

**IC - (21191) - THE FIELD GUIDE SERIES: CREATING A YOUTH-LED AND PLACE-BASED PODCAST TO PROMOTE INTEREST IN NATURE**

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**Background and objectives**

We propose the Field Guide podcast series to improve the scientific, conservation and environmental literacies of youths living in the Azorean archipelago. Despite its relatively low human population density, the archipelago faces ecological challenges, such as increasing human intervention, land-use change, invasive species and climatic shifts. Therefore, it is imperative to involve local communities in their natural heritage, experiencing nature and learning about biodiversity loss through active participation via mobile technology.

**Process and methods (for empirical research)**

In a previous study, a group of youths (N=36) formulated 168 questions during an activity in a nature trail in the Nature Park of Terceira island (Azores, Portugal). Afterwards, participants ranked these questions using the Q-sort method according to their interests and 18 questions were selected. We later invited several experts to answer those questions, each a specific question, and to record it as an audio session. In total we were able to prepare a podcast with 16 episodes that soon will be made available to the public.

**Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)**

The podcast series integrates a mobile application (App) designed by our team. Both draw on the importance of exposing younger generations to nature-rich environments by creating a multimedia tool that appeals to their interests and by transmitting scientific knowledge in an accessible way through questioning. Our Q-sort ranking results show that youths are more interested in questions focused on *species* (58%) and related to *biodiversity dynamics* (35%).

**Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution**

Today, youths disconnection from nature progresses alongside the catastrophic loss of biodiversity worldwide. The design of a digital field guide in the format of a mobile application, that among other functionalities, provides an audio series, offers a younger generation the opportunity to explore, learn about and monitor their immediate environment by posing questions to scientists engaged in studying Azorean biodiversity.

**Palavras-chave :** Inquiry-based learning, Environmental education, Nature-rich environments, Nature connection, Children and youth, Portugal, Azores, Terceira Island