



**Irish Forest  
School Association**

**IFSA Annual Conference 2018**

**Conversation Café Summary**



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# **How is/does FS in Ireland differ to other countries?**

- Unique culture & heritage e.g. Ogham, Irish Language, place-names
- Small, connected network of practitioners
- Land Accessibility: % forest cover, landowners
- Cultural challenge of perceived risk
- Need Irish-specific standards, training/accreditation, regulation, research
- Lack of funding streams
- Not embedded in formal education system



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# **What are/should the core values of FS in Ireland be?**

- Respect & responsibility for natural world
- Inclusive
- Reveres individuality
- Participant-led
- Resilience development
- Ensure Irish-specific context
- Collaborative, non-competitive network



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## Key outcomes of delivering FS in Ireland?

- Knowledge about natural world
- Awaken curiosity
- Create culture of being outdoors
- Build life skills e.g. confidence, resilience, empowerment, independence, motor skills
- Create avenue for steady funding
- Fosters nature (re)connection, stewardship
- Acceptance of weather/climate

## How?

- Regular FS practice
- Follow 6 Principles
- Irish training
- Build IFSA brand, identity
- Transfer of skills, knowledge
- Lobbying
- Group insurance scheme
- Evidence-based research (Irish)



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## **What does FS mean to you?**

- Freedom
- Nature connection, gratitude
- Wanting to be outdoors
- Non-competitive, sharing ethos
- Addresses many societal problems
- Safe risk taking
- Soul of environmental education
- Personal journey of discovery
- Resilience building
- Use of all senses



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## **IFSA envisions a world where...**

- Harmonious, valued relationship amongst natural world
- Access to natural spaces
- Reforestation with native species
- Access to FS for all
- Individuality is respected and encouraged
- Learning outcomes not primary focus
- FS is the 'norm'
- Risk-taking more acceptable
- Participation less dependent on weather
- Trainee teachers offered FS training, embedded in curriculum