

# INVESTING IN YOUTH IS INVESTING IN DURABLE SOLUTIONS.

Empowering Youth for a Better Food Future

Compounding challenges of climate change, COVID-19 and conflicts are putting pressure on our already stressed agrifood systems, impacting both access to and availability of food.

This is not sustainable. We cannot deny the link between these issues and poverty reduction, access to healthy diets, employment generation, and, above all, peace and stability. Despite the recognized urgency, particularly the impacts on poor and vulnerable populations worldwide, more decisive action is needed to ensure the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, leaving no one behind.

Youth, who will inherit these challenges, are often ignored or excluded from processes that discuss or create longer-term policies and solutions for food and agriculture. A youth engagement platform for agrifood systems transformation, including their voice in relevant decision-making fora, is therefore essential for achieving more inclusive and sustainable pathways towards a better food future.

## SDGs

This initiative advances all SDGs, in particular:



## Partnerships

Bringing together all relevant youth stakeholders, including public and private institutions, policymakers, national youth delegates, young farmers, Indigenous youth, researchers, scientists, investors, producers, civil society organizations, consumers and UN entities to engage and empower youth for a better food future.



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## The Action

The World Food Forum (WFF), launched in 2021 as an independent network of partners hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), serves as the premier global platform to actively shape agrifood systems for a better food future, accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through youth action, science and innovation, and investment, the WFF forges new paths of action and multi-sector partnerships for agrifood impact at the local, regional and global levels to achieve a more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and hunger-free food future for all.

Within this framework, WFF Global Youth Action was established to harness the passion and power of youth, and incite positive action for agrifood systems through youth empowerment. It acts as a catalytic movement and driver of youth engagement in food governance, and serves as a knowledge center and innovation lab, fostering and inspiring youth-led solutions. It thus actively contributes to the implementation of the UN Youth 2030 Strategy and enhances youth engagement in the follow-up to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

WFF Global Youth Action is implemented through a set of thematic programmes that leverage intergenerational and cross-sectoral collaboration, innovation and investment:

- POLICY** Providing a dedicated space for youth to discuss agrifood systems policy issues, presenting a united voice through the WFF Youth Assembly and Youth Policy Board, and identifying actionable solutions locally and globally, bringing youth leaders and policy solutions into intergovernmental processes;
- INNOVATION** Empowering youth to create and scale ground-breaking solutions and scientific approaches through hackathons, masterclasses, the Young Scientists Group and startup and innovation competitions, such as the WFF Startup and Innovation Awards, the Transformative Research Challenge, and the Youth Food Lab global incubator to support young innovators;
- EDUCATION** Using knowledge as a key driver for systemic change with students and educators through activities such as upskilling masterclasses, Teachers' Labs, the Youth and UN Global Alliance (YUNGA), Junior World Food Day, digital resource centers of youth-related knowledge products and the Youth Skills Hub to provide educational opportunities for young people looking to work in the agrifood space;
- CULTURE** Engaging and inspiring youth around agrifood systems challenges through the power of youth culture, including art, film, music and gastronomy;
- ADVOCACY** Raising awareness of the key challenges facing our agrifood systems to reach a diverse and inclusive global audience of young people;
- LOCAL ACTION** Acting as a catalyst for local and regional youth initiatives, and driving impact by mobilizing youth-led local action through WFF National Youth Chapters and leveraging FAO's decentralized offices;
- FLAGSHIP EVENT** All year-long activities of WFF Global Youth Action cumulate in annual flagship events, which harness intergenerational collaboration and creativity, spanning policy, science, innovation, education, culture and investment.

## 2023 Results

In 2023, the WFF hosted over 400 events, exhibitions and sessions at its flagship event in October, bringing together over 6 000 in-person attendees, more than 65 000 online visits and participants registering from over 186 countries and territories. Some highlights of the 2023 WFF Global Youth Action include:

Global and regional **youth assemblies** and consultations held with hundreds of attendees to discuss priorities for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East and North Africa, and North America;

**Inclusive dialogues** fostered with young farmer representatives and Indigenous youth from all regions at the Young Farmers Roundtable and the Indigenous Youth Roundtable;

Second United Nations Global Indigenous Youth Forum facilitated, bringing together over 500 **Indigenous youth**, with representations from the seven global socio-cultural regions and 98 Indigenous Peoples' groups;

**Innovation challenges** held with more than 1000 young researchers and entrepreneurs; recognizing 20 winners, with more than USD 200 000 in prizes to support youth-led innovation for agrifood systems transformation;

**Youth Food Lab** global incubator launched, in partnership with Wageningen University and Research, supporting youth-led innovations from idea stage to implementation;

**YUNGA School Assembly** facilitated with more than 600 children from schools worldwide engaged in interactive agrifood systems education;

WFF **Youth Skills Hub** launched as an online capacity building platform for young professionals, offering thousands of free online courses, career opportunities and hands-on masterclasses;

Hundreds of events organized, facilitating in-depth discussions on agrifood systems transformation and creating an **interactive and inclusive space** for young individuals to participate, advocate for their ideas and ignite action;

**Youth culture** around food and agriculture fostered through the annual WFF International Film Festival, art exhibitions, agrifood-related podcasts, master chef challenges and music from all six continents;

12 WFF **National Youth Chapters** launched, with dozens more in progress, to drive greater local impact;

Global **food waste campaign** delivered, educating hundreds of thousands of participants on food waste, while providing more than 100 million rice grains for those in need on the World Food Programme Freerice platform; and serving 2.7 million meals to vulnerable communities, recovering more than 18 000 kilograms of food waste through the Universal Plate campaign;

**Youth participation in major UN conferences** throughout the year, facilitating and co-hosting agrifood-related youth events and interventions, strengthening youth participation and engagement in global issues.

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## Be part of the youth-led solution – join us!

Your investment in youth will help drive the ingenuity and dynamism of young minds, to find the most innovative and sustainable solutions and technologies for our agrifood systems, to engage youth in policy dialogues, and to serve as a catalyst for local and regional youth initiatives advancing change from the grassroots up.



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### TO LEARN MORE:

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