

Jury Member

Ananya Doraswamy

Independent, India



Introduction

Ananya Doraswamy is a storyteller with a deep fondness for the natural world. Her work circles around themes of biodiversity and narratives that explore the rich relationship between communities and the natural environment around them. Her technical expertise has been cultivated by years of academic training that culminated in a Masters in Science Communication from Wageningen University.

As an independent writer with a picture book to her credit, she often contributes to publications like The Hindu's Young World, a children's supplement of a respected national daily. However, she enjoys exploring different forms of storytelling that connect diverse audiences to the natural living world. Ananya predominantly collaborates with organisations to design strategic communication-based solutions to context specific needs. On some days this could look like writing a guidebook for animal welfare, co-creating a natural-history themed museum exhibit or co-directing an audio-series of wildlife stories.

With experience writing for diverse audiences both in and out of her home country, she has developed an understanding of how stories from local perspectives can connect with a global audience.



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Brian Matara

Act4Food, Kenya



Introduction

Brian Matara is a Kenyan youth leader, food-systems advocate, and development practitioner passionate about advancing sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Statistics from the University of Embu and brings experience spanning youth engagement, environmental advocacy, project management, monitoring and evaluation, and community mobilization.

Brian serves as an Act4Food Youth Leader representing Kenya, where he has championed youth-led action towards healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food systems. He led the Indigenous Foods Campaign in Kenya, mobilizing young people to promote the value of indigenous foods, local food cultures, biodiversity, and sustainable consumption in support of SDG 2 on Zero Hunger.

As the Founder of ObbyPress Foundation, Brian works at the intersection of youth empowerment, climate action, food systems, and sustainable development. His work has also involved engagement with international environmental and food-systems platforms, including the World Food Forum and United Nations processes.

With a background in statistics and evidence-based programming, Brian brings both analytical and community-centred perspectives to his work. He is particularly interested in stories that demonstrate how people, communities, and local knowledge are contributing to the conservation of agrobiodiversity, strengthening food and livelihood resilience, and



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creating pathways towards more sustainable futures. As a juror, Brian looks forward to celebrating authentic stories that connect people, biodiversity, food, culture, and resilience.

Jury Member

Corné van Dooren

The Netherlands, The Netherlands



Introduction

Dr.ir. Corné van Dooren (1965) is an ecological nutritionist. He is since May 2021 senior advisor sustainable diets at World Wide Fund for Nature Netherlands (WWF NL) and since March 2024 senior researcher Ecological Nutrition at Wageningen University & Research. Prior to this, he worked -from 2007 until 2021- as a sustainable food expert at the Netherlands Nutrition Centre (Voedingscentrum). At the Centre, he was involved in development of the Dutch Food-Based Dietary Guidelines and the national programme on reduction of food waste in households.

He studied human nutrition at the Wageningen University and finished in 2018 his PhD at the Institute for Environmental Studies, VU University Amsterdam on the subject of 'Simultaneous optimisation of the nutritional quality and environmental sustainability of diets'.

Sustainable diets, food-based dietary guidelines, food waste, labelling, food biodiversity, and the protein shift are among his fields of expertise, reflected in his list of scientific publications.

He is member of the Dutch Society of Nutritional Sciences (NAV), of which he received in 2023 the impact price for his work on 'Eating healthy within the boundaries of one planet.' In 2022



he was -for the third time- selected in the Food100: the list of the most influential food system changers of the Netherlands.



Jury Member

Emiel de Meyer

Ghent University and State Natural History Museum Karlsruhe, Belgium



Introduction

Emiel de Meyer is an ethnobiologist and Alexander von Humboldt postdoctoral research fellow with a multidisciplinary background in biology, agricultural engineering, and the social sciences. His research examines traditional, Indigenous, and place-based knowledge systems, with particular attention to how ethnobiological knowledge develops, transforms, and supports adaptation to social, environmental, and climatic change.

His work is centred on sub-Saharan Africa and communities of sub-Saharan African heritage in Europe. He has coordinated and contributed to international research projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Belgium, addressing topics including medicinal and wild plant use, food security, spiritual people–nature relationships, and locally adapted knowledge systems.

Emiel currently works mainly on pastoral and agro-pastoral systems. In Karamoja, Uganda, I investigate how botanical and local ecological knowledge contribute to socio-ecological resilience, and how people draw on this knowledge to navigate environmental variability and broader livelihood challenges.

More broadly, he is interested in how locally grounded knowledge can contribute to biodiversity conservation and inform more socially and ecologically grounded approaches to resilience, adaptation, and sustainable livelihoods. I currently serve as Secretary of the Society for Ethnobotany.



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Gabriela Copello Duque

, Colombia, Colombia



Introduction

Gabriela Copello Duque is a Colombian agroecologist and PhD researcher with a background in regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, and sustainable coffee systems. Her work focuses on understanding how farming systems can remain productive, environmentally sound, and economically viable while adapting to social and environmental change.

She holds an MSc in Resilient Farming and Food Systems from Wageningen University & Research, where she studied how regenerative management practices influence productivity, profitability, and coffee quality in Brazilian coffee systems. Before starting her PhD, Gabriela worked with coffee producers across Latin America, supporting agroecological transitions, farmer training, the design and implementation of diversified farming systems, and the development of practical tools to monitor sustainability and farm performance.

She is currently pursuing her PhD at Wageningen University & Research, with research based in Colombia. Her work seeks to better understand resilience in farming systems by combining scientific research with the knowledge and experiences of farming communities.

Gabriela is particularly interested in how diversity, farmer knowledge, and ecological processes can contribute to more resilient agricultural systems, and in generating knowledge that is useful both for research and for people working directly with agricultural landscapes.



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Katharina Bitterlich

Independent, Germany/Spain



Introduction

Katharina Bitterlich is an agroecologist, educator & facilitator, and community organizer with a Master's degree in Agroecology.

With several years of experience in the conception, coordination, and implementation of community programs at the intersection of education, socio-ecological transformation, and food systems, Katharina works closely with NGOs, universities, and grassroots movements. Her work is guided by the question of what is needed, in the face of global polycrises, to build capacities for justice, collective liberation, and healing—within society and beyond. A key focus of her work is translating complex topics such as agroecology, sustainability, justice, and social change into accessible, participatory, and experiential formats. Through an embodied, relationship-oriented, and participatory approach to pedagogy, she invites people to not only think about change, but to embody new ways of being and actively shape the future.

Apart from organising work, she has co-designed a successional agroforestry system in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Portugal and has listened to stories from agroecology initiatives across Spain, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Bulgaria, and Palestine. If you don't see her working for social & environmental justice, you will probably find her tending to a garden, foraging and drying a stack of herbs, and dreaming about becoming a shepherdess.



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Kris Vervaeke

Independent, Belgium



Introduction

Kris Vervaeke is a photographer and visual storyteller who creates photo stories that capture the humanity, humour and goofiness he discovers in cultures around the world. With an eye for storytelling, he uses his camera to take viewers to strange and wonderful places they may not encounter in their everyday lives.

Born in Belgium, Kris has lived in many places, including 13 years across Asia. He is now based in Europe but continues to travel frequently, always with an eye for the extraordinary. His personal work often takes the form of in-depth projects that develop into books and exhibitions, while his commissioned work is approached with the same personal attention and energy.

His recent exhibitions include “98 Objects I Found in My Mother-in-Law’s Basement” in Antwerp (2024), Rotterdam International Photo Festival (2022), “Ad Infinitum” at Atlanta Photography Group (2019), Jaipur Photo Festival (2017), and Palazzo Mora in Venice (2017). His “House Full of Gold” series was presented at Les Rencontres de la Photographie in Arles, where the photobook dummy was also nominated in 2016.

Kris self-published “Ad Infinitum”, which was nominated for the Paris Photo–Aperture Foundation First Photobook Award.

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Natalia Estrada Carmona

Independent, France



Introduction

Natalia is a researcher working on agricultural biodiversity, seeking to better understand the cultivated and wild species that have co-evolved with people over generations, and the role they play in healthy ecosystems, resilient landscapes, and thriving farming communities.

Her understanding of cultivated diversity draws on lived experience, fieldwork, data, and research conducted with farmers, scientists, and policymakers around the world. Yet, as she notes, this is only a fraction of what there is to know: agricultural biodiversity is multifaceted, with limitless colours, tastes, shapes, textures, origins, and stories that no single discipline, person, or dataset could ever fully capture. She is continually reminded of how much more there is to see, learn, and feel - especially through the eyes of others.

Beyond her scientific expertise, Natalia joins the jury with a deep curiosity about agricultural biodiversity and the many ways it can be seen, experienced, and understood. She looks forward to learning from how each photographer has chosen to portray and tell stories of agrobiodiversity — a precious heritage passed down through generations, yet one that is regrettably being lost at an alarming rate. For Natalia, the contest is a celebration of life, heritage, and culture, and a valuable source of hope and joy.



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Njung'e Wanjiru

Independent, Kenya



Introduction

Njung'e Wanjiru is a Kenyan visual artist, illustrator, animator and visual storyteller whose practice explores the relationships between people, culture, place and the environments they inhabit. Through colourful, playful and narrative-driven imagery, his work brings together illustration, animation, graphic recording and moving images to communicate complex ideas in accessible and engaging ways.

His practice spans editorial illustration, visual storytelling, participatory projects and communication for social impact, with work addressing themes including identity, belonging, cities, community, heritage, climate, health and the relationship between people and nature. He has collaborated with organisations including UNICEF, WWF, WHO, African Cities Research Consortium, IPBES, C40 Cities, the Wellcome Trust and the University of Cambridge, among others.

Alongside commissioned work, Njung'e maintains an independent artistic practice and has exhibited his work locally and internationally. His work has also received recognition through international illustration awards and platforms.

Njung'e is particularly interested in how visual storytelling can reveal lived experiences, amplify diverse perspectives and create deeper connections between people, landscapes and the stories that shape them.



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Valentina Pavarotti

Agroecology Coalition, Italy



Introduction

Valentina Pavarotti is the Communications Officer at the Agroecology Coalition, where she has been part of the Secretariat since 2023.

She brings extensive experience in communications for international organisations, gained over several years working in Brussels. Before joining the Coalition, Valentina led the communications team at CIDSE, the international alliance of Catholic development organisations. There, she worked on communications and storytelling initiatives covering agroecology, corporate regulation, gender equality and other social and environmental issues. Previously, she worked at communications agencies in Brussels, delivering campaigns for the European Commission, and as a freelance journalist.

Throughout her career, Valentina has developed expertise in content creation, social media, media relations, video production and podcasting. She is particularly passionate about photography and visual communications, and about using creative storytelling to make complex issues accessible and engaging. Valentina holds an MA in European Journalism from IHECS (Brussels, Belgium), an MA in Human Geography from King's College London (UK), and a degree in International Development and Cooperation from the University of Pavia (Italy).



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