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Jessica Duchicela Ph.D. is an Associated Professor of Ecology at the Life Science Department, Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas – ESPE, Ecuador. Dr. Duchicela has focused his studies on the interaction between arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (AMF), a symbiotic soil born fungi that colonize vascular plants and enable plants to efficiently use soil nutrients and therefore response to stress, that lead important ecosystem services. In her research she examines topics related to the ecology of natural and managed ecosystems at the community and ecosystem scales to inform land managers. Dr. Duchicela earned her M.S. and Ph.D. in Ecology, Evolution and Behavior, concentration in Environmental Science from Indiana University, Bloomington - United States.

At ESPE, she serves as Scientist and Coordinator of Research and Outreach of the Biotechnology Engineering School. As a Scientist she collaborates with governmental offices such as Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agropecuarias (INIAP), Consejo de Gobierno del Régimen Especial de Galápagos (CGREG), Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería (MAGAP) y Ministerio de Medio Ambiente (MAE) in topics such as national research agenda, capacity building on microbial ecology, biotechnology, invasive plant biology and climate change.

Her studies on the status of mycorrhizal fungi on North American Grasslands, Bolivian paramo and Galapagos Island, have been published in prestigious journals and are gaining recognition since the number of citations is increasing. More recent, Dr. Duchicela identified a unique mycorrhizal species from Galápagos Island, and a different mycorrhizal plant response of native flora of the island compared with the continent, the manuscripts are in preparation. These findings have opened a new area of research which may help to understand the role of the diversity of soil microbes on different ecosystems and the implication on ecosystem management and restoration efforts.

Dr. Duchicela is recipient of several national and international prizes, including the Matilde Hidalgo Junior Scientist Award by the Secretaria de Educacion Superior Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovacion, SENESCYT - Ecuador; Fulbright Faculty Development Grant (2007), Indiana University research and teaching assistant grants (2009 – 2013).