

CultivatED: School engagement approach 2026

The Discover–Design–Develop framework
for sustainable agrifood systems
education in schools





BACKGROUND - CULTIVATED 2025

The World Food Forum (WFF) is a global platform hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that drives action to transform agrifood systems through the power of youth, science and innovation, and investment. Bringing together all stakeholders, it serves as a dynamic space for turning ideas into actions, scaling solutions and forging synergistic partnerships. By uniting diverse voices and fostering cross-sectoral and intergenerational collaboration, it accelerates progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, driving action at global, regional and local levels.

Within this context, the World Food Forum (WFF) Global Youth Action Initiative (Youth Initiative) within FAO, Office of Youth and Women (OYW), which was established in 2024 has developed a comprehensive school engagement approach for 2026. This approach aims to institutionalize youth engagement mechanisms and strengthen education systems as drivers of agrifood systems transformation.

In 2025, the WFF Education Programme piloted CultivatED in Italy, a structured school engagement initiative designed to introduce learners and educators to agrifood systems through experiential and project-based learning. CultivatEd engaged four schools throughout the year, reaching more than 750 students. By September 2025, the programme delivered 17 masterclasses, including five live virtual sessions and 12 recorded lessons. Each participating school developed its own project as part of the programme's experiential learning component.





CULTIVATED 2026

In 2025, schools in Italy engaged with global agrifood systems challenges, strengthened systems thinking and tested locally relevant actions aligned with sustainable food futures. The 2025 pilot demonstrated the value of a coordinated school-based approach that connects global knowledge resources with local action, while reinforcing the role of educators as catalysts for youth agency in agrifood systems.

In 2026, the WFF Youth Education Programme aims to formalize a decentralized, scalable school engagement model that builds on the lessons learned from the CultivatED pilot. The programme seeks to strengthen global to local linkages by connecting schools to international agrifood systems priorities while enabling context-specific implementation at national levels.

Through a decentralized approach supported by FAO Country Offices, WFF National Youth Chapters and Education partners, the programme connects schools to a global agrifood systems youth engagement network.

This model facilitates peer exchange across regions, reinforces coherence between global knowledge resources and local action and supports the institutionalization of youth engagement agrifood systems mechanisms within existing education systems.

CultivatED 2026 will also incorporate the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance ([YUNGA Challenge Badges](#)) into its work. The Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) is a partnership between United Nations Agencies, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organizations, international, national and local entities all over the world.

YUNGA was conceived as a gateway to assist the engagement of young people in activities of key environmental and social concern and to promote their participation in the initiatives of the United Nations.

These badges aim to raise awareness, educate and most of all, motivate young people to improve their behaviours and be active agents of change globally and in their local communities.



OBJECTIVES AND COMPETENCIES

The overall objective of the 2026 CultivatED project is to strengthen and scale school-based engagement in agrifood systems education by establishing a coordinated and sustainable network of schools, educators, and focal points, actively delivering agrifood systems education. This network will empower young people and educators to meaningfully contribute to agrifood systems transformation within their school communities and beyond.

Aligning with **SDG 4 (Target 4.7)** and the **FAO Strategic Framework**, CultivatED seeks to:

OBJECTIVES

- **Engage schools and educators across FAO Member States** through structured agrifood systems education approaches.
- **Enhance children's and adolescents' competencies** to address challenges in agrifood systems, environmental issues and overcome social barriers, using globally recognized learning tools, such as YUNGA Challenge Badges.
- **Empower educators and education focal points** as key stakeholders for youth engagement, in agrifood systems, reinforcing their role within national and regional education networks.
 - *Education focal points are individuals or organisations that facilitate the CultivatED framework with schools at the national level.*
- **Enable decentralized implementation of agrifood systems education initiatives** anchored in local contexts.
- **Facilitate cross-regional exchange** and support the development of locally relevant agrifood systems projects.

TARGET AUDIENCE

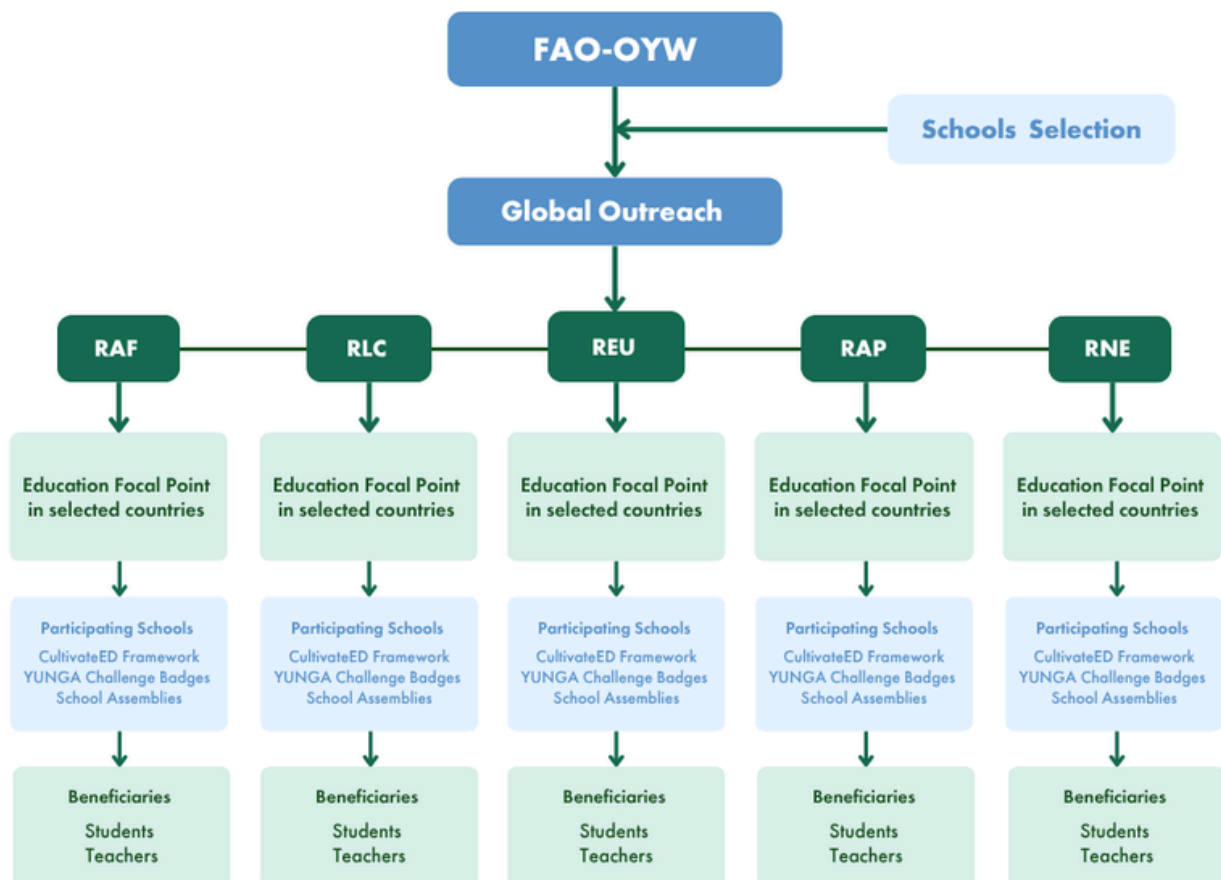
- The primary target audience consists of primary and secondary school students and educators in a network of participating schools in a country.
- The ultimate beneficiaries are **students** who will strengthen their knowledge, skills, and agency to engage in agrifood systems transformation within their school communities.
- CultivatED specifically targets children and adolescent youth
- **Primary school ages 5-12 and secondary school ages 13-18**
- In addition to this, **teachers** are also beneficiaries as they use this framework and resources to complete the entire CultivatED process with their student groups in 2026.



IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The CultivatED Schools Approach will be implemented and facilitated through a structured CultivatED Education Focal Point Management System.

- Led by a member of the WFF Youth Initiative, who oversees global coordination, quality assurance, monitoring, reporting and communication with participating countries.
- At the country level, implementation is led by **Education Focal Points**, including those from FAO Decentralized Offices and participating education institutions. These focal points are responsible for supporting the delivery of the CultivatED framework in their respective countries.
- The diagram below illustrates the implementation of CultivatED across all FAO regions.
- Below is the School-Based Agriculture Engagement Approach 2026.





CULTIVATED EDUCATION FOCAL POINT

Who is an Education Focal Point?

The Education Focal Point is a designated individual or group of individuals at the national level responsible for coordinating, supporting, and monitoring the implementation of the CultivatED framework within a country.

They serve as the primary link between participating schools and the WFF Youth Education Programme, ensuring the consistent and high-quality delivery of activities while adapting them to national education systems and local agrifood priorities.

Education Focal Points:

- Support the delivery of the Discover, Design and Develop phases in a consistent and context-relevant manner;
- Work closely with schools, teachers and students to facilitate engagement and learning;
- Disseminate educational tools, including the YUNGA Challenge Badges, using the CultivatED Training Toolkit;
- Organize decentralized School Assemblies or support participation in the WFF Global School Assembly; and
- Lead monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), including data collection, analysis and reporting to the WFF Education Programme.

Helpful resources:

- CultivatED Training Kit
- [YUNGA Challenge Badges](#)
- Masterclasses both technical and soft skills on different agrifood systems thematic areas



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE: CULTIVATED LEARNING PHASES

The CultivatED School Approach follows the established Discover, Design and Develop structure.

1) During the **Discover phase**, schools and educators engage with the [YUNGA Challenge Badges](#), which provide globally recognized, action-oriented learning modules on agrifood systems themes. These badges support foundational knowledge, critical thinking and practical action and include themes such as sustainable agrifood systems, climate action, biodiversity, water and responsible consumption. Completion of designated badges forms the basis for school recognition and progression within the programme. Additionally, soft skills development is supported by sharing the 2025 recorded masterclasses. The schools are supported with relevant learning materials.

2) The **Design** phase centres on collective reflection, peer exchange and co-creation. Schools participate in decentralized WFF School Assemblies hosted in their respective countries, where students and educators present learning outcomes, refine project concepts and align local initiatives with global agrifood systems priorities.

In addition to the decentralized School Assemblies, schools in Italy will be invited to join the WFF Global School Assembly in person in Rome, with schools outside of Italy invited to attend online.

Global School Assembly – This gathering of schools serves as the platform for intergenerational dialogue among students as they present their perspectives on the opportunities and challenges they have navigated throughout the year, particularly in agrifood systems in their local contexts. It aims to create a space for sharing experiences and knowledge among youth from different regions across the globe and between generations. The Global School Assembly reinforces the role FAO plays in inspiring and supporting students to engage in agrifood systems transformations.

Decentralised School Assemblies – These assemblies will be facilitated by Education Focal Points at the national or local level. Just as the Global School Assembly provides a platform for schools to convene, share knowledge, and engage in peer-to-peer exchange. These localized school assemblies serve the same purpose in creating a space for schools in each respective country to come together and share their experiences and learnings generated during the Discover phase and through participation in the YUNGA Challenge Badges.



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE: CULTIVATED LEARNING PHASES

3) During the **Develop** phase, teachers guide students in turning their project designs into concrete action, building on clearly defined problems, objectives, activities and expected outcomes established in the other two phases.

Education Focal Points support teachers by strengthening the practical implementation of projects and encouraging experiential, hands-on learning. Learners then implement agriculture-based projects within their schools and communities, adapting activities to local contexts and available resources.

The insights are consolidated to inform recommendations for future CultivatED cohorts.

The 2026 school engagement approach will ensure alignment with local and national education curriculum frameworks within respective countries.

The CultivatED approach comprises approximately 45 - 50 hours of the curriculum.

With the allocation of each of these three core phases as below;

- **Discover (2 hours)** – This stage includes a one-hour live masterclass, access to recorded 2025 masterclass sessions and a one-hour capacity development training on agrifood leadership;
- **Design (5 hours)** – Global School Assembly and decentralized School Assemblies;
- **Develop (35 hours)** – Project implementation and career orientation session; and
- Monitoring, evaluation, research and learning support **(4 hours)**.

On the next page, you will find a comprehensive overview of the hours allocated to each phase of CultivatED and all the necessary materials for each phase.



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE: CULTIVATED RECOGNITION

Upon successful completion of the CultivatED approach, schools and students will be recognized and celebrated for their engagement in this approach. The CultivatED Recognition Awards recognize the work that schools and teachers have completed in the CultivatED journey of 2026.

1. **CultivatED WFF School Recognition Awards**

- Recognition at the Global School Assembly upon successful completion of all phases.
- Opportunity to become a “**World Food Forum CultivatED School**” for outstanding engagement in specific thematic areas in agrifood systems.
- CultivatED certificates of participation
- YUNGA Challenge Badge (physical)

2. **CultivatED WFF Champion Awards**

- Formal recognition as “**World Food Forum CultivatED Champions**” for teachers who complete the full CultivatED journey with their students.
- Capacity building in project-based learning, agrifood systems education, and soft skills facilitation.
- Access to the CultivatED Training Toolkit
- Certificates of participation



CULTIVATED PHASES DETAILED/SYLLABUS

Project Phase	Specific contents	Hr
Discover (5 hours)	<p>A. Introduction to UN, FAO, and the WFF Youth Initiative</p> <p>B. Technical knowledge of agrifood systems Topics to be chosen from by the YUNGA Challenge Badge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture 2. Biodiversity, restoration, and conservation 3. Bioeconomy 4. Climate Change (2nd Edition) 5. Disaster Risk Reduction 6. Ending Hunger 7. Energy 8. Forestry 9. Food Security and Climate Change Challenge (1st Edition) 10. Gender 11. Governance 12. Land and Water 13. Nutrition 14. The Ocean 15. Plastic Tide Turner Challenge Badge 16. Pollinators 17. Soils <p>C. One masterclass, delivered by FAO technical on the chosen YUNGA Challenge Badge (*subject to availability of experts)</p>	2h
	<p>CultivatED Soft Skills Development Masterclasses Pre-recorded CultivatED 2025 Masterclasses on the soft skills. Topics include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communications skills; 2. Collaboration and teamwork; 3. Project management and implementation; 4. Advocacy and branding strategies; 5. Behavioral Science Masterclass. 	1h
MEL	<p>Monitoring, evaluation, and learning Pre-programme survey</p>	2h



<p>Design (5 hours)</p>	<p>WFF Global School Assembly – Italy, Rome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools in Italy attend the WFF flagship event in person <p>Decentralised School Assemblies in respective countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Focal Points organize and implement a decentralized school assembly in their respective countries with schools. 	<p>5h</p>
<p>Develop (35 hours)</p>	<p>Develop final project implementation</p> <p>Each school will be guided by the Education Focal Point through the CultivatED journey.</p> <p>The Develop stage will operate as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing from lessons learned during the Discover stage and the exchange of knowledge throughout the Design phase with the School Assembly. • Teachers will facilitate and guide their students in the design of a project through the following steps: problem identification, definition of objectives, planned activities, and expected outcomes. <p>Through the YUNGA Challenge Badges curriculum activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear timelines and deliverables will be established to achieve ongoing project activities • Documentation and reporting will follow to capture key learnings and insights to inform future cohorts. 	<p>35 h</p>
<p>MEL</p>	<p>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning</p> <p>Post programme survey</p>	<p>2h</p>
<p>Total Hours</p>	<p><i>This is an approximation of the hours that are intended for a school to perform CultivatED.</i></p>	<p>45 - 50</p>



CULTIVATED TIMELINE 2026

