



Library of Experience

I. PERSONAL INTRODUCTION: *Who are you and what do you do?*

[Ignace Schops](#)



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Active in various roles and projects:

- Environmentalist
- Biodiversity, landscaping & herpetology expert
- Director of the Belgian NGO Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland (RLKM)
- President of EUROPARC Federation
- Full member of the EU chapter of Club of Rome
- Council of Natuurpunt
- Part of Climate Leadership Corps of Al Gore

II. TOP 10 QUESTIONS: *Please share with us your experience*

1. What is your earliest memory of enjoying or feeling connected to nature?

When I was 6 years old. Collecting newts and tadpoles questioning myself where these beautiful (monsters) creatures came from; what they were eating (bread – like us - I thought).

2. Was there an incident, or situation in your life that inspired you into the field of work you now do?

Yes, later, when I was 9 years old I found a Ladybird in the hedges in the meadows ... I tried to catch them and put it in the (stolen) box of matches of my father. In the box, I packed some grass leaves for food ... after opening “my” box of matches more than 100 times over 3 days my Ladybird died. Why? Later, I realized that without space, food, water, and light it is not possible to survive.

3. What book, or article, painting, photograph or TV or radio programme would you say has influenced you most in your work?

[Song of the dodo – David Quammen](#)

4. What person has influenced or inspired you most in your work and why?

A local conservationist of the valley of the Black Creek named Willy Vanlook. He made me aware it was possible to make a difference that can be done by everyone, everywhere, anytime

5. What advice would you give to your 20 year old self?

Be confident, be co-operative, be ready. Learn about the past to design the future (of the planet)

6. What 3 words would you say to give advice to young people wishing to come into your area of work?

Passion – confidence – fun // think globally, act locally and change personally

7. What is the most fun thing about your work?

All kinds of everything - Variability of things and integration of different ideas – unexpected encounters of species and people

8. What are the hardest thing to overcome and how have you achieved this

Blind spots – things which are there, but you cannot see // Creeping normality ☹

Environmental blindness, we don't see/witness the negative changes in nature/environment because it evolves in little, rather invisible steps (i.e. silent collapse of ecosystems – climate change).

9. What motivates you to continue?

The positive energy of people & close encounters with and the wonders of nature

10. What do you want your legacy to be?

The wisdom that it is possible that when you lay a stone in a river, the river never runs like has ever run before – [it is possible to change things positively for biodiversity and the natural heritage – think globally, act locally and changer personally]
