

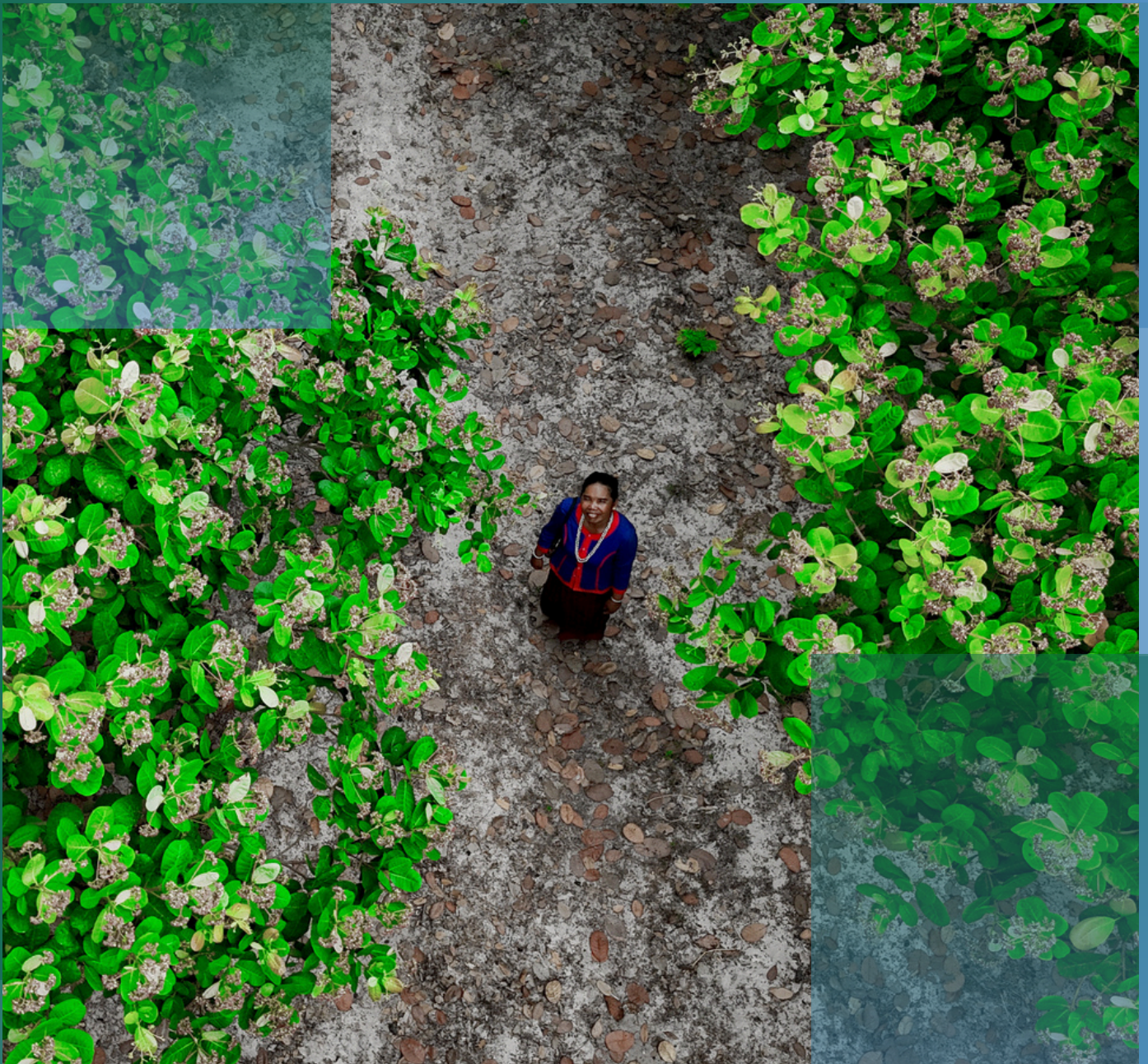


WORLD  
FOOD  
FORUM

GLOBAL  
YOUTH  
ACTION

MAY 2026

# Youth recommendations for the Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition



# Introduction

Biodiversity, food and nutrition are deeply interconnected. The diversity of species and ecosystems can contribute to more resilient livelihoods, food security and improved nutrition, especially by providing a variety of safe and nutritious food as part of healthy diets.

Recognizing these interlinkages, the **cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition** of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP), in COP 8 Decision VIII/23.

The Initiative aims to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity in programmes contributing to food security and nutrition, and to counter the loss of diversity in diets and ecosystems, by implementing four elements, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The four elements of the initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition of the CBD



**ELEMENT 1**  
Document and  
develop  
knowledge



**ELEMENT 2**  
Integrating  
biodiversity for food  
and nutrition issues  
into research and  
policy instruments



**ELEMENT 3**  
Conserving and  
promoting the wider  
use of biodiversity  
for food and  
nutrition



**ELEMENT 4**  
Enhancing public  
awareness

# Youth engagement process

In 2025, the **World Food Forum (WFF) Youth Assembly**, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), conducted a global consultation process to capture youth perspectives on the linkages between biodiversity, nutrition and diets. This process aimed to support policy action under **Decision 16/35** (par. 22) adopted by the COP to the CBD (COP16), which invites Parties to implement the Initiative in line with the **Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** and to collaborate with FAO in the preparation of an action plan for its implementation.

The consultation process combined a capacity development dialogue involving more than 250 young participants and a global youth survey in English and Spanish completed by over 600 young people from 96 countries. The consultation process adopted an agrifood systems approach, identifying entry points from ecosystems to supply chains, food environments and consumer behavior. All responses were analyzed and used to develop youth recommendations on the implementation of the Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition.

Figure 2. Structure of the consultation process

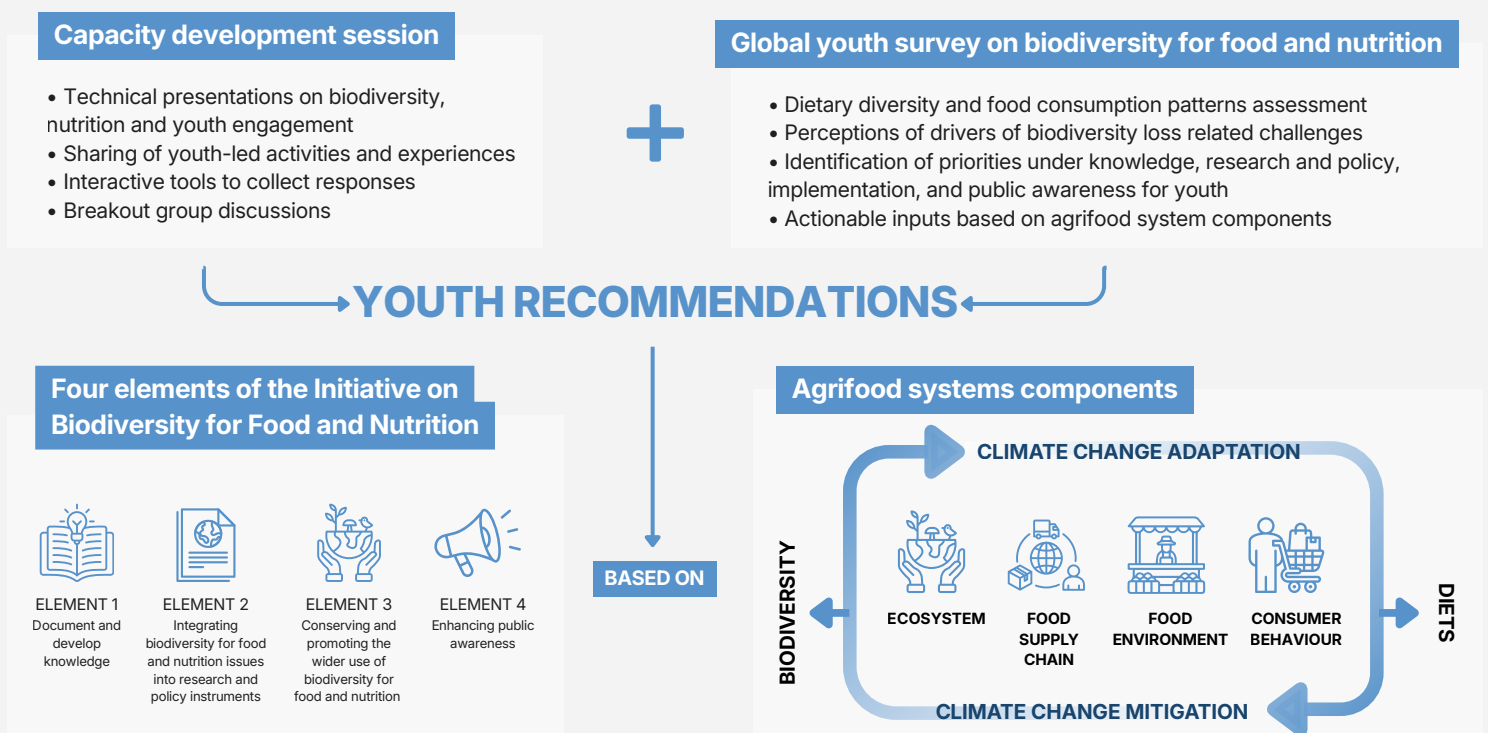


Figure 3. Age representation

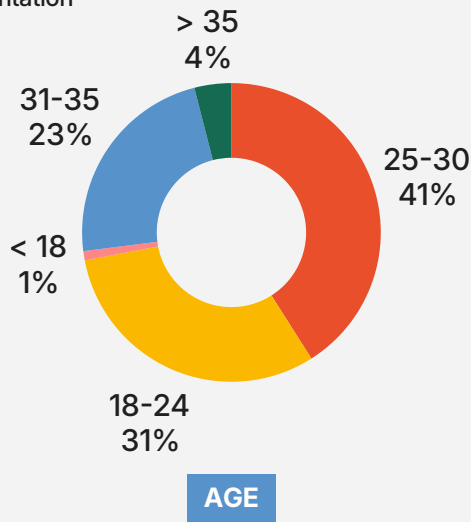
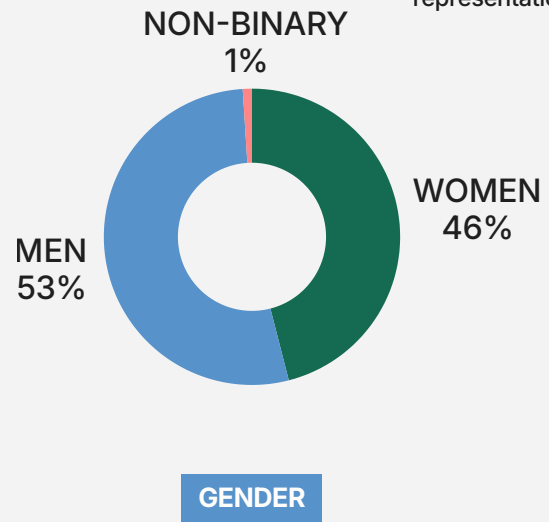


Figure 4. Gender representation



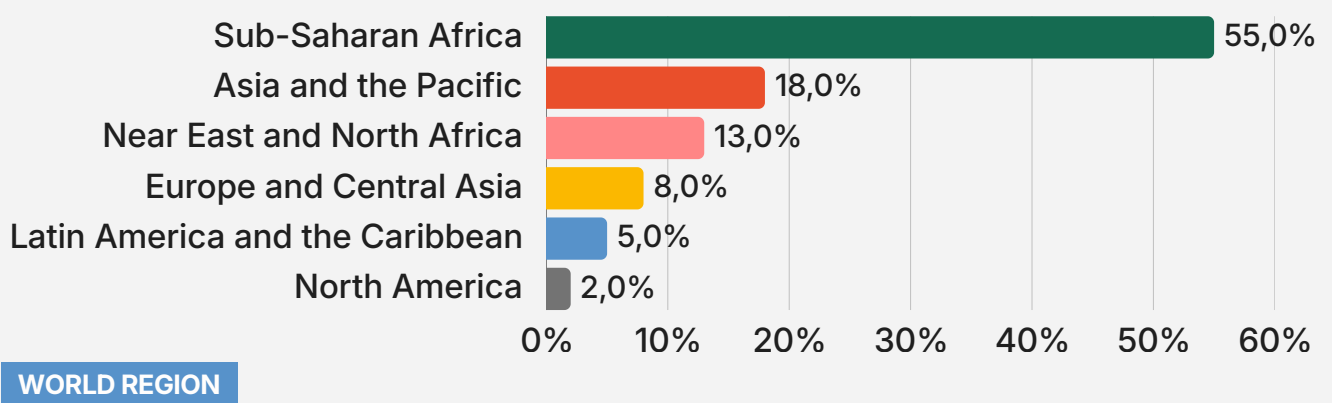
## Demographic details on respondents of the global youth survey on biodiversity for food and nutrition

Most respondents were aged 25-30 (41 percent), followed by 31 percent being 18-24 and 23 percent between 31-35 (Figure 3).

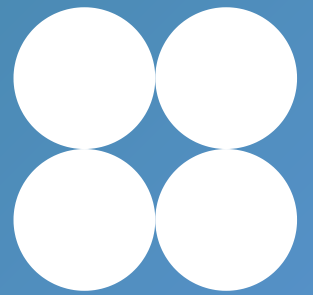
The responses reflected an overall gender balance, with 53 percent men and 46 percent women respondents (Figure 4).

In terms of world regions, most respondents came from Sub-Saharan Africa (55 percent), followed by Asia and the Pacific (18 percent) (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Regional representation



# Youth priorities identified through the consultation process



In this section, we present patterns in the responses and youth priorities that were identified through the consultation process, particularly through the youth survey.

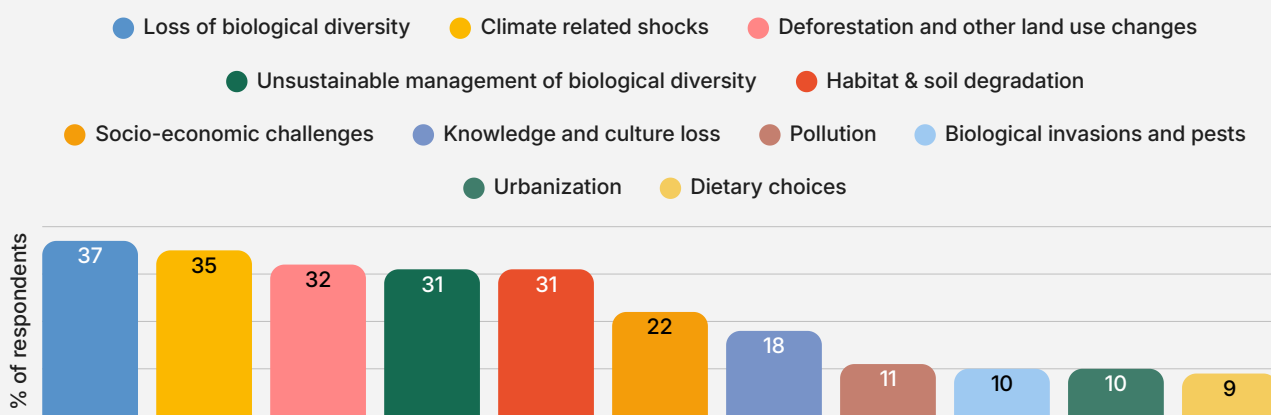
For more detailed priorities that cover a significant number of actions and topics under each element of the Initiative, please refer to the extended version of this document, which will be published separately at a later stage.



## Perceived challenges

Around 75 percent of respondents stated that they were familiar with challenges affecting biodiversity and changes in food, diets and nutrition within their communities. Overall, youth identified loss of biological diversity, climate-related shocks, deforestation and other land use changes, the unsustainable management of biological diversity, as well as habitat and soil degradation as the main challenges. Socio-economic challenges and loss of knowledge and culture were mentioned by around one fifth of respondents. 9 percent of respondents recognized dietary choices as a challenge too (Figure 8).

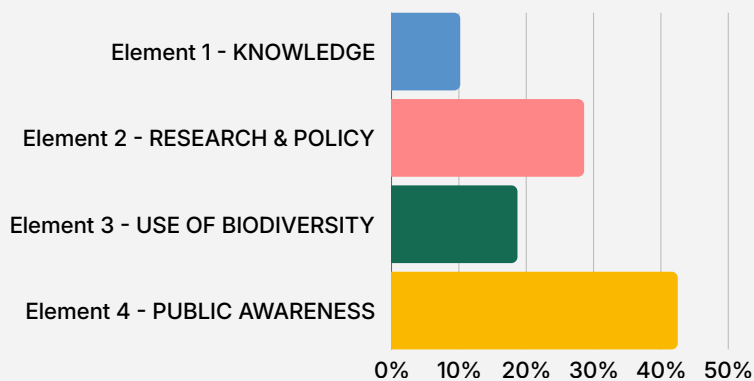
Figure 8. Main challenges related to biodiversity for food and nutrition



## Reported priorities under each element of the Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition

Respondents to the youth survey – including those representing Indigenous Peoples as well as farmers, pastoralists, fishermen, and other rural communities – reported feeling that, as of now, they can contribute most directly to public awareness and to research and policy on biodiversity for food and nutrition (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Elements of the initiative that youth feel they can currently contribute to the most



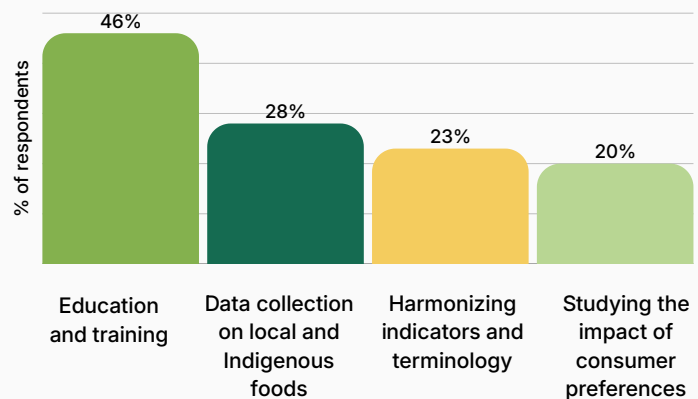
# Youth identified various priorities under each element of the Initiative, as shown in the boxes below.

## Box 1. Developing and documenting knowledge

### Education and training

Disseminating knowledge on the links between biodiversity, nutrition and diets through youth-targeted education and training emerged as the main priority for 46 percent of respondents, particularly in regard to leveraging traditional food cultures and sustainable agricultural practices.

Figure 10. Youth priorities under developing and documenting knowledge (Element 1)



### Data collection on local, neglected and underutilized species, including food from Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems

Nearly 30 percent of respondents emphasized the need for research to prioritize the strengthening and systematization of data collection on neglected and underutilized species, including native species and foods that are a part of Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems, which remain significantly underrepresented in both research and policy processes.

### Harmonizing indicators and terminology

For 23 percent of respondents, establishing standard terminology and indicators on biodiversity, nutrition and diets was identified as a priority, for it would support stronger analysis of their linkages and cross-sectoral integration.

### Studying the impact of consumer preferences

Twenty percent of respondents called to increase research on how demand influences agrifood systems, particularly in relation to the linkages between food consumption patterns, agricultural production, and the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems and species.

## Box 2. Integrating biodiversity for food and nutrition issues into research and policy instruments

Among respondents who reported on policy instruments, about 63 percent were aware of specific national policies, followed by voluntary guidelines or National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) (Figure 11).

About 40 percent of those respondents were aware of existing or potential policies that integrate biodiversity, nutrition and diets linkages at either the production, market or consumer level (Figure 12).

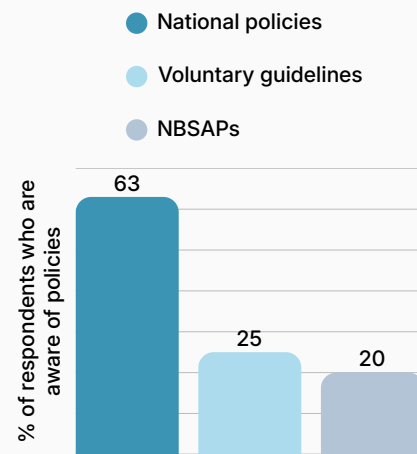
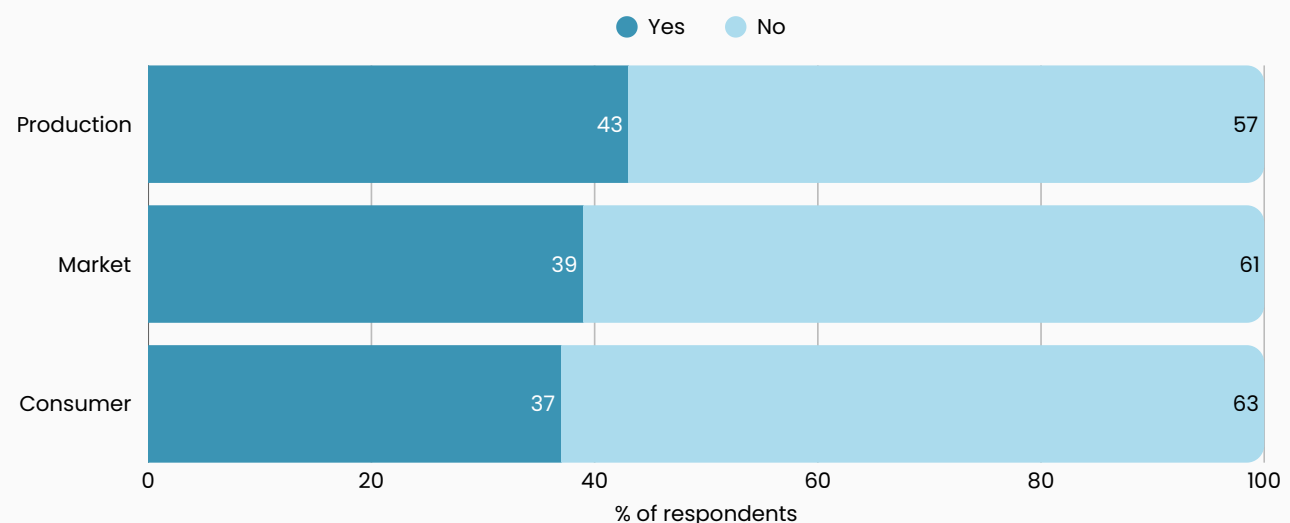


Figure 11. Policy instruments acknowledged by respondents

Cited examples included policies supporting diversified cropping systems and sustainable farming practices at the production level, initiatives to strengthen value chains for neglected and underutilized species at the market level, and dietary guidelines that encourage the consumption of nutrient-rich, traditional and locally produced foods at consumer level.

However, respondents consistently noted that policy instruments they are familiar with seem to lack strong inclusivity processes, particularly in recognizing and meaningfully engaging youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities as knowledge holders and contributors to policy development processes.

Figure 12. Awareness of policies on biodiversity for food and nutrition at different levels

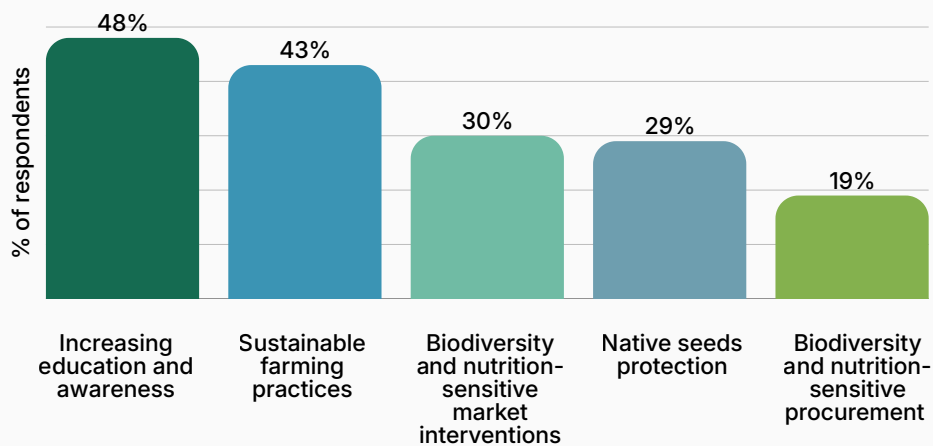


## Box 3. Conserving and promoting the wider use of biodiversity for food and nutrition

### Increasing education and awareness about the use of biodiversity for food and nutrition

Almost half of the respondents highlighted the importance of increasing education and awareness efforts under the conservation and promotion of wider use of food biodiversity. They emphasized the need to valorize traditional food cultures while mainstreaming more diversified and resilient farming systems.

Figure 12. Youth priorities under conserving and promoting the wider use of biodiversity for food and nutrition (Element 3)



### Advancing sustainable, inclusive farming for better livelihoods

Training on and implementation of sustainable farming practices, such as organic, agroecological and regenerative practices, was mentioned by 43 percent of the respondents. Support for youth- and women-led entrepreneurship was often emphasized to help achieve sustainable livelihoods. Youth want to receive support to produce diverse food species, shifting away from monocropping and harmful practices that negatively affect the conservation of natural resources and the health of ecosystems.

### Leveraging food environments to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use

Actions targeting change at the food environment level were frequently identified by respondents. Approximately one third prioritized the inclusion of neglected and underutilized species, as well as Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and food systems in school meals. Respondents also emphasized the protection of native seeds and genetic diversity through community seed banks and seed saving initiatives, alongside policy measures aimed at mainstreaming food biodiversity more broadly within markets.

TOTAL POSTS

## Box 4. Enhancing public awareness

### Prioritizing areas of interventions and methods for awareness raising

One third of respondents identified the integration of knowledge on biodiversity, nutrition and diets in both formal and informal education, particularly targeting children and adolescents, as a key method to raise long-lasting awareness on the conservation and sustainable use of food biodiversity (Figure 14). Around 22 percent of the respondents identified storytelling as an effective traditional communication method to be leveraged for transmitting intergenerational knowledge. Finally, about one fifth emphasized the importance of increasing knowledge through targeted awareness raising and training among young farmers.

Figure 14. Prioritized methods to raise public awareness (Element 4)

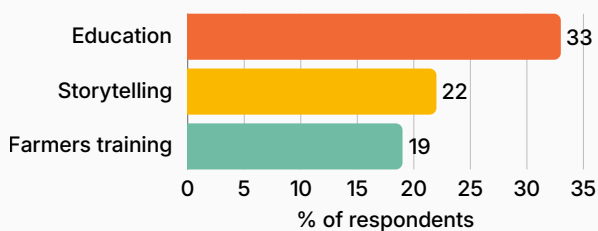
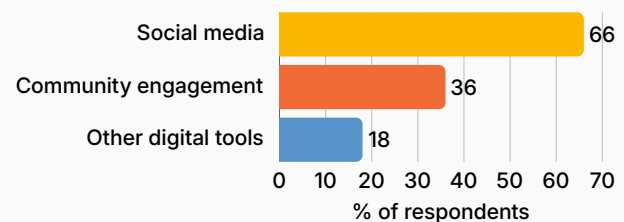


Figure 15. Tools to be leveraged for public awareness raising (Element 4)



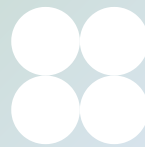
### Emphasizing digital and community tools for knowledge sharing

A range of tools were identified by respondents to support awareness raising efforts with the primary goal of making the linkages between biodiversity, nutrition and diets more accessible to the broader public while helping to reduce misinformation (Figure 15).

Using social media was emphasized by two thirds of respondents, including for storytelling activities. Over one third of respondents highlighted community-level engagement activities, such as community gardens, agricultural fairs, awareness raising and in-person events. In addition, 18 percent of respondents pointed to the potential of digital and smart tools beyond social media, such as mobile applications, SMS alert systems, gamified agricultural processes, and, in a limited number of cases, artificial intelligence.

These tools were seen as means to enable faster knowledge exchange and foster greater ownership among youth by engaging them through approaches that are accessible and aligned with their everyday digital practices.

# Youth recommendations



The recommendations presented below are based on the integrity and transparency of the consultation process, and they are informed by both the survey and the capacity development session. They apply an agrifood systems approach to reflect youth recommendations across ecosystems, supply chains, food environments, and consumer behavior.

## Recommendations at the ecosystems level



**Scale** up the adoption of sustainable agroecological practices that protect ecosystems by providing tailored financial and technical support, such as incentives and capacity development, specifically targeting young farmers.

**Prioritize** the right to food across policies and programmes that involve the management of ecosystems and natural resources, ensuring that conservation and sustainable use objectives are aligned with the preservation of local livelihoods, with particular attention to Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems and rights.

## Recommendations throughout the food supply chain



**Strengthen** the sustainable use of neglected and underutilized species, including native foods and foods from Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems by facilitating their production and community ownership through innovative solutions such as community seed banks, while enabling income-generating opportunities.

**Support** cooperatives and youth-led small and medium enterprises by enabling market access and protecting local farmers, particularly women, who produce diverse, nutrient-rich foods and face barriers to land access, decision-making and production diversification.

**Leverage** digital tools and youth's familiarity with technology by integrating smart solutions across supply chains, strengthening efficiency and outcomes while opening new pathways for young people to actively shape and improve agrifood systems.



## Recommendations across food environments

**Emphasize** the use of food biodiversity in school meals and involve youth in their design, leveraging repeated consumption and learning as entry points for sustained behavioral change and the adoption of healthy food habits among new generations.

**Facilitate** access to and the selling of diverse food products by supporting youth-led enterprises and youth-oriented investments in market infrastructure.

**Increase** food availability at the local level by enabling community ownership of food environments, particularly by facilitating youth access to land and markets, promoting shorter supply chains, and investing in local solutions such as community gardens.



## Recommendations targeting consumer behavior

**Integrate** education on linkages between biodiversity, nutrition, and diets as well as the health and environmental impact of different dietary patterns in school curricula to foster long-lasting behavioral change that can improve dietary outcomes and promote sustainable agrifood systems.

**Support** the transmission of traditional knowledge by leveraging digital tools, storytelling approaches and in-person activities, including its integration into formal and informal curricula and community gardens.

**Promote** awareness raising and educational campaigns that encourage the consumption of diverse, local, seasonal, and traditional foods, with a strong emphasis on the sustainable use of neglected and underutilized species.

**Update, promote and disseminate** dietary guidelines through innovative and user-friendly approaches that resonate with young people, engaging them both as end users and as advocates to support adoption at individual, household and community levels.

# Call to action

## Governments and policymakers

Youth call on governments to implement the cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition, considering the following:

- Governments should institutionalize youth participation in policy design, implementation and monitoring processes, recognizing youth as current knowledge holders and future decision-makers, moving beyond ad hoc consultations towards permanent youth advisory or co-governance mechanisms.
- Youth must be both co-designers and beneficiaries of policies that target food biodiversity, in particular Indigenous youth, as representatives of Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems and custodians of biodiversity.
- Governments are called upon to adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to implement actions for the long-term transformation of agrifood systems, in alignment with Agenda 2030.

## Civil society and academia

Youth urge civil society organizations and academia to strengthen interdisciplinary research by generating and harmonizing evidence and data across different sectors. Supporting youth-led initiatives and individuals, particularly early-career researchers, can help bridge the gap between global policy commitments and local implementation. Youth stand in a unique position to document new knowledge on biodiversity for food and nutrition, particularly by leveraging digital innovations and technology.

## Private sector

Youth call on the private sector to shift from unsustainable and harmful production practices to nature-positive ones, which also include the diversification of species used for food, including neglected and underutilized species, and when possible, native. Businesses and other private sector actors can support the integration of youth as a part of the workforce across agrifood systems, collaborating with governments to ensure decent rural employment opportunities and contributing to rural revitalization.

## Youth worldwide

Engage in actions related to biodiversity, food and nutrition in ways that are within your reach. Gather knowledge and raise awareness among your communities on the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of food biodiversity for healthy diets.

Actively participate in policy spaces at local, national, and global levels. Call on governments to support young people as both learners and leaders of formal and informal education on the linkages between biodiversity, nutrition, and diets.