



# ESCOLA-FORESTA / FOREST-SCHOOL

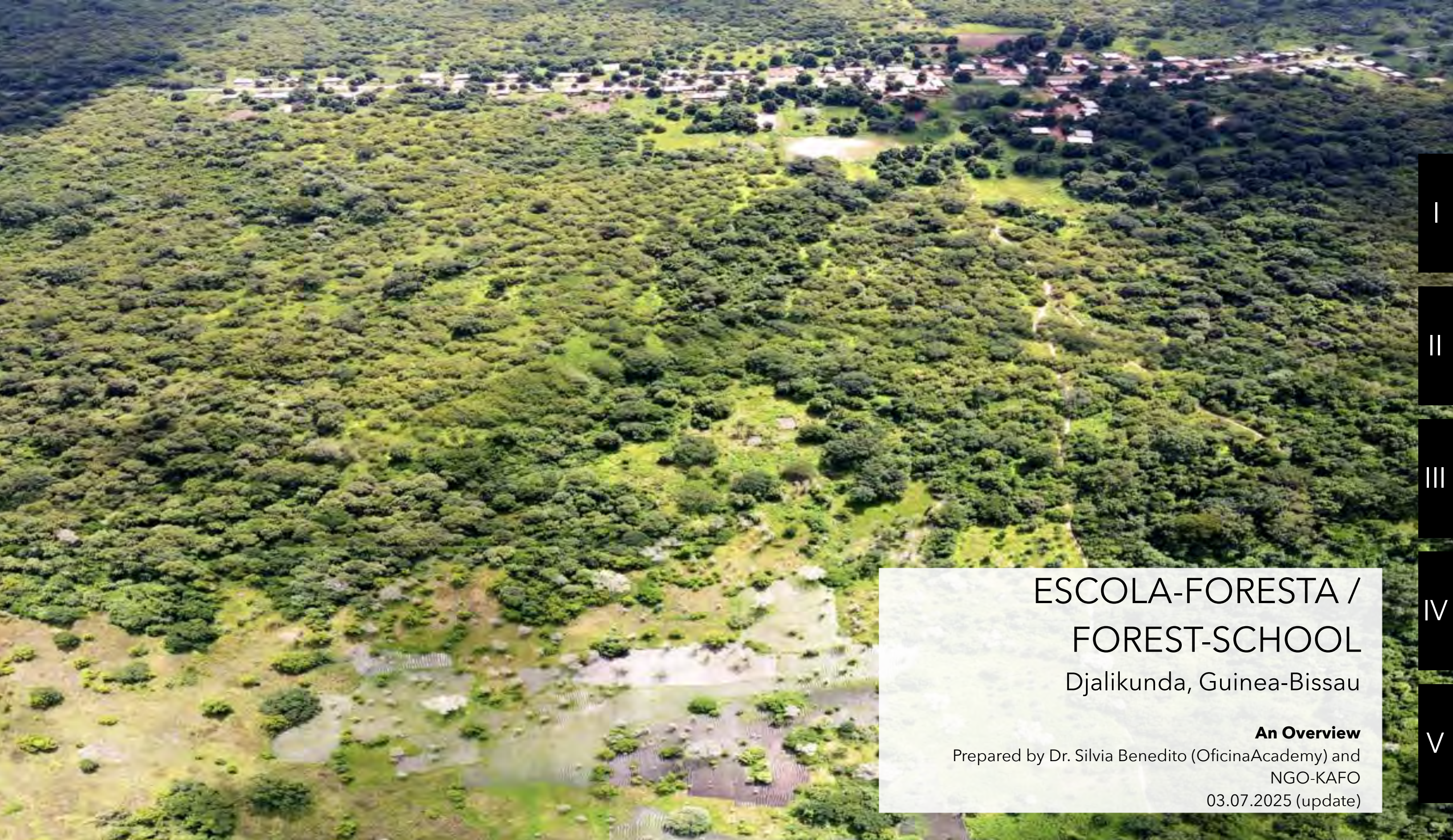
Djalikunda, Guinea-Bissau

## **An Overview**

Prepared by Dr. Silvia Bedito (OficinaAcademy) and  
NGO-KAFO

03.07.2025 (update)





- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V

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*What is the “Forest-School”?*

I

*Where?*

II

*Why?*

III

*For whom/ with whom?*

IV

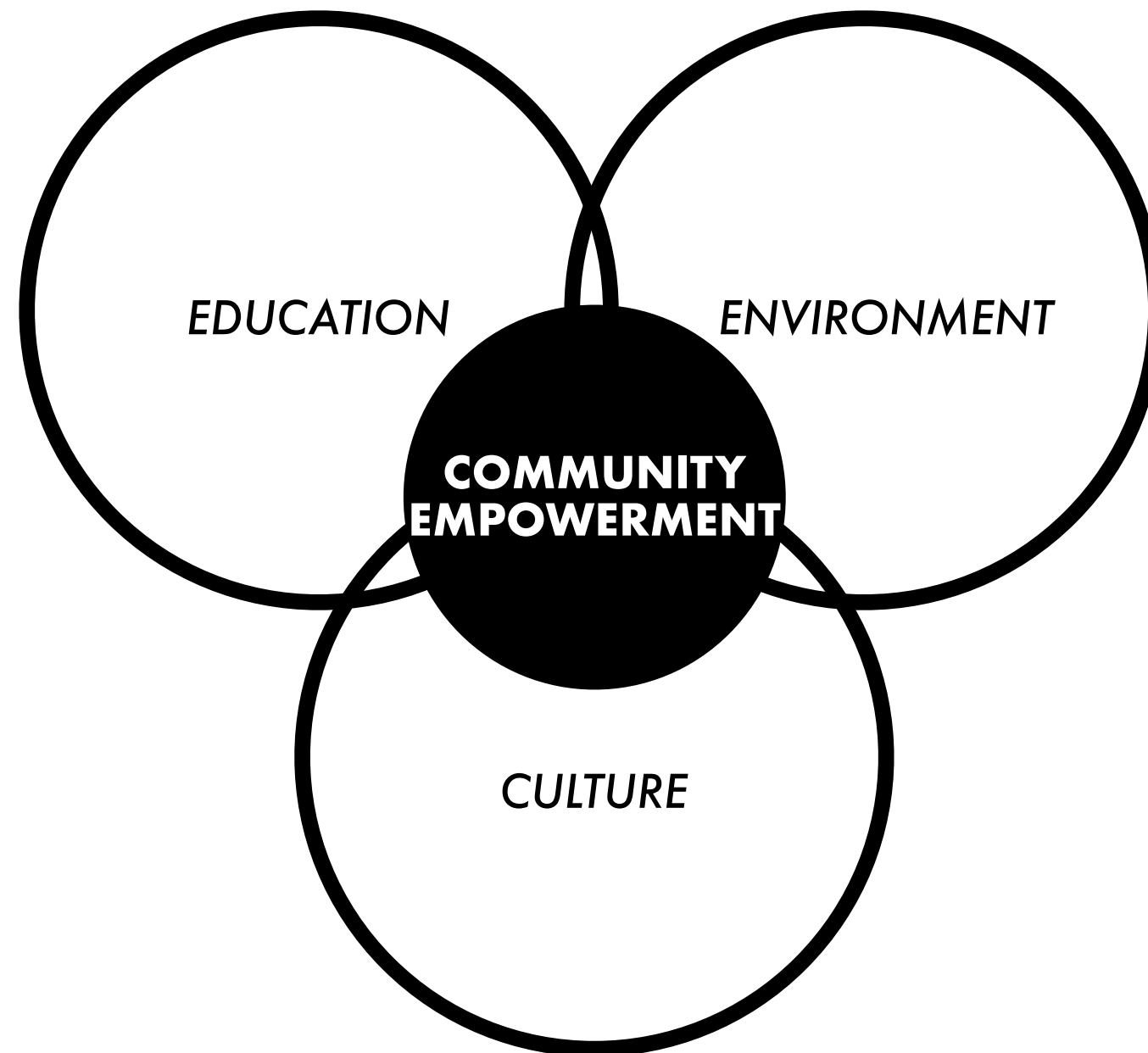
*How?*

V

## What is a Forest-School?

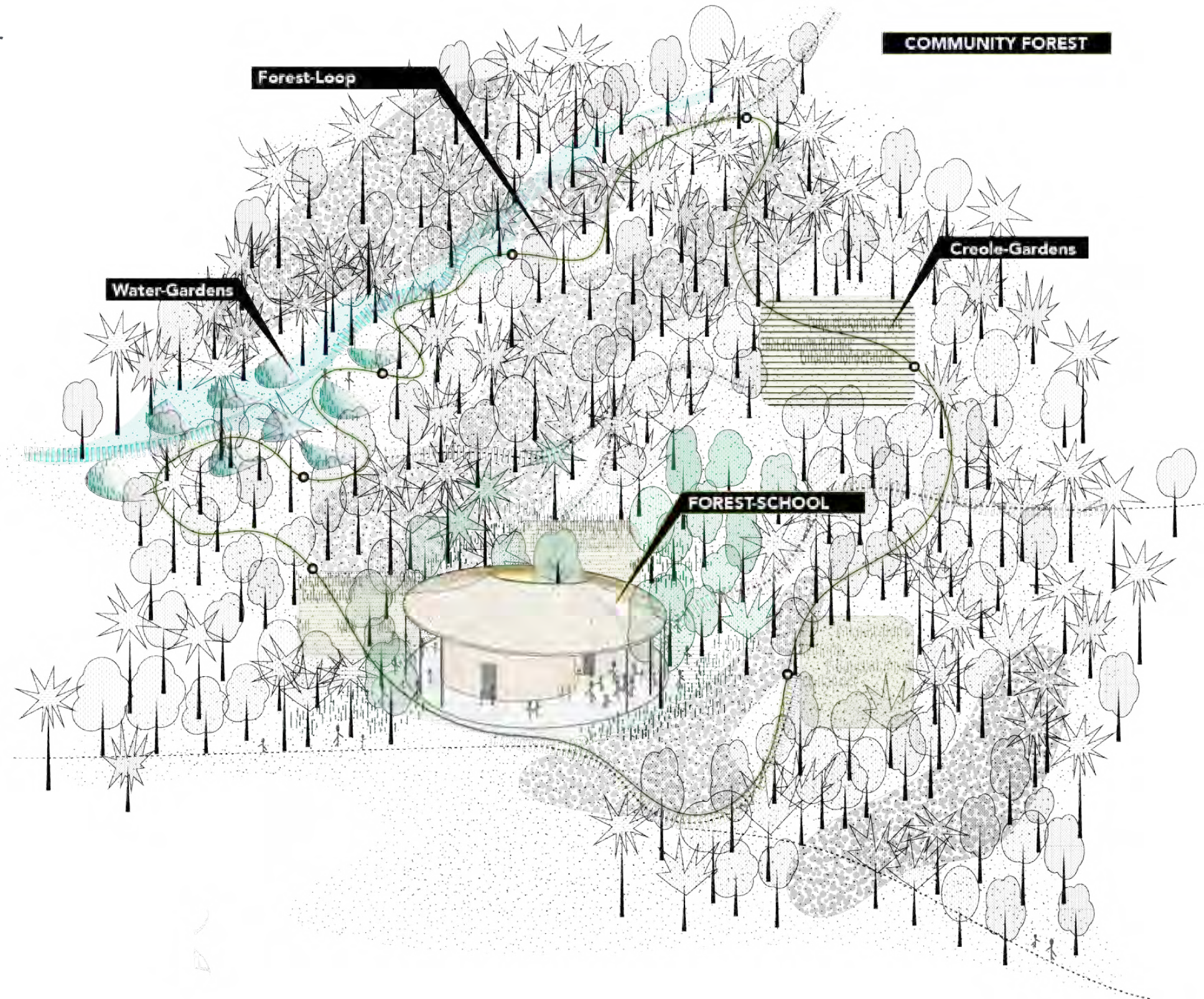
The FOREST-SCHOOL is a school for children between 6-12 yrs old incorporating environmental education focused on nature conservation, cultural sovereignty and food security.

## 3 Objectives in 1





The FOREST-SCHOOL is a space for  
nature + learning + play  
(A possible illustration...)

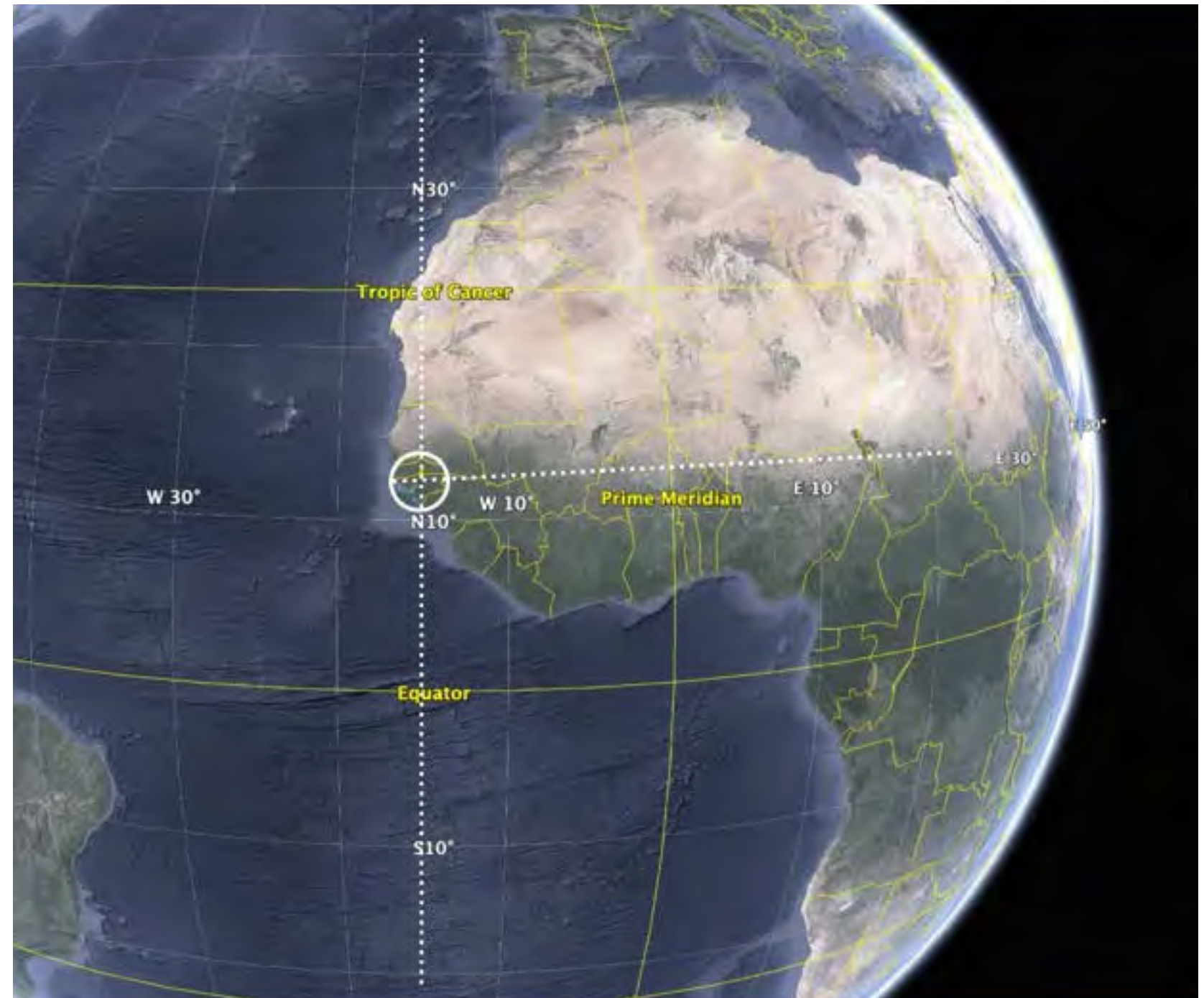


## Where?

The FOREST-SCHOOL is located in the Oio Region of Guinea-Bissau (north) along the **Sahel frontier of West Africa** experiencing the acceleration of desertification and ecosystem deterioration. There are 7 villages (Tabancas) integral to this local initiative: Ionfarim, Cabaceira, Demba-so, Baite, Colombato, Manecunda, and Damicunda. With a total of 112 children.



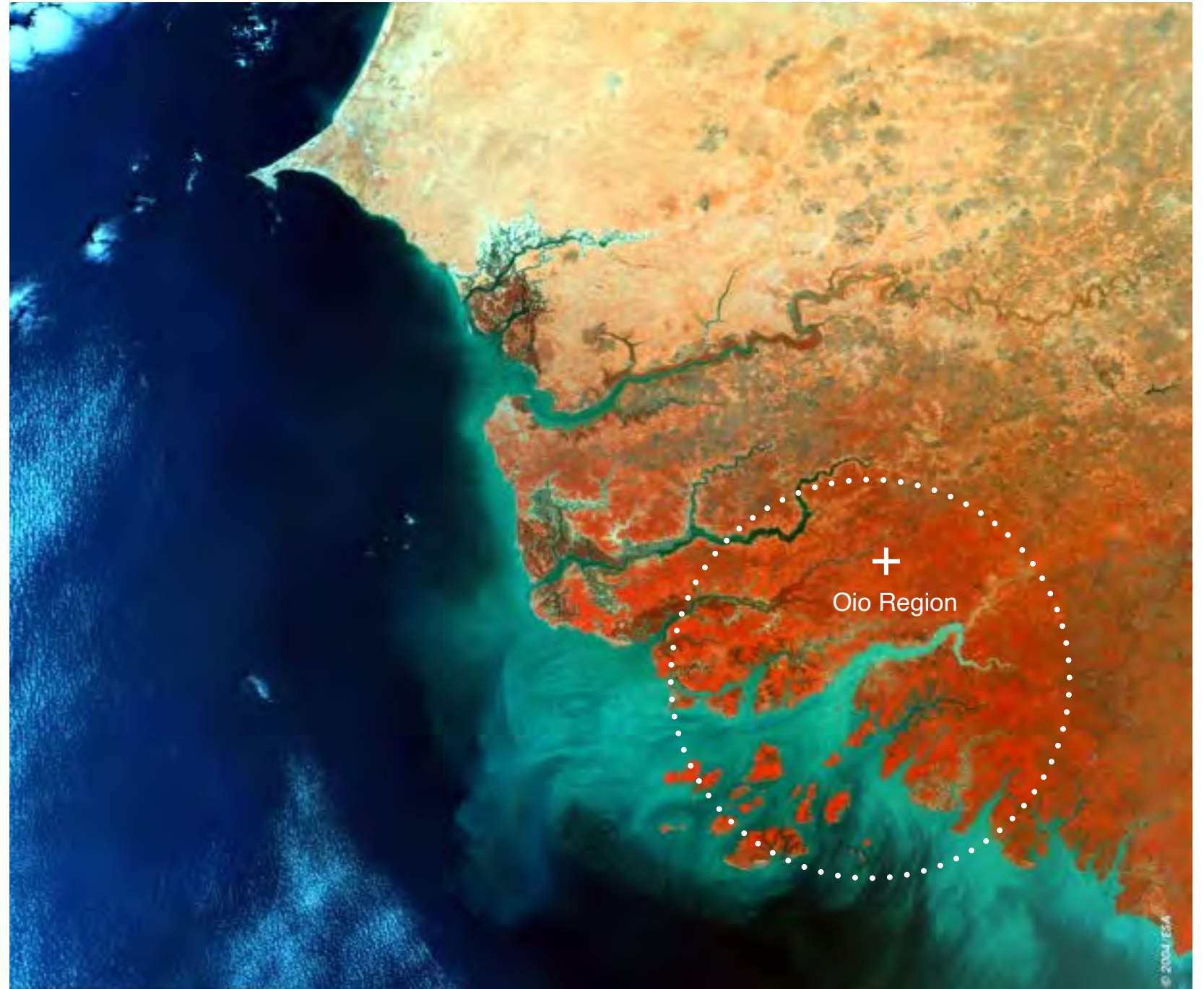
Guinea-Bissau is part of the Sahel region, a transitional zone between the desert Sahara to the north and the belt of humid savannas/ forests to the south. This region is currently experiencing the expansion of droughts and accelerating desertification. Despite these challenges, the Sahel countries “holds significant human, cultural, and natural resources” (UN)



<https://earth.google.com/web/>



Is estimated that increasing temperatures and rising droughts in West-Africa will affect significantly the Oio province in the northern region of Guinea-Bissau and its rural communities.



Source: [https://www.esa.int/Applications/Observing\\_the\\_Earth/Coast-mapping\\_satellites\\_will\\_follow\\_the\\_tides](https://www.esa.int/Applications/Observing_the_Earth/Coast-mapping_satellites_will_follow_the_tides)

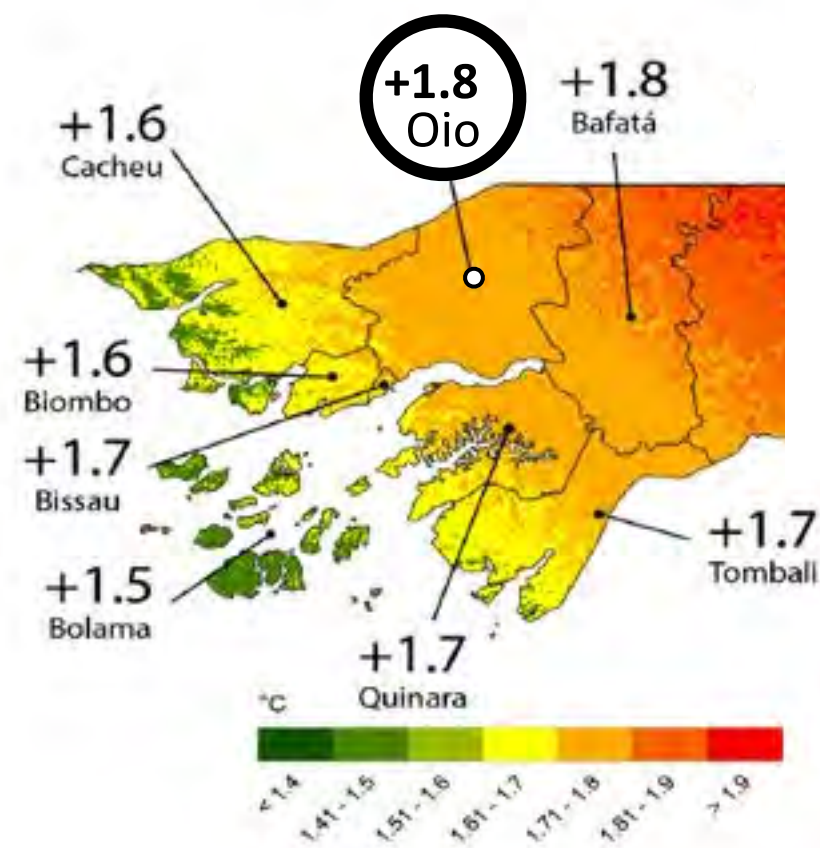


# Guinea-Bissau climate degradation impacts:

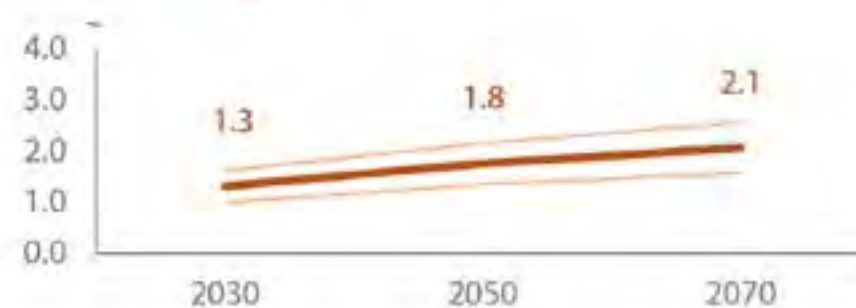
Two diagrams portraying Guinea-Bissau's (and Oio Region) estimates on:

- (1) Changes in the annual mean T°C
- (2) Changes in total precipitation.

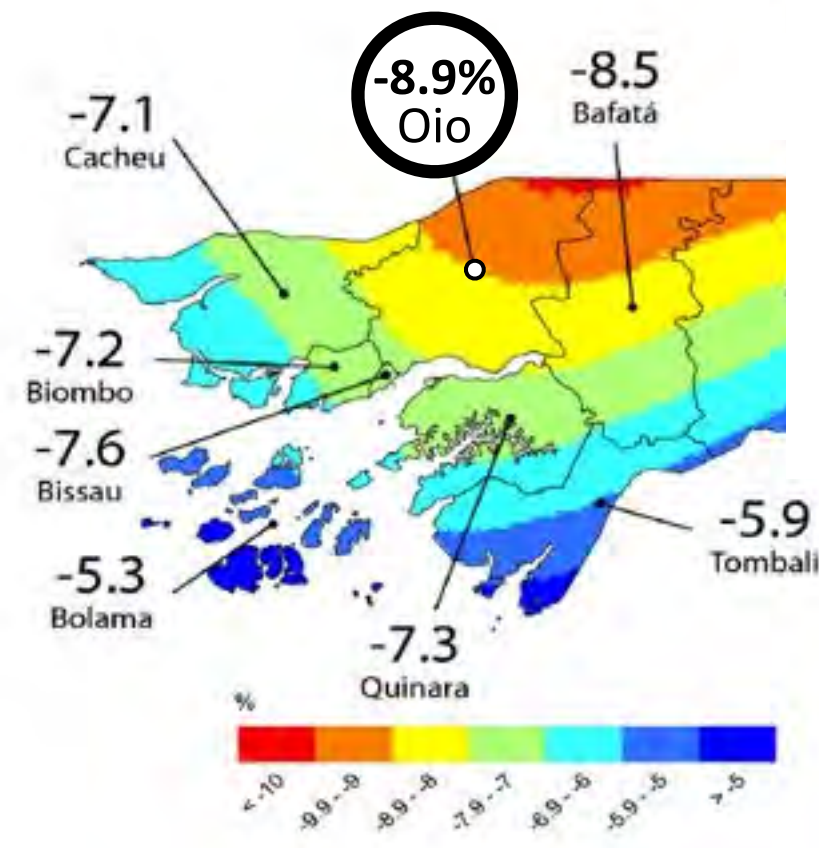
## 1) Changes in annual mean T°C



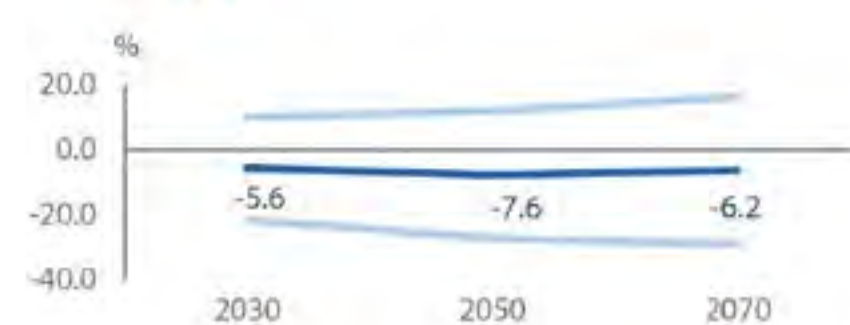
Average temperature (°C)



## 2) Changes in total precipitation (%)



Average precipitation (%)



Source: Guinea-Bissau, FAO and ICRISAT. 2019. Climate-Smart Agriculture



Villages Location:



Villages Location: Ionfarim, Cabaceira, Demba-so, Baite, Colombato, Manecunda, and Damicunda





## Why?

Promoting social empowerment through the emancipation of **education** focused on nature protection and restoration becomes increasingly vital in the face of escalating ecological pressures, especially with the expansion of the Sahel from the North.



Given the desire expressed by the local communities,  
the Forest-School is structured in 9 axes:

1. Strengthening	2. Reinforcing	3. Integrating	4. Facilitating	5. Establishing	6. Ensuring	7. Identifying	8. Disseminating	9. Expanding
the role of the KAFO Peasant Federation in the empowerment and consolidation of rural communities through educational and environmental programs focused on children and young adults rooted in the community forests of Oio, more precisely, the Djalikunda community forest;	the role of the community forest as a strategic resource and a local learning/ safeguarding site in a context of growing social, climate, and ecological vulnerability (as a "living laboratory");	into the current curriculum a creative and educational component associated with environment, culture, and natural resource management;	access for children and young adults to programs based on traditional ecological knowledge as a means of safeguarding and enhance local landscapes/ habitats;	educational monitoring systems and exchanges between children from various tabancas and/or regions in the protection and management of the forest and its resources (e.g., dissemination and safeguarding of native seeds, fauna, soil fertility, etc.);	the transmission of local knowledge through the participation of older generations in recreational- educational activities;	landscapes of cultural, economic, and ecological interest for beckoning programs focused on nature conservation and rural entrepreneurship;	the scientific, technological, and economic potentials of Oio's community forests as hotspots for biodiversity and strongholds against expanding desertification (with medicinal, cultural, symbolic, and ecological significance)	opportunities in local markets systems addressing emerging "green" economies regarding ecosystem services.



In the context of...



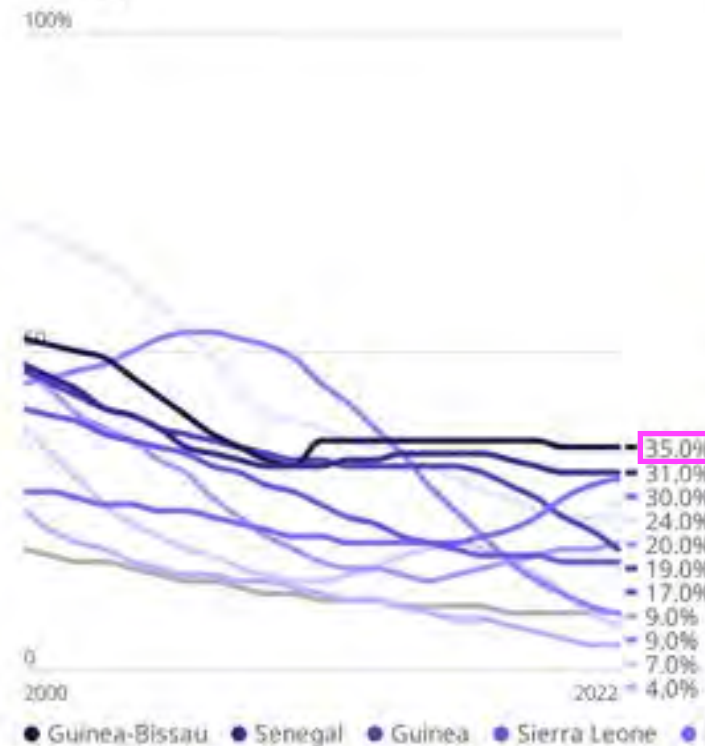
*Out-of-School rates have been declining...*

### Out-of-School Children rates in Guinea-Bissau

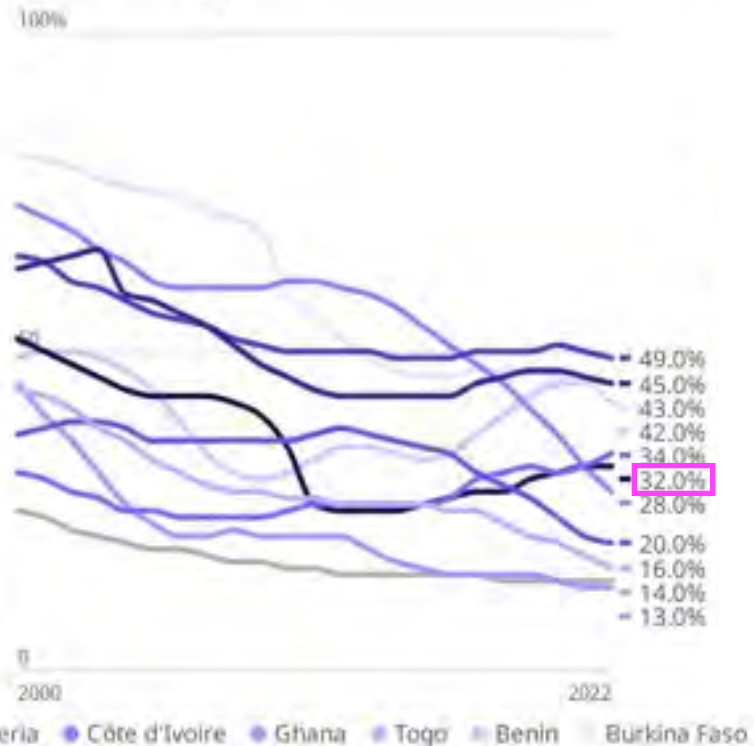
A recent study conducted by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in collaboration with the Global Education Monitoring Report reveals that Guinea-Bissau boasts the **highest** rates of "Out-of-School" children in the Primary Cycle (ages 6-12) among West African nations, especially in rural areas and among female children.

Out-of-school rate by level

#### Primary



#### Lower-Secondary



This graphic was designed for the GEM Report SCOPE website: [www.education-progress.org](http://www.education-progress.org)  
Selection: Countries: GNB, SEN, GIN, SLE, LBR, CIV, GHA, TGO, BEN, BFA...  
Source: UIS database, 2022. Accessed: Mar 27, 2024



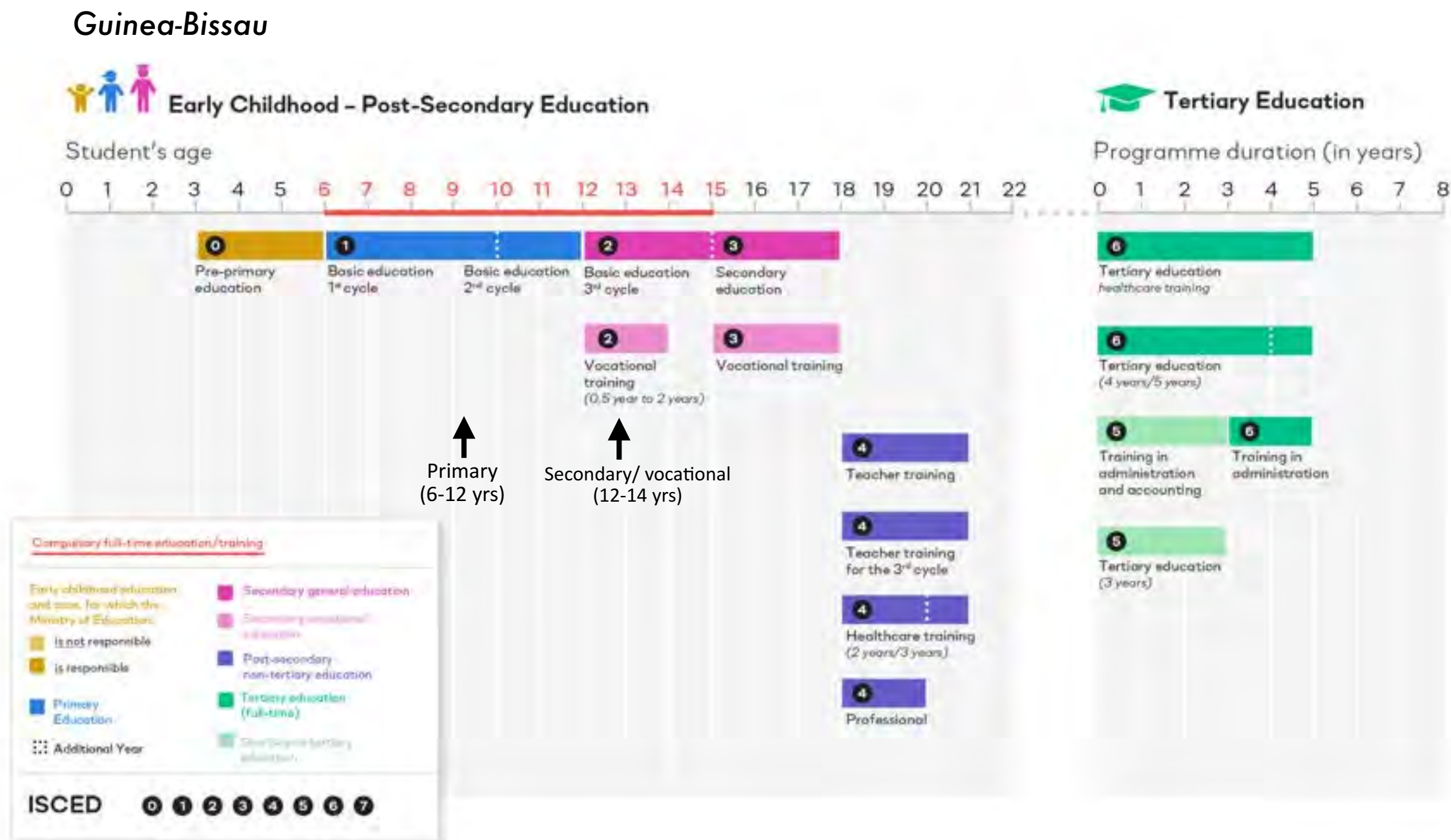
<https://www.education-progress.org/en/articles/access>



## Educational structure in Guinea-Bissau

The “Forest-School” targets the Basic Education Cycles, respectively:

- 6-12 yrs old (Primary);
- 12-14 yrs old  
(Secondary Vocational training)



<https://www.education-progress.org/en/articles/access>



## For whom/ with whom?

**KAFO Federation** is a rural non-profit organization, one of the largest peasant organizations in Guinea-Bissau and sub-Saharan Africa. KAFO is the result of the genuine will of more than 25,000 peasants (62% women, 25% young people and 13% men) to actively define and implement their options for socio-economic, cultural and environmental development in rural areas.



KAFO Peasant Federation, 20 years of projects' development in core areas.

The deep rooting of the KAFO Peasant Federation in rural communities in the North and East of the country (Oio, Cacheu and Bafata) provided the emergence of a distinct and well-established participatory peasant leadership at the service of agricultural and rural development. The popular base conquered over the years has given an effective capacity for mobilization and congregation of peasants, in favor of local philanthropic and rural initiatives, integrated and sustainable. Partners on the multiple projects includes: SWISSAID, EU, AFD, CFSI, AECID, New-Field, PAM, FAO, PRSPDA-BM

<https://kafobissau.org>





KAFO Peasant Federation,  
20 years of projects (examples):

1) “Community-Forest”

**Partners:** Institute of Bio-diversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) + Communities of Kamkebo and Djalikunda

2) The Juices of the Forest

**Partners:** Institute of Bio-diversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) + Communities of Kamkebo and Djalikunda

3) Tradicional Medicine Exchange

**Partners:** Institute of Bio-diversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) + Communities of Kamkebo and Djalikunda

4) The Forest Honey/ Bees Project

**Partners:** Institute of Bio-diversity and Protected Areas (IBAP) + Communities of Kamkebo and Djalikunda



The “Community-Forests” in Oio (Kamkebo)



The Juices of the Forest



Traditional Medicine Workshop exchange



The Forest Honey/ Bees project



### Engagement Sessions with the communities

In 2021, the NGO-KAFO and Prof. Silvia Benedito (Harvard University) started a collaboration to discuss the impacts of the ecological degradation in the social and cultural domains amongst the rural communities of the Djalikunda area (Oio Region). During this time, KAFO identified 3 communities interested to work in this initiative: Bironki (Mandinga), Indamikunda (Balanta), and Nemanako (Fula).

During the engagement sessions, the communities shared their motivation in supporting the development of a **School for children** between (6-12 years).







### Engagement Sessions with the communities

The “idealized” School, through its curriculum including environmental education, is linked to the protection and conservation of the local forests—today, vulnerable sites due to extraction threats and droughts. These local forests are a resource for food, with cultural, medicinal and spiritual significance.



## How ?

The **KAFO Federation** together with a selected local **Committee** formed by the parents of the partnering villages (Tabancas) will lead the process of development, implementation and monitoring. This process will be coordinated with the National Office of Education.



Villages Location:

- Indamicunda
- Ionfarim
- Cabaceira
- Demba Só
- Colon Bato
- Baite
- Canchungo-Zinho
- Manécunda
- Simbor
- Bagadadij



A “Escola-Floresta” / The “Forest-School”, an Overview

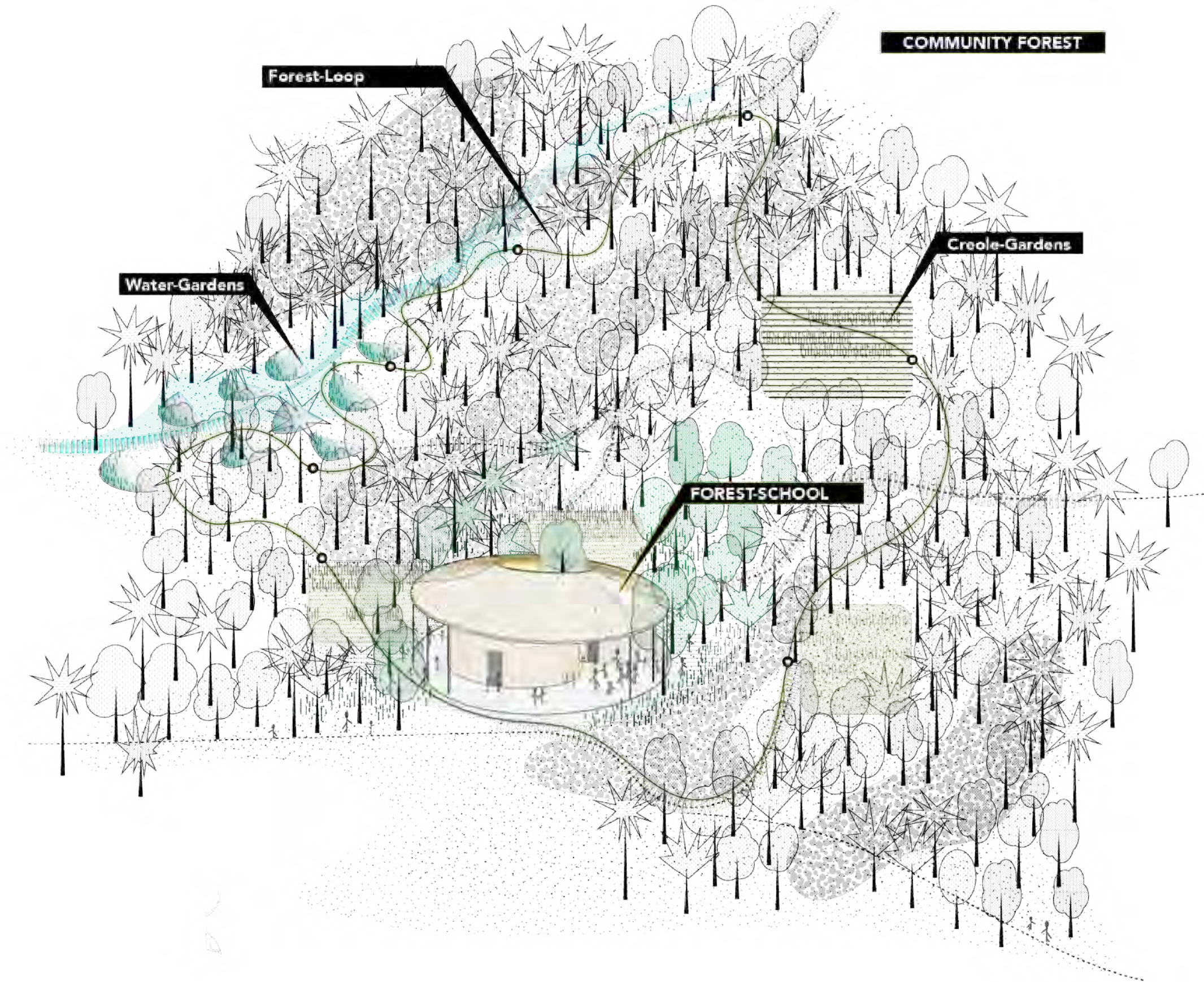


The FOREST-SCHOOL:  
Location (Zoom-in)





The FOREST-SCHOOL: a space for nature + learning + play in the Djalikunda Community Forest  
(A possible illustration...)





Koran reading in the village of Bironki  
January 2022





Indamikunda  
January 2022









Nemanako  
September 2023





Bironki

September 2023









Nemanako  
September 2023





Nemanako  
September 2023





Bironki

January 2022





Community engagement in Bironki  
January 2022





Community engagement in Nemanako  
January 2022





The Forest and the Bolanhas  
January 2022





Tabanca Indamikunda  
January 2022





Tabanca Nemanako  
January 2022





## January 2022





The House in Indamikunda  
January 2022





Community engagement in Camkebo  
With Students from Harvard University, September 2023





Working Session with Prof. Raúl Fernandes (Uni. Bissau)  
Djalikunda, Septemebr 2023





An architectural rendering of a school courtyard. The scene is set in a warm, sunny environment. In the foreground, several young children are playing; one boy is kicking a small orange ball. The courtyard is paved and surrounded by lush greenery, including large trees and various tropical plants. In the background, a long, single-story building with a thatched roof and open sides serves as the school. A woman is standing near a chalkboard on the left, and another person is pushing a red stroller on the right. The overall atmosphere is bright and lively.

A sketch...

ESCOLA-FORESTA /  
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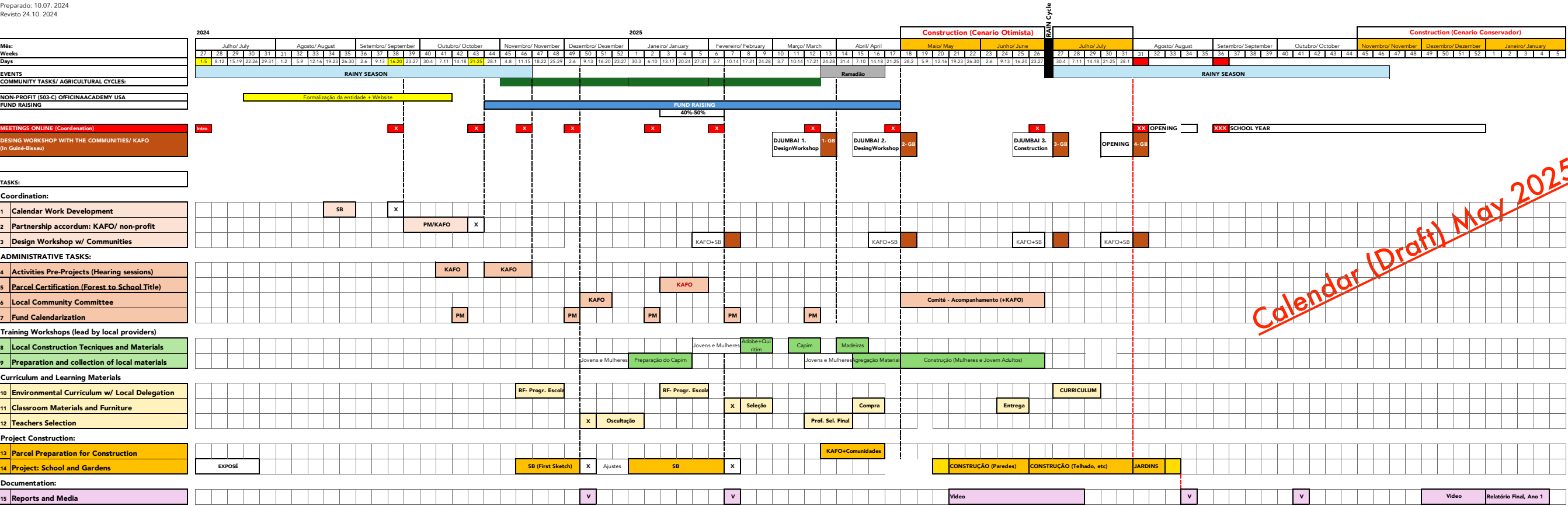
**An Overview**

Prepared by Prof. Arch. Silvia Benedito (OficinaAcademy)  
and NGO-KAFO  
10.10.2024 (update)



ESCOLA-FLORESTA - CALENDÁRIO (CENÁRIO OTIMISTA)

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