

OBJECTS that MATTER

Creating global connections to explore sustainability concerns and foster hope in the present



Tesoro Escondido Reserve, Ecuador and the University of Sussex, United Kingdom

WORLD-CENTRED EDUCATION



Education researchers at the University of Sussex are working with Environmental educators at the Tesoro Reserve in Ecuador.



Together they are exploring the educational needs of children and young people experiencing the threats and effects of climate change and biodiversity loss.



They aim to support students to live with hope in the present, where they may act to ensure a more sustainable and liveable world.

The Tesoro team, including adults from the local community, supported children and young people to explore uncertainties in their environments and communities.

They used creative activities, such as photography and model making, to engage with difficult issues.





FACING UNCERTAINTY

“I THINK PEOPLE SHOULDN'T DUMP THEIR RUBBISH ANYWHERE . . . I KNOW IT'S WRONG, BUT I HAVE DONE IT ANYWAY. AS I SEE THAT EVERYONE DOES IT, I DO IT TOO.”

Creative activities support young people to explore challenging issues, connecting them to their experiences, thoughts, and concerns.

They help to surface complex feelings, encourage different perspectives, and identify tensions and contradictions.



DEFORESTATION

Children and young people conveyed a love and connection to the beauty and biodiversity of their local areas.

They stressed the need to preserve the forest for future generations, whereas community adults have seen it pushed back and have come to assume that it will soon be gone.

They discussed the complexity of deforestation, which is causing riverbeds to dry up and losing animal and plant habitats. It is also affecting the beauty of their communities which may lose tourist income.

And yet, timber companies provide much needed employment and local people cut down the forest to build things and to grow food and graze animals.

Food security is important to the young people, particularly during the pandemic, when they valued being able to grow their own food in order to save money and to avoid going to larger towns to shop.



“Under the tree you feel freshness, pure air, tranquillity, and the energy of it. Even if the trees don't talk, they have a lot to tell.”





The young people's thoughts, feelings and concerns were discussed at a local exhibition event with parents, community residents and local government officials.

The adults encountered, for the first time, the children and young people's local knowledge and deep engagement with environmental sustainability.

Parents now want to get involved in supporting the change identified by their children and Tesoro has begun an environmental group for mothers.



‘The leading question here is not what I might want from the world, but what the world might want from me, that is, what the world is asking from me.’

GERTBIESTA (EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHER)

The University of Sussex researchers are also undertaking similar work in India and UK schools.

Children and young people across the three countries exchanged objects that matter to them and say something about their sustainability concerns.

Each group discussed the received objects to think what they might teach us about global connections.



HOPE IN THE PRESENT



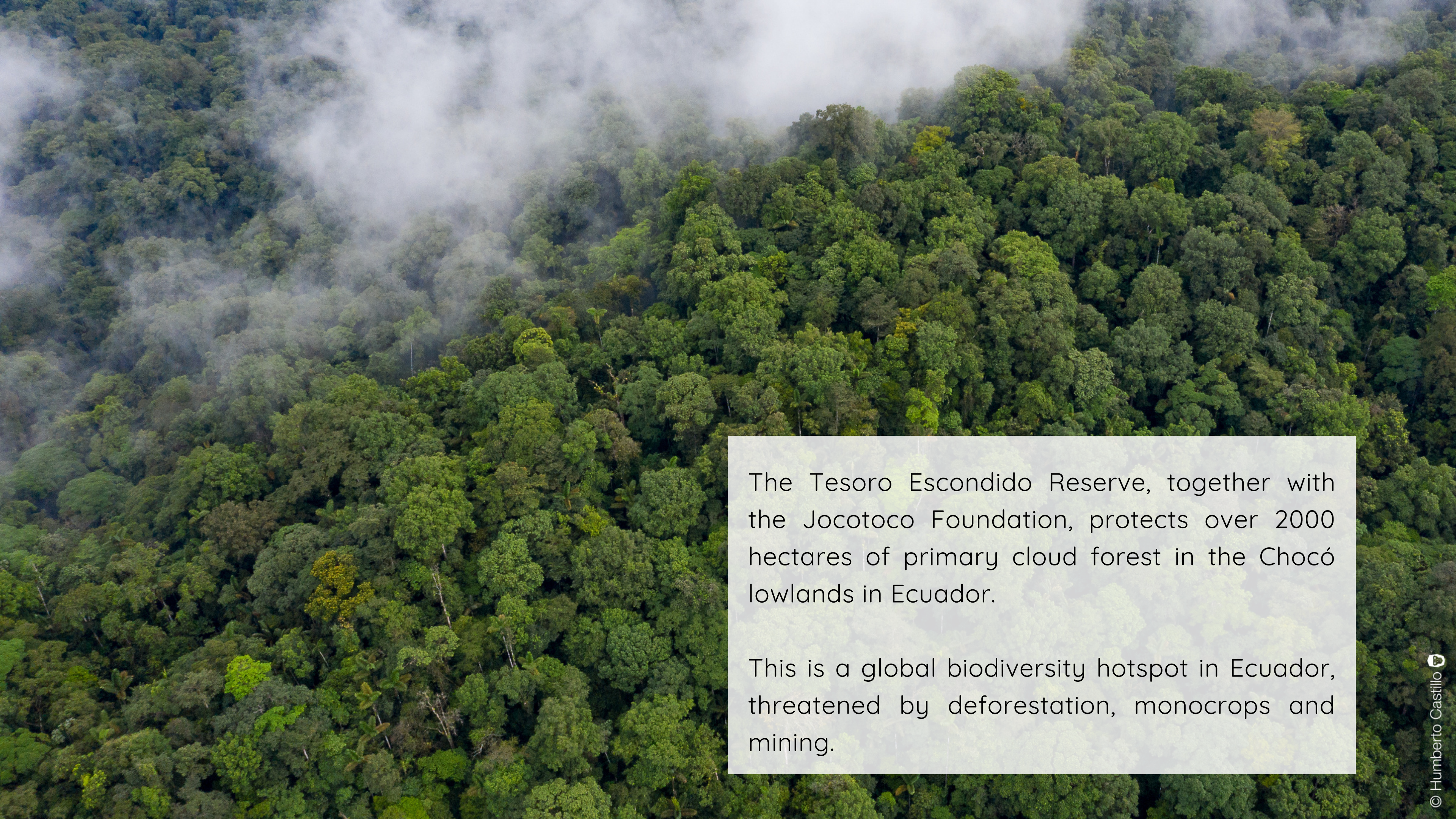
Young people experience the weight of climate change and biodiversity loss.



Creative activities give them time to explore these complex issues in depth, with the support of teachers and other adults.



Identifying what to preserve, what to change, and what action to take, together with others in the community, can help to build hope to live in the world as it is now.



The Tesoro Escondido Reserve, together with the Jocotoco Foundation, protects over 2000 hectares of primary cloud forest in the Chocó lowlands in Ecuador.

This is a global biodiversity hotspot in Ecuador, threatened by deforestation, monocrops and mining.



JONAS PAURELL

The reserve protects many endangered species. For example: Ecuadorian brown-headed spider monkeys', great green macaws, banded-ground cuckoos, harpy eagles, jaguars and pumas.



JONAS PAURELL

TO FIND OUT MORE...

Read more about the work of Tesoro Reserve:
tesororeserve.org



INSTAGRAM

@tesoro_reserve



Read more about the University of Sussex's education researchers' work on using creative and discussion-based activities to engage students with the many uncertainties in their lives: transformineducation.org



INSTAGRAM & TWITTER

@transform_in_ed

TRANSFORM-IN EDUCATION

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University of Sussex team: Dr Rebecca Webb, Dr Perpetua Kirby, Fliss Bull, Dr Mika Peck, Prof. Vinita Damodaran.

Advisers: Prof. Paul Basu, Prof. Janet Boddy, Prof. Ian Scoones.

Exhibition: CWEH artist Zuky Serper
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/cweh/>

Film maker: Kata Káráth



TRANSFORM-*IN* EDUCATION