In this issue:

- ArBio selected as finalists in MIT Climate CoLab Competition!
- Analog forestry demonstration site in Los Cipreses, San José
- EcoEra, Costa Rica: Gateway to analog forestry
- Kpalimé, Togo: Workshop with Les Compagnons Ruraux
- Community workshop in Hojancha, Costa Rica
- Belipola, Sri Lanka: Training of trainers workshop
- Follow-up visit to Rancho Quemado, Costa Rica
MIT Climate CoLab: ArBio selected as finalists!

Francesca Allievi
ArBio Italia

As previously announced on our ArBio Italia Facebook page, ArBio has taken part in a competition organized by the Climate CoLab of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston. This competition aims at implementing actions that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the effects of climate change. We are thrilled to announce that our project has been identified as one of the finalists!

For the theme of “Land Use: Agriculture, Livestock, and Forestry”, ArBio submitted a description of the project that is being implemented in an area of our concession in Peru, where a productive forest has been developed and planted on the basis of analog forestry principles. Such forest provides both food and income for the local population. You can read a comprehensive description of our project here.

This year the judges have evaluated over 600 proposals, but only about seventy of them have reached this stage: it is a great result for our project, which has been evaluated by an international board of experts!

Having reached the final stage, we can compete for two prizes within our theme: the Judges’ Choice Award and the Popular Choice Award. The first is decided by the Jury and the latter is based on the amount of votes received through the competition’s page. Getting either of these prizes earns us the right to go and present our project right at MIT’s headquarters.
MIT's Climate CoLab is organising a conference called “Crowds & Climate”, on the 5th to 7th of November, 2014, in which various experts will debate the issues of climate change, and the winning projects of each theme will be presented. During the conference the Final Winner (chosen from among all themes) will also be announced, and will receive the grand prize of 10,000 dollars!

The online community of Climate CoLab has 15,000 members, and as many followers on its Twitter account: it is thus a great chance to spread the word about ArBio’s work to a wide audience!

What can you do?

All you need to do is follow this link, click on “Register” and create your account or log in using your Facebook or Google+ credentials, and cast your vote for our proposal. You can do this until 30th September, when voting will close.

Just a few clicks are enough to give our message the chance to reach even more people! Help our branches reach MIT!

Analog Forestry in cities: Planting in Los Cipreses, San José

Adam Kabir Dickinson
IAFN Secretariat

IAFN’s mission statement includes the phrase “a new rural development paradigm”. But is analog forestry only a solution for rural areas? Can the forest never again come to the city? These days, more than half of the world’s population lives in urban areas. Our work with the Los Cipreses neighbourhood in San José, Costa Rica, shows that this half of humanity also has a need for more forested area.
San José is a bustling city crisscrossed by rivers, which provide conduits for water and natural areas throughout the urban area. However, many of the local riverbanks have been stripped of their forest cover, and many serve as dumping grounds for the city's garbage and untreated sewage. The municipality of San José has recently begun the Río Torres Interurban Biological Corridor project to begin reforesting these areas in order to bring back the biodiversity of the areas surrounding the city, and to protect the area's watershed, which is coming under ever-increasing demands.

IAFN, as part of the Comité Pro Bandera Azul Los Cipreses, has been contributing to this effort with the reforestation of a stretch of riverbank along the Río Torres, in the Los Cipreses neighbourhood of Barrio México in San José. The trees there were cut down long ago, and the slopes were taken over by elephant grass, a persistent invasive species that can keep anything else from growing in the area.

In July 2014, the first planting took place on the riverbank by Los Cipreses, with the participation of dozens of men, women, and children from the neighbourhood, as well as volunteers from IAFN and the municipality. The planting was also supported by Grupo Pampa, a local importer, who offered a promotion in May 2014 where they pledged to plant a tree for every bottle of wine sold. Their contribution to this planting was essential to its success.

“We've thrown away a lot of garbage and destroyed our environment” says one of the children who planted that day. As these trees grow up, they bring a change in the urban environment, and in the minds of the people who live there.

Photo credit: Kitty Garden
Athina Koutouleas is a sustainable agriculturalist from Australia. Starting in May 2014, she and her partner embarked on a bike tour across Latin America, visiting sustainable agriculture and analog forestry sites across the continent. Reports from her journey will appear on IAFN's site periodically. In her first entry from May 2014, she relates a stay with IAFN partner EcoEra, who began an analog forestry demonstration site last year.

Londres was our gateway for our analog forestry adventures. In the week I spent there, I came into contact with a handful of some of the most enlightened and environmentally conscious individuals I have ever met: a community of conservationists and agroforesters, if you will.

José Pablo and Natalie are the on-site employees of La Posada, an eco-village that is guided by the principles of analog forestry to develop the landscape. The site includes four fully self-contained guest houses, large spaces for yoga and meditation retreats, a communal kitchen, sounds of the gushing Naranjito River and an array of fruit trees.

Our hosts expertly guided us through the many species of tropical plants and animals and introduced me to the goal of the site and the current analog forest design. I was absolutely thrilled to have had the chance to put the principles of analog forestry into practice when José Pablo handed me a machete and we began to clear sections of the site that had been overrun by bananas and heliconias, impeding the growth of the planted trees. The next day we balanced our actions out by planting 16 guanabana (soursop) trees to increase the presence of tall, evergreen tree species, known as 'V8's in analog forestry parlance. We also visited surrounding sites and heard the journey that each forester has taken to get to the point of sustainability and productivity specific to their own land.
We worked feverishly in the nursery, propagating in hopes that some heirloom seeds José Pablo had purchased and collected would germinate this season. Natalie introduced me to the techniques of permaculture, which are strikingly different from the commercial practices back home in Australia. I left the towering gates of La Posada feeling more in-the-know about tropical plants and having had an excellent hands-on experience in analog forestry.

**Analog Forestry in West Africa: Workshop with Les Compagnons Ruraux**

*Adam Kabir Dickinson*

*IAFN Secretariat*

After a long time in the works, IAFN supported a capacity building activity with Les Compagnons Ruraux, a Togolese NGO that has been active in the restoration of Togo's mountain ecosystems. This was IAFN's first major activity in French West Africa, though LCR's work in the area has shown the potential of analog forestry as a tool for the restoration of ecosystems and improving rural livelihoods.

Participants from Burkina Faso, Benin, and Togo converged on LCR's home in Kpalimé, close to the Missahöö forest, where LCR has been active for many years. Through group discussions and a short field visit to LCR's projects in Missahöö, participants got a feel for the analog forestry method and considered how best to apply it in their home countries. Most came into the workshop with little or no prior exposure to analog forestry, however all returned home with plans to work the method into their restoration activities.

IAFN thanks Jules Adjima of Les Compagnons Ruraux for facilitating and organizing the workshop, and Youndjie Gabriel Koleoko for acting as co-trainer.
Click here to see a poster that details some of LCR’s work in Togo’s mountain ecosystems. The workshop report can be downloaded here.

Photo Credit: Les Compagnons Ruraux

Opportunities for restoration: Working with communities of the Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica

Adam Kabir Dickinson
IAFN Secretariat

Following a positive experience with the community of Rancho Quemado in the Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica, the IAFN team delivered a second community-based training in the community of Hojancha, in Guanacaste province. Participants came from the hills around Hojancha and the Pacific coast of Nicoya to learn about reforestation using the analog forestry method.

The workshop was held in the Monte Alto Natural Reserve, an area of former farmland turned into a protected area in the early 1990s, a period during which the Nicoya Peninsula had been almost completely deforested, and communities throughout the region set to the task of bringing back their forested areas bit by bit – one of Costa Rica’s great success stories, the Nicoya Peninsula has regrown thousands of hectares of forest in the last two decades.

Nonetheless, much work remains to be done: in the hilly regions around Hojancha, many participants saw analog forestry as a productive way to reforest increasing parts of their own land, while participants from along the coast saw reforestation as one of the most important investments they could make to ensure their water supply, which is under ever increasing pressures.
IAFN is immensely grateful to the staff of the Monte Alto reserve and our partners at UNAFOR Chorotega for helping to organize the workshop.

For more, please see this photo gallery from the event. A workshop report will be available shortly on the IAFN's capacity building page.

Fostering local knowledge: Training of Trainers in Belipola, Sri Lanka

Adam Kabir Dickinson
IAFN Secretariat

One of the key challenges of running an international network is this: how can you translate a global scope into local results? At IAFN, we work with local partners who have impact on the ground – that is why our programs are geared toward enhancing our partners’ ability to deliver results.

In order to increase our partners’ ability to carry our capacity building activities, IAFN is carrying out a series of training-of-trainer workshops in the coming months. This will result in the expansion of our trainers’ network to include dozens of additional trainers who can apply and teach analog forestry in their local contexts.

The first such training-of-trainers event took place this past August, at the Belipola Training Centre in Mirahawatte, Sri Lanka. Many experienced participants came from around Sri Lanka, as well as a group from the Cameroonian Analog Forestry Network. This highly skilled group went through a number of exercises together, culminating with each new trainer delivering a miniature training module themselves.

With a dynamic new cohort of trainers in Sri Lanka and Cameroon, the stage is set for analog forestry practice to flourish in these two countries.
What happens to a group of trainees once our workshops end? Three months after the first analog forestry workshop with the community of Rancho Quemado in the Osa Peninsula, the IAFN team paid a follow-up visit in order to see how the participants have been advancing with the method, and to work on the designs that were developed in the workshop. They also looked into the progress of the community nursery. Over a couple of days, we were able to see that the community remains interested, in spite of the difficulties encountered in dedicating time to their analog forestry plots. The nursery has become a constant source of plant material that benefits and informs the designs that we hope to see involve more members of the community.

In addition, due to the high rate of germination of some species, the nursery carried out a donation of seedling trees to the high school in La Palma, which is carrying out a community reforestation project, which we hope is the beginning of a greater exchange network.

Photo credit: Kitty Garden
IAFN thanks all authors for their contributions. Photos are by the author of the respective articles, except where noted. To contribute to a future IAFN bulletin, please contact Adam Kabir Dickinson, Knowledge Management Officer at kabir@analogforestry.org