



WORLD
FOOD
FORUM

GLOBAL
YOUTH
ACTION

YOUNG CHEFS
PROGRAMME

TERMS OF REFERENCE



BACKGROUND

The World Food Forum (WFF)'s Young Chefs Programme (YCP) | equips young chefs (aged 18–35) with skills, knowledge and networks to take a leading role in transforming agrifood systems through culinary practices. From advancing better nutrition to promoting food security and biodiversity, its ultimate goal is to create leaders that can inspire and guide other chefs to advocate for more sustainable and healthier consumption habits.

The programme focuses on the next generation of chefs, providing training, mentorship and advocacy opportunities. Working in annual cohorts, participants will gain both technical expertise and soft skills to become influential agents of change. As part of the WFF Youth Initiative's mission, the YCP activities support youth leadership, with an emphasis on empowering young female chefs to ensure more equitable and thriving agrifood systems.

The YCP supports young chefs in launching impactful projects in their communities, encouraging them to participate in meaningful dialogue and decision-making processes. Participants will also develop a set of recipes that are nutritionally balanced, reflect local food cultures and use local ingredients when possible.

Through these efforts, participants contribute to the Young Chefs Call to Action, which aims to empower other young chefs to join the movement. These actions aim to shift mindsets and consumption patterns over time to transform our agrifood systems.

CORE VALUES

All members of the YCP are expected to uphold the WFF Youth Initiative's core values of integrity, responsibility and collaboration as well as to adhere to the highest ethical standards. Participants should promote diversity, equity and inclusion in all activities. The WFF Youth Initiative strongly encourages the participation of women, Indigenous Peoples, underrepresented minorities and other marginalized groups to ensure diverse perspectives in advocacy and action.

Scope of Work

The YCP operates for a one-year term, structured in two phases:

Phase 1: Capacity development and project design

The first half of the year focuses on capacity development, including technical workshops in areas such as nutrition, biodiversity, food waste and advocacy. Participants will create recipes that are nutritionally balanced and diverse, reflect local food cultures, are gastronomically appealing and use local ingredients when possible. They will also begin designing projects to implement within their communities that address local agrifood systems needs based on their local insight and learning experience, aligning with the regional priorities of the WFF Global Youth Action Plan (GYAP).

Phase 2: Project implementation and Young Chefs Call to Action

The second half of the year participants implement and present their projects. They will also contribute to the Young Chefs Call to Action, which aims to empower other chefs to join the movement in shifting mindsets and consumption patterns over time to transform our agrifood systems.

YCP members are also expected to:

- Contribute to various activities of the WFF Youth Initiative through a culinary approach.
- Represent the WFF Youth Initiative and YCP at events, interviews, workshops and public outreach activities.
- Participate actively in scheduled masterclasses and group activities throughout the programme.
- Submit proposals and deliverables by the communicated deadlines. Failure to do so may affect continued participation in the programme and eligibility for future opportunities.
- Maintain engagement and commitment to the full duration of the programme. Early withdrawal without prior agreement may limit the opportunities for future collaboration.
- Support coordination and collaboration within the cohort; focal points may be designated to liaise with the WFF Youth Initiative.

Admissions

YCP members are selected through an open and competitive selection process. The composition of the YCP aims to reflect gender parity and regional representation. Each cohort serves a one-year term, with the possibility to reapply once. The term of any individual YCP member shall not exceed a maximum of two cohorts (two years). Applications will be evaluated by a selection committee based on the criteria mentioned below. Interviews will take place early December 2025.

Eligibility criteria:

- Applicants must be a culinary professional of at least 18 years of age and no older than 35 by 16 November 2025;
- Have reliable internet connection;
- Have at least one active social media account that can be used for YCP advocacy and outreach activities;
- Demonstrate a commitment to sustainable gastronomy, either through culinary practice or advocacy efforts;
- Have sufficient proficiency in spoken and written English.
- Be able to dedicate between 16–20 hours per month to the role;
- Not be an immediate family member (spouse, parent, child, siblings or in-law) of a FAO employee; and
- Not be employed by FAO but can be part of WFF Youth Initiative activities (E.g. YPB, YSG, YRP etc).

Selection criteria

- Culinary experience and skills – Hands on experience or training in professional culinary settings such as restaurants, catering, culinary education or community-based food initiatives.
- Creativity and innovation – Demonstrated ability to develop recipes or projects that promote sustainable agrifood systems transformation.
- Advocacy and communication – Capacity and willingness to use social media and other platforms to advocate for better nutrition, food security and biodiversity.
- Collaboration and global mindset – Interest in contributing to the transformation of agrifood systems at local and global levels, including engagement with the GYAP regional priorities and collaboration within the WFF Youth Initiative.

Only completed applications will be accepted, which includes the submission of:

A signed working protocol;

An updated CV;

A short video (maximum two minutes) describing how the applicant would contribute to the YCP and their vision for youth-led sustainable gastronomy;

A high-quality headshot for use in selection announcements; and

One to two sentences outlining what the applicant hopes to gain from participating in the programme.

The programme prioritizes gender and geographic diversity, with focus on young women.