



# CultivatED

Discover, Design and Develop  
sustainable agrifood systems



## BACKGROUND

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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), is a global platform dedicated to transforming agrifood systems and accelerating progress toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through youth action, science and innovation, and investment, the WFF fosters strategic partnerships and cross-sector collaborations to catalyze transformative change in agrifood systems at the local, regional and global levels, working towards a sustainable, resilient and hunger-free world, leaving no one behind.

Within this framework, the WFF's **Global Youth Action Initiative** (Youth Initiative) was established to harness the passion and power of youth to transform our agrifood systems. It acts as a catalytic movement and driver of youth engagement in food governance and serves as a knowledge centre and innovation lab, fostering and inspiring youth-led solutions.

**Erasmus Student Network (ESN)** is a non-profit international student organization that supports and represents international students. Its mission is to foster cultural understanding and personal growth through the principle of “students helping students”, by providing enriching experiences and opportunities for connection across cultures.

**The WFF Youth Initiative** and **ESN** share a common vision of equipping youth with the tools, knowledge and networks to actively engage in global governance and leadership. By combining the WFF Youth Initiative’s focus on agrifood systems transformation and ESN’s expertise in international relations education, this partnership aims to enhance youth capacity-building on a global scale. For the pilot project, the WFF Youth Initiative will be working with ESN Roma Tre.



## PROJECT

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The **WFF Youth Initiative and ESN Roma Tre** propose the development of a comprehensive pilot school engagement project in collaboration with Italian schools. This project aims to integrate agrifood systems education into school curricula, inspire youth-driven solutions and empower young people to take meaningful action in shaping a more sustainable and resilient food future.

By connecting students with agrifood systems experts, young policymakers and innovators across all WFF Youth Initiative programmes, this activity fosters knowledge exchange and action. It equips **15 to 19-year-olds** with the tools, knowledge and motivation to address agrifood systems challenges, empowering local efforts that drive national and global impact, ensuring youth play a leading role in shaping the future of agrifood systems.

The strategy encourages students to become **catalysts for change** by embedding agrifood systems knowledge in their educational environment.

This pilot project is designed to create a model for integrating agrifood systems education into school curricula, with the aim of expanding it globally. Italy has been selected as the pilot country due to the strategic advantage of hosting the FAO headquarters in Rome, providing easy access to local schools. The strategies used and lessons learned from this pilot will be shared with the WFF National Youth Chapters, informing future global efforts to empower youth in agrifood systems and ensuring that the model is adaptable and impactful across diverse educational and cultural contexts.



## OBJECTIVES AND COMPETENCIES

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The project fosters global citizenship by raising awareness of agrifood systems challenges, promoting innovative solutions, and aligning with key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate meaningful interactions between youth and experts, including FAO senior management and technical teams, the WFF Youth Initiative team and global changemakers;
- Increase awareness among youth about the roles of FAO, ESN and the WFF Youth Initiative in agrifood systems, through masterclasses and hands-on learning;
- Encourage youth to actively engage in WFF Youth Initiative activities, fostering ongoing participation in shaping agrifood systems solutions beyond the pilot phase;
- Showcase diverse youth perspectives on global food security and sustainability challenges; and
- Establish inter-regional school networks to promote sustainable agrifood systems.

### KEY COMPETENCIES GAINED

- Systems thinking through learning sessions on interconnected complex topics such as agrifood systems, sustainability and global food policies;
- Interpersonal communication skills to engage with diverse stakeholders, including public speaking and advocacy skills;
- Collaboration and teamwork through the development of school projects; and
- Project management skills to ensure successful project execution.



## SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

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During the Discover phase, the WFF Youth Initiative team and ESN Roma Tre will engage young people in the project through targeted outreach in schools, encourage members of the WFF Italian Youth Chapter to participate and support, and open a public call for applications.

### Eligibility criteria:

- Have at least 15 students registered, per school, for the project;
- Students must be enrolled in the fourth or fifth grade in October 2025;
- At least a B1.2 level proficiency in English is required; and
- Priority is given to schools offering agrifood systems-related courses.

For the in-person flagship event experience, the students will be selected by their teachers.

The Design phase participation will be limited to 1 000 attendees in Rome, with each school allocated 20 spots. To ensure balanced representation, each school delegation must include one male and one female student to present statements, along with at least one teacher serving as a tutor.

The WFF Youth Initiative team will select two schools per region in Italy to ensure equal representation. Where there are more than two applicant schools per region, the selection will be based on the best applications. Schools applications will be reviewed against ongoing agrifood systems-related projects within schools, engagement of students within these activities and applicability of the projects to the school's communities.

**The WFF Youth Initiative will not be able to allocate any funding to support the schools to join the WFF School Assembly. Any cost related to it will be covered by schools.**



## STRUCTURE

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Through a structured 60-hour project plan that includes capacity development sessions (technical knowledge, soft skills and guided self-learning), participation in the WFF flagship event, project implementation and career orientation activities, the project inspires students and educators to take meaningful action towards a sustainable, inclusive and resilient food future. The entire project will be delivered in English.

During the WFF flagship event, the WFF School Assembly will feature student statements from the capacity development sessions. Guided by set guidelines, students will share their insights in a clear and impactful way. They will also participate in interactive discovery stations with hands-on learning experiences designed to deepen their understanding of agrifood systems and the interconnectedness of global issues.

The 2025 pilot school engagement project aligns with the Pathway for Transversal Competencies and Orientation (PCTO) framework for Italian schools, comprising an experience out of the curricular hours. The PCTO is an extracurricular experience, designed to balance three dimensions: learning, experience and orientation. It offers students a structured and recognized learning experience focused on sustainable agrifood systems.

This strategy will be piloted in Italy and structured around three core phases:

- Discover: Capacity development sessions (21 hours);
- Design: WFF in-person flagship event (5 hours); and
- Develop: Project implementation and career orientation session (34 hours).

*In the Discover phase, the technical skills masterclasses will be conducted live, while the soft skills sessions will be pre-recorded and shared with the school tutor in advance for self-paced weekend learning.*



Project Phase	Specific Contents	Hours
<b>Discover</b> (21 hours)	Introduction to UN, FAO & WFF Youth Initiative	2h
	<p><b>Technical knowledge of agrifood systems</b>  <i>Live one-hour masterclass on Zoom, delivered by FAO technical teams to your classroom.</i></p> <p>Topics include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Biodiversity, restoration and conservation;</li> <li>2. Bioeconomy;</li> <li>3. Climate change;</li> <li>4. Desertification, land degradation and drought;</li> <li>5. Fisheries and aquaculture;</li> <li>6. Forestry;</li> <li>7. Gender equality and women's empowerment;</li> <li>8. Land and water;</li> <li>9. Livestock; and</li> <li>10. Nutrition.</li> </ol>	10h
	<p><b>Soft skills development</b>  <i>Pre-recorded one-hour masterclass on the soft skills to deliver statements, managed and held by WFF Youth Initiative team.</i></p> <p>Topics include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communications skills;</li> <li>2. Collaboration and teamwork;</li> <li>3. Project management and implementation; and</li> <li>4. Advocacy strategies</li> </ol>	4h
	<p><b>Guided self-learning resources</b>  <i>Reading of masterclass resources and preparing student-led statements.</i></p>	5h



<b>Design</b> <i>(5 hours)</i>	<p><i>Attending the WFF flagship event in-person and engaging in the following activities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. WFF School Assembly</i></li> <li><i>2. Educational Discovery Stations</i></li> </ol>	<p>5h</p>
<b>Develop</b> <i>(34 hours)</i>	<p><b>Final Project Implementation</b>  <i>Implementation of a localized project related to the thematic topic the school students decide to present during WFF School Assembly.</i></p> <p>The students will be equipped with an implementation project booklet.</p>	<p>30h</p>
	<p><b>Career Orientation Session</b>  <i>Exploring career pathways in agrifood systems-related field. This session is supported by the Italian National Youth Chapter.</i></p>	<p>4h</p>
<b>Total Hours</b>		<p>60h</p>





# TIMELINE

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