

Soka Institute of the Amazon

In this webinar, we travel to Manaus, Brazil, which is home of The Soka Institute for Environmental Studies and Research of the Amazon.

We hear from three members of the institute: Jean Dinelly Leão, Tais Tiyoko Tokusato and Rodrigo Izumi, who provide an insight into their work within the Rainforest and together with local communities.

Kasia Grycuk is our emcee for this event, and we have welcomes and opening words from SGI-UK General Director **Robert Harrap**.

We hear first from **Jean Dinelly Leão**, who explains the mission of the institute: Founded by Daisaku Ikeda, The Soka Institute for Environmental Studies and Research of the Amazon is focused on the environment, through conserving the Amazon Rainforest and its biodiversity, it works to raise awareness across the globe and fights to protect and nurture this immeasurably precious native forest and its inhabitants for future generations.

We have the chance to watch a video presentation on the work of The Soka Institute before hearing from The Institute's Environmental Engineer, **Rodrigo Izumi**, who outlines his work with the Seed Bank, how they collect and nurture/germinate seeds, planting trees to populate the forest. He outlines a project initiated by the institute called, 'Seeds of Life', in which for each child born in Manaus a tree is planted.

Tais Tokusato, coordinator of Environmental Education Programmes, introduces the Institute's projects and programmes related to environmental education, focusing on environmental projects for students, teachers, educational staff and the wider general public.

For students, the main programme has been the Environmental Academy, which is a project which aims to give students from schools within Manaus a day of environmental educational activities in nature. The number of students and the space between each day in the forest is taken into consideration to avoid disturbing the wildlife. During the Pandemic, a new 'Online' Environmental Academy was created and the institute created videos on the environment for schools to incorporate into their lessons. Tais also outlines further educational work, such as the establishment of The Environmental Pedagogical Network, incorporating nursery schools and staff into environmental awareness programmes and educational activities, as well as the Institute's further collaborations with companies and institutions, all contributing to solidifying the awareness of the importance of supporting the Rainforest. These efforts resulted in the Institute becoming a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact.

At the end of the presentation, Robert Harrap introduces some questions asked by the viewers, giving us a chance to get to know the speakers a little better.

*This Webinar was originally broadcast with the fantastic live interpretation by **Monique Tiezzi den Hartog**, and for this video, English subtitles are available.*

