



Meet The DGFC Founders in Sabah!

An interview took place on 8th March at 10:30am with Benoit Goosens and Milena Salgado Lynn who are the founders of DGFC. DGFC stands for Danau Girang Field Centre and it started in 2008. DGFC is a center where people inspect and look after animals in the forests/wild with cameras and they are trying to make a difference in the world. They also encourage people to stop illegal hunting; trading. They hold events and projects for people to take part in and they are fighting for wildlife.

What inspired you to start DGFC?

Benoit - Sabah in 1999, when I was very young, I visited a friend. When I came here, I fell in love with Sabah right away because of the beautiful wildlife that lives here. I found a wildlife center abandoned in the middle of the forest (when I was exploring), which is now called DGFC, and decided to rebuild the building and start an animal research center.

What was your childhood dream? Do you feel like you have accomplished it?

Benoit - I have always dreamed of working with wildlife, inspecting tropical animals that live in forests and becoming a wild veterinarian. I think I have accomplished my childhood dream.

Milena - I have always dreamed of becoming an Olympic swimmer at first so I trained hard and harder but stopped because it was too much for me. So I went back to biology because my love was in animals. After a while I went to be an engineer. However, after I grew older, I went back to biology to study animals again. I might have accomplished my dream.

What inspired you to start field work? What would you say to young scientists to encourage them?

Benoit - I didn't have much time to focus on field work because I spent more time in the labs at a university called Cardiff. After some time, I decided to go to China to study Pandas because I wanted to focus on nature. I would say follow your dreams but finish school first and ignore your parents. Choose your right path and choose a good university to study what you like.

Milena - Science will always live in your body and cells and we always have something to learn in science. More people can contribute to study science and science will never end. Follow your dreams and never be forced into anything you don't like. Choose your right path.

Which of your projects do you think is the most important and why?

Benoit - All our projects in DGFC are important. There are a lot of center's that care for wildlife in Sabah and we're trying to do the same thing. We try to stop illegal hunting; trees being cut down; fighting for wildlife and we make projects to make a difference.

Milena - We also try to stop illegal trading, poaching, trafficking and deforestation. Illegal trading is basically people who kill animals and cut off the goods. For example, people kill elephants for their tusks to sell it and they kill sharks to sell their fins only. This way they get a lot of money. We fight for wildlife and try to make an impact.

What animal is your main conservation priority and what impact would it's extinction have on the ecosystem?

Benoit - Pangolins are one of our main priorities for animals. Pangolins help balance the trees that grow and balance insects called termites. Termites eat and attack trees and pangolins eat them so it balances how much termites are living right now. And if one of the animal specie(s) are gone, other species will soon be extinct too.

What projects are you planning for the future to protect living habitats?

Benoit - I want to continue tracking wildlife and look after them because it's important to them but also it's important to us. Another reason is, COVID - 19 is in our world and it can harm and make animals sick so I want to help them.

Milena - Animals have a substance in their bodies and if humans living in the forests need food and kill animals, and the substances go in the humans bodies, it can be very dangerous for them and dangerous for more animals near their surroundings.

How do you fund the work that you do at DGFC?

Benoit - We set up foundations, organisations online. We also get events and information from the USA zoos and we have visitors coming to apply for the event and give us money. We also set up donations to get donations from people online and we use those money to buy supplies to monitor animals and to pay our center's rent.

So basically DGFC helps animals and they do their very best to stop people doing illegal things like poaching, deforestation, trafficking and hunting. They also look after and monitor animals if they're doing well or not and they will always stand up for wildlife and the wonderful animals that live on Earth. They set up fun events and foundations for people to take part and get donations from people to help animals! If you want to look more into Benoit Goosens and Milena Salgado Lynn go to this website:

<http://www.dgfc.life/home/dgfc/>