2023 Annual Report to IAVS Council

Section Young Scientist of the International Association for Vegetation Science

Career-supporting grants for ‘young’ vegetation scientists

During the 2022 Council, the steering committee presented the proposal for a grant to assist its members in their career development. The awarded grants should help students, as well as Postdocs with up to 2 years of working experience to advance their personal and professional development by, for example, attending training courses, workshops, or field excursions, as well as short-term research, and stays in other institutions. The initiative was approved by the council and it was launched on September 9th 2022. We had only four applications, all of them suitable for approval. We discussed the potential reasons for the low interest and we concluded that the eligibility criteria could only be accessed by signing in the members area of IAVS website, which could have decreased the ad reach. Despite that, this initiative will be kept, with adjustments on the eligibility criteria and with improved advertising. We think that by enhancing the public advertisement we can engage and attract more young scientists to become part of the IAVS community.

New committee elected

The elections for the new steering committee occurred in March 2023. There were 7 candidates, 44 members voted and 5 were elected. The new committee took over on April 4th. The chairperson and membership officer was elected from the members of the committee. The new committee members are:

- **Chair:** Helena Streit, PhD in Ecology, Brazilian, currently works as Postdoc at the Grassland Vegetation Lab, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.
- **Membership officer:** Juliana Teixeira, PhD in Ecology, Brazilian, currently works as Postdoc at Yale University, USA.
- **Felicia M. Fischer,** PhD in Ecology, Brazilian, currently a Postdoc at the Desertification Research Center, Spain.
- **Florian Gbodja Codjia,** PhD in Forestry and Wildlife Management, Benin.
- **Antonelle Gori,** PhD in Agricultural and Environmental Science, currently working as a researcher in Tree Physiology and Biochemistry at the University of Florence, Italy.

The new committee has since discussed and planned future activities, which include:
**DEIJ actions**

In our efforts to promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice and foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for young vegetation scientists, we are preparing a report on the groups on which our members identify. This initiative aims to identify critical barriers that hinder a full engagement in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups. For example, it is widely known that maternity is a pipeline to women in science, and actions to support their continuity in academia are essential, such as offering childcare in conferences.

**Continuation of ongoing actions**

**Promoting communication within the group**

We kept updating our Twitter (@IavsYoung), Facebook ([https://www.facebook.com/groups/353191064892110/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/353191064892110/)), and mailing list accounts including job and meeting announcements and the #youngvegscientists posts (see below). We are also now searching for a new social media manager for our session.

**Virtual excursions**

While this initiative was a success in the first year during the IAVS Virtual Symposium, its impact was less pronounced at the hybrid 64th IAVS Annual Symposium, with only 3 applicants. This year we kept this action considering that the Symposium location could pose challenges for early-career researchers lacking funding to attend due to geographic location. We received great support from the organizers, however, we only received one application for this year's Symposium.

**#youngvegscientists**

The YS steering committee launched an initiative to promote the visibility of young vegetation scientists by advertising their work on our social media. By young scientists, we consider MSc, PhD students, and postdocs, e.g. non-tenured researchers. The post is under the hashtag #youngvegscientist and contained the candidate’s affiliation, a short description of the research aims, and selected photos. So far we have promoted 10 candidates and we plan another round of posts. In order to have high representativeness of diversity in academia, we took the effort to promote candidates from continents, genders, and career stages. **We especially invite the members of the IAVS council meeting to indicate people that you know, especially the ones from underrepresented groups, to participate in this action.** Candidates can apply via GoogleForm ([https://forms.gle/ic4ZNZR7qRRMyGPP9](https://forms.gle/ic4ZNZR7qRRMyGPP9)) or via our e-mail address: iavs.yssteeringcommittee@gmail.com

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(Chair of the IAVS-YS Steering Committee, 2023-2025)