costs of living.

**In the sprint to 2030**, we urge all ODA providers to meet their commitments.

January 2024 - Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General:

"Across the globe, democracy is **eroding**; populism and extremism are increasing; our **climate is heating**; and **trust in institutions** of all kinds is **breaking down**. The refusal to accept the two-state solution for Israel and Palestinians, and the denial of the right to statehood to the Palestinian people, are unacceptable.

**It is critical to uphold the basic human rights** of every person, regardless of background, **race**, religion, sexual orientation, or political opinion."

**‘Despite 30 years of international climate negotiations, climate destabilisation is threatening the livelihoods of billions of people, and dangerous climate disruptions are becoming more frequent and extreme all around the world.**

**The COP-29 meeting in Azerbaijan demonstrates yet again the ineffectiveness of our collective efforts to respond to the devastating injustices of the climate crisis. Another year, another COP where those profiting from fossil fuels continue to prevent transformative change.’**



Jennie C. Stephens,  
Maynooth University

Jennie C. Stephens is professor of climate justice at Maynooth University in Ireland and professor of sustainability science and policy at Northeastern University in the US, and author of **Climate Justice and the University: Shaping a Hopeful Future for All.**

[MORE...](#)

During a plenary session at the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, on Monday (Dec. 11), Brazil secured unanimous support to host COP30, scheduled for November 10-21, 2025. The selected city for this significant global event is Belém, the capital of the state of Pará.



**“Holding COP 30 in the heart of the forest is a powerful reminder of our responsibility to keep the planet within our 1.5°C target”**

Marina Silva, Minister for the Environment and Climate Change

**Stop  
SLAPP**

**S trategic  
L awsuits  
A gainst  
P ublic  
P articipation**



# What is a SLAPP? SLAPP = Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation

SLAPPs are Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation.

These damaging suits chill free speech and healthy debate by targeting those who communicate with their government or speak out on issues of public interest.

**SLAPPs** are used to silence and harass critics by forcing them to spend money to defend these baseless suits. **SLAPP** filers don't go to court to seek justice. Rather, **SLAPPs** are intended to intimidate those who disagree with them or their activities by draining the target's financial resources.

**SLAPPs** are effective because even a meritless lawsuit can take years and many thousands of dollars to defend. To end or prevent a **SLAPP**, those who speak out on issues of public interest frequently agree to muzzle themselves, apologize, or "correct" statements.

<https://anti-slapp.org/what-is-a-slapp>

**SLAPPs** are used by those in **positions of power** who want to **silence** and disturb key-elements of **democracy**, such as **journalism** and **advocacy**.

By filing multiple lawsuits against critical voices, they waste time and resources.

<https://www.thejournal.ie/eu-passes-anti-slapp-legislation-6311411-Feb2024/>

While Texaco owners Chevron  
want to silence Steven Donziger,  
a much larger corporate-funded-  
travesty of justice in happening  
that will have dreadful effects on  
our children, wildlife and future  
generations – the oil industry  
wants to kill off GREENPEACE.

<https://greenpeaceontrial.org>

**GLOBAL LIVESTREAM**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 13th, 7PM ET**

[www.youtube.com/@donzigeronjustice](https://www.youtube.com/@donzigeronjustice) 

**GREENPEACE  
ON TRIAL**

The independent trial monitoring team will lead a discussion about the most recent attack by Big Oil on Indigenous peoples and the climate movement.



MARTY GARBUS / NATALI SEGOMIA / STEVEN DONZIGER / AYISHA SIDDQI  
*Plus: Paul Paz y Miño / Jeanne Mirer... and more*

This is the website for the attorneys who are independently monitoring the trial in *Energy Transfer v. Greenpeace* for due process violations and abuses of power. The trial started February 24 in state court in North Dakota and is expected to last until the end of March.

Greenpeace has alleged that Energy Transfer's \$300 million claim against the environmental group is a SLAPP harassment effort designed to silence the organization and weaken the entire climate justice movement. The rights of free speech and fair trial are at stake - not just for Greenpeace, but for all advocates regardless of political orientation. Please come here for regular updates.

Click here... <https://www.trialmonitors.org>

See also: Donziger on Justice - <https://www.youtube.com/@donzigeronjustice>



**'By driving information out of the public domain, SLAPPs make it extremely difficult to hold power to account.**

**Put simply, SLAPPs weaponise the law in order to harass and punish those speaking out in the public interest.**

**They threaten not only our freedom of information, but our human rights, our rule of law, and our democracies.'**

[Download Report](#)



# Context Priorities Challenges On the table



A dense, colorful word cloud centered around environmental and social issues. The words are arranged in a grid-like structure, with some words appearing multiple times in different colors. The colors used include green, red, blue, yellow, orange, and purple. The words include: FOSSIL FUELS, CLIMATE, RACE, GREEN WASHING, LIFE ON LAND, CLEAN WATER, ZOONOSIS, LAND DEGRADATION, RED MEAT, FRESH AIR, NO POVERTY, ZERO HUNGER, LIFE BELOW WATER, TRANSITION, RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION, INVESTMENTS, DECENT WORK, QUALITY EDUCATION, BIODIVERSITY, BIOMASS, EMISSIONS, ADAPTATION, and SLAPP. The word 'SLAPP' is at the top right, and 'ADAPTATION' is at the bottom right.

**Starting in 2025 being a SMART Educator is going to have to be a Community-wide affair...**



**SMART**



# Your mission is...

Amid the worsening climate crisis and intensifying inequities, higher education can play a powerful role in addressing humanity's intersecting crises.

Higher education institutions hold untapped potential to advance social justice and reduce climate injustices.

However, universities are not yet structured to accelerate social change for the public good.

In Climate Justice and the University, [Jennie C. Stephens](#) reimagines the potential of higher education to advance human well-being and promote ecological health.



## Why do we need activists?

Activism has played a major role in ending slavery, challenging dictatorships, protecting workers from exploitation, protecting the environment, promoting equality for women, opposing racism, and many other important issues.

Today we need to protect community activists and human rights defenders like Steven Donziger and the forest communities he represents from corporations like Texaco/Chevron who are hell bent on criminalising those dedicated to protection of our human rights and our precious environment.



1

# Stir Up Everyone in your community

**Community groups will work to create an unstoppable force - through our collective actions linked to the Global Goals.**

**We will identify risks to make sure no family or individual is left behind.**

**This means that each of us must take action - individually and collectively, locally, regionally and globally.**



2

# Insist on urgency and ambition

**Families, supported by their local Community groups must be at the forefront to win the race against climate change, stop ecosystem destruction, prevent ecocide, end extreme poverty and conquer injustice and gender inequality.**

**Collectively, families must hold our politicians to account and point to what is possible when our actions deliver results.**



3

# Stop ‘false’ truths and turn ideas into solutions

**Families, must put a stop to corporate  
‘greenwashing’ and SLAPPs so that their children  
can confidently voice their opinions when something  
is wrong.**

**Community groups will drive sustainable innovation,  
truly green financial investments and technology –  
while making space in our towns, villages and cities  
for young people to lead and thrive.**



4

# Support the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

**The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier our planet and its people.**

**The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent - oceans and forests. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction. It will only succeed if everyone in the community plays a part.

**Community groups, with the support of local families, will do all we can to prevent, halt and reverse the loss of nature.**



5

## Act on the science

**The government acted swiftly on the financial crises of 2008 and again on the COVID pandemic crises in 2019.**

**Community groups must insist that our political and corporate leaders listen to and act upon the science of the Global Assessment Report on '*Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*' (IPBES Report) *launched in May 2019***

**Families will be open to discuss best practice in all things affecting their consumerist habits with particular emphasis on fairly-traded goods and services that support their **livelihoods**.**



# Slide# references

1  
2  
3  
4  
5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkaxUblCGz0>

<https://www.politico.eu/article/un-secretary-general-antonio-guterres-climate-ambition-summit/>

<https://spoarts.ie/download-spoarts-wash/>

<https://www.decadeonrestoration.org>

<https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment>



## Ask yourself why?

Community groups must ask the question why? Ireland is a wealthy country. We are ranked as the sixth richest country in the world in 2022 with a GDP per-capita of \$85,267.

On the other hand Ecuador only has a 'projected' GDP per capita of \$14,304 in 2023.

So, we need to ask ourselves why does a company like Texaco want to sponsor a children's art competition and give our sports clubs money?

They didn't ask the communities, sports clubs or the schools in Ecuador's Amazon basin if they wanted sponsorship for sport or children's art competitions. Would it not have made more sense if they did considering the vast amounts of oil Texaco took out of Ecuador and the tragic loss of life and ecological mess they left behind?

They didn't write to sports clubs in Ecuador and ask them if they needed money to upgrade their meagre sports facilities. No. Instead, Texaco fled Ecuador after a court found them guilty of gross pollution and human rights violations. No, instead, Texaco tell us that they want to share their apparent generosity with the wealthy people of Ireland. They want us to think they are a good community corporation with our best interest at heart. The opposite is actually closer to the truth.

Irresponsible businesses, including fossil fuel companies like Texaco, are driving catastrophic climate change, human rights abuse as well as the destruction of climate-critical tropical forests and the communities and biodiversity that rely on them.

They must be challenged.

On the next page, Irish Times journalist and founder of Pocket Forests, Catherine Cleary, asks why a fossil fuel company is allowed to sponsor a children's art competition.



Irishtimes.com Saturday/Sunday, May 6/7, 2023

<http://epaperirishtimes.com/irishtimes/3036/>

## Sustainability

# Why is an oil company sponsoring a high-profile children's art competition?

**Game Changers**  
**Catherine Cleary**



**Offaly man and woodworker Tom Roche** is a long-standing activist. He founded Just Forests in 1989, well before the idea of a social enterprise was born. Stewardship is a word that he thinks about a lot, and his kinship with fellow woodworkers wherever there are forests. We should be stewards not extractors.

He set his sights on the Texaco Children's Art Competition a number of years ago. Why is a fossil fuel company allowed to sponsor such a high-profile children's art competition, he asked? The competition has produced dazzling art. I have been that parent marvelling at the

talent of children the same ages as mine where our own efforts were still at the finger-painting stage.

Longevity has grown like moss over what we think of as an Irish institution, 69 years on the go. There's nothing wrong with celebrating talented young artists. But the real winner every year has been the Texaco oil brand and its US parent company Chevron.

Working with documentary maker Peadar King and human rights activist Colm Regan last month, Roche launched SpoArts Washing calling out an uncomfortable truth. Fossil fuels don't deserve the soft focus that sponsorship deals can bring. We need to be clear-eyed about the urgency of ending fossil fuel extraction, and Texaco's sports and arts sponsorships give it a halo of community, putting it into the hearts of parishes, playing pitches and schools.

"Chevron is a class apart in how it just wields very sophisticated tools of green-washing," New York lawyer Steven



There's nothing wrong with celebrating talented young artists. But the real winner every year has been the Texaco oil brand. Photograph: Getty

Donziger told the launch webinar, speaking from his apartment where until almost exactly a year ago he was under house arrest, wearing an ankle brace after Chevron pursued him through the courts following his work on behalf of indigenous communities in Ecuador. They are masters at "penetrating the information ecosystem", Donziger said.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has called out the advertising and PR businesses for their role in delaying the urgent shift away from fossil fuels. "Advertisement and brand-building strategies may also attempt to deflect corporate responsibility," the IPCC has said.

This year France has banned fossil-fuel advertising. Last year 350 advertising and PR firms joined a movement called Clean Creatives, refusing to work for fossil fuel firms or their trade associations.

Sponsorship buys "social licence" to continue polluting activities. We are the society that is granting this licence and it's up to us to withdraw it. Kudos to all the brilliant artists and winners over the decades. None of this takes from the beauty of their achievements. But it's up to us as citizens, parents, teachers, editors and journalists to find a better way to reward the talent of our youngest artists and local sports teams. ●



# Context Priorities Challenges On the table



# What's on **your** table?

From the humble kitchen table to the powerful corporate boardroom table, decisions are made every day that impacts nature, our own lives and the lives of millions of people around the world.

Table is used as a metaphor in international negotiations 'what's on the table' and in political discourse to 'table a motion' and bring warring factions 'to the table'.

The table is seen as an essential place for negotiations and decision making.



The image above is of a center leaf of a drop-leaf table. It is somewhere in the region of 250 years old. The wood (still perfectly sound) is Honduras Mahogany – a commercially extinct species.

This particular species of mahogany was used extensively in Ireland for high-quality furniture for over 150 years. The discarded tabletop was found in the municipal dump in Tullamore. It had been used as a mortar board. I removed most of the mortar and restored the section you see here and this piece of mahogany became the reason for me establishing Just Forests in 1989.

No society can afford to discard and dump precious natural resources such as this. It is the main talking point in Just Forests **Wood of Life** Exhibition.

Photo taken by Tony Murphy, National Council of Art & Design (NCAD), during a workshop to art students by Just Forests

# What's on your 'community' table?

**"Pick an issue. Study it. Figure out who the decision makers you want to influence are. Name the guilty men. Make alliances with experts. Combine activism with the writing. Create a constituency for reform. And don't stop till you have achieved some progress.**

**This is what I mean by the Joe Frazier method. Keep coming forward. Be relentless. Don't stop moving your hands. Break the other guy's will.**

**Compassion without anger can become merely sentiment or pity. Knowledge without anger can stagnate into mere cynicism and apathy. Anger improves lucidity, persistence, audacity, and memory."**

Jack Newfield, 1938-2004



**Top Photo** ©Just Forests. Brian Cowen, Minister for Foreign Affairs, launches Just Forests **Good Wood Policy Guide** in the offices of the Royal Institute of the Architects (RIAI) in Ireland, Merrion Square, Dublin. September 2002.

**L to R:** Tom Roche - Brian Cowen, - Jack Keyes, Director of Services, Offaly Co. Council and Mr. Tom Arnold, CEO, Concern Worldwide.

**Download Minister Cowen's full presentation here...**  
<https://justforests.ie/good-wood-policy-guide/>

**Left Photo** ©Just Forests. Just Forests founder confronts former Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, on the use of illegally-logged timber used in the refurbishment of the former Irish Aid Education Centre, O'Connell Street, Dublin, during the official opening of the Centre by Mr Ahern in January 2008.

# What's on your 'political' table?

**"It is a pleasure for me to be here this afternoon in Bishopstown Public Library to open the 'Wood of Life' exhibition for Just Forests.**

**Irish Aid, Ireland's official Aid Programme, which is managed by my Department, is delighted to support this development education initiative.**

**I can see why the exhibition is very popular, particularly among students and the general public. It is unique and 'hands-on' and delivers a valuable learning experience."**

**Michael Martin**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs – 2010

**Minister Martin's full speech** along with photos of the exhibition are available at this link:  
<https://justforests.ie/project/wol-bishopstown-library-cork-2010>





# What's on your 'human rights' table?



Photo by kind permission of ©Governor's Office, State of Pennsylvania. Just Forests founder Tom Roche presents a wooden replica of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo to Mr. Tom Ridge, Governor of Pennsylvania and former (first) Director of the office of Homeland Security.

The presentation took place when Mr Ridge visited the Pennsylvania-owned True Temper Garden Tools manufacturing facility in Cork in 2001.

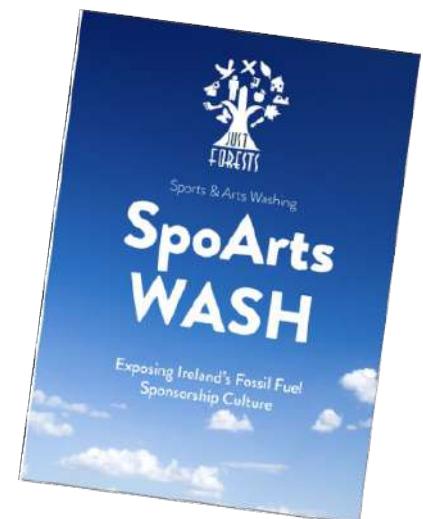


**Above** Photo ©Just Forests. Tom Roche meets human rights Attorney Steven Donziger in New York in June **2023**. Steven won a major case against Texaco's criminal acts in Ecuador which resulted in what is now termed the Amazon 'Chernobyl'.

In an attempt to support Steven from this end, Just Forests have sent Steven's press statement and a link to the [Texaco Children's Art Competition](#) to a number of human-rights and law associated entities asking them to support him by making public statements to that effect.

The entities/organisations I have written to includes:  
Mary Lawlor - UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders as well as:

- The President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins
- Mary Robinson Chair of The Elders
- The Mary Robinson Centre
- The Irish Centre for Human Rights
- Trinity College Law School
- Law Students for Accountability



# What's on your 'educators' table?

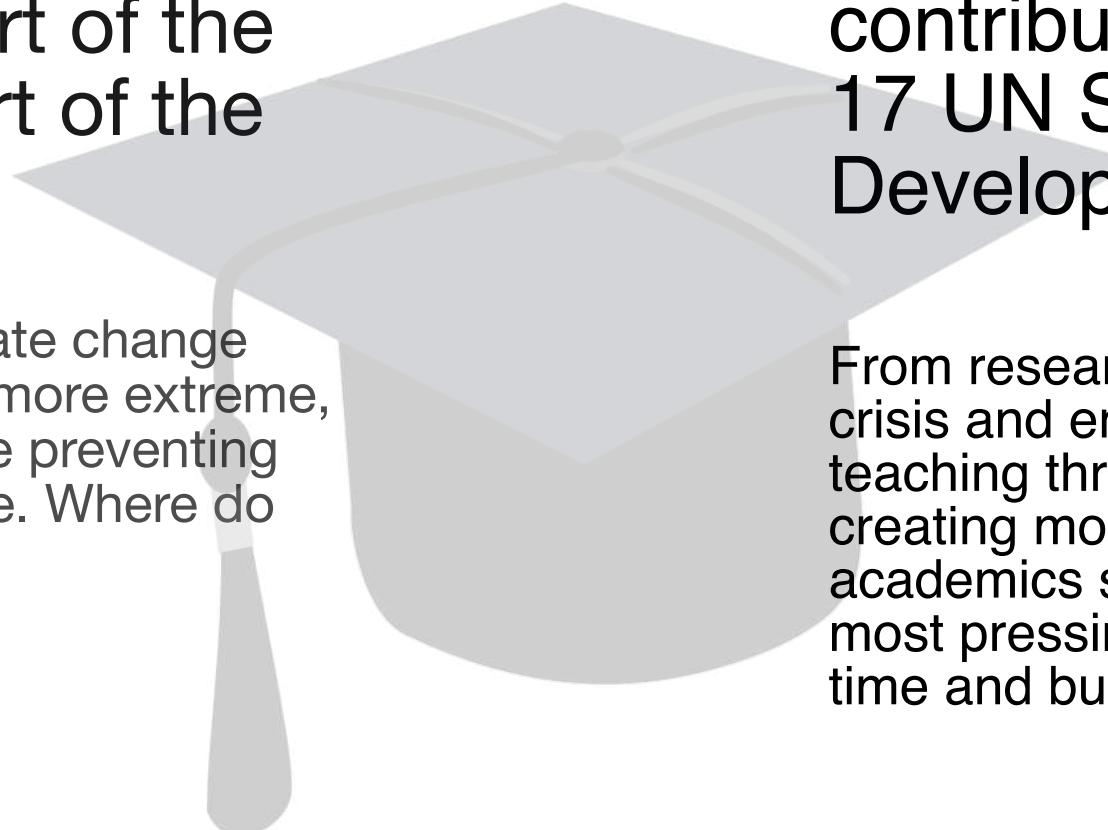
On Thursday 21st March 2024, members of IDEA attended the third session in a series of a three-day program on the 'ABC of GCE', jointly facilitated by the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) and Concern Worldwide.



# Universities, climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals

On climate change, are universities part of the problem or part of the solution?

As the effects of climate change become increasingly more extreme, fossil fuel interests are preventing transformative change. Where do universities stand?

[MORE...](#)

How can universities contribute to achieving the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals?

From research to mitigate the climate crisis and environmental damage to teaching through an SDG lens and creating more sustainable campuses, academics share strategies to tackle the most pressing global challenges of our time and build a sustainable future.

[MORE...](#)

# Example of projects on the 'community' table for

## \*SMART Community Group Educators ...

\*SMART Community Group Educator slides will issue in a separate presentation



# WHAT WOULD PRIORITISING THE STRUGGLING UN GLOBAL GOALS (SDGs) LOOK LIKE IF WE WERE TO TAKE A SMART APPROACH BASED ON URGENCY AND COMMON SENSE?



# Just IMAGINE!

IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE FASTER **CLIMATE ACTION**, SUPPORTED BY CUTTING **INDUSTRIAL-SCALE** CATTLE FARMING AND DAIRYING, AS WELL AS REDUCING OUR CONSUMPTION OF **RED MEAT** AND OUR ADDICTION TO **FOSSIL FUELS**, HAS CAPPED THE WARMING OF THE PLANET. **WE HAVE** BUILT GENUINE LONG-TERM **PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS. PEACE AND JUSTICE** FACILITATED BY A JUST **EQUITABLE** TRANSITION **THROUGH STRONG** COOPERATIVE **INSTITUTIONS**, ENSURES ABUNDANT DIVERSE **LIFE ON LAND** AND FLOURISHING **LIFE BELOW WATER**. THERE IS **CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION FOR EVERYONE**, EQUITABLE AND **QUALITY EDUCATION, GOOD HEALTH** AND MENTAL **WELL-BEING**, AND FULL **GENDER EQUALITY** EVERYWHERE HAS HELPED TO **REDUCE INEQUALITIES**.

**WE** WORK TOWARDS A WORLD WHERE THERE IS **NO POVERTY, NO FOOD WASTE** AND **ZERO HUNGER**. OUR PROSPERITY IS FUELED BY **DECENT WORK** AND PEOPLE-CENTERED **ECONOMIC GROWTH** AS WELL AS **GREEN INVESTMENTS** IN GENUINELY **AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**. COMMUNITY-CENTERED **INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE** HAS HELPED TO CREATE **RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION** WHICH IS HEALING OUR WORLD, AND WE LIVE IN **SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**.

**ALL** OF WHICH IS **POSSIBLE** THROUGH OUR DETERMINATION TO **COOPERATE** WITH EACH OTHER, TO ACT **LOCAL AND THINK GLOBAL**, TO SUPPORT SMALL ADEQUATELY-FINANCED **FAMILY-RUN FARMS** OF DAIRY/TILLAGE/LIVESTOCK, TO SOURCE LOCAL FOOD PRODUCE AS WELL AS OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY **LOCAL PROVIDERS** AND BY OUR COLLECTIVE AND PURPOSEFUL **RESTORATION** AND APPROPRIATE **STEWARDSHIP** OF NATURE.

Projects 'on the table' in the following pages will help participants to turn Just IMAGINE into real action.

\*Just IMAGINE is also an opportunity for students and others to debate and re-think an alternative version of the struggling Global Goals



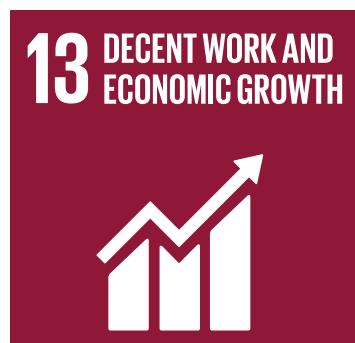
# THE GLOBAL RACES

For Sustainable Development

## Stewardship

## The missing goal

By Tom Roche

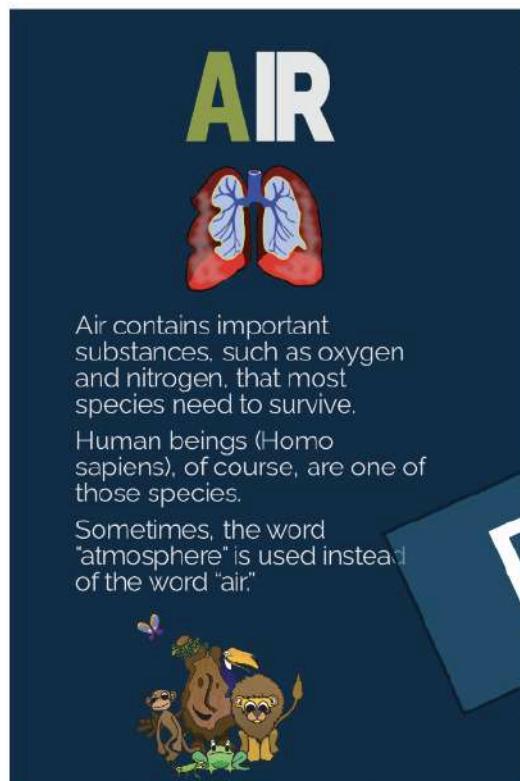




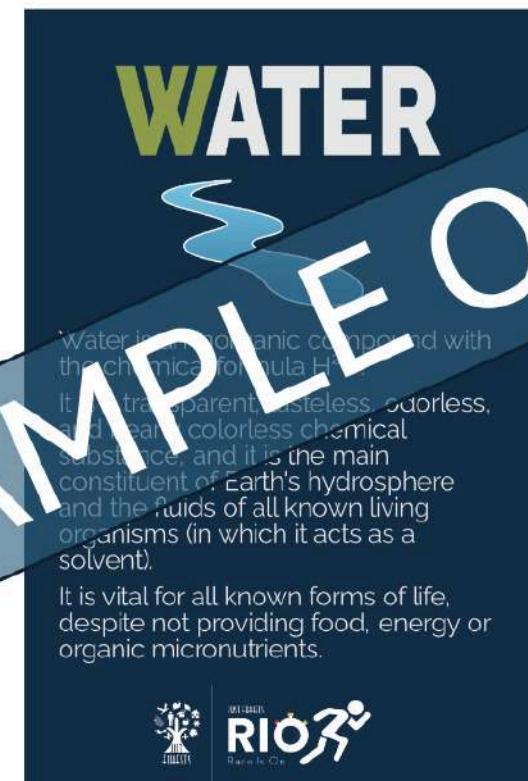
# GETTING STARTED'

Download the following in September 2025

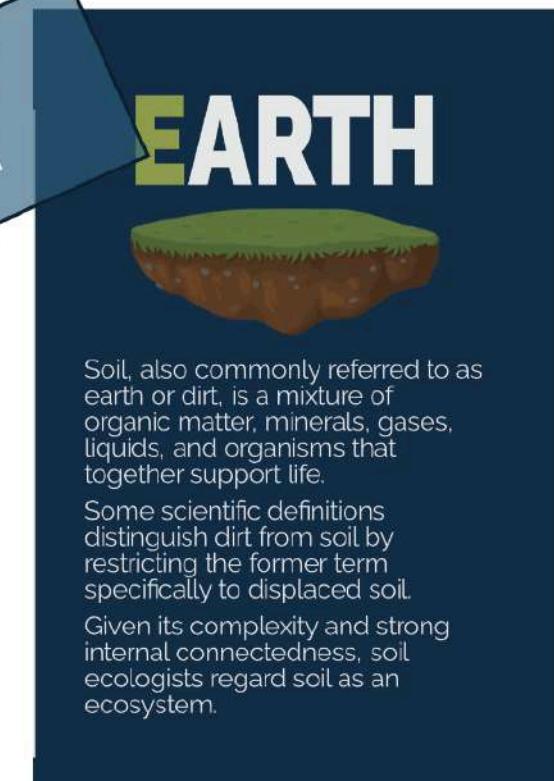
Step 1. Download **Putting the AWE back into AWESOME Planet for Life**



Step 2. Download **Putting ECO back into ECOlogy for Life**

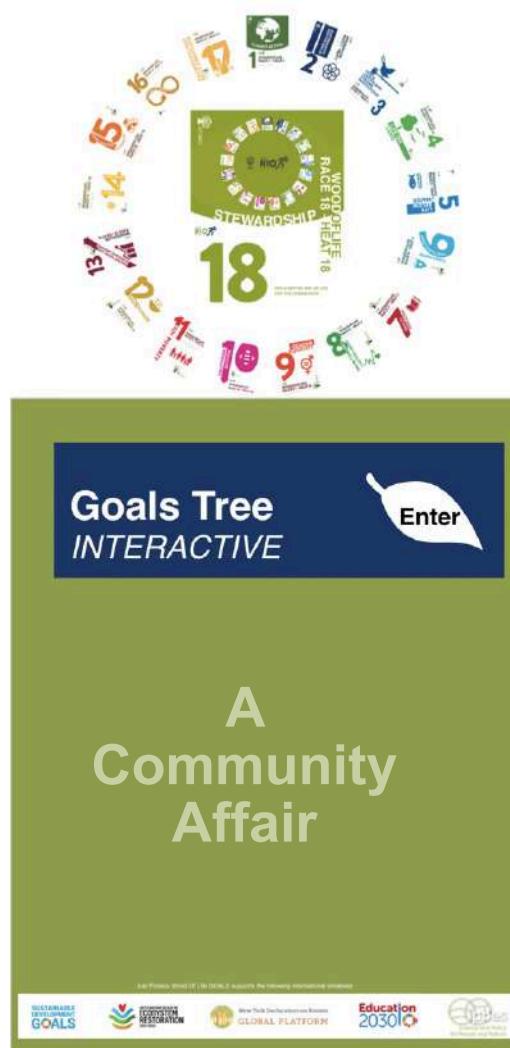


Step 3. Download **Smart Approach to Action for Life**



**EXAMPLE ONLY**

# ...includes



Above: Example scenes from project #5

## Project #5

### Community Forests...a way forward

### The Goals Tree *INTERACTIVE*

Forests are essential to all communities - economically, socially and environmentally. The successful implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depends on responsibly-managed forests. Good stewardship of forests, avoiding deforestation and forest degradation contributes significantly to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions while providing biodiversity protection, ecosystem resilience, improved water security, sustainable livelihoods and access to food for communities in all regions of the world.

This very cleverly compiled interactive resource shows communities and families just how critical forests are in their lives. It inspires them to further investigate the important roles forest play in their economic, social, environmental, cultural and spiritual lives.

Clicking on any leaf number (image 2) takes learners to that Global Goal number and that particular association to forests . Communities have an enormously important role to play in the sustainability arenas and forests are critical to that role.



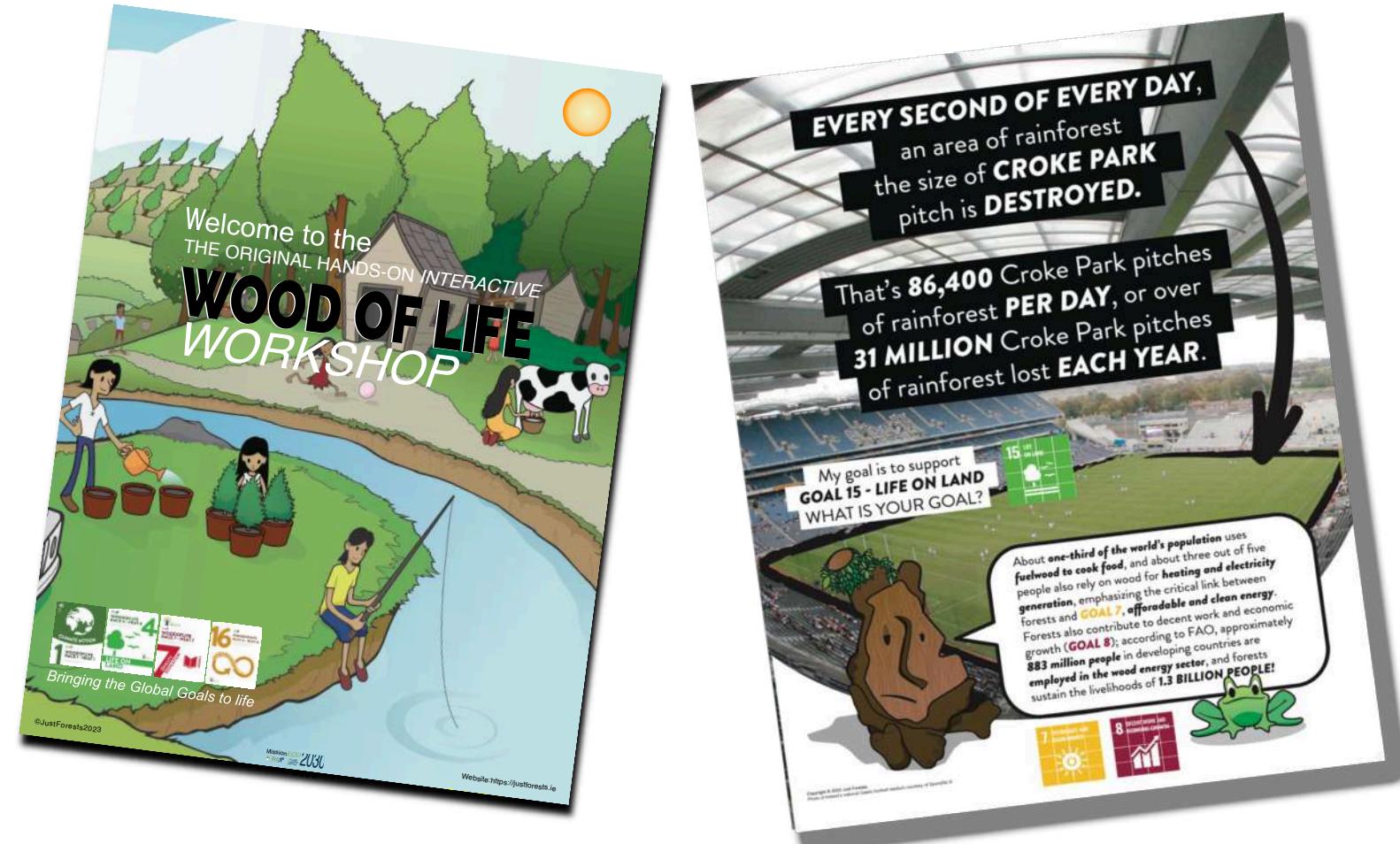
# Project #6 Wood of Life /INTERACTIVE

Just Forests Wood of Life Exhibition panels takes community groups on a journey of discovery that leads to action.

- They discover where the timber for the construction of their homes comes from.
- Activity sheets empowers them to investigate and discuss what they find.
- Follow-on sheets gives them the confidence to act decisively for the ongoing protection of forests and gives them hope for a sustainable future and **lots, lots more...**

**“**  
We take a very practical hands-on approach to learning. From this practical and critical engagement, the information from the Just Forest Exhibition might mean even more to the children. The exhibition itself opens up direct links to the Geography, Music, Religion and Science curricula. The panels offer statistics which can support Maths development. Exploring trees in the vicinity of the school opens up possibilities for visual arts and creative writing. Without any effort on the teacher's part the exhibition involves children in cross curricular learning.

Theresa Hegarty,  
DICE Lecturer,  
Freobal College, Dublin



Above: Example panels from project #6

## Testimonials



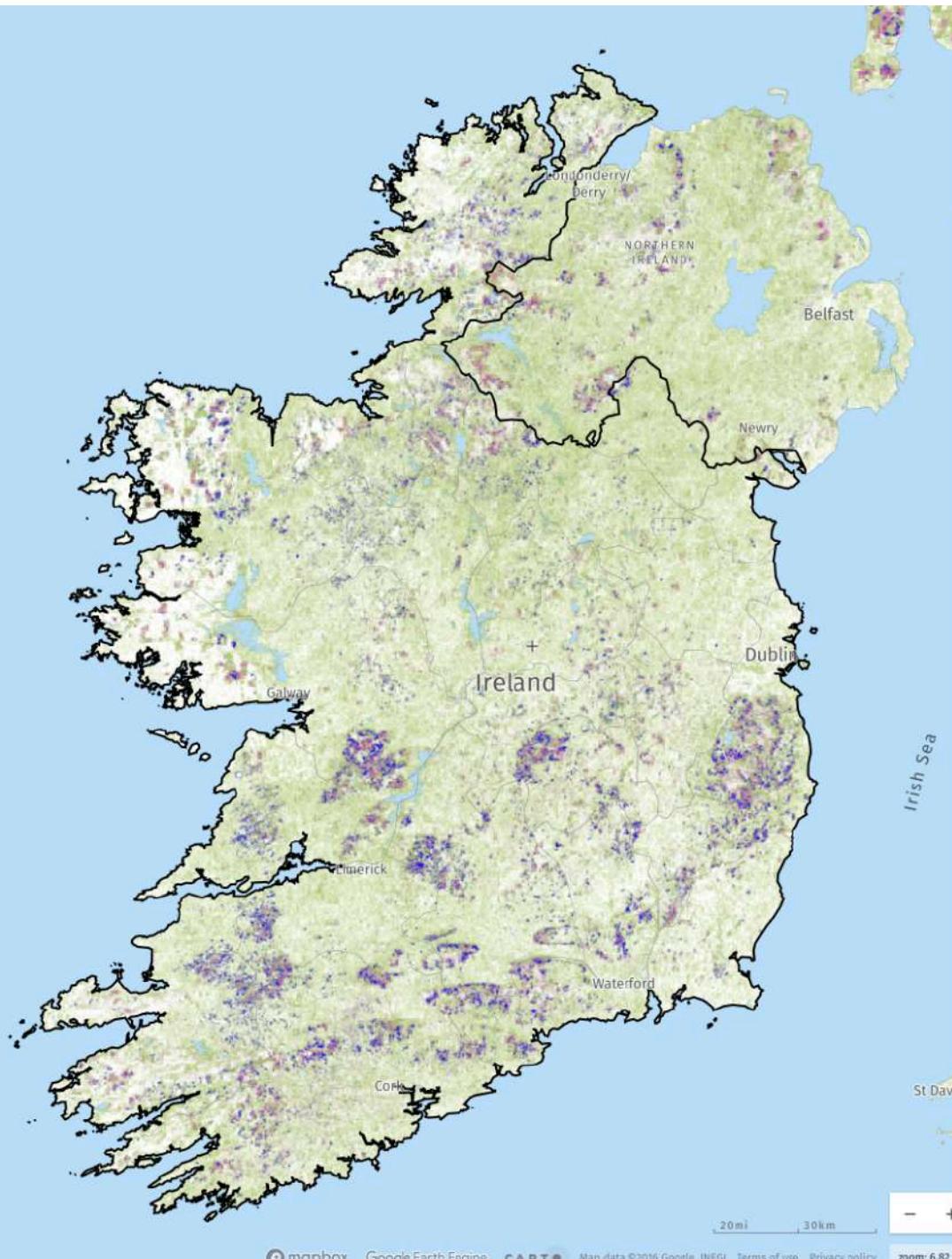
## HISTORY: lessons from Ireland's past

An understanding of events of the past can be a great way of helping us to prepare for the future. The late Eileen McCracken, a former Professor of forestry at the University of Ulster, in Belfast, gives us a fascinating account of the history and state of Ireland's woodlands and forests during the period 1400 -1600's.

In her book - 'The Irish Woods Since Tudor Times', McCracken tells us how Ireland was very much covered with dense forests of oak, ash, elm and scot's pine among other species of trees. She details their distribution and exploitation across the country.

It was a time when wolves were plentiful and roamed the country. But planned commercial exploitation of Ireland's rich and fertile forests by our colonizing neighbors led to almost total deforestation, a decimated native wildlife, and serious timber shortages. This in turn and the social unrest it caused is sole destroying for any country and no one knows this better than the Irish of the period.

Cont'd on next slide...





## HISTORY: parallels between then and now...

McCracken explains the political, economic, social and environmental impacts of that exploitation which took place between 1600 and 1800. Her findings leave us in no doubt as to when, how, why and who set the trends in motion that reduced our historically vast forests to small pockets of woodlands that covered a mere one percent of Ireland by the end of the eighteenth century.

The devastation of Ireland's forests that took place during the 1600s is still going on around the world today and the consequences are reflected in many countries where illegal logging and uncontrolled deforestation is a major activity.

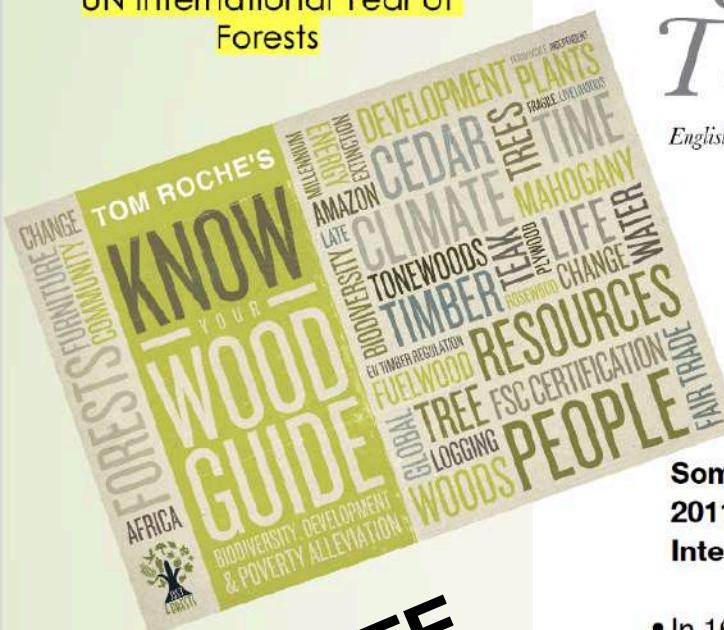
There are parallels between the historical decline of Ireland's forests and what is happening in many countries around the world today as the destruction of natural forests and land clearance for agriculture continue, but this time Ireland is involved in that exploitation.

Cont'd on next slide...





Extract from page 16 of  
**Know Your Wood Guide**  
published in 2011 to mark the  
UN International Year of  
Forests



# UPDATE Coming 2026



## Some FACTS to consider during 2011-The United Nation's-designated International Year of forests (IYF 2011)

- In 1600, one-eighth of Ireland's landmass was covered by forests and woods. By 1700, the Irish woodlands had been reduced to about 2 percent of the total land area and by 1900 Ireland had only 1 percent forest cover.
- Ireland had a booming timber export trade. In the mid-1680s, Irish ports shipped over 20 million staves. Irish cooperers used native ash and oak to make curved staves.

and flat headpieces for barrels, hogsheads and butts. These were shipped to be assembled with willow witches or bands at their destination. Source: <http://www.justforests.org/importance-of-wood/down-through-the-years-forests>

- Ten countries account for two-thirds of the global forest cover. Source: FAO Forest Resources Assessment
- Every second of every day, an area of rainforest the size of \*Croke Park pitch is destroyed. That's 86,400 Croke Park pitches of rainforest per day, or over 31

million Croke Park pitches of rainforest last each year! (Source: UNEP states that, 'an area of rainforest, the size of a football field, is destroyed every second')

Thirty-three of the world's 100 largest cities derive their drinking water from catchments within protected forest areas.  
Source: WWF

- Timber has the lowest carbon footprint compared to concrete, steel and aluminum. Source: <http://www.timber.net.au/index.php/environmental-design-carbon-footprint.html>



- The boreal forest is the largest tract of ancient forest left in North America and represents 25 percent of the world's remaining ancient forests.  
Source: Greenpeace
- Thirty-three of the world's 100 largest cities derive their drinking water from catchments within protected forest areas.  
Source: WWF
- Fifty-seven percent of the world's forests, including most tropical forests, are located in developing countries. Source: The Nature Conservancy
- More than 1.6 billion people depend to varying degrees on forests for their livelihoods, e.g. fuelwood, medicinal plants, and forest foods. Source: World Bank 2004

- Forests provide habitats to about two-thirds of all species on earth.  
Source: World Bank 2004
- The Amazon rainforest produces 20 percent of the world's oxygen. Source: ACEER Foundation
- Tropical forests renew the air we breath and moderate our global climate by absorbing about 20 percent of the carbon from emissions. Source: The Nature Conservancy and REUTERS
- Forests are home to 300 million people around the world. Source: FAO Forest Resources Assessment
- Tropical rainforests are home to over half the world's species. Source: The Rainforest Council

- Australia, Brazil, and Mexico each possess more than 1,000 species of native trees. Source: FAO Forest Resources Assessment
- Globally, forests represent about four billion hectares (3,952 million hectares or about sq km) or 30.3 percent of total land cover. Source: Forests and The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)
- The Irish are the largest per-capita consumers of tropical timber in the European Union. Source: <http://www.justforests.org/>

(\*Croke Park –Ireland's National Gaelic Games Stadium)

Extract from page 17 of  
**Know Your Wood Guide**  
published in 2011 to mark the UN  
International Year of Forests



## Context



## Priorities



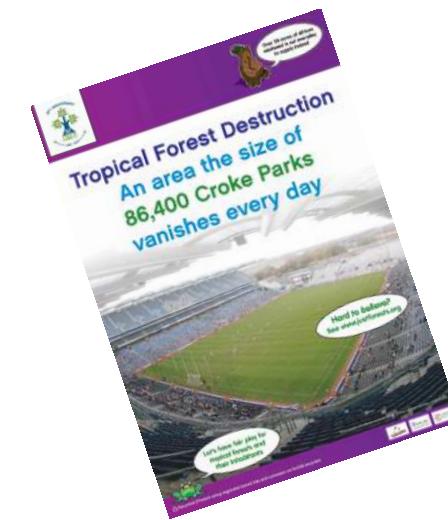
## Challenges



## On the table



## CÉN ÁIT AR DOMHAN A dtAGANN AN TADHMAD TRÓPAICEACH AS?



## BÍ PÁIRTEACH SA RÉITEACH

Tugann an Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) dearbh le chéile chun teacht ar reilgigh a chuirteann an mhiseoirseachtaí ar fhóraisí an domhain chun cinn.

# GCE RESOURCES 2025 - 2030



Just Forests ©RIO Series of supplementary Global Citizenship Education (GCE) resources for activists in a world in peril will include:

1. **Putting the AWE back into our AWESOME Planet** – a set of *back-to-basics* posters on Air – Water - Earth  
Launch date mid-June 2025
2. **Putting ECO back into ECOlogy for Life** – a set of *back-to-basics* posters on Educate – Cooperate - Outcomes  
Launch date end July 2025
3. **Casper's Fund-raising Options That Won't Cost The Earth** – alternatives to 'Tractor Runs' for community groups, activists, charities, schools and sports clubs, as a means of raising funds.  
Launch date mid-August 2025
4. **Mission Possible** – what you will be expected to do in your professional and private capacity to advance TRUE 'sustainability'  
Launch date mid-September 2025
5. **Get on your marks, RIO the Race Is On** – Stop Corporate Greenwashing. Get the fossil fuel 'elephant-in-the-room' sponsorship out of the classroom and off the pitch in sports clubs in Ireland  
Launch date mid-October 2025
6. **Wood of Life INTERACTIVE** - 22 panels telling the story of the importance of forests to our economic, social, environmental and spiritual wellbeing  
Date to be decided
7. **Forests and the SDG's** – Just Forests way of linking trees/forests to all Global Goals but in a surprisingly new way that includes Stewardship  
Date to be decided
8. **Thinking TREES INTERACTIVE** – an updated version of a great favorite  
Date to be decided
9. **Know Your Wood Guide INTERACTIVE** – for all wood users, specifiers and students of woodwork & construction studies  
Date to be decided
10. **Just Forests 12 Steps to Survival in a time of Climate Crisis**

All the above will be available at:

<https://justforestsnewsletter.org>

Since founding Just Forests in 1989, I have taken a livelihood approach to good forest management, biodiversity decline and associated human rights abuses.

What I mean by that is, that if your livelihood depends on getting goods and services from the natural world (forests for example) then you have an obligation and responsibility to ensure that you are part of the sustainability mentality that manages the resources to the highest possible standards.

## Examples of previous education/awareness projects includes:

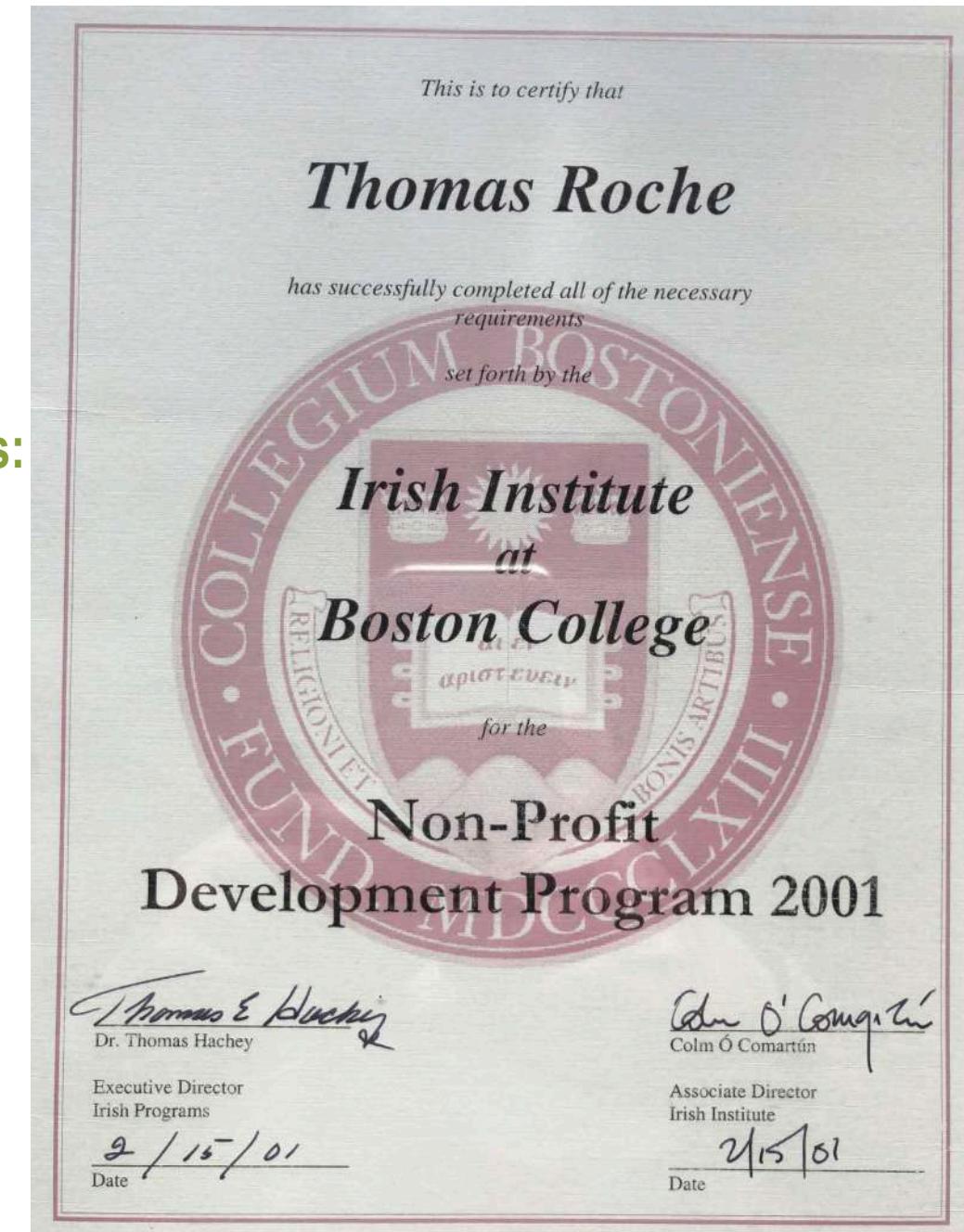
Celebration of Trees - in association with Killarney Chamber of Commerce and Tourism - [View](#)

The Chieftains - Sound of Wood Concert - [View](#)

Wood of Life Workshops - [View](#)

The BIG Hug - [View](#)

Woodies DIY threatened me with legal action after seeing this video but eventually ceased to sell controversial crap plywood - [View](#)





# About

This presentation was created by Just Forests and is free to anyone to use for non-commercial purposes, so long as Just Forests is cited as the source.

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Just Forests is a member of:



**@justforests**  
Just Forests creates awareness of societies dependence on forests for life

Activist - Craftsman - Educator

- EcoRace2030 | Just anotherJust Forests website
- Download SpoArts WASH
- Bring Casper Elder & The Just Forests Gang back
- Say No 2 Texaco
- The Race Is On
- The Silent Killer
- Barking Up The Rite Tree
- Just Forests (archive)
- Save The National Park
- The BIG Tree Hug
- My Story | Tom Roche

[@](https://www.instagram.com/justforests/)
[X](https://www.twitter.com/justforests/)
[F](https://www.facebook.com/justforests/)

All my education resources are available for you to download for FREE at the websites listed above at this link: <https://justforestsnewsletter.org>





# The last word...

“Dear Friends,

Let's be clear, human activity are at the root of our decent towards chaos, but that means that human action can help solve it. Makin peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century. It must be the top, top priority for everyone everywhere. In this context the recovery from the pandemic is an opportunity. We can see rays of hope in the form of a vaccine, but there is no vaccine for the planet.

Nature needs a bailout. In overcoming the pandemic, we can also avert climate cataclysm and restore our planet. This is an epic policy test. But ultimately, this is a moral test. The trillions of dollars needed for covid recovery is money that we are borrowing from future generations - every last penny.

And we cannot use those resources to lock in policies that burden them with a mountain of debt on a broken planet. It is time to flick the green switch. We have a chance not simply to reset the economy but to transform it. We are facing a devastating pandemic, new heights of global heating, new lows of ecological degradation and new setbacks in our work towards global goals for more equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

To put it simply, the state of the planet is broken.

Dear friends, Humanity is waging war on nature. This is suicidal. Nature always strikes back -- and it is already doing so with growing force and fury. Biodiversity is collapsing. One million species are at risk of extinction. Ecosystems are disappearing before our eyes. Deserts are spreading. Wetlands are being lost.

Every year, we lose 10 million hectares of forests. Oceans are overfished -- and choking with plastic waste. The carbon dioxide they absorb is acidifying the seas. Coral reefs are bleached and dying. Air and water pollution are killing 9 million people annually – more than six times the current toll of the pandemic. And with people and livestock encroaching further into animal habitats and disrupting wild spaces, we could see more viruses and other disease-causing agents jump from animals to humans. Let's not forget that 75 per cent of new and emerging human infectious diseases are zoonotic.

It's time to flick the “green switch”. We have a chance to not simply reset the world economy but to transform it.”

Antonio Guterres  
UN Secretary-General

