

WFF Global Youth Action Initiative 2024 Results Report



WORLD
FOOD
FORUM

GLOBAL
YOUTH
ACTION

GOOD FOOD FOR ALL, TODAY AND TOMORROW

About the World Food Forum

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.

What is the WFF Global Youth Action initiative?

Within the framework of the WFF, the Global Youth Action initiative harnesses the passion and power of youth, and incites positive action for agrifood systems through youth empowerment. It acts as a catalytic movement and driver of youth engagement in agrifood governance, and serves as a knowledge centre and innovation lab, fostering and inspiring youth-led solutions. It thus actively contributes to the implementation of the [United Nations Youth 2030 Strategy](#) and enhances youth engagement in the follow-up to the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit.

The WFF Global Youth Action initiative is hosted within FAO's Office of Youth and Women (OYW), which was established in 2024 to strengthen FAO's capacity to better serve its Members through advocating for youth and women. The OYW ensures that youth and women act as conduits both internally, supporting women and youth career enrichment, and externally, by gathering innovative ideas and approaches from youth and women within the FAO mandate. The Global Youth Action initiative is a core component of OYW's engagement with and empowerment of youth around the world to positively transform our agrifood systems.

The activities of the initiative are implemented through a set of thematic programmes that leverage intergenerational and cross-sectoral collaboration, innovation and investment. These include a Youth Assembly, a Youth Innovation Lab, a Youth Education programme, a Youth Culture programme and a Local Youth Action programme.





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Abbreviations

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| AMR | <i>Antimicrobial resistance</i> |
| AYA | <i>African Youth Agripreneurs</i> |
| CBD | <i>United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity</i> |
| CFS | <i>Committee on World Food Security</i> |
| COAG | <i>Committee on Agriculture</i> |
| COFI | <i>Committee on Fisheries</i> |
| COFO | <i>Committee on Forestry</i> |
| COP | <i>Conference of the Parties</i> |
| ECOSOC | <i>United Nations Economic and Social Council</i> |
| FAO | <i>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</i> |
| GIYC | <i>Global Indigenous Youth Caucus</i> |
| GYBN | <i>Global Youth Biodiversity Network</i> |
| IAAS | <i>International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences</i> |
| IFAD | <i>International Fund for Agricultural Development</i> |
| OYW | <i>FAO Office of Youth and Women</i> |
| PPR | <i>Peste des petits ruminants</i> |
| RFS | <i>Real Food Systems</i> |
| SDG | <i>Sustainable Development Goal</i> |
| SIA | <i>Startup Innovation Awards</i> |
| STI Forum | <i>United Nations Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals</i> |
| TRC | <i>Transformative Research Challenge</i> |
| UNCCD | <i>United Nations Convention on Combatting Desertification</i> |
| UNDP | <i>United Nations Development Programme</i> |
| UNESCO | <i>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</i> |
| UNFCCC | <i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i> |
| UNFSS | <i>United Nations Food Systems Summit</i> |
| UNICEF | <i>United Nations Children's Fund</i> |
| UNIDO | <i>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</i> |
| WASAG | <i>Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture</i> |
| WFF | <i>World Food Forum</i> |
| WFP | <i>World Food Programme</i> |
| WUR | <i>Wageningen University & Research</i> |
| XTC | <i>Extreme Tech Challenge</i> |
| YFL | <i>Youth Food Lab</i> |
| YPB | <i>Youth Policy Board</i> |
| YSG | <i>Young Scientists Group</i> |
| YUNGA | <i>Youth and United Nations Global Alliance</i> |





Introduction



Introduction

In 2024, the World Food Forum (WFF) Global Youth Action initiative entered its fourth year, embarking on a transformative journey toward a world with good food for all, for today and tomorrow. Throughout the year, it remained steadfast in its mission to empower young people to drive transformation within agri-food systems and address climate challenges on both local and global scales. Through expanded multi-generational initiatives, deeper collaborations and greater inclusivity, the WFF Global Youth Action initiative strove to create lasting impact in the journey toward a more sustainable and equitable food future for all.

The initiative brought together youth organizations, governments, the private sector, academia and Indigenous communities, among others. Over the year, youth collaborated to define regional priorities and policy recommendations, launching the first-ever [Global Youth Action Plan](#) to move from policy to action. It established ten new National Youth Chapters for greater local impact, supported research and innovative startups, and invested in initiatives for lasting change. Additionally, it connected people of all ages through music, film and gastronomy, using culture as a catalyst for change.

“Your ideas, your energy, and your commitment are what will lead us towards a more dynamic and prosperous future”.

– Qu Dongyu, FAO Director-General



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02

Youth Assembly highlights



Innovating for Sustainability: Bridging Tradition and Technology in Africa's Agri-Food Systems

FAO

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|  Ms. Leila Beldjoudj Director of the National Directorate Research Services, Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Government of the Republic of South Africa |  Hon. Dr. Bruce Kannyemba Kannyemba Minister of State for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of Uganda |  Abatechew Kassaemba Secretary General of HEDRI/NET, a member of CTOF and President of the Regional Youth Council of ICOPFA, Regional FO of Western Africa for WIF |  Judy Kigonda Co-Chair, Global Indigenous Youth Caucus and FAO, Field Here |
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Youth Assembly highlights



The WFF [Youth Assembly](#), led by the [Youth Policy Board](#) (YPB), serves as a year-round open, inclusive and structured platform for young people to co-create and engage in discussions about various agrifood systems related issues. It brings together young individuals, youth entities, organizations and constituencies to discuss specific policy topics within agrifood systems, and to develop joint recommendations and solutions that can be brought into intergovernmental processes and translated into programmatic actions.

In 2024, the Youth Assembly was significantly enhanced and expanded to fulfil its mission of establishing a consolidated and representative voice for youth in agrifood systems governance. Transitioning from a platform that was primarily convened during the WFF flagship event to a year-round process, the Youth Assembly brought together more than 1 500 national and partner youth representatives and observers for 46 youth assembly sessions throughout the year. This process included consultations that focused on each region of the world, identified youth priorities, and informed the development of the first Global Youth Action Plan for each region to guide the advocacy and policy work of the Assembly for the coming year. The Assembly also covered a range of critical thematic topics and disseminated Assembly outcomes in global governance spaces, including the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO), the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

29th Conference of the Parties (COP29), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD) COP16; and the Rome Water Dialogue on the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG). The year represented a notable step forward in meaningfully engaging youth in shaping the agrifood systems policies that will impact the future they will inherit and laid the foundation for the continued empowerment of youth in agrifood systems transformation going forward.

2024 Youth Assembly highlights included:

Launch of the new Youth Policy Board cohort 2024–2025

The WFF Youth Assembly launched its 2024–2025 YPB cohort, bringing together 24 young changemakers from all six regions to advance a youth-led vision for global agrifood policy. Selected from over 3 500 applicants in a rigorous four-tier process, this cohort demonstrated exceptional leadership, policy expertise and dedication to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over the year, the YPB played a key role in the WFF Youth Assembly's policy initiatives, coordinated regional and thematic activities and ensured youth engagement in international fora, working with youth groups worldwide to shape inclusive and, impactful agrifood policies.

Regional Youth Assembly sessions and consultations

Over the course of the year, the Youth Assembly held over 18 regional consultation sessions on the policy priorities identified by the YPB from each region. These sessions and surveys were key to further developing the [Global Youth Action Plan 2025–2026](#), a two-year blueprint to guide the activities of the YPB, the Youth Assembly Secretariat and relevant stakeholders. The Plan provides an overview of each region's challenges and identifies policy priorities, coupled with actions to address these challenges in alignment with the policy priorities.



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Africa – 27 July and 7 September

Over 170 delegates were consulted on their perspectives on the policy priority identified by the YPB members from Africa: “Support smallholder families, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth farmers by enhancing their capacities through targeted training and workshops on digital technologies, strengthening partnerships with research institutions and promoting climate-smart agriculture”. Some key takeaways from these consultations included:

- Improved digital connectivity and training programmes have begun to enhance agricultural productivity and market connectivity in rural areas, empowering farmers and marginalized groups.
- Increased support from digital platforms and farmer cooperatives is helping smallholder farmers connect with reliable markets, access agricultural inputs and secure sustainable financial services, leading to increased incomes.
- The integration of traditional farming techniques with modern digital agriculture solutions is enhancing productivity and resilience.
- Initiatives involving youth and women in leadership roles are fostering more equitable participation and inclusive decision-making in agrifood systems.

Asia and the Pacific – 27 April and 31 August

More than 180 delegates were consulted on their perspectives on the policy priority identified by the YPB members from Asia and the Pacific: “Invest in and promote the production, accessibility and consumption of safe, healthy and sustainable food by educating stakeholders, offering capacity development tools and enhancing their understanding of the interconnected challenges within the agrifood system”. Some key takeaways from these consultations were:

- Significant challenges are hindering youth from taking action towards more sustainable agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets; a lack of capacity development, limited education and insufficient funding are major barriers.
- The incorporation of local and traditional foods into modern diets is becoming a growing area of interest to support domestic food security and preserve traditional knowledge.
- There is a pressing need for targeted support to empower young people to transform their diets and actively participate in policy discussions.
- Collaboration across youth organizations, government bodies and educational institutions is essential for addressing these challenges and enabling young leaders to thrive in the agrifood sector.



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Europe and Central Asia – 20 July and 30 August

Over 100 delegates were consulted on their perspectives on the policy priority identified by the YPB members from Europe and Central Asia: “Increase youth involvement across various fields and positions within the supply chain by establishing accessible training and knowledge-sharing hubs focused on providing practical education aimed at reducing food loss and waste throughout the supply chain”. Some key takeaways from these consultations included:

- A broader focus on local action and intergenerational collaboration is needed.
- Age imbalances and village abandonment remain significant challenges, with young farmers on small family farms struggling to maintain their livelihoods due to post-harvest losses.
- Young professionals are key to driving sustainable agricultural innovations, with knowledge-sharing hubs and supporting youth-led startups identified as essential strategies.
- Collaboration between public, private and academic sectors is crucial for scaling sustainable solutions, and building resilient agrifood systems.
- An expansion of plant-based agriculture and adopting composting practices to reduce mineral fertilizer reliance and enhance soil health are needed in alignment with FAO’s 2022–2031 recommendations for climate-resilient farming.
- Mobile technology innovations are essential for creating crisis-proof agrifood systems and supporting farmers.

Latin America and the Caribbean – 17 July and 29 August

More than 160 delegates were consulted on their perspectives on the policy priority identified by the YPB members from Latin America and the Caribbean: “Support the dissemination of knowledge on finance, credit and funding to diverse rights holders while preserving, acknowledging, and sharing Indigenous knowledge to support agroecology and local and nature-based solutions for the conservation of biological diversity and climate change mitigation, ensuring secure land tenure for marginalized communities”. Some key takeaways from these consultations were:

- The lack of access to information for decision-making is hindering producers from actively participating in local, national and international decision-making spaces.
- Underrepresented youth groups are inadequately included in decision making and governance bodies, limiting their capacity to influence agricultural policies.
- Insufficient transparency in agricultural sector processes and decisions is creating distrust and reducing active participation.
- Young and small producers are facing challenges in acquiring or securing land ownership, compromising their ability to invest in long-term sustainable practice.
- Despite existing mechanisms designed to protect producers, such as insurance and support networks, their implementation remains deficient, lacking effective enforcement and economically viable solutions for sustainability.



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Near East and North Africa – 18 July, 30 August and 27 September

Over 100 delegates were consulted on their perspectives on the policy priority identified by the YPB members from the Near East and North Africa: “Improve life and work conditions for rural people, particularly social minorities in agrifood systems, by providing social protection and promoting environmentally and socially friendly practices in agriculture. This will be achieved by advancing accessible education and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration”. Some key takeaways from these consultations included:

- Youth-led innovations in rural empowerment and eco-friendly agricultural practices are showcasing the potential for sustainable development, particularly through technological solutions and social entrepreneurship.
- Recognition of the intersection between climate change, gender inequality and food insecurity in the region requires innovative, gender-responsive solutions.
- Increased emphasis on youth involvement in policy advocacy and accountability within agrifood systems is emerging as a key factor for driving change.

North America – 22 April, 16 July and 23 August

More than 190 delegates were consulted on their perspectives on the policy priority identified by the YPB members from North America: “Promote a timely and sustainable transition towards a closed-loop food supply chain that minimizes waste and maximizes resource efficiency by confronting policy and implementation

barriers within university settings, identifying cross-functional solutions, and leveraging existing research and experiences to drive youth-led impact”. Some key takeaways from these consultations included:

- There is a growing need for a broader understanding of how to scale food redistribution systems.
- The rise of micro-scale programmes and student-led clubs/organizations is receiving minimal support or involvement from post-secondary institutions.
- Negative perceptions around food waste reduction, inflexible meal plans and limited expertise are leading to poor initiation and execution of action plans.



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Thematic Youth Assembly sessions and consultations



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Over the course of the year, the Youth Assembly held thematic Youth Assembly sessions covering a wide variety of topics, gathering the inputs and perspectives of youth on specific issues of concern that can feed into ongoing intergovernmental processes.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on COFI – 2 July

Covering a range of topics related to sustainable aquatic food systems, this session brought together 55 delegates. It was organized with support from the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division to prepare youth delegates for the 36th Session of COFI. Breakout groups addressed key topics such as youth challenges in decision-making, opportunities within biodiversity frameworks, policy support for youth engagement and capacity-building priorities.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on the Pre-FAO COFO 27: Young Minds Green Solutions – 11 July

Organized with support from the COFO Youth Task Force, the International Forestry Students' Association, the Mediterranean Youth Task Force and Young Professionals for Agricultural Development, this Youth Assembly session had over 185 delegates. It aimed for youth engagement ahead of the 27th Session of COFO. The event fostered youth-led discussions on forestry challenges, innovative solutions and the Youth Call for Action, contributing valuable insights toward the Youth Roadmap on Forestry 2024.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on the CBD: The Role of Agrifood Systems in Biodiversity Conservation – 19 August

Over 100 delegates explored the critical relationship between biodiversity and agrifood systems within the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the CBD, by focusing on the role of youth and Target 10 of the Framework. This session was organized in collaboration with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), the official youth constituency supported by the CBD Secretariat.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on One Health with a focus on Antimicrobial Resistance – 2 September

In partnership with the Working Group on Youth Engagement for Antimicrobial Resistance of the Quadripartite Secretariat for One Health, the Youth Assembly brought together over 65 delegates to promote the FAO initiative "[Reduce the Need for Antimicrobials on Farms for Sustainable Agrifood System Transformation](#)". Insights and approaches were gathered on One Health, as well as policy and

governance feeding into the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on COAG – 24 September

Convening over 200 delegates and emphasizing youth's critical role in addressing key challenges in agrifood systems – including sustainable plastic management, gender inequality and technology adoption in agriculture – this session was created in partnership with the International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences (IAAS) and the Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on One Planet – Empowering Youth in the Bioeconomy: Cross-Sector Policies and Solutions – 27 September

Organized in collaboration with the International Advisory Council on Global Bioeconomy Youth Champions and the FAO Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, this session brought together over 60 delegates. It explored approaches to bioeconomy through the lens of four different disciplines: (1) forestry, (2) urban bioeconomy, (3) fisheries and aquaculture, and (4) rural farming and biologists.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on Livestock – 2 October

Over 60 delegates took part in this Youth Assembly session organized in partnership with the Global Youth Network on Sustainable Livestock Transformation. In the lead up to the WFF Global Youth Action side event at the 29th Session of COAG, it gathered youth insights regarding livestock in: (1) integrating youth in decision-making for livestock sustainability, (2) inclusive strategies and opportunities for pastoralist youth in the livestock sector, (3) the perception of animal-source food consumption among youth, and (4) scaling up climate-smart practices and technologies in livestock production.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on the Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG – 8 October

In collaboration with the World Youth Parliament for Water and the Water Youth Network, the Youth Assembly convened this session with 90 delegates. It was the first of two assemblies that aimed to create a Youth Statement to feed into the High-Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG. The session included discussions of three different topics: youth in WASAG governance, sustainable use of water and ecosystem-based solutions.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on the Youth Action Towards Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems Youth Dialogue of the 8th Mediterranean Forest Week – 4 November

Organized by the Mediterranean Youth Taskforce and Silva Mediterranea, and supported by the Youth Assembly, International Forests Student Association and Young Professionals for Agricultural Development, this session was held during the Mediterranean Forest Week in Barcelona's Sant Pau Art Nouveau Site. The goal was to strengthen youth involvement in forestry and environmental conservation, building upon a diversity of perspectives from both the global North and South. It included short presentations by young experts, followed by breakout discussions, working toward a collective Youth Roadmap on Forestry.

Engagement at the FAO Governing Bodies and other processes

In 2024, the Youth Assembly brought the outcomes of the thematic sessions and consultations held throughout the year to key FAO Governing Bodies and the CFS. This allowed youth to voice their perspectives and have a prominent place in the most important fora for food and agriculture.

COFI – 11 July

The Youth Assembly hosted a youth side event titled "[Youth Voices in Fisheries: Bridging Generations for Sustainable Solutions](#)" at the 36th Session of COFI, focusing on youth engagement and gender equality in aquatic food systems governance. The event featured Laura Sánchez, Deputy Assistant Director General of Legal Affairs and International Fisheries Governance of Spain, who emphasized the need for youth access and participation, alongside speakers

Nada Zammel of the YPB, who underscored barriers such as limited decision-making access, Xuechan Ma of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, and Ronald Rodriguez from the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers. In her closing remarks, FAO Deputy Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Vera Agostini, emphasized the necessity of youth involvement in transformative efforts and pledged support to secure youth spaces in governance and decision-making. The event concluded with a commitment to establish a global youth constituency for aquatic food systems, promoting youth-led policy advocacy and collaboration.

COFO – 26 July

Young professionals [presented the outcomes](#) of the first forestry themed Youth Assembly session – organized in collaboration with the COFO Youth Task Force – to senior FAO leaders including Deputy Director-General, Maurizio Martina and Forestry Division Director, Zhimin Wu. The Assembly emphasized the need for career development support, increased opportunities and responsibilities, improved collaboration between youth and senior experts, and an environment that fosters innovative technologies. The event continued into open discussions between FAO leaders and young professionals, underscoring FAO's commitment to integrating youth perspectives into its strategic initiatives.

COAG – 4 October

During COAG 29, the Youth Assembly hosted a side event on "[Youth-Led Recommendations for Sustainable Agrifood Systems](#)" at FAO headquarters. The event featured keynote remarks by Peter Cleary from Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. In the first panel, YPB member Marilena Bachmeier and FAO representatives – including Frederico Dalton from the FAO Forestry Division and Yerkem Sembayeva from the FAO Animal Production and Health Division – presented critical outcomes on livestock, One Health and AMR, and the forestry themed Youth Assembly session.

A second panel followed, in which Samuel Pablo Pereira from the FAO Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, highlighted youth-led initiatives in bioeconomy, and YPB member Marilena Bachmeier shared findings from the thematic Youth Assembly session on biodiversity and bioeconomy. Ricardo Fornaro from IAAS gave an overview of the COAG thematic Youth Assembly session held on 24 September and Marilena Bachmeier presented key recommendations, sparking an interactive question and answer session. The event concluded with a call to action for youth-driven policy integration in agrifood systems.

CFS – 23 October

At the 52nd Plenary Session of the CFS, the Youth Assembly hosted an impactful side event titled “[Good food for all, for today and tomorrow – Inclusive youth engagement and empowerment for agrifood systems transformation](#)”.

The event opened with keynote remarks by Gerald Geoffrey Mwel, Permanent Secretary of Tanzania’s Ministry of Agriculture. The YPB member Audrey Wong presented outcomes from the CFS thematic Assembly session held during the WFF flagship event and introduced the Global Youth Action Plan, connecting it to CFS policy recommendations. Celia Burgaz of the WFF Young Scientists Group (YSG) discussed the YSG report on digital technologies for multidimensional youth engagement. A panel of inspiring female voices followed: Leticia Tanchella Niehues from the WFF Youth Education team shared case studies on education as a tool for youth empowerment; Celeste Macilwaine, head of the Youth Innovation Lab, highlighted the WFF Innovation Challenges; and Stephanie Cabovianco from the WFF Italy Youth Chapter shared local youth-led initiatives. Erma Rheindrayani, Indonesia’s Alternate Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Rome closed the session, reinforcing the event’s call for inclusive youth engagement in transforming agrifood systems.

Engagement in multilateral fora

In 2024, the Youth Assembly engaged in several intergovernmental processes by actively participating in multilateral fora, presenting the outcomes of the thematic sessions and consultations held throughout the year, and engaging with key stakeholders to ensure youth perspectives on food and agriculture remain high on the international agenda.



United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Partnerships Forum 2024 – 30 January

The Youth Assembly held a virtual side event during the ECOSOC Partnerships Forum in collaboration with ProVeg International, Welthungerhilfe, Africa Climate and Environment Foundation and the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth. The event opened with a keynote address by Stefanos Fotiou, FAO Director of the Office of SDGs. This was followed by a panel discussion on youth engagement and co-leadership in food systems and SDG 2 progress. Panelists included Ghanshyam Bhattarai, WFF Nepal National Chapter representative; Herwig Ranner, European Commission Team Leader and European Union agriculture negotiator at UNFCCC sessions; Daniela Paz Piña Benítez, Representative from the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth; and Dr Sanjo Faniran, Director of Social Development Department, Ministry of Budget and National Planning, Nigeria.

ECOSOC Youth Forum 2024 – 16 to 18 April

The Youth Assembly engaged with the ECOSOC Youth Forum in New York. FAO's Office of Youth and Women (OYW) and Shreyaa Venkat, representative of the YPB, actively participated in various discussions, particularly those relating to SDG 2: Zero Hunger. A [meeting of youth partners](#) was also hosted at the FAO Liaison Office in New York, promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and engagement with the Youth Assembly.

2024 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development – 8 to 17 July

Zack Ahmed and Shreyaa Venkat, from the YPB, attended the High-Level Political Forum, where an in-depth review was conducted of SDG 2: Zero Hunger. Representing the collective voice of the Youth Assembly, Mr Ahmed and Ms Venkat shared youth perspectives at the launch of the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024* report, among other high-level events.

High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance, United Nations General Assembly 79 – 26 September

On the sidelines of the official health-focused event during United Nations General Assembly, Audrey Wong represented the YPB in presenting the outcomes of the thematic Youth Assembly session on One Health. This side event ensured that agrifood systems and youth perspectives were brought to the awareness of policymakers, raising their visibility and impact.

High-Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG – 17 October

During the WFF flagship event, YPB member Nada Zammel and World Youth Parliament for Water representative Megi Marku presented the outcomes of the Thematic Youth Assembly session on WASAG. Taking into consideration the upcoming WASAG Strategy for 2025–2031, the “Youth Statement on WASAG” was also presented, outlining the demands of youth from the strategy.

The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to CBD – 12 October to 1 November

YPB representatives María José Cervantes Calderón and Daniel Valdovinos Pérez engaged with the CBD COP16 in Cali, Colombia, hosting a side event on “Youth Leadership and Agroecology”, catalyzing biodiversity conservation in agrifood systems. In collaboration with the GYBN, this session provided a platform to share case studies of youth leadership with a focus on the Latin America and Caribbean region.

The Global Bioeconomy Summit 2024: “One Planet – Sustainable Bioeconomy Solutions for Global Challenges” – 23 to 24 October

YPB representative George Platt participated in the Global Bioeconomy Summit 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya, where he hosted a side event titled “An Intergenerational Dialogue: How to Bridge Youth Visions for Bioeconomy with International Policies on Bioeconomy?” The event was co-organized by the Youth Assembly, FAO and the International Advisory Council on Global Bioeconomy Youth Champions, in collaboration with the European Union Bioeconomy Youth Ambassadors. The session aimed to develop a unified call to action for youth engaged in bioeconomy. With support from FAO, this call to action will be presented in various policy discussions and fora.

UNFCCC 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) – 11 to 22 November

In November 2024, the FAO OYW and a number of YPB members attended [UNFCCC COP29](#) in Baku, Azerbaijan. The delegation followed negotiations, coordinated policy briefings as co-host of the Action on Food Hub, coordinated communications campaigns and hosted events on youth leadership in building resilience in agrifood systems.

UNCCD COP16 – 2 to 13 December

The FAO OYW and YPB actively engaged in the UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. As the appointed lead on agrifood systems for the Youth Forum and a partner of the UNCCD Youth Caucus, the OYW ensured that youth perspectives were effectively integrated across all thematic days through multistakeholder engagement.

03

Youth Innovation Lab highlights

Transformative Research Challenge 2024





Youth Innovation Lab highlights

Through the [Youth Innovation Lab](#) initiatives, the WFF bolsters youth-led solutions for sustainable development in support of ending hunger. Led by global youth, it engages the leaders of tomorrow and elevates youth-led innovative solutions, inspiring the world to confront the threats that our agrifood systems face today.

2024 Youth Innovation Lab highlights included:

Transformative Research Challenge

The [WFF Transformative Research Challenge](#) (TRC) is a global competition that engages young researchers, in particular those from the Global South, to develop innovative projects to support the transformation of agrifood systems. The TRC partners with research institutions, United Nations agencies and non-profits to address critical agrifood systems topics, offering hundreds of thousands of dollars in research grants, as well as mentorship opportunities and other forms of support.

The 2024 edition of the TRC was launched at the [United Nations Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs \(STI Forum\)](#) in New York and received over 1 000 applications from young researchers around the world, with more than half coming from Sub-Saharan Africa. The 2024 TRC consisted of six different prize categories focussed on key agrifood systems challenges:

- *Gender Mainstreaming in the Eradication of the Peste de Petits Ruminants (PPR) Prize* co-hosted with FAO's PPR Global Eradication Programme Secretariat;
- *Global One Health Prize* co-hosted with Wageningen University & Research (WUR), and the FAO One Health and Disease Control Group;
- *The Role of Water in Agrifood Systems Transformation Prize* co-hosted with EIT Food;
- *Food Loss and Waste Prize* co-hosted by the FAO Food and Nutrition Division with the support of the Food Systems and Food Safety Division;

- *Plant-Based Food Prize* co-hosted with Meatless Monday; and
- *Plant Breeding and Nutrition Prize* co-hosted with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics.

From the pool of applications, 50 teams were paired with expert mentors to develop their initial research concepts into detailed proposals. Twenty-four finalist teams were then selected, all of whom went through a bootcamp in effective communication facilitated by Narratize to support them in creating winning pitches. Twelve teams, two per prize topic, were chosen to pitch their proposals before a panel of high-level judges including FAO senior management and leaders representing global research institutions. More than USD 250 000 worth of research grants and prizes were awarded to the top research proposals to help the young researchers to convert their ideas into action.

Youth Food Lab

The WFF [Youth Food Lab](#) (YFL) is an incubator programme that empowers young innovators from all backgrounds to develop and scale their high-potential solutions into sustainable business models. The YFL is launching local Labs to create a global, decentralized network to provide youth with the skills and resources they need to advance and scale projects in their local contexts.

2024 saw the completion of the second cohort of the YFL global online programme created in partnership with WUR and the IAAS in 2023. Eleven teams participated in the eight-month capacity development programme, in which the teams were paired with expert mentors, and received bi-weekly masterclasses and workshops from experts on topics such as business development, communications and fundraising. To support the teams, 11 mentors from FAO, WUR and other partner organizations were engaged, as well as ten trainers from renowned institutions including the [World Food Prize](#) Foundation, [Systems Innovation Food Hub](#) and FAO who facilitated 18 sessions.

The 11 teams came from Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Nepal, Rwanda and Uganda. Throughout the year, the teams participated in various WFF and United Nations events including the STI Forum in New York, the grand opening of the WFF flagship event and FAO conferences.

In 2024, the YFL programme also localised to countries and regions around the world. During the Nepal Food Forum in September, the FAO country office announced the creation of a YFL in the country and on 30 September, the [YFL Netherlands hosted by WUR](#) was launched to help young innovators turn their ideas into impactful solutions by providing them with tailored programmes. Earlier in the year, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean [launched the workshop series “Designing New Solutions for Agrifood Challenges”](#), in partnership with Universidad Mayor in Chile, co-designed under the framework of the global YFL. In addition, the development of a lab at Penn State University in the United States of America was announced at the 2024 WFF flagship event by Ambassador Jeffrey Prescott.

Startup Innovation Awards



The WFF [Startup Innovation Awards](#) (SIA) is an annual startup competition, powered by [Extreme Tech Challenge](#) (XTC), to support young innovators and entrepreneurs who are harnessing the power of technology to drive the sustainable transformation of our agrifood systems. In collaboration with diverse

partners, the SIA provide winners with financial support, capacity development, visibility and financial support to elevate and scale their solutions.



The 2024 SIA were officially launched at the [WFF Side Event during the STI Forum](#) in New York on 8 May, where the four award categories were announced: [Digital Innovation in Food Processing](#); [Empowering Women in Agrifood Systems](#); [Food Loss](#); and [Good Food for All, for Today and Tomorrow](#). This year, the SIA received over 468 entries from 53 countries. From these, [35 semifinalists](#) were shortlisted, with 74 percent coming from the Global South. After four days of virtual semi-finals live pitch sessions, eight startups (two per category) were selected as finalists from eight different countries, including five from the Global South.

The 35 semifinalists received a masterclass in intellectual property management from SIA partners, Kilburn and Strode, as well as a feedback session from global experts to develop and refine their pitches before the finals in October. Finalists received public relations and communications support, investor matching opportunities and a travel allowance to attend the WFF flagship event in Rome. In total, more than USD 100 000 was awarded to finalists for travel to WFF and as seed funding for winners.

Conferences attended and outcomes

STI Forum – 9 to 10 May

The WFF Youth Innovation Lab hosted a [side event](#) on 9 May at the STI Forum in New York to advocate for the support of youth-led innovation for sustainable agrifood systems transformation. A keynote speech was given by former Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Carol Bellamy, with remarks from the ECOSOC Ambassador for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Katja Lasseur, and presentations from young WFF Global Youth Action innovators from the TRC, SIA, YSG and YFL incubator, in an intergenerational dialogue on the importance of investing in youth in science, technology and innovation. The event marked the launch of the 2024 editions of the SIA and TRC global competitions.



Food Waste Free United conference – 18 to 19 June

The Youth Innovation Lab attended the Food Waste Free United conference, “Towards Halving Food Waste in Europe”, in the Netherlands in June. This event brought together representatives from companies, private and scientific organizations, and civil society with the high ambitions of halving food waste by 2030. The Lab participated in a panel discussion focused on youth: “Next generation on stage: our youngest employees interviewing representatives from SFYN [Slow Food Youth Network], World Food Forum, and the UN”.

Partnerships

The year 2024 saw the cultivation of various partnerships to support the activities of the Youth Innovation Lab. Notably, this included the creation of an SIA award category to identify youth-led startups developing solutions to broad issues in food loss, together with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). These projects will be supported with a post-awards programme to develop and scale the youth-led solutions, using the resources of both UNIDO and FAO.

With the 2024 expansion and localization of the YFL programme, partnerships were forged with FAO’s Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean to create an online capacity development programme for young leaders in agrifood systems, developed within the framework of the YFL online incubator programme. Similarly, local YFLs are under development in both Nepal, in partnership with the FAO country office and WFF National Youth Chapter, and in the United States at Penn State University.

04

Youth Education highlights





Youth Education highlights

The [Youth Education programme](#) provides access to knowledge and actionable solutions, inspiring the next generation of children, youth and educators to create a better food future for all.

2024 Youth Education highlights included:

AgX Fair

The WFF's [AgX Fair](#) (the "X" standing for experience, exchange and exhibit all you have to offer in agrifood systems education) showcases formal and non-formal education projects from educators and young people around the world. Its goal is to recognize excellence and share good practices within agrifood systems education.



Entering its third year in 2024, the AgX Fair once again invited educators and youth to share their projects from around the globe focusing on the theme of "Good food for all, for today and tomorrow", receiving 90 submissions from all regions of the world. Judging criteria were developed to equitably review all submissions across several categories, including youth leadership, strategic relevance to the 2024 WFF theme and FAO's strategic framework, creativity and innovation, replicability, communication and presentation, level of impact and finally the live presentation. Based on these criteria, the 90 submissions were reduced to ten. With support of partners from [Kids4SDGs](#), the WFF YPB and [Food for Climate League](#), the AgX Fair held two semi-finals where shortlisted participants were

given the opportunity to share their projects with the WFF Youth Education team. Following these semi-finals, five teams were selected and funded to come to Rome and present live on the mainstage at the WFF flagship event.

The five finalists selected were:

- Rural Incubator: Building Peace (*Colombia*);
- CFF Agroschooling Project (*Nigeria*);
- The Food Clans (*Spain*);
- Empowering Marginalized Rural Women: Climate-Smart Dairy and Beef Cattle Production (*Bangladesh*); and
- Sustainable Oyster Mushroom Production Project (*Uganda*).

FAO Permanent Representations were invited to listen to the presentations from each finalist and offer feedback and remarks. The Permanent Representative from Nigeria, Dr Yaya O. Olaniran, and the Deputy Permanent Representatives from Colombia and Spain – Mr Nestor Augusto Ponguta Puerto and Dr Juan Prieto-Gomez – provided remarks on their countries' respective projects.

Youth Skills Hub

In 2023, the WFF launched the [Youth Skills Hub](#) online platform. In 2024, the education team realized the potential of this space to support young people to develop their skills in the agrifood systems space. The hub contains three pillars: masterclasses, career opportunities and online resources. Each pillar aims to support young people to gain access to skills or expertise across the broad spectrum of sectors within the agrifood system. The Youth Skills Hub is also a space for the WFF to connect the work of FAO's offices and divisions with younger audiences. Throughout 2024, several events were held online to support young people to engage with FAO's work and our partners. These included:



People's Unit, focused on the right to food. This hybrid workshop brought together about 80 attendees from a variety of different regions.

Resources open day

An online resources open day was held online on 3 September 2024. There were 80 attendees from 169 registrations. Its aim was to create an engaging and informative event that provided youth with access to resources that actively contribute to their understanding of agrifood systems, and can enable them to shape future agrifood systems. Speakers for the event were from several different sectors, including FAO, WFF and Stanford University. The objectives were to:

- promote awareness about the Youth Skills Hub and its online library resources;
- showcase the range and depth of resources available in the online library pillar, including interactive websites to demonstrate the value and relevance of the platform;
- provide opportunities for engagement and encourage active participation from attendees by providing opportunities to explore the online library, participate in interactive activities, and interact with facilitators and fellow participants;
- demonstrate how to effectively utilize the resources available in the online library to enhance technical knowledge and professional development in the field of agrifood systems; and
- provide networking opportunities between attendees, experts and/or organizations involved in agrifood systems.

Career day

The first-ever WFF Youth Education programme career day was held online on 4 September 2024. Over 200 attendees received information on available job and internship opportunities in different agrifood sectors, including with FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP). The event also provided space for networking with professionals working in different agrifood sectors, utilizing breakout rooms. Finally, the session provided organizations an opportunity to present their current work opportunities to a youth audience.

Masterclasses

In 2024, the education programme launched the Four Betters Masterclass series. This series invited FAO offices and divisions working across all sectors of agrifood systems to share their work with younger audiences. These sessions had a total of approximately 604 attendees from 1 000 registrations, demonstrating a desire from young people to learn from FAO experts.

- The Better Production workshop, held on 29 May and led by FAO's Global Soils Partnership, focused on sustainable production practices. The event saw 125 attendees, representing all global subregions.
- The Better Nutrition workshop, held on 3 July and led by FAO's Food and Nutrition Division with support from the Office of Innovation, focused on clean cooking and nutrition. The event saw 193 participants from 68 countries.
- The Systems Approach workshop, held on 12 September and led by FAO's Food Systems and Food Safety Division, focused on applying a holistic approach to agrifood systems transformation. The event brought together 170 attendees from 74 different countries.
- The Better Environment workshop, held on 8 October and led by FAO's Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, focused on bioeconomy. This workshop attracted 36 attendees from 23 different countries.
- The Better Life session held on 17 October and led by FAO's Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division in collaboration with FAO's Indigenous

Presenters during the session included: WFP human resources representative Rosalba Cardinale, CFS Private Sector Mechanism representative Wayne Dredge, WFF Research/Academia representative Ana Luiza Domingos, Global Youth Campaigns representative Sophie Healy-Thow, Food Security Information Network representative Carlos Estevez and FAO human resources representative Martina Zannotti.

Agrifood Leadership Education Programme

Throughout 2024, the WFF Youth Education team worked with [Real Food Systems](#) to develop a leadership programme to support young motivated agrifood leaders. The WFF [Agrifood Leadership Education Programme](#) is a transformative initiative aimed at empowering youth to become catalysts for change in agrifood systems. By providing young leaders with essential tools, skills and mentorship, it equips them to make a tangible impact on the future of food and agriculture.

The Programme incorporates mixed learning modalities across three pillars:

- **Explore:** Candidates explored various topics to develop their technical knowledge and soft skills to become successful agents of change for agrifood systems transformation. A series of learning materials composed of masterclasses and workshops were delivered by the WFF Youth Skills Hub.
- **Encourage:** The Programme encouraged selected candidates to lead and take action in agrifood systems transformation within their communities. Candidates viewed presentations by seasoned young global agrifood actors, researchers and award winners who shared their experiences, including challenges, outcomes and lessons learned.

- **Experience:** Selected candidates gained leadership experience in agrifood system transformation by formulating their own projects. Candidates' projects will be developed with mentors and address local agrifood systems needs, based on each candidate's local insight and experience. Additionally, these projects will address the priority issues of WFF National Chapters.

Educators Network

The WFF [Educators Network](#) is a collaborative space for educators to engage with one another on vital issues related to the transformation of our agrifood systems. The network launched in July 2024 to support educators with the necessary tools and skills to develop and implement education projects focused on agrifood systems.



Educators are invited to share their projects across the network to foster a community of practice, collaboration and support. There are currently 608 educators in the network, consisting of a diverse group of formal and non-formal educators striving for regional, gender, cultural and religious diversity. Members are invited to interact with each other periodically via online discussion forums, capacity building teachers' labs and network meetings. Additionally, this network provides educators with opportunities to co-develop educational resources, including:

- **Teachers' labs:** The first teachers' lab workshop – held on 3 July 2024 and led by FAO's Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment – focused on behavioural science. The event saw 105 attendees from 68 countries, making it one of the most engaged sessions of the year.
- **Network meetings:** The first network meeting was held online on 22 August. Network meetings provide support for educators in their project development and community activities. They serve as a safe and inclusive space for educators to communicate and share pedagogical approaches, research, updates and progress of ongoing projects. By exchanging insights on effective methods, staying informed on relevant topics and updating each other on project progress, the Educators Network aims to promote new ways of educating future generations. During the first network meeting, approximately 90 participants heard presentations from EIT Food Educators, Pennsylvania State University, the Network of Academic and Scholastic Esports Federations Farmcraft initiative, and the WFF Academic Delegations lead.
- **Discussion space:** The Educators Network discussion space, [educators-network \(Channel\) – WFF Education – Slack](#), provides a dedicated platform for educators to engage in meaningful dialogue about critical issues in agrifood systems education. The WFF Youth Education team provides prompts and updates to stimulate conversation and keep educators informed about the latest developments and challenges in the field. The discussion space aims to enhance collective understanding and develop collaborative approaches to the complex problems facing agrifood systems today. Engaging educators from diverse backgrounds and regions ensures a rich exchange of perspectives and ideas, which is essential for developing effective, context-specific educational strategies.

Youth Towards Zero Food Waste

In 2024, the [Youth Towards Zero Food Waste campaign](#) aimed at expanding its scope by developing further initiatives and learning materials while also launching actionable initiatives to fight food waste. Several events were incorporated into the campaign as follows:

- **Zero Food Waste culinary series:** The campaign launched its first-ever hybrid culinary series in the beginning of 2024, aiming to educate and empower individuals to experience the joy of cooking by adopting sustainable cooking practices while minimizing food waste in their daily lives and lifestyle. By hosting chefs from four different regions and from different cultural backgrounds, the series showcased different methods and techniques on how one can join the fight against food waste. The series aired seven episodes with over 10 000 views across the WFF social media platforms and 733 participants throughout the episodes carried out on Zoom.
- **Global Youth Hackathon on Food Waste:** With the aim of launching actionable initiatives under the campaign, the Hackathon was developed in partnership with KidsforSDGs, who secured USD 5 000 to support the realization the top three finalists' proposals. It saw a large number of expressions of interest, with 445 young people signing up to participate. The top 15 participants received mentorship and capacity development opportunities to further advance their proposals and pitched them to an online panel of expert judges. The top five finalists were chosen based on the deliberation of the judges and came in person to the 2024 WFF flagship event to showcase their community-based solutions to tackle food waste, competing for the cash prize. The three rounds of selections were supported by FAO and external experts in food waste, with 3 to 15 evaluators throughout each selection round. The criteria used for evaluation were: (1) innovation and creativity, (2) feasibility and implementation, (3) social and environmental impact and, (4) collaboration and presentation. The finalists were:

- Nicholas Kofi Adegbe, Martin Lutherking Aduko and Afloe Emmanuel (Africa) with the project “Brown Technology”;
 - Marjan Lotfi Fard, Zahra Lottifard and Ian Anthony Wijono (Asia and the Pacific) with the project “Carbon Dragon”;
 - Suraj Chaudhary (Asia and the Pacific) with the project “Green Weddings – Transforming Indian Traditions for a Sustainable Future”;
 - Getachew Worku Alebachew and Esubalew Muluneh Medmim (Near East and North Africa) with the project “From Fillet to Broth: Transforming Fish Waste into Nutritious Soup”;
 - Shatha Awni Abu Al Nadi, Esraa ALhaj and Roa’a Abu shaqrah (Near East and North Africa) with the project “EcoPet Cuisine”.
- **Food waste resources:** Throughout 2024, food waste resources were finalized, covering topics on food waste auditing, composting, food pantries and youth activism. The materials were compiled in collaboration with FAO experts and external partners. The material on youth activism highlights activities throughout different age groups that young people can engage in to raise awareness on food waste.
 - **Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) Food Loss and Waste Challenge Badge:** Building on the work started in 2023, the new YUNGA Food Loss and Waste Challenge Badge was finalized and is currently accepting applications for piloting. The work was conducted in partnership with the Youth Towards Zero Food Waste campaign, together with the FAO Office of Climate and Biodiversity.

Young Scientists Group

Throughout 2024, the [YSG](#) dedicated their mandate to producing and disseminating their biennial report entitled “[Digital technologies for multidimensional youth engagement for agrifood systems transformation](#)”. The report aims to highlight the role digital technologies play in the lives of young people and explore how they can be used to engage youth in transforming agrifood systems.



The YSG also collaborated with Nexus-Ness and the PRIMA Foundation for the NexusArt initiative, where the aim was to utilize contemporary art to translate complex scientific research within the scope of agrifood systems. Seven members of the YSG were involved in this project: four served as guides to the artists, presenting their research and offering support throughout the process, and the other three supported judging the final pieces.

Youth Policy and Deliberation Challenge

The [Youth Policy and Deliberation Challenge](#) provides young policymakers the opportunity to present innovative and bold ideas across three themes. The themes include: healthy diets for people and planet; sustainable water management for agrifood systems transformation; and addressing food waste, a win-win opportunity for climate and agrifood systems.

With 229 applications, the Challenge held three rounds of evaluation to select the three best policies from each theme. The shortlisted teams were offered mentorship opportunities, with the aim of helping them to harness their policymaking skills. The finalists also received further capacity development on pitching and public speaking to prepare them for the final presentation during the 2024 WFF flagship event, where the winners were announced. The top three finalists for each theme were:

- **Healthy diets for people and planet**
 - “Building healthy habits, securing a sustainable future: to empower Mozambican children toward healthy diets and a sustainable planet”, by Kamanzi Claudine, Delfina Fernandes Hlashwayo and Lencho Megersa Marami (Africa);

- “Nudging towards healthy and sustainable diets”, by Maria Etessam Alvaro, Annabella Boersma, Carlos Navarrete Llamas and Alice Terpereau (Europe); and
- “The utilization of maize crop residue in the production of organic manure in Kenya”, by Brenda Musenya Mutune, Cadey Kerubo Moguche and Mugenyi Nathan (Africa).
- **Sustainable water management for agrifood systems transformation**
 - “Utilizing data for sustainable crop selection”, by Selma Bichbich, Miriam Akinyi and Wissal Chafik (Near East and North Africa);
 - “Promoting nexus approaches for sustainable oasis management through best practices”, by Najet Ben Mabrouk and Taheni Souf (Near East and North Africa); and
 - “Virtual water trade”, by Moses Baluku, Olugbenga Eyimofe Oluwakemi and Olabisi Onilari Kumuyi (Africa).
- **Addressing food waste, a win-win opportunity for climate and agrifood systems**
 - “Beyond the date: from discard to action”, by Feyisayo Akande and Chanel Perreault (North America);
 - “Recycling organic waste through black soldier fly rearing”, by Frank Jackson Mbise, Rainfrida Ostack Mwalongo, Rodgers Rogito and Shukuru Munigwa Seraphin (Africa); and
 - “Collecting data for a circular economy: addressing food waste in Brazilian public schools”, by Ana Carla Sena de Assis e Rocha, Beatriz Proença de Oliveira, Laís Lopes de Jesus and Sérgio Ritheli Rocha (Latin America).

Conferences attended and outcomes

Nuffield Contemporary Scholars Conference – 9 to 17 March

This conference in Campo Grande, Brazil, provided valuable opportunities to connect with rural youth from around the world – including but not limited to, Nuffield scholars – and advocate for the involvement of young farmers in policy dialogues. Participation at the Conference and connections made increased the

involvement of Nuffield Scholars at the WFF flagship event and throughout different WFF Global Youth Action initiative programmes, particularly supporting the expansion of the WFF Brazil National Chapter.

STI Forum – 9 to 10 May

During the WFF Global Youth Action side event at the STI Forum in New York, two YSG members, Tarini Gupta and Margaret Hegwood, presented the work of the YSG and the challenges young scientists face. They also presented the topic of the 2024 YSG biennial report.

UNICEF Leading Minds conference – 28 to 31 May

This conference in Florence, Italy, was a first opportunity to share the work of the newly launched WFF Youth Education programme with several other United Nations agencies, international organizations and partners. It forged new partnerships and connections for the further expansion and growth of the programme. Several university professors joined the WFF Educators Network and will prepare teachers labs on behavioural change. Group discussions were also facilitated on climate literacy and green skills, and how these impact youth and children. These discussions led to a peer group discussion in which WFF Global Youth Action, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF colleagues explored ways to support youth with climate action. UNDP engaged to support the WFF Youth Towards Zero Food Waste campaign and are developing a collaboration between the United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP and FAO on food waste.

CFS – 21 to 25 October

For the WFF Global Youth Action side event during the CFS in Rome, Italy, YSG member Celia Burgaz presented the 2024 biennial report, highlighting the structure of the research and its findings in relation to digital technologies serving as a tool for youth engagement in agrifood systems transformation.

Borlaug Dialogue – 29 to 31 October

As an awardee of the Top Agri-food Pioneer designation by the [World Food Prize](#) Foundation, YSG member Isnawati Hidayah attended the 2024 Borlaug Dialogue in Des Moines, United States of America. This conference was important to further spread the work of the YSG and connect with potential partner organizations, such as [Gates Ag One](#) and the [CGIAR](#) Nutrition Impact Platform.

Partnerships

In 2024, the WFF Youth Education programme launched a collaboration with the [AGCO Foundation](#). This partnership aims to support the capacity development of young people to gain successful employment in agrifood systems jobs markets. It will continue over three years with several goals, including: (1) the development of a comprehensive capacity needs assessment report, (2) customised educational resources, (3) a training of trainers programme, (4) the updating of the Youth Skills Hub online platform and (5) the establishment of a community of practice around this platform.

Through the Educators Network, the WFF Youth Education programme has developed a strong collaborative partnership with Pennsylvania State University's [Global Teach Agriculture Network](#). This partnership has kickstarted discussions to bring educators together from across the globe to tackle issues that are defined by YSG members working on youth priority issues. Through this international collaboration, the WFF Youth Education programme aims to enhance global learning in agriculture and food security. The partnership leverages the collaborating organizations' expertise to provide innovative educational resources, professional development opportunities and a community for educators focused on transforming global food systems.

[KIDsforsDGs](#) is an impact venture that provides a comprehensive SDG journey and addresses a variety of topics surrounding education. KidsforSDGs supported the Global Youth Hackathon on Food Waste through sponsoring prizes for the winners and reviewing proposals.

[Real Food Systems \(RFS\)](#) is a global community of youth, advocating since 2019 for nourishing the human race and planetary ecosystems through real food. RFS empowers youth to influence their future, promoting real-time solutions to prevent climate catastrophe through a just transition to healthy agrifood systems for future generations. It has a network of over 80 youth ambassadors and associates in 43 countries.

The RFS has a keen interest in supporting young women in agrifood systems. They are providing their expertise on the development of educational projects to the WFF Youth Education programme and are co-developers of the Agrifood Leadership Education Programme.



05

Youth Culture highlights





Youth Culture highlights

The WFF [Youth Culture](#) programme aims to inspire a global movement for agrifood systems transformation using the universal languages of art, gastronomy, film and music to translate complex agrifood systems issues.

2024 Youth Culture highlights included:

Film Festival

The [WFF Film Festival](#) harnesses the power of film to share impactful stories about agrifood systems and the changemakers within them. It provides a platform for young filmmakers to initiate change and create a better food future for all. In 2024, the fourth edition of the Festival celebrated a number of talented youth, showcasing diverse voices to bridge cultural, social and geographical gaps, and foster dialogue on agrifood systems. It received 326 submissions from over 60 countries across six global regions.



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Sustainable Gastronomy Restaurant Week

The first-ever [Sustainable Gastronomy Restaurant Week](#), held from 17 to 24 June 2024, highlighted sustainable culinary practices across the globe. Created to honour [Sustainable Gastronomy Day](#) (coordinated by FAO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]) its theme was “More Taste, Less Waste”. As a pilot initiative, 2024 Sustainable Gastronomy Restaurant Week featured 20 restaurants across Europe, Asia, North America and Africa, spanning seven countries and nine cities. It celebrated youth leadership by featuring custom menus created by chefs under the age of 40 that focused on minimizing waste and using seasonal, local ingredients. The venues — including restaurants, bakeries and gelato shops — offered the custom menus at various price points to demonstrate that sustainable gastronomy can be accessible to all. In 2025, Sustainable Gastronomy Restaurant Week will expand to feature an open call for young chefs globally, aiming to increase its impact. Plans also include launching the Sustainable Gastronomy Young Chef Award.

During Sustainable Gastronomy Restaurant Week, the Youth Culture programme also hosted a [zero-waste dinner](#) inspired by the 17 SDGs to celebrate Sustainable Gastronomy Day. Held at the American Academy in Rome and sponsored by [The Hunger Project](#), the event brought together 17 young journalists, influencers and FAO leaders. Artist Marta Abbot crafted 17 unique plates, each representing an SDG. The event generated significant media coverage, with over 15 articles published in outlets like *Forbes US*, *Food and Wine Italia*, and *Xinhua China*.

Art exhibition: Paradise Bank by Lucas Memmola

The second annual WFF art exhibition, [Paradise Bank](#), opened to the public at the Rome Botanical Gardens on 11 October 2024 and remained on display through 7 November 2024. The opening featured the presence of FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu, FAO Deputy Director-General Maurizio Martina, FAO

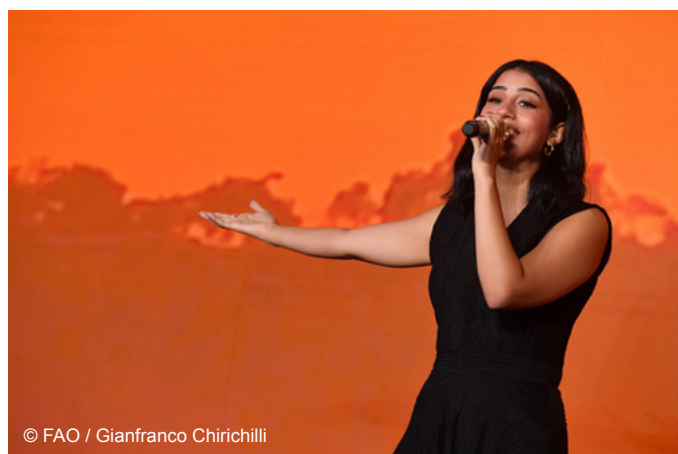
Chief Economist Máximo Torero, and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil to FAO Carla Barroso Carniero.

Paradise Bank by Lucas Memmola was an immersive, site-specific installation that highlighted the Amazon's vital role in biodiversity and the importance of respecting Indigenous Peoples – their land, practices and role in sustainable agrifood systems. Mr Memmola is a 30-year-old Italian-Brazilian artist specialized in experiential art exhibitions that explore the dialogue between various elements of nature, adopting an approach to art that resembles the practices of an alchemist. His work emphasizes the interconnectedness of natural elements, highlighting how they can interact and communicate within the context of art.

The exhibition was created with the support, curation and organization of the youth-led art association Tramandars. The association has collaborated with the WFF Youth Culture programme for the past two years, creating eye-catching and dynamic exhibitions that challenge young artists from around the world to explore and communicate complex issues of agrifood systems through their art. Technical panels were also created featuring key FAO Forestry publications and highlighting youth-led initiatives toward the better production of the four main exports of the Amazon featured in the exhibition: cacao, guarana, açai and Brazil nuts.

The WFF Youth Anthem

The WFF Youth Anthem captures the spirit of the Forum and engages participants through the universal language of music. [Nouran Abu Taleb](#), the 2024 WFF Anthem artist, is a 29-year-old Egyptian vocalist with a background that melds her cultural roots with a modern sound. She's known for her fusion of Arabic melodies with jazz and other contemporary genres, bringing a fresh sound that's both emotional and uniquely rooted in her heritage. Her song for the WFF Youth Culture programme, "[Sow Seeds, Grow Dreams](#)", reflects her passion for agriculture and connection to her home country, aiming to inspire a sense of unity and progress in the agrifood sector.



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NexusArt

In 2024, a partnership between NexusArt and the WFF was initiated to integrate art and science in promoting sustainable agrifood systems. This initiative is part of the broader Nexus-Ness program, which fosters a transdisciplinary approach to sustainability by connecting art, science and community engagement. The project collaborated with the Rome Academy of Fine Arts and featured young artists who were guided by scientific input from YSG members throughout their creative process. A key highlight of this collaboration was the NexusArt award ceremony held during the WFF flagship event. The winning artwork, Valerio Tirapani's *Michette*, was displayed at the Culture Corner during the flagship event, exemplifying the vital role of art in conveying critical messages about sustainable practices. This partnership provided a platform for young artists to express their ideas and fostered dialogue among emerging stakeholders in science and art, encouraging active engagement with the complex issues and innovative solutions surrounding our agrifood systems.



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06

Local Youth Action highlights





Local Youth Action highlights

The WFF's [Local Youth Action](#) programme aims to “Think Global, Act Local”, adapting the WFF Global Youth Action programmatic areas, priorities, work and direction to local contexts to drive enhanced local youth engagement, action and impact in agrifood systems transformation. By mobilizing youth-led local initiatives through national youth agrifood platforms and collaborating closely with FAO's decentralized offices, the WFF Local Youth Action programme is dedicated to amplifying the impact of the WFF Global Youth Action initiative at the grassroots level.

2024 Local Youth Action highlights included:

Collaboration with FAO Decentralized Offices

FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium

- In February, the Interview of the Month featured in the FAO Liaison Office in Brussels monthly newsletter celebrated the 9th International Day of Women and Girls in Science. It showcased three young female scientists from the YSG. These inspiring women shared their journeys from Sweden, Brazil and [Indonesia](#), promoting gender diversity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and encouraging young women and girls to pursue careers in science and technology.
- Director Raschad Al-Khafaji delivered a presentation to master's students from the United Nations University – Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology. The session provided insights into FAO's mission and activities, alongside presentations by other United Nations agency leaders in Brussels. The Director also spotlighted the work of the WFF Global Youth Action initiative.

- In collaboration with the United Nations Brussels Youth Task Force, the Liaison Office participated in an exchange with Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs Felipe Paullier and other United Nations Brussels agencies. Mr Paullier met with the FAO Brussels team to discuss empowering young leaders to address pressing global issues such as climate change, inequality and sustainable development. He also underscored the crucial role of the newly established United Nations Youth Office in advocating for youth voices at the highest levels of international decision-making and their ongoing efforts to create more opportunities for youth participation in global governance.
- Efforts to establish a WFF Belgium [National Chapter](#) began with identifying potential partners and briefing them on the initiative. Next steps include the co-creation of a concept note in collaboration with interested youth partners to formalize interest and solidify outcomes and activities.



FAO Liaison Office with the United Nations in Geneva

The FAO Liaison Office in Geneva has been pushing forward in increasing youth engagement by focusing on strengthening, empowering and facilitating youth action on a local level to make a larger impact on a global scale. With the guidance, facilitation and collaboration of the WFF Local Youth Action programme, the Liaison Office worked throughout the year to scale impact and drive transformative youth initiatives that catalyze locally led agrifood systems development. Efforts towards amplifying regional action included:

- On 14 March, the Liaison Office and the WFF Local Youth Action programme co-organized the FAO Café workshop, “From Bean to Cup: Following the journey of your morning coffee”, as part of [Geneva Sustainability Week](#). An event dedicated to deepening youth knowledge on the importance of localization, it spotlighted the vital role of small coffee farmers and families in practicing and sourcing sustainability methods.
- On 25 June, the Liaison Office organized the [International Year of Camelids 2024 Exhibition](#) in Geneva, featuring high-level keynote presentations and speakers. The FAO OYW underscored how empowering youth through advocacy and initiatives can raise awareness about the camelid sector, leading to increased investment in capacity development, research and outreach.
- The Liaison Office coordinated and facilitated a Switzerland Youth Delegation to attend the WFF flagship in Rome, which included representatives from the [Geneva Graduate Institute](#) and the [Bern University of Applied Sciences](#). During the WFF flagship event, the Liaison Office coordinated a bilateral meeting with OYW representatives and the Switzerland Youth Delegation to strengthen youth engagement through WFF National Chapters.
- The Liaison Office provided technical cooperation to the Geneva Graduate Institute Agrifood Collective who organized a panel discussion between experts titled “[The Transformative Power of Agroecology](#)”. During the event, a representative from the YSG highlighted the [2024 YSG Report](#) and discussed the barriers

that youth farmers face when it comes to pushing forward agroecology approaches, including a lack of knowledge, mentorship, resources and other forms of education.

FAO Liaison Office for North America

- The Liaison Office for North America supported the establishment of the WFF United States Chapter, which is set to launch in spring 2025, and aims to help establish a Canadian Chapter in 2025 as well.
- In celebration of International Youth Day, the Liaison Office published [an article highlighting the work of the North American YPB](#) with a regional focus on food waste.
- The Liaison Office facilitated the participation of four Planet Forward correspondents at the 2024 WFF flagship event to support media coverage around the event and amplify the key messages in support of youth leadership.
- The North American YPB team launched an agrifood systems student ambassador programme in 2024, empowering North American students to connect, collaborate, and enhance their policy efforts. The programme also includes workshops on agrifood systems, food security and nutrition, featuring FAO staff and partners.
- The Liaison Office has supported the collaboration of the WFF Youth Innovation Lab with Penn State University to host a North American YFL incubator programme.

FAO Liaison Office with the Russian Federation

Young people are always welcome to join FAO events in Russia. They are often speakers and guests at the conferences and workshops organized by the FAO Office in Moscow. In addition to a Regional Forum event at the WFF flagship event, the Liaison Office with the Russian Federation held two fully dedicated events for youth in 2024, together with its partner, the Russian State Agrarian University – Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy:

- To mark World Bee Day in May, the Liaison Office held the DobroPchel 2024 All-Russian competition for schoolchildren from rural settlements and

towns at the premises of Timiryazev Agricultural Academy. DobroPchel 2024 engaged schoolchildren in work on priority areas of the National Technology Initiative by introducing them to high-tech projects and agricultural developments. With the help of digital maps, the students identified the best sites for apiaries and ways to protect bees from exposure to pesticides. Utilizing data archives and online access to “smart hives”, the schoolchildren simulated the situation, produced a joint solution and assembled a “smart hive”.

- In August, the Liaison Office and Timiryazev Agricultural Academy held a youth festival celebrating International Youth Day and the Honey Feast of the Saviour. Participants included over 80 high school students from all over Russia who were winners of a contest for young students of nature, their mentors and hosts, and the entire team of the Department of Aquaculture and Beekeeping. The students visited six “work stations” dedicated to topics such as the history of hive beekeeping, the hive structure and embedding wax foundation into frames, bee colonies, honey harvesting and preparing bees for wintering.

FAO Liaison Office in Japan

The FAO Liaison Office in Japan hosted a regional forum event on the sidelines of the WFF flagship event, in partnership with the Food System Transformation Promotion Team—a group of university students affiliated with the NGO Hunger Free World. Held under the theme “Building Connections: Fostering Collaboration and Opportunities for Youth in Japan’s Agrifood Systems,” the event showcased youth-led initiatives, highlighted the role of triangular cooperation (including with African countries) and introduced practical tools such as mapping analysis to better understand the complex dynamics of agrifood systems. The event also explored key challenges and opportunities facing youth in Japan’s agrifood sector, underscoring the critical role of education, innovation and collaboration in advancing sustainable transformation.

FAO Partnership and Liaison Office in the Republic of Korea

The FAO Liaison Office in the Republic of Korea has been supporting the empowerment of youth to recognize critical food security issues and drive impactful, youth-led initiatives:

- To catalyze a global movement that encourages young people worldwide to actively engage in shaping resilient agrifood systems and contribute to the SDGs, the Liaison Office established the WFF National Chapter of the Republic of Korea in June 2023 and supported the activities and expansion of the National Chapter in 2024.
- To address pressing issues such as food security and sustainable agriculture, the Liaison Office led the preparation process for a WFF Regional Forum event hosted by the WFF Republic of Korea National Chapter, managing and supervising the National Chapter through constant communication to ensure that the speakers were well prepared for the event and interview sessions.

FAO Regional Office for Africa

The FAO Regional Office for Africa has been instrumental in supporting the establishment and success of WFF National Chapters across the continent, along with participating in the WFF flagship event. The office has supported various initiatives aimed at enhancing youth engagement in agrifood systems:

- The Regional Office is supporting collaboration between the African Youth Agripreneurs (AYA) Platform and the WFF’s Global Youth Action Initiative. The AYA Platform is an online community launched in August 2021 with support from FAO and the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation. It provides a space for networking, learning and mentorship for individual young agripreneurs and rural youth organizations. The Platform is a response to youth demands for access to these opportunities and has successfully connected over 4 500 young people across Africa. Its overarching goal is to foster meaningful youth engagement in agrifood systems by enabling shared knowledge and experiences. Recognizing the platform’s potential, WFF National Chapters in Africa aim

to utilize AYA as a hub for convening members, facilitating discussions and organizing activities. This collaboration will create a virtual space for National Chapters to exchange best practices, access job opportunities and share information about calls for applications, regional assemblies and events.

- In addition, the Regional Office continues to support the establishment of new National Chapters across Africa, ensuring that they are locally driven while receiving institutional and financial backing from FAO Country Offices. These chapters are working on their annual work plans, aligned with youth priorities in the region, to contribute to sustainable and resilient agrifood systems.

FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

In 2024, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific strengthened its collaboration with WFF National Chapters in the Republic of Korea, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. With the support of the Regional Office, each National Chapter is currently developing its annual work plan, aligning with YPB youth priorities and regional action items, while expanding its activities, increasing its diversity of backgrounds and regional coverage, and ensuring gender balance within its membership. In addition to National Chapter support, the Regional Office led and hosted several initiatives in 2024:

- In celebration of International Youth Day, the Regional Office hosted a series of virtual events to explore how youth are transforming agrifood systems at both the national and regional levels. At the event, the WFF Bangladesh National Chapter team delivered an inspiring video that highlighted the transformative power of youth in shaping agrifood systems through technology and digital tools.
- During the WFF flagship event, the Regional Office, along with FAO Country Offices, hosted a total of five engaging events.
- The Regional Office is leading several ongoing regional and national projects and initiatives focused on youth, including one on empowering youth through capacity development on innovative

farming systems for agrifood system transformation in Indonesia and another on empowering youth for agrifood systems transformation in Nepal.

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

In 2024, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia led a number of activities to support youth in the region:

- In coordination with the efforts of the WFF Local Youth Action programme, the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia continues to support youth consultations within the already established regional platform for youth and other stakeholders to promote inclusive agrifood system transformation. The consultations highlight the importance of young people in family farming and facilitate the sharing of locally adaptable, innovative solutions to facilitate generational turnover in the agriculture and food sector. The first Regional Rural Youth Consultation was held in November 2023 and a second consultation is planned to be organized in the first half of 2025.
- The Regional Office has supported dialogues and the creation of youth platforms for the empowerment of young women and men at the country level. The raising of awareness on the role of youth in food security and sustainable food systems was undertaken in Turkey, while support is being provided for the establishment of a Youth Network for Agriculture and Rural Development in Georgia, which could provide a good basis to establish a WFF National Chapter. Other countries, for example Armenia, also expressed their interest in forming a WFF National Chapter.
- Rural youth in the region are diverse and face challenges and opportunities that differ depending on specific national and local contexts. The Regional Office therefore supports the ongoing development of studies on the situation and needs of rural youth in the countries in the Western Balkans as well as in Central Asia to provide insights into possible solutions for more informed decision-making at the policy level.

FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

In addition to Regional Forum and National Chapter events at the WFF flagship event, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean continued to support National Chapters and led a series of activities throughout 2024:

- The Regional Office led several ongoing regional and national projects and initiatives focused on youth, including one on the economic empowerment of rural women and youth to improve food and nutritional security and resilience to climate change in El Salvador, and another aimed at promoting innovative agricultural practices among youth and evidence-based agricultural policy in Trinidad and Tobago.
- The Regional Office is supporting the establishment of WFF National Chapters in Chile and Colombia. These Chapters are locally led and driven, while being institutionalized and financially supported by the FAO Country Offices. Each Chapter is in the process of developing its annual work plan in line with YPB youth priorities and actionable items in the region.
- In celebration of International Youth Day, the Regional Office hosted a series of virtual events to explore how youth are transforming agrifood systems at both the national and regional levels.

FAO Regional Office for Near East and North Africa

In 2024, the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa led a number of activities to support youth in the region:

- The Regional Office supported the establishment of WFF National Chapters in Egypt, Mauritania and Qatar. These Chapters are locally led and driven, while fostering global connections. Each is in the process of developing its annual workplan to engage, train and leverage youth in national agrifood system priorities.

- In celebration of International Youth Day, the Regional Office hosted a virtual event to explore how youth can, and already are, transforming agrifood systems at the national and regional level. As a result of the webinar, a series of online trainings on leadership in agrifood systems are now underway for university students in Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen.
- Under the framework of the Arab Forum for Advisory Services, the Regional Office is preparing to launch several Arabic-language online courses and an internship programme to support a new generation of extension and advisory service leaders in the region. The e-courses will provide basic certification in advisory service provision in line with market needs.
- The Regional Office is supporting the YPB in its preparation of a special issue of the Saudi Sustainability Magazine dedicated to youth voices in agrifood systems. The issue seeks to highlight youth perspectives and showcase initiatives from across the region contributing to more sustainable, inclusive and productive agrifood systems.
- In 2024, the cohort of 2023 winners of the Agrination Startup Cup completed their seven-month incubation programme, concluding with a virtual Demo Day during the WFF flagship event. The Regional Office is now preparing to launch a new regional youth entrepreneurship initiative building on the success and lessons learned from Agrination, with the aim of creating decent and green jobs while fostering innovation in agrifood systems by incubating agrifood startups and cultivating enabling ecosystems around them.



WFF National Chapters

WFF [National Chapters](#) are self-organized national youth agrifood platforms aligned to the principles and mission of the WFF Global Youth Action initiative and convened by a local network of partners/organizations. WFF National Chapters undertake activities and projects that include tracking and mobilizing youth-led local action to help achieve more sustainable agrifood systems in their respective communities, cities and countries.

Following an extensive development process, in 2024 the WFF National Chapters network expanded to 24 countries across all FAO regions. In addition to the pioneering National Chapters in the Netherlands and Tanzania, the WFF Global Youth Action initiative currently has local presence in [Argentina](#), [Bangladesh](#), [Bhutan](#), [Ecuador](#), [Egypt](#), [Ghana](#), [Indonesia](#), Ireland, [Italy](#), Malawi, Mauritania, [Nepal](#), Peru, Qatar, the [Republic of Korea](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [Spain](#), Uganda and Zimbabwe. Its upcoming National Chapters are in India, Kenya and [South Africa](#).

In 2024, the WFF National Chapters delivered real impact, empowering young leaders to drive transformative changes in agrifood systems and paving the way for a sustainable food future. Each National Chapter is actively shaping the future of its local agrifood systems, working jointly with FAO Country Offices whose expertise and guidance, along with vital government support, are instrumental in these efforts.

Throughout the year, WFF National Chapters around the world led a variety of initiatives, culminating in the WFF flagship event. The flagship event provided a powerful showcase of the global youth movement, though it only begins to reflect the vast, impactful work happening on the ground. Moreover, the National Chapters also joined forces on shared initiatives to mark international days, scale promising solutions and extend their reach.

As a highlight event, on 12 August 2024, the WFF Global Youth Action initiative marked International Youth Day with a bold commitment to transforming global agrifood systems. The event featured a [24-hour marathon of youth-led regional activities](#) across 21 countries. Led by National Chapters, the WFF Local Youth Action team organized 18 events across 24 hours, demonstrating the strength, unity and creativity of young people as they addressed urgent agrifood challenges. This day emphasized the vital role of youth in driving meaningful change and advancing a vision for a sustainable food future.

At the WFF flagship event in October, National Chapter representatives from across the globe gathered to share the extraordinary achievements in their communities, cities and countries. In addition to participating in the event, attendees had the opportunity to visit Rome and engage with the OYW, strengthening their networks, sharing best practices and maximizing the impact of their participation.

Status: ● Established ● Upcoming ● Prospective



National Chapter spotlight

Nepal



Launched during the WFF flagship event in October 2023, the WFF [Nepal National Chapter](#) has since made considerable impact in providing a uniquely youth focused agrifood platform in the country. It convenes youth engaged in the various facets of the agrifood sector including young farmers, advocates for policy change, agrifood entrepreneurs, researchers and students, amongst others. Under the guidance of FAO Nepal, the endorsement by the Ministry of Agriculture of the country, and in collaboration with the National Youth Council, the WFF Nepal Chapter has also served as an institutional network for the FAO Country Office and relevant government departments to implement youth related programming.

The Nepal National Chapter is led by five core team members taking the roles of Strategy and Innovation lead, Collaboration and Partnerships lead, Project and Initiatives lead, Research and Documentation lead, and Social Media and Outreach lead. To engage youth across the country, the Chapter has further decentralized into the seven provinces of the country with a Provincial Youth Team in each region.

Modelling its activities against the work of the WFF, the Nepal National Chapter has excelled in 2024 with a series of initiatives that showcase the power of youth in the transformation of agrifood systems.

Through its initiatives, events and campaigns, the WFF Nepal National Chapter engaged 16 500 youth in 2024:

- From November to December 2023, the WFF Nepal Chapter led a nationwide “SDG College Campaign” across all seven provinces to raise awareness and inspire students to contribute actions towards achieving the SDGs. With 54 trained facilitators, the campaign reached 6 314 students from 140 colleges across 35 districts.
- On 11 January, the WFF Nepal National Chapter participated in the International Policy Dialogue on Future-smart Crops organized by FAO Nepal. Exhibiting at the forum, participants interacted with WFF representatives, learning about its mission to promote sustainable agrifood systems. The event was attended by FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu.
- From February to April, the Nepal National Chapter team established Provincial Youth Teams across all seven provinces to strengthen regional/local representation and coordination. This expansion enabled localized actions and empowered youth leadership at the provincial/local level, creating a wider network and impact across Nepal.
- Throughout 2024, the seven WFF Provincial Youth Teams in Nepal actively conducted college outreach sessions targeting students of agricultural and technical campuses to engage and inspire the next generation of agrifood leaders. Their efforts reached 14 different agricultural and technical campuses and schools, engaging over 1 000 students.
- From April to May, the WFF Nepal Digo Actions social media campaign invited youth to share stories of their sustainable actions aligned with the SDGs. This digital initiative aimed to amplify youth contributions, and inspire others to engage in sustainable practices and share diverse stories, including traditional Jholmol preparation, river cleanup programs and innovative Azolla intercropping training.
- Contributing to World Environment Day, the WFF Nepal National Chapter and other partners hosted a school art competition attracting over 70 students. The event provided a creative platform for young minds to express environmental themes, emphasizing the importance of environmental sustainability.

- In collaboration with FAO Nepal, the Nepal Youth Council and Ncell, the WFF Nepal National Chapter launched the “One Youth One Plant Campaign” on June 28. The Campaign focused on youth-led tree planting across Nepal’s 77 districts, with an inauguration in the Nuwakot District.
- On National Rice Day 2024, the WFF Nepal National Chapter and IAAS Nepal held a photo contest to showcase the significance and beauty of rice farming in Nepal. This initiative, which awarded three winners, attracted entries from young photographers and enthusiasts who spotlighted sustainable agricultural practices and natural landscapes.
- In Lumbini Province, the WFF Nepal National Chapter, FAO Nepal, the National Youth Council and the Lumbini Provincial Government brought together 175 young participants for the Provincial Youth Forum to discuss local food security and the sustainable agriculture sector. The event was supported by the Lumbini Provincial Youth Team. It emphasized youth involvement, and innovation and networking among young students, agripreneurs and stakeholders, fostering collaborative ideas for a sustainable agrifood system.
- On International Youth Day 2024, the WFF Nepal National Chapter, in collaboration with Provincial Youth Team Madesh, FAO Nepal and IAAS LC Bardibas, organized an event themed “Driving Youth Towards Sustainable and Digital Agri-Innovation” at the College of Natural Resource Management in Bardibas, Mahottari. This hybrid event, linked to the International Youth Day theme “From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development”, engaged youth to discuss sustainable and digital agricultural innovation.
- To contribute to the Summit of the Future, WFF Nepal National Chapter members participated in the Nepal Youth Summit 2024, a gathering of over 150 youth from across the country. The two-day Summit on 12 and 13 August concluded with the presentation of a Youth Declaration to the Prime Minister of Nepal aimed to contribute to the Pact for the Future, outlining actions and commitments from Member Nations to build a more resilient global community for present and future generations.
- To celebrate World Food Day 2024, the Provincial Youth Teams across six provinces in Nepal coordinated interactive and educational activities from 26 September to 7 October, focused on the theme: “Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future”.
- In the lead up to the WFF flagship event, FAO Nepal, the Ministry of Agriculture and the WFF Nepal National Chapter co-hosted the Nepal Food Forum on 10 September 2024. Inaugurated by Vice President Ramsahaya Prasad Yadav, the Forum gathered 800 participants under the banner of Nepal Youth Action, Nepal Science and Innovation Forum and the Nepal Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum. The event brought in lessons from Bhutan’s National Youth Symposium, showcased innovations from Nepal’s Youth Agri-Innovation Challenge and included a policy debate simulated by Debate Network Nepal. It also featured an interactive SDG action card game and Indigenous cultural performances.
- During the Nepal Food Forum, FAO Nepal and the WFF Nepal National Chapter announced the establishment of the Nepal YFL. The local incubator programme will empower young innovators from the country to develop and scale their high-potential solutions into sustainable business models.
- Inspired by the WFF Masterclass sessions, the WFF Nepal Chapter conducted a series of masterclasses and trainings throughout the year on proposal writing, systems thinking in the agrifood sector, the agrifood landscape in Nepal, the intersections of SDGs and climate action, nutrition and the determinant of dietary habits, the summit of the future and the application of artificial intelligence in agriculture.
- In addition to some members participating in the 2024 WFF flagship event, the Nepal National Chapter was also represented at UNFCCC COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Africa National Chapters highlights

On International Youth Day, WFF National Chapters across Africa organized events showcasing the essential role of youth in building resilient agrifood systems. Each chapter developed unique activities to engage young people, encouraging sustainable agriculture, innovation and solutions-oriented dialogue.

- **The Gambia:** The WFF Gambia National Chapter arranged field visits that emphasized youth involvement in agriculture. These hands-on excursions allowed young participants to witness firsthand the practices and challenges of sustainable agrifood systems.
- **Ghana:** To build the capacity of students on key agricultural themes and mentor those interested in a career in the agrifood sector, the WFF Ghana National Chapter hosted an event for senior students from Accra Academy. This thought-provoking session urged students to consider their potential to drive agrifood sustainability, fostering awareness and a sense of responsibility for the future of agriculture in Ghana.



- **Kenya:** Youth seized the spotlight through the organization of the Pre-Local Conference of Youth on Climate in Kenya, in collaboration with Fridays for Future Kenya and the Society for International Development under YOUNGO – the official children and youth constituency of the UNFCCC. This event emphasized the critical role of young people in climate action and agrifood systems resilience, underscoring the dedication of Kenyan youth to these causes. The session included keynote remarks from representative of the Food Systems National Convenor of Kenya, Priscilla Muiruri, and Director of the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub, Stefanos Fotiou.

- **Nigeria:** The WFF National Chapter in this country marked International Youth Day with celebrations centred on “Youth-Driven Solutions for a Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood System”. This event explored ways for young people to contribute innovations and solutions that can enhance the sustainability and resilience of their local agrifood systems.
- **Sierra Leone:** The WFF Sierra Leone National Chapter hosted an impactful event titled “Youth in Action: Shaping Solutions for Food Insecurity and Climate Challenges”. The event was designed to empower young leaders to take an active role in addressing the pressing issues of food security and climate change. It brought together a diverse group of participants, including young people, experts, decision-makers and organizations. It also fostered a collaborative environment to share information, develop innovative solutions and strengthen cooperation across sectors.
- **South Africa:** The WFF South Africa National Chapter hosted a workshop aimed at empowering youth-led agricultural businesses. Keynote speaker Vuyiswa Ramokgopa highlighted the crucial roles of both youth and women in agriculture, advocating for stronger policy engagement to drive innovation. The workshop also addressed barriers faced by women farmers, emphasizing the need for greater inclusion and leadership opportunities.



- **Zimbabwe:** The WFF Zimbabwe National Chapter, in collaboration with the FAO Zimbabwe Office, organized an event celebrating the power of youth and digital innovation. The event highlighted how young leaders can transform Zimbabwe’s agrifood

systems through partnerships with the Green Jobs for Rural Youth Employment project and the FAO Digital Villages Initiative, demonstrating the potential for youth-led digital innovation to reshape the agricultural landscape.

Additional activities conducted throughout the year by the National Chapters reflect their commitment to a broader mission, extending well beyond the observance of International Youth Day:

- **Ghana Poultry Day initiative – 1 July**

Members of the Steering Committee of the WFF Ghana National Chapter participated in the Ghana Poultry Day initiative, which celebrated the nation's poultry industry. The event focused on advocating for greater support and consumption of locally produced poultry, emphasizing its nutritional and medicinal benefits.

- **Capacity building programme – 24 July**

The Lead for Social Protection and Human Rights at WFF Ghana represented the WFF National Chapter at a capacity-building programme in Fiapre-Sunyani, Bono Region. Organized by WAN-Hive Ghana in partnership with the Kosmos Innovation Centre, the programme included a presentation on the vital role of women in ensuring food security and distributed farm inputs to 200 female farmers to strengthen agricultural productivity across the country.

Asia and the Pacific National Chapters highlights

National Chapters receive robust support from FAO Country Offices, enabling these youth-led platforms to align with office priorities and integrate into strategic planning. This support empowers them to implement impactful activities with expert guidance for effective leadership. In Asia and the Pacific, FAO Country Offices have taken a proactive role in supporting the WFF National Chapters, contributing valuable experience and insight into the local context.

- **Bhutan:** On International Youth Day, Bhutan launched its WFF National Chapter, emphasizing the nation's commitment to empowering youth in the agrifood sector. The launch was a key part of the National Youth Symposium, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in collaboration with FAO, attracting over 150 young participants.

- At the National Youth Symposium, the Chapter launched a Bhutanese version of "The SDGs Action Card Game X (Cross)" in collaboration with FAO Bhutan and the Kanazawa Institute of Technology. The game is a tool to inspire young people to actively participate in addressing the complex challenges of transforming Bhutan's agrifood systems while promoting the SDGs.
- Aligned with the 2024 World Food Day theme, FAO Bhutan, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and the National Chapter organized the World Food Day Bhutan Art Competition. The Competition received submissions from tens of young students aged 10 to 24, enabling them to express their vision for a future where everyone has access to safe and nutritious food.
- In partnership with FAO Bhutan, the Bhutan WFF National Chapter also hosted the inaugural Food Dialogue in October 2024. The event focused on the importance of capacity building and education in the agrifood sector. The dialogue underscored the critical role of youth in driving agrifood systems transformation and launched a series of masterclasses to equip young people with the skills to innovate and lead in sustainable agrifood practices.



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- **Bangladesh:** The WFF Bangladesh National Chapter showcased an inspiring session demonstrating how youth can leverage technology and digital tools to transform agrifood systems. Their appearance and representation during the WFF flagship event emphasize those commitments.



- **China:** The WFF China National Chapter, in partnership with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, hosted an event for International Youth Day titled “Youth Action for Rural Revitalization”. It encouraged young people to engage in agriculture and rural enterprises, and highlighted technology’s role in addressing global agrifood challenges.
- **Indonesia:** Indonesia launched Southeast Asia’s First WFF National Chapter in 2024 with support from the FAO Indonesia Office. Youth members, in collaboration with the Executive Office of the President and the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, held an event that focused on emphasizing the role of youth as key players in ensuring the sustainability of Indonesia’s agriculture sector and encouraging their involvement to highlight the importance of agricultural innovation.



- **The Republic of Korea:** In 2024, the WFF Republic of Korea National Chapter doubled the number of its members, making it more representative of the country. The addition of new members allowed the National Chapter to introduce three new teams within its network: Communications, Workshops and Field Trips. Each team’s contributions reflected a range of benefits including increased social media presence and promotion, skill development, collaboration and planning, and hands-on learning experiences through online and offline teamwork. As one of the WFF’s longest-established National Chapters, regularly consulting with the FAO Partnership and Liaison Office in the Republic of Korea, it continues to provide a significant platform for youth in the country to share their perspectives on agrifood transformation. In 2024, the National Chapter hosted activities that helped deepen members’ understanding of food security issues and demonstrated the National Chapter’s effectiveness in supporting a sustainable agrifood system for a better future.
 - In August, the National Chapter held its first workshop to strengthen cooperation among members by sharing diverse backgrounds and common interests, and to identify potential speakers for the 2024 WFF Regional Forum event.
 - In October, the National Chapter organized a field trip to Wonju in Gangwon-do to visit the youth farmer organization “Orca Team” and participate in a semi-workshop on permaculture.
 - Also in October, the National Chapter co-hosted a Regional Forum event on the sidelines of the WFF Global Youth Action Forum event in Seoul.

Europe and Central Asia National Chapters highlights

Italy: In 2024, the WFF Italy National Chapter made its debut at FAO headquarters in Rome, launching a movement to inspire young leaders dedicated to transforming Italy’s agrifood systems. The National Chapter serves as a unifying platform for youth-led initiatives across Italy, aiming to catalyze local action and promote sustainable change in the agrifood sector. To further its goals, the Italy National Chapter arranged a series of strategic meetings. These included discussions with Rector Antonella Polimeni

of Sapienza University of Rome, FAO Deputy Director-General Maurizio Martina and Italy's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Rome, Bruno Archi. These collaborations set a strong foundation for the National Chapter's ambitions. To expand its membership, the National Chapter undertook a mobilization process that led to 294 new members joining the platform.

- **Ireland:** The WFF Ireland National Chapter (also known as the National Youth Food Forum) was launched in March 2024 in a lively virtual event bringing together a host of youth and other stakeholders, including representatives from educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and the government.
 - Through the year, the Ireland National Chapter hosted two youth agrifood dialogues at Airfield Estate in Dublin, discussing crucial topics including balancing Ireland's role as a major food producer with both domestic and international climate commitments, youth engagement with farming and rural economy, and transparency and fairness in the agri-food supply chain.
 - On 20 September, alongside Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development, the National Chapter hosted Ireland's National Youth Food Summit. The event brought together young leaders from around the country and world for a day of interactive workshops and panel discussions. Opened by Minister of State for Land use and Biodiversity at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Pippa Hackett, participants engaged in knowledge-sharing and built connections to drive meaningful change in the agrifood sector.
 - At the WFF flagship event, the National Chapter hosted a side event and took part in the Ireland Youth Networking Reception that brought together the 2024 sponsored Ireland youth delegates, Ambassador of Ireland to Italy and Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations Agencies in Rome, Patricia O'Brien and FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu, among other representatives.

- On 8 November, the Irish Youth Delegates participating in the WFF flagship event met with Irish Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, to report on their experiences at the Forum.
- **Switzerland:** The prospective WFF Switzerland National Chapter has been undertaking a comprehensive mapping of youth-led and youth-focused organizations engaged in the agrifood sector in the country, conducting youth consultations, as well as engaging with the FAO Liaison Office in Geneva and with the Swiss Federal Office of Agriculture. As a highlight event, the prospective National Chapter hosted a consultation forum on the sidelines of the WFF flagship event to find consensus and discuss steps towards the establishment of the National Chapter.
- **Spain:** The WFF National Chapter in Spain marked a significant step forward by organizing two Policy Labs in collaboration with the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Polytechnic University of Madrid. These discussions centred on key themes derived from the Youth Assembly Regional Compendium for Europe and Central Asia, focusing on capacity building and introducing agrifood systems transformation into traditionally overlooked sectors. In a parallel effort, during the campaign for the European elections, the WFF Spain National Chapter partnered with the Young European Federalists to engage candidates on their commitments to rural youth and the future of agrifood systems in Europe. This initiative highlighted the National Chapter's role in amplifying youth voices and driving meaningful dialogue on policy matters.

Latin America and the Caribbean National Chapters highlights

In 2024, WFF National Chapters in Latin America and the Caribbean participated in International Youth Day with various events.

- **Argentina:** The WFF Argentina National Chapter participated in a roundtable discussion with youth from various agrifood sectors. Representatives from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships in advancing food

systems, while the National Institute of Agricultural Technology emphasized the role of technological and ecological practices. The Argentina National Chapter also represented youth interests at the CFS in October, advocating for youth inclusion in decision-making processes. At the CFS, WFF Argentina National Chapter lead Stephanie Cabovianco shared various approaches to empowering youth in agrifood systems through education, innovation and local action.



- **Brazil:** The prospective WFF Brazil National Chapter – as part of the Regional Dialogues of the Y20, the official youth engagement group at the G20 – organized a side event bringing together local youth to contribute their perspectives to the upcoming G20 Leaders’ Summit in Rio de Janeiro. With the outcomes of this session informing Y20’s contributions to the global process, the session offered a crucial platform for young Brazilians to voice their views on reducing global hunger and poverty.



- **Ecuador:** The WFF Ecuador National Chapter hosted the Youth Fair for Food Security at Espacio Cultural in Quito, providing a platform for young entrepreneurs to showcase their projects and share innovative ideas for a sustainable future. Supported by United Nations agencies, including FAO Ecuador and UNESCO, the fair reinforced global commitments to sustainable development and youth engagement. In October, the Ecuador Chapter continued its efforts with a Youth Summit, gathering participants from over 50 organizations across the country.
- **Peru:** The Peru National Chapter hosted “New Voices, New Solutions: Youth in Agrifood Systems”, spotlighting young leaders’ contributions from rural and urban areas in policy shaping and local food systems enhancement. Throughout the year, the Peru Chapter also focused on knowledge-sharing through workshops that empowered youth to address agrifood systems, climate change and resource sovereignty, promoting sustainable and resilient agrifood landscapes.

Near East and North Africa National Chapters highlights

Throughout 2024, WFF National chapters in the Near East and North Africa engaged youth by holding meetings with new members and preparing for upcoming activities. These efforts underscored the crucial role of youth leadership in building sustainable agrifood systems and reflect the Near East and North Africa region’s ongoing commitment to youth-driven policy influence, and long-term positive impacts.

- **Regional Forum:** On International Youth Day, the event “How Can Youth Transform Agrifood Systems in the NENA [Near East and North Africa] Region?” brought together diverse youth networks and organizations committed to agrifood system transformation. Supported by the FAO regional youth focal point, the Forum encouraged collaborative problem-solving and innovative thinking on agrifood challenges from international, regional and local perspectives.

- **Egypt:** The WFF Egypt National Chapter has been proactive in engaging youth in agrifood systems. They hosted their first virtual meeting to introduce the National Chapter to potential members, promoting inclusivity and accessibility. During the WFF flagship event, the Egypt National Chapter actively participated in youth assemblies, including the UNCCD Thematic Assembly, where they shared their work alongside the FAO model as a promising framework. Together with the WFF Qatar National Chapter, they demonstrated how National Chapters enable youth to collaborate with government bodies and organizations to drive sustainable change through actionable solutions.



- **Qatar:** In partnership with the University of Doha for Science and Technology and the Ministry of Municipality, the WFF Qatar National Chapter collaborated with FAO in 2024 to build a strong foundation for youth engagement aligned with WFF Global Youth Action principles. Following preparatory engagements throughout the year, the WFF Qatar National Chapter launched at the WFF flagship event.
- **Mauritania:** Launched at the WFF flagship event, the WFF Mauritania National Chapter now joins the ranks of other WFF National Chapters and is working towards driving a uniquely youthful agrifood system transformation in the country.

North America National Chapters highlights

- **The United States of America:** The National Chapter for the United States is in its developmental stages but has already made notable strides in engaging youth and building partnerships.
 - During the 2024 WFF flagship event, representatives of the United States National Chapter participated in key sessions, showcasing their commitment to youth-led agrifood systems transformation. A standout moment was their involvement in the 2024 American Young Leaders Welcome Reception, hosted by the US Mission to the United Nations Agencies in Rome. The event provided a unique opportunity to engage with prominent figures such as U.S. Ambassador Jeffrey Prescott, U.S. Special Envoy for Global Youth Issues Abby Finkenauer and Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.S. Mission in Rome Rodney Hunter, strengthening connections and expanding youth networks. During the reception, a comprehensive presentation on the WFF National Chapter framework was shared, aiming to inspire collaboration and mobilize support for the National Chapter's establishment and activities.
 - The mobilization of youth-led organizations across the United States is actively being supported by the FAO Liaison Office in Washington, D.C. This effort involves fostering partnerships and building a network that can drive impactful youth-led actions at the national level, contributing to more sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems. With ongoing development and strong institutional backing, the United States National Chapter is poised to become a model for youth engagement in the region.



Key youth-led campaigns



The WFF goes to university

During this week-long campaign, WFF Global Youth Action representatives went on a roadshow to universities around Rome. It served as a way for the initiative to strengthen its student community, raise awareness about its programmes and showcase its impact. The WFF Global Youth Action initiative plans to localize this activity in collaboration with WFF National Chapters, further enhancing its reach and strengthening its relationships with student communities around the globe.

WFF community picnic

On 25 September, the WFF Global Youth Action team invited students to FAO headquarters, where they dove into thematic activities linked to agrifood systems. This [pilot picnic](#) focused on the topic of food waste. All of the food served was made with rescued ingredients in collaboration with Recup. Additionally,

one of the picnic activities was utilizing plantable papers to grow the seeds embedded in them. The idea was to highlight the message that we can find new ways to make things more sustainable – in this case, what was taken and produced from plants, was given back to nature.

Feed the Future campaign with WFP Freerice

Freerice is a WFP platform that aims to get as many people as possible involved in their life-saving missions. It is also knowledge hub for youth, featuring a trivia game in which for every correct answer, players generate 10 grains of rice that will be matched by donors and will go to support WFP's missions. With WFP Freerice, the WFF Global Youth Action initiative created a challenge to raise rice grains, inviting people to play the game and getting them involved in the fight against world hunger. The 2024 campaign raised over 88 million rice grains and engaged more than 14 000 participants.

08

Youth at the 2024 World Food Forum flagship event



Youth at the 2024 World Food Forum flagship event

All activities of the WFF Global Youth Action initiative held throughout 2024 culminate at the annual WFF flagship event, where youth joined hands with world experts, impassioned changemakers and visionary leaders of all ages to foster partnerships and action for agrifood systems transformation. The 2024 WFF flagship event was held from 14 to 18 October at the headquarters of FAO in Rome, Italy, and online.

Organized around three pillars – Global Youth Action, Science and Innovation, and Hand-in-Hand Investment – the 2024 flagship event leveraged the power of intergenerational collaboration, as well as partnerships and action across policy, science, innovation, education, culture and investment. The event also hosted the 2024 edition of the annual World Food Day celebrations and the High-Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG, as well as the Global Family Farming Forum and the Global-Hub Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems Meeting, ensuring even more inclusivity, dialogues and solutions for the present and future of our agrifood systems.

Opening ceremony

The [opening ceremony of the Global Youth Forum](#), held on 14 October at the 2024 WFF flagship event, put youth at the forefront in efforts to tackle hunger ensuring good food for all. After the WFF Anthem, performed by Nouran Abutaleb, FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu delivered the opening address, highlighting the essential role of young people in creating resilient agrifood systems, and urging them to embrace innovation and collaboration.

The session's first panel, on the importance of youth engagement and empowerment in agrifood systems transformation, featured esteemed panelists including Lao People's Democratic Republic Minister of Agriculture and Forestry H.E. Linkham Douangsavanh; Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs at the United Nations Youth Office Felipe Paullier; Dutch Ambassador for Youth, Education and Work Jurriaan Middelhoff; Chief of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Office of the First Lady of the Republic of El Salvador Marianna Montes

Moreno; COP29 Youth Climate Champion Leyla Hasanova; and Andile Mnguni, member of the YPB. The panel explored strategies to empower youth in the agrifood sector and moderators facilitated audience engagement with the panelists. Between panel segments, WFF Poet Parneet Kaur delivered a stirring performance, adding cultural depth to the discussions. The panel resumed with interactive questions from attendees, underscoring youth-driven solutions and sustainability.

The ceremony continued with another cultural highlight: a performance by singer Pumehana. WFF Global coordinator Kazuki Kitaoka then introduced a second panel with WFF Global Youth Action representatives Oisin Gill, Lindsey Hook, Celeste Macilwaine, Victor Muiru and Javier Bravo, who shared insights on youth-led initiatives in agrifood systems. The session ended with an interactive question and answer session, leaving participants energized by the diversity, creativity and commitment displayed. The Global Youth Forum opening set a collaborative and hopeful tone for a week of meaningful engagement and action toward building a sustainable future.

Youth partner side events

To complement the mainstage events, the WFF Global Youth Forum welcomed partners and interested parties to propose and lead virtual or hybrid in-person side events. These events aimed to highlight partners' visions, innovations and programmes related to the 2024 WFF theme. In total, [42 side events](#) were organized. These gatherings aimed to facilitate in-depth discussions on agrifood systems transformation, creating an interactive and inclusive space for young individuals to participate, advocate for their ideas and ignite action.

Flagship exhibitions

The WFF flagship exhibitions showcased a total of 35 youth-related exhibitions, with participation from 18 FAO exhibitors and 17 external partners. The FAO exhibitors' contribution highlighted youth's role in agrifood systems through exhibits from various divisions, including the Sustainable Animal

Production Division, the Feed and Genetics Group, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the Food Systems and Food Safety Division, along with initiatives like the FAO eLearning Academy and the Global Internship, Volunteers and Fellows Programme. Additionally, inclusion of members of the YPB, YSG and various WFF Global Youth Action initiatives, such as Youth Towards Zero Food Waste campaign and the Youth Skills Hub, showed a commitment to youth engagement. External partners also contributed significantly, showcasing their work through exhibitions from organizations like Good Food Fund, 2050 to People, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and several culinary and sustainability-focused youth-led institutions. The vibrant programme included culinary events, dance performances, a photo competition, a tea ceremony and a silent disco, all designed to celebrate youth involvement in sustainable agrifood practices.

Youth Assembly highlights

Mainstage events

From Policy to Action: Youth Shaping Global Agrifood Systems – 15 October

The [first mainstage event](#) of the flagship week focused on strategies to move from policymaking to concrete actions, with a spotlight on youth leadership in agrifood systems transformation. The event highlighted best practices for turning policy into action through knowledge-sharing and youth-led solutions for sustainable agriculture. FAO Director of Food Systems and Food Safety, Corinna Hawkes, delivered a keynote speech, emphasizing the role of youth in driving inclusive policy reformation. The panel, “Bridging Innovation and Tradition: Youth-Led Solutions for Sustainable Agriculture”, moderated by YPB member Gabriel Adami, explored how youth and Indigenous leadership can foster climate-smart agriculture. Panelists included Dutch Ambassador for Youth, Education and Work Jurriaan Middelhoff; United Nations Youth Delegate Ida Simonsen; WFP Director of Food Systems Marco Cavalcante; and Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC) Co-Chair Judy Kipkenda.



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The session also featured a fireside chat with YPB members Osman Naqvi and Maria Jose Cervantes Calderon, who shared insights on effectively advocating for youth priorities in agrifood systems and the importance of community engagement when implementing action plans. The event concluded with closing remarks from Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs at the United Nations Youth Office, Felipe Paullier, who stressed the power of youth in building a sustainable future.

Youth Assembly Global Action Plan Launch – 18 October

This session marked the official [launch of the Global Youth Action Plan](#), developed by the YPB. The event showcased regional initiatives and policy priorities designed to address challenges at the local and regional levels while fostering a multi-stakeholder approach for scalable impact.



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The panel discussion, moderated by YPB member Shreyaa Venkat, featured insights from IFAD Lead Technical Specialist Hisham Zehni and Youth4Climate and UNDP Partnerships Lead Buay Tut. They explored strategies for ensuring continuous youth engagement in global policymaking and supporting marginalized youth in rural areas. The panel also discussed effective approaches for mobilizing young people in climate action, drawing from Youth4Climate experiences.

The session concluded with closing remarks from FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol who reflected on the importance of empowering youth to shape a sustainable future, and encouraged continued action and involvement with the Youth Policy Board.

Thematic Youth Assembly sessions

Thematic Youth Assembly session on CFS: Youth as Catalysts for Policy Transformation: Shaping Inclusive and Sustainable Food Systems – 15 October

This Assembly session, with more than 195 participants combined, featured inspiring keynote remarks from CFS Secretary Adriana Herrera Moreno. It included thought-provoking discussions led by panelists, focusing on strengthening youth involvement in agrifood systems and policymaking. During four different breakout sessions, delegates discussed challenges such as rising food prices, inequalities and the lack of youth interest in agriculture, proposing solutions including investment in education, rural development and inclusive decision-making processes.

The Road to COP29: Two Thematic Youth Assembly sessions on UNFCCC – 15 and 17 October

Two thematic Youth Assembly sessions were hosted during the WFF flagship event on the UNFCCC with a combined audience of over 205 delegates.

- The first session focused on capacity building for delegates with presentations on the FAST Partnership, the Global Goal on Adaptation and the Just Transition Work Programme. Both sessions were co-organized with YOUNGO, featuring partners including ProVeg International Youth Board, YARN, ACT4FOOD and IAAS.

- The second session included interventions from Director of the FAO Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment Kaveh Zehedi and Director of the FAO Agrifood Economics Division David Laborde. The YOUNGO Food and Agriculture working group presented an overview of their Global Youth Statement and breakout groups gathered youth perspectives on financing, nationally determined contributions, farmers' inclusion and just transition. Both sessions fed into the positions of the WFF Global Youth Action initiative and YOUNGO in the lead-up to COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on the Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG – 16 October

This Assembly session, with over 200 delegates, featured the participation of Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at FAO Marcel Beukeboom, and Director of the FAO Land and Water Division Lifeng Li. In collaboration with the World Youth Parliament for Water and the Water Youth Network, the session aimed to revise the final details of the Youth Statement to be presented in the High-Level meeting of the Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on Post COFO: Youth Perspectives on the Forestry and Agriculture Nexus Thematic Assembly Session – 16 October

This Assembly session, which had over 193 delegates, featured impactful opening remarks by Deputy Director of the FAO Forestry Division Tiina Vähänen. The session included insightful panel discussions with leaders in forestry and agriculture, addressing challenges faced by youth in the forestry-agriculture nexus, including career development, climate resilience and the need for sustainable practices. Through breakout sessions, delegates explored strategies for empowering youth in decision-making, promoting innovative approaches and fostering intergenerational collaboration, building on themes from the 2024 forestry themed Youth Assembly held in July.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on the UNCCD: Youth perspectives on combatting desertification, land degradation and drought – 17 October

In partnership with the UNCCD Youth Caucus, this session brought together over 70 youth leaders to explore the gendered impacts of land desertification, degradation and drought with a focus on development strategies that empower youth and women to improve agricultural resilience. With speakers including UNCCD Secretariat Marcos Montoiro, UNCCD Youth Caucus representative JulietGrace Luwedde, Head of Technical Office within Qatar's Food Security Department Saleh Al-Rumaihi, WFF Egypt National Chapter representative Mariam Mohamad Abdelhady and World Farmers' Organisation representative Martin Murray, the session built momentum for the engagements of the WFF Global Youth Action initiative at UNCCD COP16.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on WFF Youth Leadership for Implementing Systems Approach to Agrifood Systems Transformation – 17 October

This Assembly session, which had over 146 participants, featured keynote remarks from Director of the FAO Food Systems and Food Safety Division Corinna Hawkes. The session brought together youth leaders, experts and stakeholders to explore the transformative potential of a systems approach in agrifood systems. Through an intergenerational dialogue, the participants engaged in discussions on enabling environments, priorities and barriers in adopting systems thinking.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold – 17 October

This Assembly session featured the participation of Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tanzania to the World Meteorological Organization and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Vice-Chair Dr Ladislaus Chang'a, and FAO Chief Economist Maximo Torero. The session explored

achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) with consideration of the 1.5-degree roadmap, discussing different ways to create actionable solutions with more than 100 participants. Building upon previous youth assemblies, interventions on SDG 2 at the United Nations headquarters in New York and a global survey, working towards Zero Hunger remains core to the Youth Assembly.

Second Thematic Youth Assembly session on Aquatic Food Systems – 17 October

The second thematic Assembly session on Aquatic Food Systems, held in a hybrid format by the WFF Global Youth Forum in collaboration with the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, centred on strengthening the youth constituency in aquatic food systems. The session was attended by more than 100 participants who gathered input on effective outreach strategies to better engage youth in fisheries and aquaculture to draft a workplan for the constituency. The discussion identified priorities, including the need to empower youth, bridge connection gaps, and build resilience in fisheries and aquaculture for a sustainable future.

Thematic Youth Assembly session on the UNFSS – 17 October

This thematic Assembly session, with over 155 participants, featured an insightful retrospective analysis by youth leader Elizabeth Mwende on youth involvement since the 2021 UNFSS. Director of the Office of SDGs at FAO Stefanos Fotiou, presented the current landscape and the state of global food systems and food security. The session provided a platform for youth perspectives on global agrifood systems and food security challenges, highlighting the need for youth-centred strategies for the upcoming UNFSS+4. Participants engaged in a roundtable discussion, addressing youth leadership in policy, capacity-building and innovative approaches to ensure resilient, equitable agrifood systems.



Regional Youth Assembly workshops

YPB members presented the [Global Youth Action Plan 2025–2026](#) through different regional sessions during the WFF flagship event. These hybrid sessions served as the last round of consultations for the Global Youth Action Plan. At the core of these consultations were the “actionable items” – two actions identified per region aimed at addressing the issues identified through the policy priority, and which will form the basis of the work of the YPB for the 2025–2026 term. Attendees shared their perspectives on these actionable items, allowing the YPB to gain greater insight into their relevance and applicability to youth in the region, and incorporate their suggestions into the Global Youth Action Plan before its launch.

- **Africa:** This hybrid session with more than 180 participants had a panel discussion on “Innovating for Sustainability: Bridging Tradition and Technology in Africa’s Agrifood Systems”, with presentations from Chief Director: Sector Capacity Development, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development of the Republic of South Africa, Lebo Botsheleng; GIYC Co-Chair Judy Kipkenda; and Secretary General of REJEPPAT, member of CTOP (La Coordination Togolaise des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles) and President of the Regional Youth College of ROPPA Afantchawo Koudasse. The actionable items from the Africa Regional Youth Action Plan consulted were:
 - Capacity development for digital technologies and traditional knowledge; and
 - Advocacy for inclusive policies that support agrifood systems transformation.
- **Asia and the Pacific:** This hybrid session with more than 170 participants had a panel discussion on decoding “Nutrition Labels: Understanding Serving Sizes, Nutrients and Ingredients”, with presentations from Deputy Minister at the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs of Indonesia Dida Gardera, Pacific GIYC Regional Focal Point Lahela Kamehanaokala Mattos and FAO Nutrition Officer Ramani Wijesinha Bettoni. The session also included interventions from Former GIYC Asia Co-Chair Mai Thin Yu Mon, National Farmers’ Federation of Australia and World Farmers Organization representative Martin Murray, and Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture representative Dr MJ Khan. The actionable items from the Asia and the Pacific Regional Youth Action Plan consulted were:
 - Education and awareness on better nutrition and food labeling; and
 - Capacity development for sustainable food production practices.
- **Europe and Central Asia:** This hybrid session with more than 140 participants had an “Intergenerational Panel on Policy Frameworks and Youth-Led Innovation for Rural Development and Sustainable Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia”, with presentations from Policy Officer for the Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs Treasa Cadogan; Dutch Ambassador for Youth, Education and Work Jurriaan Middelhoff; United Nations Youth Delegate Dutch Ambassador Bine Liem; and First Deputy Director of Youth Affairs Agency of Uzbekistan Dilnozakhon Kattakhonova. The session also included interventions from GIYC Arctic Regional Focal Point Michael Bro, International Life Sciences Institute Europe Virginia Espen and World Farmers Organization representative Andrea Colafranceschi; and Minister of Agriculture of Hungary István Nagy. The actionable items from the Europe and Central Asia Regional Youth Action Plan consulted were:
 - Food loss regional training and knowledge-sharing modules; and
 - Awareness and advocacy on food loss.

- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** This hybrid session with more than 140 participants had a “High-Level panel on enhancing policy frameworks in Latin America and the Caribbean: How we can apply the local solutions within government better practices?” with presentations from Director of the FAO Office of Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries Angelica Jacome Daza; Former FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva; Director of International Affairs and Cooperation, Office of the First Lady of El Salvador Marianna Montes Moreno; and General Coordinator of Rural Youth for the Brazilian Ministry of Agrarian Development Maria Eduarda de Lima Vasconcelos. The session also included interventions from FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean Mario Lubetkin, GIYC Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Focal Point Brenda Saloj, Coordinator of the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger of the Mercosur Parliament Matias Sotomayor, and member of the youth section of the Agriculture Alliance of the Caribbean and World Rural Forum Tiffany Marcelle. The actionable items from the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Youth Action Plan consulted were:
 - Promote mechanisms to improve access to finance; and
 - Multistakeholder partnerships and intergenerational knowledge sharing for sustainable agrifood systems.
- **Near East and North Africa:** This hybrid session with more than 120 participants held an “Intergenerational Panel on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Tackling Food Waste, Gender Equality, and Youth Empowerment in the NENA [Near East and North Africa] Region”, with presentations from CEO of the Egyptian Food Bank Mohsen Sarhan; Assistant Professor at the Institut supérieur de commerce et d’administration des entreprises Latifa Ziadi, agriculture innovation centre director Jeyid Yacoub Daye, GIYC Co-Chair Judy Kipkenda, and Coordinator at Gaza Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Platform Zainab Abid. The session also included an intervention from Director of the FAO Office of Communications Yasmina Bouziane. The actionable items from the Near East and North Africa Regional Youth Action Plan consulted were:
 - Collaborative platform for agricultural innovation for young farmers; and
 - Accessible education for sustainable agriculture.
- **North America:** This hybrid session with more than 130 participants had a panel on “Shaping Food Waste Solutions: Regional Approaches and Youth Leadership in the Post-Secondary Setting” with presentations from Deputy Permanent Representative and Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Mission to the United Nations Agencies in Rome Rodney Hunter, Alternate Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Agencies in Rome Qamer Hameed, US Special Envoy for Global Youth Issues Abby Finkenauer, and Canadian Federation of Agriculture representative David Charles Newcombe. The actionable items from the North America Regional Youth Action Plan consulted were:
 - Food waste reduction powered in post-secondary settings; and
 - Food waste hierarchy education for north american innovators.

Roundtables

Young Parliamentarians Roundtable – 16 October

The Young Parliamentarians Roundtable featured the presentations of the Regional Action Plans by the YPB members. Parliamentarians – including Matías Sotomayor of Argentina, Jeremy Lissouba of the Republic of Congo, Loris Resinelli of Belgium, and Gilbert Awassi of Gabon – shared insights on the Global Action Plan and stressed the need for presenting the document to the different governments. They showed their commitment to support the implementation of the YPB Global Action Plan.

Indigenous Youth Roundtable – 17 October

The Indigenous Youth Roundtable featured the collaboration between Indigenous youth and the YPB to align the YPB Global Action Plan. Key discussions highlighted the importance of empowering Indigenous governance, respecting rights and fostering inclusive platforms for collaboration.

Young Farmers Roundtable – 18 October

The Young Farmers Roundtable, held at the Farm venue during the WFF flagship event featured a keynote remark by WFF Global Coordinator Kazuki Kitaoka. Farmer speakers – including Harbert Mawejje, Paola Laini, Lucia Cordero and Melissa Gomez – shared insights on challenges in land access, policy needs for generational turnover, and innovative knowledge-sharing strategies to empower young farmers and strengthen sustainable family farming practices.



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Meet and Greet with United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs

On 14 October, YPB members – along with WFF National Chapter leads, YSG members and other youth delegates present at the flagship event – participated in a meet and greet with United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs Felipe Paullier. This session provided an opportunity for the Assistant Secretary-General to engage directly with young changemakers, facilitating an informal yet impactful exchange of ideas, insights and experiences between high-level leadership and youth.



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WFF Youth Innovation Lab highlights

TRC Finals

The [TRC finals](#) were held on 15 October 2024. Twelve finalist teams pitched their innovative research proposals with representatives from China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Somalia and the United States.



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Two teams per category pitched their research proposals before a high-level jury comprised of FAO Chief Scientist ad interim Beth Crawford, FAO Investment Centre Deputy Director Nuno Santos, IFAD Lead Livestock Specialist Anne Mottet, Executive Director ETH Zurich World Food System Center, President of the Swiss National FAO Committee Martijn Sonneveld and Regional Director of Advance Consulting Lamia Dabbas.

The judges chose a winner in each category as well as an overall winner of the competition. The winners received various prizes including research grants of up to USD 10 000, consultancies, visibility, an award certificate, promotion through the WFF Global Youth Action initiative and partner media channels, networking opportunities and more. In total, more than USD 200 000 in prizes were awarded.

The six prize category winners were:

Global One Health Prize

- One Health in Action: Mobile-App and Suitcase-Lab for Rift Valley Fever Prevention by Ahmed Abdulkadir Hassan-kadle, Marian Muse Osman, Arianna Ceruti, Omar Abshir Omar and Aamir Muse Osman;

Gender Mainstreaming in the Eradication of the PPR Prize

- Goat Rearing by Rural-Women: Constraints, Economics, and Way-Forward Highlighting PPRV by Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, Prajwal Bhandari, Basant Saud, Mayisha Maliha Kona and Amina Khatun;

Plant-Based Food Prize

- Mangrove Fruit Optimization for Sustainable Plant-Based Emergency Food Bars by Gusti Ayu Made Devta, Annisa Aurora Kartika and Pradipta Widyo Nugroho;

Plant Breeding and Nutrition Prize

- WildCrossSorg: Harnessing Wild Sorghum Potential for Developing Fall Armyworm Resistant Cultivar by Sarvesh Prabhu, Rishita Ghosh and Harpuneet Singh;

Food Loss and Waste Prize

- Documenting Indigenous Fermented Food in the Pearl River Basin of China to Reduce Food Loss and Waste by Zeyuan Wang, Mengyao Ma, Xiaohui Liu, Yihong Li and Ao Huang; and

The Role of Water in Agrifood Systems Transformation Prize

- Tackling Heavy Metals Water Contamination with Dead Bacteria, through Biodesign and Community Engagement for Safe Agriculture by Valentina Perez Escobar, Carolina Páez Vélez, Maria Valentina Forero Sierra, Maria Alejandra Parra García and Laura Camila Velasco Ortega.

The overall winner of the 2024 TRC competition was the Mobile-App and Suitcase-Lab for Rift Valley Fever Prevention team (Global One Health category) for their innovative proposal. They were awarded an extra USD 10 000 to support the development of their research.

YFL final event

The second cohort of the YFL incubator programme concluded during a [final event](#) on 17 October 2024. Since its inception, the YFL has supported young entrepreneurs around the world to develop their innovative solutions for agrifood systems challenges into sustainable and impactful businesses. For the event, nine teams were funded to attend the WFF flagship event and pitch their entrepreneurial and sustainable businesses. Teams from India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria and Uganda worked on diverse projects that tackle agrifood systems challenges such as food waste, PPR eradication and wetlands conservation. The audience had the opportunity to vote for their favourite team, selecting Team Ecoliving from Indonesia as the winner of the 2024 People's Choice Award.

Moreover, each team that completed the eight-month programme will receive seed funding of USD 2 000 and the winner of the People's Choice will be awarded an additional USD 2 000.

The event featured insights from FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol, as well as reflections from US Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture Jeffrey Prescott and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations in Rome Marcel Beukeboom.

The event also highlighted the development of the global network of regional and national YFLs at WUR in the Netherlands, Penn State University in the United States, in Nepal and in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region. María Elena Túquerres and Sadrác Cifuentes were selected to represent the YFL Latin America and the Caribbean programme, and to share their insights with the audience and young innovators in their region.

SIA Finals

Young innovators took centre stage at the 2024 SIA, powered by XTC. The fourth annual global competition reached its conclusion with the live finals pitch session on 16 October 2024. All finalists received travel allowances to attend the finals where they pitched to an expert jury.

The finalists in each category were:

Digital Innovation in Food Processing Award

- [PoultrySync](#) (United Arab Emirates);
- [Safi](#) (Canada);

Empowering Women in Agrifood Systems Award

- [AgroSure Products and Innovations](#) (India);
- [Energy Assured](#) (Nigeria);

Food Loss Award

- [Altered Carbon](#) (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- [Duhqa](#) (Kenya);

Good Food for All, for Today and Tomorrow Award

- [BettaF!sh](#) (Germany); and
- [SenzAgro Solutions](#) (Sri Lanka).

The judges included FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol (chair), Director of the FAO Agrifood Economics and Policy Division David Laborde, Senior Vice President of West and Central Africa and Haiti region of Chemonics International Garron Hansen, and UNIDO Managing Director of the Directorate for SDG Innovation and Economic Transformation Gunther Beger.

The winners of the 2024 SIA were:

Digital Innovation in Food Processing Award

- Safi (Canada);

Empowering Women in Agrifood Systems Award

- AgrowSure Products and Innovations (India);

Food Loss Award

- Altered Carbon (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); and

Good Food for All, for Today and Tomorrow Award

- BettaF!sh (Germany).

Altered Carbon was also chosen as the overall WFF Startup Innovation of the Year.

Private Sector Roundtable

The 2024 private sector roundtable consisted of two diverse panels. Opening remarks were delivered by FAO Deputy Director-General Maurizio Martina and a keynote speech was given by Executive Director ETH Zurich World Food System Center and President of the Swiss National FAO Committee Martijn Sonneveld, who highlighted the importance of putting youth at the heart of systemic change by the private sector to transform global agrifood systems.

The first panel was designed to explore innovative, entrepreneurial initiatives and structures that are already transforming agrifood systems. It was moderated by Chief of the FAO Partnerships and United Nations Collaboration Division Carlos Watson, and WFF SIA and Private Sector Engagement lead Abir Kharrat. The members of the first panel were: CEO and founder of Startups Without Borders Valentina Primo, CEO and founder of Wastech Victor Poncelet, and Regional Managing Director of the Middle East and Africa Endeavour Egypt Amr El Abd.

The second panel included Regional President of Archer Daniels Midland Africa Martin Kropp, Founder and CEO of Edible Planet Ventures Sharon Cittone, Chief of Institutional Relations and Sustainability at Lavazza Mario Cerutti, and Lead of Partnerships for Latin America and the Caribbean at Acorn Rabobank

Group Paola López Vargas. This panel focused on the question “How can the private sector support youth-led innovation in advancing technology, innovation and sustainability in agrifood systems?” by referring to case studies, success stories and initiatives of their organizations. The panel was moderated by FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol. Closing remarks were given by Professor of Marketing and Digital Transformation at the University of Naples Federico II Alex Giordano.

WFF Youth Education highlights

AgX Fair

The AgX Fair showcase was held on 15 October 2024 and welcomed 10 young people from across the world to the stage to present their organizations and projects. Head of the International Development Unit, United Nations and SDGs Unit, Economics and Planning Division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Ireland, Harry O’Crowley, spoke on the importance of supporting youth capacity development across the world and intergenerational dialogue across sectors. Foundation Manager for the AGCO Foundation John Agboola also spoke on the importance of highlighting youth projects and empowering young people to take action for the transformation of our agrifood systems. In addition to these guest speakers, FAO Permanent Representations from the countries of the presenting projects – Nigeria, Spain and Colombia – also spoke. Permanent Representative of Nigeria to FAO Yaya O. Olaniran commended the work of the Calvary Farm & Feeds Agroschooling project and offered to further the visibility of this project and the work within Nigeria. Permanent Representative of Spain to FAO Juan Prieto Gomez shared his thoughts on the creative and innovative way the Food Clans project supports sustainable agrifood systems for younger students. Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia to FAO Nestor Augusto Ponguta Puerto supported the dedication of the Rural Incubator project. The projects from Bangladesh and Uganda – “Empowering Rural Women” and “Sustainable Oyster Mushroom Project”, respectively – also heard feedback from Costa Rica YPB member Maria Jose Cervantes and RFS Director Karlee Schnyder.

WFF School Assembly and Junior World Food Day

In 2024, the Junior World Food Day joined forces with the WFF School Assembly as [a single large event at FAO](#). The session fostered dialogue between international food leaders, youth activists, influencers and students on the themes of “Right to foods for a better life and a better future” and “Good food for all, for today and tomorrow”. This fun event was packed with stories, music, interactive quizzes and games, and inspired action for a sustainable food-secure future. The event welcomed thousands of students between the ages of 8 and 14, in addition to over 100 teachers and FAO colleagues.



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The programme was packed with internationally recognizable names and advocates including the Harlem Globetrotters, WFF Youth Anthem singer Nouran Abutaleb, activists and WFF YPB members Andile Mnguni and Shreyaa Venkat, Italian celebrity chef Max Mariola and his son Mario Mariola, and sustainable fashion activist Matteo Ward. The event was followed by a discovery stations tour.

Discovery stations

The “discovery stations” were short learning experiences delivered by FAO divisions and offices, each focused on their area of expertise. The objective was to educate the young students on a wide range of topics through FAO’s global expertise, and to explain how these areas relate to food action and climate action.

The experiences were designed to be short and fun to engage young learners between the ages of 8 and 14. Each experience, or lab, was approximately 15 minutes in duration. Student groups of around 20 to 30 students each passed between several stations within the allotted timeframe.

The discovery station organizers included:

- The FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division;
- The FAO Food and Nutrition Division;
- The FAO Agrifood and Economics and Policy Divisions;
- The Agrifood Systems and Food Safety Division;
- The WFF YSG;
- The FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- The FAO Plant Production and Protection Division;
- The United Nations Decade on Family Farming Secretariat;
- The FAO Indigenous People's Unit;
- The FAO Office of Corporate Communications; and
- The OYW Youth Culture team.

Educators Network roundtable

On 18 October, in collaboration with Pennsylvania State University, the WFF Education programme held the Educators Network roundtable discussion. This side event was the first product of a collaboration with the Global Teach Ag Network. It aimed to create a shared space to brainstorm educators' needs and create a framework for collaboration. At the roundtable, approximately 80 attendees engaged in discussions around three guiding questions:

- Why educators in agrifood systems transformation?
- What are the challenges facing education about agrifood systems transformation?
- What should the next steps be in collaborative impact?

The event closed with a call to join the networks of the WFF Education programme and the Global Teach Ag Network.

Youth reporters

Throughout the WFF flagship week, 16 youth reporters between the ages of 14 and 18 conducted interviews with FAO staff, governmental representatives, WFF Global Youth Forum challenge winners and participants, among other special guests. This project provided young people with an opportunity to learn from experts and young leaders about the importance of youth participation in decision-making processes for sustainable agrifood systems. In total, there were 36 youth reporter interviews conducted across the five days.

The interviews will be turned into a communications mini-series launched on social media. The series will focus on the different stakeholder groups and their perspectives, including FAO senior management, the OYW and others. Following the series, the young reporters will publish an article on their experiences and the knowledge they have gained.

Global Youth Hackathon on Food Waste

The finals of the Global Youth Hackathon on Food Waste were held on 17 October. Five finalist teams presented their community-based solutions to a panel of expert judges from the FAO Food and Nutrition Division, UNDP Youth4Climate and KIDSforSDGs. Judges assessed both the substance of the solutions and the teams' ability to communicate their ideas effectively, based on the same criteria applied throughout the Hackathon.

The overall winning team with the highest average scores in this round was:

- Nicholas Kofi Adegbe, Martin Lutherking Aduko and Afloe Emmanuel (Africa) with the project "Brown Technology".

The winning team received a USD 3 500 grant to support the realization of their solution. Teams who placed second and third received USD 2 500 and USD 1 500 respectively.

Additionally, the Global Youth Hackathon on Food Waste partnered with Too Good to Go for a youth booth exhibition during the WFF flagship event on 16 October. The booth showcased three different recipes created with produce acquired through Too Good to Go, showing simple and practical ways that food waste can be managed within households.

Young Scientists Group

The YSG members took part in several sessions throughout the 2024 WFF flagship event, both as speakers and organizers.

- **WFF flagship event grand opening – 14 October**

YSG member Tarini Gupta moderated the panel on “Knowledge and innovation for agrifood systems transformation”, discussing how science, research and collaboration can contribute bold and innovative solutions to challenges in our agrifood systems.

- **NexusArt presentation – 14 October**

During the final presentation of artwork developed in collaboration with the YSG, three members – Isnawati Hidayah, Ana Luiza Domingos and Ayaz Shaikh – participated as judges, evaluating the artwork.

- **WFF Meet and Greet with United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs – 14 October**

In a meeting with United Nations Youth Assistant Secretary-General Felipe Paullier, YSG member Gideon Iheme had the opportunity to introduce the YSG’s work and present the biennial report.

- **Side event on women and girls in science – 15 October**

In partnership with the FAO Science and Innovation Forum and the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit, YSG members Ana Luiza Domingos and Isnawati Hidayah organized an event to inspire young women interested in science and research careers. The event featured professionals who shared their experiences and insights on overcoming challenges in the field.

- **Science and Innovation Forum opening – 16 October**

The YSG’s 2024 biennial report was officially launched during the [Science and Innovation Forum opening](#). YSG member Ebba Engström presented the report and shared key findings.



- **EmPOWERing Youth through Innovative Sustainable Mechanization and Digitalization – 17 October**

In this joint Science and Innovation and Global Youth Forum session, YSG member Isnawati Hidayah joined a panel highlighting successful examples of youth empowerment through sustainable agricultural mechanization and digitalization.

- **Gates Ag One Culture Corner Exhibition – 17 October**

YSG members Ayaz Shaikh, Haiteng Li and Margaret Hegwood engaged in a question and answer session with Gates Ag One, discussing their careers and research. They also participated in crop quizzes tailored to their expertise, interacting with the audience.

- **YSG Presentation – 17 October**

Several YSG members joined the stage to present findings from the biennial report. They also participated in a panel discussion with FAO Chief Scientist ad interim Beth Crawford and Director of the FAO Food Systems and Food Safety Division Corinna Hawkes.

- **WFF flagship event closing ceremony – 18 October**

During the WFF closing ceremony, YSG member Ayaz Shaikh joined the Global Youth Forum panel, and YSG member Ebba Engström participated in the Science and Innovation panel, where they each shared their reflections and highlights from the WFF flagship week.

Youth Policy and Deliberation Challenge

On 15 October, the WFF flagship event welcomed the finalists of the first ever [Youth Policy and Deliberation Challenge](#). Director of the FAO Food and Nutrition Division Lynnette Neufeld, Director of the FAO Food Systems and Food Safety Division Corinna Hawkes, and Director of the FAO Land and Water Division Lifeng Li served as final round judges following the presentations of each of the nine finalists.



The teams' innovative ideas covered critical issues facing our agrifood systems such as healthy diets, sustainable water management and addressing food waste. After months of mentorship and capacity development, the finalists presented their proposals and showed the audience the power of young leaders to reinvent agrifood systems policy.

The winning teams were:

Healthy diets for people and planet

- “Building healthy habits, security a sustainable future: To empower Mozambican children toward healthy diets and a sustainable planet” by Delfina Fernandes Hlashwayo, Kamanzi Claudine and Lencho Marami (Africa) – a project project engaging children aged 7 to 14 in sustainable food practices through storytelling and tech;

Sustainable water management for agrifood systems transformation

- “Utilizing data for sustainable crop selection” by Mi-riam Akinyi, Selma Bichbich and Wissal Chafik (Near East and North Africa) – a digital technology solution, guiding farmers with data to

maximize their water resources for greater crop yields through a crop suitability platform; and

Addressing food waste, a win-win opportunity for climate and agrifood systems

- “Beyond the date: from discard to action” by Chanel Perreault and Feyisayo Akande (North America) – smart meal labels to reduce meat-related food waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

WFF Youth Culture highlights

Art installations

Barbara Mattei

The art installation, *Amaranth: Where Biodiversity Meets Beauty*, was present at the FAO headquarters cafeteria during the WFF flagship event. Created by young Italian artist and Founder of FLOVVER Barbara Mattei, this installation celebrated amaranth, a crop originating in Central and South America that is prized for both its beauty and nutritional value. The installation's fluid forms, with bundles of amaranth hanging from the ceiling, evoked nature's cyclical rhythms and invited reflection on the balance between beauty and function. This project highlighted food circularity and inclusiveness by showcasing collaboration and sustainability. The amaranth used in the exhibition was repurposed from an organic farm near Rome, managed by young farmers, where it had been growing as a weed destined for compost.

General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

On 14 October 2024, the WFF Youth Culture programme unveiled a collaborative art installation with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean at the FAO headquarters cafeteria. This exhibition highlighted the importance of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, fostering discussion on the connection between aquatic foods, aquaculture, food security and sustainability through the universal language of art. It featured illustrations by environmental artist Ali Elly, showcasing three key farmed species: gilthead seabream (*Sparus aurata*), European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) and Mediterranean mussel (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*).

These artworks were created for the publication *Farmed Aquatic Food for All Tastes*, which won the Best Free Culinary Book in the World Award 2023 at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards.

NexusArt

Michette “Bread” by Valerio Tirapani was the winning installation of the WFF NexusArt initiative. This installation, featuring over 1 250 chalk rosettes – a common but increasingly unpopular type of Italian bread – explored the tension between diversity and unity while proposing a utopian vision of coexistence. Food, particularly bread, is a universal symbol across cultures and is a simple yet powerful element of social connection. In a world of growing imbalance, the artwork highlighted food’s role in addressing global challenges like food waste. Bread, as a fundamental yet often wasted resource, became a symbol of exchange, urging us to rethink our relationship with food. This installation was part of the broader Nexus-Ness program, which aimed to integrate art and science to promote sustainable agrifood systems. Finalists in the NexusArt initiative included Damiana Ardito, Valeria Grillo, Giuseppe Antonio Lo Presti, Enea Tomassi and Chiara Stella Landi. Members of the YSG, including Sofia Cavalleri, Ram Neupane, Margaret Hegwood, Gideon Iheme and Celia Burgaz, actively supported the project, guiding young artists throughout their creative processes and fostering dialogue between art and science.

WFF Culture Segments

The WFF Youth Culture programme presented 42 performances across 26 events this year, showcasing a mix of poetry, dance, music and spoken word. Artists dedicated to agrifood systems and climate came from 12 countries across five continents – Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and Oceania – bringing rich cultural diversity to the event. The Culture Segments included unique performances from Indigenous artists, such as members of Australia’s Karajarri people from the Kimberley region, as well as a hula dancer with Hawaiian, Māori and Chinook heritage.

In addition to the opening concert at the WFF flagship event, the Culture Segments provided relevant performances between event panels, key discussions and speeches, keeping audiences energized and

engaged. Collectively, the artists’ reach – nearly two million followers – amplified the WFF Global Youth Forum messages, as each performer shared their experiences, expanding the reach of the Forum.

All performances at the WFF flagship event embodied the theme “Good food for all, for today and tomorrow”, aiming for a sustainable food future. From traditional Indonesian dances depicting the agricultural cycle to spoken word encouraging youth activism, each act resonated with the event’s mission. Artists shared poetry, music and stories about food and agriculture, highlighting the importance of sustainable practices and the role of young leaders in driving change. These powerful presentations added depth to the Forum’s agenda, inspiring attendees to consider the broader cultural and environmental dimensions of agrifood systems.

Uzbekistan lunch

“Uzbekistan: Pioneering Sustainable Agrifood Systems”, was a lunch organized by the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Rome and the FAO Office in Uzbekistan, which took place in the Uzbekistan Lounge at the FAO headquarters on 16 October. The lunch highlighted Uzbekistan’s dedication to youth engagement in agrifood systems and provided insight into its innovative strategies promoting nutritious food for all, aligned with the theme, “Sustaining healthy meals for every person, now and always”. Attendees tasted the traditional Uzbekistani dish osh-palov while enjoying traditional dances from Uzbekistan and displays of dried fruits and ceramics. For the third year in a row, Uzbekistan created a successful event, contributing culture and innovation to the 2024 WFF flagship event, reinforcing their leadership in advancing global food security and healthy diets. Key guests included Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to United Nations Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome Abat Fayzullaev, and First Deputy Director of the Youth Affairs Agency of Uzbekistan Dilnozakhon Kattakhonova, as well as young students and team members of FAO Uzbekistan.

Ireland Reception

Ireland continues to champion youth empowerment and engagement in agrifood systems and is a strong supporter of the WFF Global Youth Forum and its diverse youth programmes. In 2023, the country sponsored over 100 youth delegates from nearly 40 countries in the Global South to participate in the WFF flagship event, while in 2024 it sponsored over 160 youth from the Global South to participate. The Ireland Reception was a youth networking event that brought together the 2024 sponsored Ireland youth delegates, Ambassador of Ireland to Italy and Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations Agencies in Rome Patricia O'Brien, and FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu, among other representatives. The reception was brought to life with traditional Irish music performances by Gens D'Ys Irish Dancing Academy and musicians from the Munster Technological University Cork School of Music.

Canada Reception

The Canada Reception, "Good for Planet and People: Unveiling Plant-Based Innovations through Taste and Learning", was organized by the Embassy of Canada in Italy at the 2024 WFF flagship event. With remarks from Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Agencies of the United Nations Elissa A. Golberg, and representatives of EIT Food and youth representatives, the reception highlighted the environmental and health benefits of plant-based diets as sustainable solutions to global food challenges and the role of youth in such diets. The evening featured tastings from small- and medium-sized plant-based companies.

Washoku

With the generous support of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Washoku Association of Japan, this unique mainstage event combined technical knowledge on Washoku and nutrition. It featured a cooking demonstration by two young chefs who raised awareness on the cultural and nutritional relevance of Japanese gastronomy: Japanese chef Takuya Sato from Corale Restaurant in Tuscany, Italy, and Chef Matteo Faenza, Italian chef of Ritual Lab x Mogano. Together they showed how Washoku is a bridge between cultures – a concept

distilled in a beautiful moment at the end of the event's cooking demonstration when Chef Takuya's dashi broth was used as the broth for Chef Matteo's Italian-inspired ramen.

Coffee talks and tastings

During the 2024 WFF flagship event, Peacock's Coffee, a youth-led speciality coffee roasting company based in Italy, hosted two agroforestry coffee talks and tastings. These sessions highlighted the environmental benefits of coffee grown in agroforestry systems, which integrate trees with coffee crops to support biodiversity, soil health and carbon sequestration. Attendees sampled unique coffee varieties while learning about sustainable production practices that benefit both local ecosystems and farming communities. Through these talks, Peacock's Coffee emphasized how agroforestry can serve as a model for climate-resilient agriculture, showcasing the potential for coffee production to support both environmental conservation and local economic stability.

WFF Local Youth Action highlights

National Chapters

Sixty youth leaders representing 25 WFF National Chapters gathered at the WFF flagship event to showcase their impactful work from the past year. This provided an invaluable opportunity for young leaders to network with peers and connect with representatives from various countries and regions. Through the dedication of WFF National Chapters, the WFF Global Youth Forum extended its reach beyond headquarters, establishing a truly global movement for food security and sustainability.

Throughout the week, National Chapter leads engaged in a series of dynamic activities designed to maximize learning and exchange. These sessions allowed them to share best practices, strengthen collaborative networks and gain new insights to bring back to their home countries. Highlights from an inspiring week of knowledge-sharing and innovation included:

- **Main Stage Event**

The event "WFF National Chapters: Inspiring Local Youth Leadership in Agrifood Systems

Transformation” on 17 October underscored the crucial principle of “thinking global, acting local”. It emphasized the need to empower youth to develop actionable, inclusive solutions that positively transform agrifood systems in their communities, showcasing the significant contributions of various WFF National Chapters and highlighting best practices in building youth-led platforms to tackle local agrifood challenges. The event consisted of two panels:

- The first panel featured FAO Country Representatives from Bhutan, Ecuador, Nepal and Uganda, illustrating the strong collaborations between WFF National Chapters and FAO offices. These partnerships ensure a cohesive response to global agrifood challenges, aligning efforts to foster sustainable practices that benefit local communities.
- The second panel brought together leaders from WFF National Chapters in Ghana, Brazil, Indonesia, Ireland and Qatar, who presented their impactful work over the past year. They addressed common inquiries on initiating projects, engaging government stakeholders, embracing diverse backgrounds, and expanding initiatives nationwide. This discussion highlighted the necessity for tailored solutions to agrifood system challenges, acknowledging that while some issues are shared globally, unique strategies are required for specific regional contexts. It was moderated by Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean Focal Point Valentina Morales Hermosilla.

The event also served as the launching platform for new National Chapters in Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Italy, Mauritania, Peru and Qatar. With the support of Minister for Agriculture and Livestock from Bhutan, H.E. Younten Phuntsho; Director of the FAO Food Systems and Food Safety Division Corinna Hawkes; Chief Director of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development in South Africa, Lebo Botsheleng; and WFF Global Coordinator Kazuki Kitaoka, this celebration marked a significant step forward in empowering youth leadership and driving positive change in agrifood systems worldwide.

• Side Events

During the WFF flagship event, National Chapters from around the world converged in Rome, transforming the event into a vibrant showcase of their collective commitment to reshaping global agrifood systems. Over the course of the week, each National Chapter brought forward unique discussions, partnerships and initiatives, offering a tapestry of ideas that highlighted both regional perspectives and shared aspirations.

• Youth Engagement for a Sustainable Food Future: What have we learned from the National Chapter Youth Dialogues? – 15 October

The WFF Ireland National Chapter led an interactive session on the importance of youth engagement in building a sustainable food future. Drawing on insights from their National Youth Food Forum summits, they highlighted how youth perspectives are shaping policy and practice.

• Zero Waste: Empowering local youth action in finding solutions to fight food waste – 15 October

The WFF Italy National Chapter held an energizing Zero Waste campaign challenging young people to devise solutions for reducing food waste and spotlighting the power of collective action for sustainable change.

• CFS 52 Thematic Assembly Session – 15 October

In anticipation of CFS 52, this session involved National Chapter representatives joining a roundtable to discuss how youth are essential catalysts for policy transformation, contributing valuable local perspectives to shape a more inclusive global outlook. This participation not only marked a milestone in youth engagement but also underscored the importance of integrating young voices in crafting policies for sustainable agrifood systems worldwide.

• From the Nepal Food Forum to the WFF: Best Practices on catalyzing agrifood transformation – 16 October

The WFF Nepal National Chapter shared a set of best practices for catalyzing agrifood system transformation, presenting real-world strategies to

inspire young leaders. The Netherlands National Chapter created a platform for these young voices, hosting a roundtable that invited youth from around the world to exchange ideas on their role in food governance, emphasizing the power of participation and the impact of youth engagement.

- **Sustainable agritech solutions for arid regions – 16 October**

The WFF Qatar National Chapter, in collaboration with the Ministry of Municipality, hosted a session on Sustainable Agritech Solutions for arid regions. With a focus on innovations designed for dry climates, the event underscored the potential of agritech to address agricultural challenges in regions with limited water resources – a crucial discussion for many attendees from similar environments.

- **National Chapters and Youth Organizations: Intercontinental youth dialogues on food security – 17 October**

One of the most compelling moments unfolded when leaders from the Ghana, Nepal and Peru National Chapters hosted an intercontinental dialogue on food security. Joined by the FAO Country Representative for Bhutan and Nepal, the panel emphasized the critical role of youth-led projects in building food security. With stories of local successes and new calls for action, they ignited a powerful conversation on how to scale youth-driven initiatives globally.

Throughout the week, various National Chapters also had the chance to connect with government and FAO representatives from their respective countries. This provided invaluable guidance, fostering alignment in their work and strengthening support for their missions at home.

Activities

The WFF flagship event offered numerous networking opportunities for National Chapters.

- One of the most notable activities was hosted by the Irish Embassy. This dedicated networking session allowed youth participants to connect, exchange ideas and build new collaborations, while also highlighting Ireland's commitment to supporting

youth in transforming agrifood systems. This event provided a valuable platform for young leaders to strengthen connections and foster a shared vision for a sustainable food future.

- Each National Chapter also had the opportunity to showcase their work and perspectives through the official WFF Global Youth Action social media channels. National Chapters were featured in interviews and podcasts, allowing their leaders to share insights, discuss ongoing projects and outline future plans for agrifood transformation in their regions. This platform not only amplified their voices on a global stage but also helped create a stronger, more connected network of youth leaders united by their shared mission to drive sustainable change in agrifood systems worldwide.
- Finally, National Chapters had the opportunity to explore the wonders of Rome alongside the OYW. This unique experience allowed participants to bond while discovering the city's rich history and culture. The time spent together fostered camaraderie and a shared appreciation for the vibrant city. As they wrapped up an inspiring week, attendees left with unforgettable memories and a renewed sense of purpose to drive their actions forward.

Regional Youth Forum events

To culminate the collaboration with FAO decentralized offices throughout the year, FAO country, liaison and regional offices held 12 Regional Forum events on the sidelines of the WFF flagship event. The Regional Forum events played a crucial role in promoting a locally led, youth-focused and integrated approach to building sustainable and equitable agrifood systems. They also brought best practices and experiences from the regional and local levels to feed into the global deliberations at the WFF flagship event.

Africa Regional Forum event

- **“Feeding a Fertile Future – A Dialogue with Young African Farmers” hosted by FAO Regional Office for Africa – 18 October**

Held in collaboration with AGRA and aligned with the 2024 WFF theme, this event showcased the contributions of young agripreneurs in addressing the challenges of feeding Africa's growing population. Elizabeth Kabakoyo, founder of Glowish

Agro Solutions, shared how she merges traditional knowledge with modern techniques to create bio-inputs from organic agricultural waste, offering smallholder farmers in Uganda a sustainable alternative to inorganic fertilizers. Similarly, Baraka Jeremiah of Tanzania's Kilimo Fresh highlighted the importance of reducing food waste, emphasizing his company's efforts to minimize losses and enhance farmer incomes by directly connecting smallholders to markets. Nigerian agribusiness Farmz2U, led by Aisha Raheem, presented its data-driven approach to improving supply chain transparency, addressing the correlation between profitability and sustainable farming. The panel also tackled challenges unique to youth-led businesses, with Mr Jeremiah stressing the importance of building strong business brands over personal ones. In their concluding remarks, the young entrepreneurs called for actionable strategies, systemic changes and the active involvement of youth as co-implementers in agrifood development rather than passive beneficiaries.

Asia and the Pacific Regional Forum events

- **“Regional Youth Innovation Championship for Agrifood System Transformation in Asia”** hosted by FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific – 16 October

Held in collaboration with the UNDP, this competition aimed to highlight youth leadership in driving the transformation of agrifood systems. Special Advisor to the FAO Assistant Director-General Robert Simpson opened the session with a challenging question: “How it is possible that so many people are still food insecure on the 79th anniversary of FAO?” He then talked about the mutual benefit of involving young people in agrifood systems as an opportunity for them to create livelihoods while also bringing their innovative thinking and will to take the risks – attributes needed to identify new and transformative solutions. To represent this correlation, ten entrepreneurs who made it to the final stage of the Championship delivered pitches in front of five judges from the FAO Regional Office, UNDP and the private sector. The presentations inspired and empowered the present and future generation

of global problem solvers to identify breakthrough technology, products and services that can accelerate sustainable social and economic change in agrifood systems. Four entrepreneurs were selected as the winners:

- **Best idea:** Phurpa Dorji from Bhutan with his AI-Powered Crop Monitoring whose goal is to integrate artificial intelligence innovation to farming, making it smart and sustainable;
- **Best scalable solution:** Priyanka Shukla from Nepal, representing Sattva, an organization that aims to foster global well-being by leveraging Nepalese traditional knowledge and resources while empowering women and farmer communities in Nepal;
- **Social and environmental impact award:** Sothearath Sok from Cambodia, representing Junlen Cambodia, which promotes sustainable waste management, offering an efficient way to recycle organic waste into nutritious, high-quality compost; and
- **Audience Choice award:** Adika Risha from Indonesia, representing Fam, a rural development consulting company which leverages a social business approach (such as agroforest-tourism) to improve the economy of rural communities.
- **“Youth Leadership in Sustainable Soil Management”** hosted by FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific – 16 October

This event focused on inspiring and empowering youth leadership in sustainable soil management, highlighting the vital role of young people in advancing soil health and sustainable agriculture. The virtual session was interactive, engaging the audience through videos, polls and quizzes designed to test the audience's knowledge around sustainable land management, the main causes of soil degradation and the key benefits of involving youth in sustainable soil management. The event included:

- a presentation on the current state of soil health, including the need to drive innovation in soil management, incorporate practices that boost soil health, reduce erosion and improve water retention;

- a discussion on educational and capacity building initiatives that involve youth as champions to reverse the trend of soil degradation;
- success stories from Thailand, Cambodia and Nepal showcasing how education and hands-on training is empowering young farmers to adopt and promote sustainable practices including crop rotation, organic fertilization and soil conservation techniques in their communities;
- the identification of key barriers for effective youth engagement, including limited access to resources, funding and land;
- proposed solutions for overcoming barriers, including creating more inclusive platforms for youth engagement, providing grants and loans, and fostering mentorship programs that bridge the generational divide, enabling knowledge exchange between experienced farmers and young innovators;
- examples of how young people are leading the way in integrating technology into soil management, such as the use of internet technology devices for soil monitoring, automated systems for urban gardening, and digital tools to optimize resource use;
- emphasis on the need for greater investment in technology and innovation to attract more young people to the field and improve soil sustainability practices;
- the identification of cross-generational and cross-sector partnerships as crucial for building resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, with a call for more direct engagement of young leaders in policy-making processes; and
- a call to action for continued support and investment in youth-led initiatives, recognizing young people as essential to the future of sustainable soil management and global food security.
- **“Building Connections: Fostering Collaboration and Opportunities for Youth in Japan’s Agrifood systems” – hosted by the FAO Liaison Office in Japan – 17 October**

In this online event, in collaboration with the Food System Transformation Promotion Team, a group of university students engaged with the “Hunger Free World” organization. Activities included:

- a presentation by University of Tsukuba representative Miho Hamano illustrating crucial youth focused initiatives fostering enhanced participation and involvement of youth in sustainable agrifood systems, including leveraging youth culture as a catalyst in breaking down complex agrifood issues and raising awareness on pertinent topics; the presentation highlighted the essence of triangular cooperation and explained how the activity of Hunger Free World extends to various African countries including Benin, Burkina Faso and Uganda;
- a demonstration exercise by Nagoya University Graduate School representative Karen Baba on the utility and practical steps for conducting a “mapping” analysis, enabling participants to appreciate the complexity, broadness and interconnection of food related issues, encompassing political, economic, social and environmental aspects;
- the identification of key challenges by participants, such as the need for bridging generational gaps in knowledge and practices, limited resources and lack of cohesive networks among youth organizations to synergize efforts for enhanced impact and change; and
- an overall emphasis on the crucial role of youth engagement in reshaping agrifood systems, both in Japan and globally, combining education, technology and community engagement as pathways for promoting sustainable practices that accelerate agrifood systems transformation.
- **“Plan B-etter for a sustainable tomorrow” – hosted by the FAO Partnership and Liaison Office in the Republic of Korea and the WFF Republic of Korea National Chapter – 17 October**

This WFF Regional Forum event highlighted promising youth-led initiatives that are reshaping the way society produces, distributes, consumes and discards food. Head of the WFF Local Youth

Action Team, Victor Muiru, delivered opening remarks connecting the initiative in the Republic of Korea to the work of the WFF Global Youth Action initiative, making a case for the need to empower youth through more systematic engagement. The interactive event used surveys to engage both in person and online attendees and was divided into a panel session, presentations and speeches.

- Participants explored innovative ways to combat food waste. Two young leaders who shared their journey in transforming perceptions around discarded agrifood products through unique projects.
- Team Nareum introduced their initiative to connect local farms with gelato shops by purchasing “ugly” fruits that are unfairly discarded due to appearance and delivering them to gelato shops.
- Gold Babyrice, a startup, presented their upcycling project, which turns broken, unused rice into cosmetics, creating additional income for rice farmers while optimizing resource use. They stressed how their ventures are designed to reduce waste and promote sustainable agricultural practices, contributing to a circular economy, where waste is minimized and resources are efficiently utilized, in line with global sustainability goals.
- Both teams shared their struggle in gaining acceptance from farmers and establishing reliable partnerships, and their entrepreneurial resilience gained through persistent engagement, visiting farms and building trust with agrifood stakeholders.
- ALTist, a food-tech company dedicated to producing plant-based meat alternatives, discussed the need to change dietary behaviours, including through alternative food sectors. The company talked about its willingness to create an agrifood system that is healthier, accessible and sustainable, stressing that there have been many challenges in making young people overcome biases or preconceived notions about plant-based food.
- The WFF Republic of Korea National Chapter presented their ongoing activities in supporting and expanding youth initiatives, fostering collaborations and empowering young people

to take active roles in the agriculture and food sector. As a youth-led agrifood platform, they invited the youth present to join them in their mission to foster innovative agrifood solutions and change the present and future of their local agrifood systems.

FAO Representative and Head of the FAO Partnership and Liaison Office in the Republic of Korea, Shengyao Tang, closed the session by praising the achievements of youth in the country’s agricultural sector, and encouraging the upscaling of youth-led solutions in driving sustainable development and addressing global food security challenges.

- **Sustainable Agrifood Revolution: Green Innovations for a Brighter Tomorrow** – hosted by FAO in Indonesia – 18 October

This WFF Regional Forum event, hosted by FAO Indonesia at the Tamran Tower and online, was a dynamic and engaging session that brought together key stakeholders committed to shaping the future of sustainable agriculture. It featured leaders from organizations including GIZ Indonesia and FAO, with the central focus on green technologies and innovative solutions that can drive the transformation of agrifood systems locally and globally. The keynote speakers emphasized the power of collaboration and the shared responsibility of all sectors to work toward a sustainable future. Project Leader at the Energy Security Leadership Council Exchange Department Rahman Dani Bardiano addressed the diverse audience, encouraging an open-minded approach to collaboration throughout the event. Project Leader for Public Relations and Partnerships at the Energy Security Leadership Council Bagus Jahio acknowledged the essential role of partners like FAO, GIZ and the German Embassy, stressing the need for cross-sector partnerships to tackle global challenges.

- Local Committee Director for the WFF Indonesia National Chapter Haridi Du Elliot, spotlighted the crucial role that youth play in advancing sustainable agrifood systems, urging participants to take bold policy actions, empower youth innovation and raise awareness regarding the pressing challenges faced by youth in agrifood systems.

- GIZ Indonesia Advisor Dominic Schwab provided in-depth insights into the organization's work in transforming Indonesia's agrifood sector, discussed the importance of adapting green technologies to local contexts to ensure their effectiveness and showcased examples of how GIZ collaborates with local partners, government ministries, the private sector and international donors to promote sustainable agricultural practices across Indonesia. He outlined several challenges facing Indonesian agriculture, including low productivity, outdated farming practices, vulnerability to climate change and the underrepresentation of women in the sector. Additionally, he pointed to the inefficiencies and risks created by fragmented supply chains, particularly for smallholder farmers. Despite these challenges, Schwab shared a positive outlook, outlining key GIZ initiatives aimed at addressing these issues and highlighting GIZ's efforts in developing traceability systems that connect smallholder farmers to international markets while encouraging sustainable production.
- The event concluded with speakers issuing a powerful call to action, urging participants to take the knowledge and insights gained from the day and apply them to create more resilient, inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems.
- Director of the FAO Liaison Office in Brussels Raschad Al-Khafaji and Director of the FAO Liaison Office in Geneva Dominique Burgeon delivered opening remarks, highlighting the resilience of women in rural communities. They stressed how women often shoulder the responsibility of feeding their families and communities while facing economic, social, political and environmental shocks.
- FAO Senior Gender Officer Clara Park addressed women's pivotal role throughout the whole food value chain, from production to processing to selling food. She also highlighted how women, especially Indigenous women, play a very important role in natural resource management and conservation of biodiversity globally. She concluded her speech with a call to action, stating how gender-responsive policies and action plans are pivotal in ensuring equal access to land, finance and resources for women and girls.
- Young Kenyan agripreneur Lucy Wangari, who runs an enterprise focused on transforming arid regions into thriving onion production hubs through climate-smart agriculture, shared her personal experience and insights related to the agribusiness domain, as well as to the challenges she must face as a female entrepreneur.

Ultimately, the event proved to be an invaluable platform for open dialogue, enabling participants to critically engage with the challenges facing the global food system and explore how innovation, collaboration and gender inclusion can drive sustainable solutions.

Europe and Central Asia Regional Forum events

- **“Women and Girls Empowerment Leading the Change towards Agrifood Systems Transformation” – hosted by the FAO Liaison Offices in Brussels and Geneva – 14 October**

Kicking off the WFF flagship event 2024, and on the eve of the United Nations International Day on Rural Women, this event served as an occasion to spotlight the vital role of girls and young women who are leading initiatives that are contributing to agrifood systems transformation and food security.

During the meeting, participants were constantly engaged through interactive quizzes and games, where they were able to share insights and inputs on effective ways to accelerate the empowerment of women and girls in agrifood systems.

- **“Healthy Food for All: Market Trends Impacting Diets for Youth in Russia” – hosted by the FAO Liaison Office with the Russian Federation – 15 October**

This event was held at the United Nations House in Moscow and was moderated by FAO Liaison Office with the Russian Federation representatives Anna Benoit and Eduard Porvatov. The event featured young leaders working in private and public organizations, family farmers, as well as heads and experts from United Nations agencies in Russia, including the World Health Organization and the United Nations Information Centre, as well as other social and educational organizations.

- Director of the FAO Liaison Office with the Russian Federation Oleg Kobiakov spoke about the main initiatives and transformations of the Organization proposed and implemented by FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu, including the FAO Youth Committee and Women's Committee. He urged the stakeholders present to actively engage in FAO projects, noting that it is only through intergenerational efforts and innovative approaches that we can get closer to achieving SDG 2.
- Numerous speakers highlighted how youth play a critical role in promoting a healthy lifestyle, acting as advocates, influencers and future health leaders. The discussion featured ways to incentivize young doctors, volunteers and scientists in Russia to act as influencers directing young people in making the right nutritional decisions. It also shed light on the importance of leveraging educators as promoters of healthy diets and of increasing the share of local products in school meals. The speakers focused much of the discussion on innovation, sustainable development and interdisciplinary cooperation, reflecting the WFF Global Youth Action goals of empowering youth to drive positive changes in the agrifood sector.
- Participants also explored ways in which large retailers and agritourism projects can be utilized to attract young people to consume natural foods.
- **“Brussels: A Fully Circular Journey from tradition to innovation ” – hosted by the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium – 17 October**

This event took place in person in Brussels and was also broadcast online. It showcased various local youth-led initiatives that integrate sustainability into all stages of the agrifood supply chain with contributions from Brussels and beyond. It brought together young farmers and entrepreneurs, all focused on prioritizing the well-being of producers and consumers and ensuring environmental sustainability by combining traditional practices with innovative solutions. Most of the initiatives presented at the event align with the [Brussels Good Food Strategy](#) (2022–2030), one of the region's strategies for promoting sustainable agrifood systems.

- [Bruxelles Environnement](#) representative Coline Questiaux opened the discussion, highlighting the strategy's aim to re-qualify the regional agrifood system, develop localized approaches and bring food production closer to consumers.
- Young farmers in primary production representative Sébastien Geens, from the [Fédération des Jeunes Agriculteurs](#), underscored the importance of supporting young farmers in establishing sustainable, economically viable family farms. He described the Federation's role in empowering the next generation of farmers through training and trade union support.
- [Le Début des Haricots](#) representative Gabriele Annicchiarico highlighted his organization's urban farming project, which serves as a social economic project and educational platform, training youth on agroecology and sustainable practices.
- Founder of [The Barn](#) Quentin Labrique discussed his zero waste grocery store model that focuses on organic, seasonal products sourced directly from local farmers. He emphasized the store's goal of reducing plastic use and encouraging bulk purchasing to make sustainability more accessible.
- [Le Réseau des Groupes d'Achats Solidaires de l'Agriculture Paysanne](#) representative Timothée Collin explained his organization's mission to support sustainable agriculture through direct sales, without intermediaries, between consumers and small-scale farmers in Belgium.
- [Nowa Market](#) representative Ophélie Defourt presented an online grocery platform designed to facilitate zero waste living. Through Nowa's platform, customers can order groceries in reusable containers, which are then returned, cleaned and reused, making sustainable shopping convenient and accessible.
- [Wastech](#) representative Nicolas Rotsart introduced the concept of rearing black soldier flies to upcycle organic waste into valuable eco-products.
- Founder of [Fermenthings](#) Yannick Schandenne discussed his company's focus on “circular fermentation”, using surplus produce to create fermented products and offering workshops to spread fermentation knowledge in Brussels.

Overall, the event highlighted the key role of youth involvement in transforming agrifood systems, especially given their unique skillset, including leveraging social media tools as avenues for raising public awareness and sharing best practices on the circular food economy.

- **“Students4Food Inspirational Talk” – hosted by the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium – 18 October**

The first edition of this global initiative took place at Ghent University as part of the WFF Global Youth Forum and aimed to empower young people to drive sustainable food solutions. The event attracted over 120 attendees and provided a stage for students to share their research and ideas on transforming agrifood systems. Five student speakers from various Belgian universities – KU Leuven, Université catholique de Louvain, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, the University of Liège and Ghent University – delivered compelling presentations, exploring a range of subjects at the forefront of sustainable agrifood systems.

- KU Leuven representative Mairénys Concepción Hernández captivated the audience with her presentation on the potential of using CRISPR/Cas9 gene-editing technology to protect bananas from the devastating effects of plant diseases.
- Université catholique de Louvain representative Mathieu Delandmeter delved into the complex relationship between human diets, agricultural circularity and climate change.
- Universiteit Brussel representative Océane Duluins brought attention to the concept of the protein transition. As an alternative to animal-based proteins, he explored how plant-based and alternative protein sources could not only contribute to healthier diets but also play a pivotal role in reducing the environmental impact of food production.
- University of Liège representative Louise Busschaert focused on the innovative use of modelling and satellite observations in agriculture. Her talk highlighted how these technologies are transforming farming practices by providing precise, real-time data on crop health, soil conditions and weather patterns.

- Ghent University representative Mathis Vermeersch presented his research on urban aquaponic farming. In a world where urban populations are rapidly growing, he discussed how aquaponics, a sustainable farming system that integrates aquaculture and hydroponics, can play a key role in ensuring a safe, local food supply.

The success of the event was demonstrated not only by the strong turnout of students and faculty, but also by the engaging questions and rich interactions with the audience that followed each presentation. The FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium plans to organize Students4Food Inspirational Talks annually, with a different theme and location every year. The objective is to further promote multidisciplinary solutions, international collaboration, diversity and innovation by welcoming a broad range of voices and topics into the conversation.

Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Forum event

- **“Cultivando el Cambio: Juventud, Sistemas Agroalimentarios y Biodiversidad: camino a la COP16” – hosted by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean – 16 October**

This pivotal session on biodiversity, held in anticipation of COP16 in Cali, Colombia, was opened by FAO Senior Field Programme Officer Hivy Ortiz Chour, who expressed her that brings together youth around the critical theme of biodiversity. She emphasized the importance of intergenerational dialogue and collective action to drive transformative changes in agrifood systems, particularly in the context of the biodiversity crisis.

The session centred on how agrifood systems can play a key role in achieving the goals set by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, with a particular focus on engaging youth in the Convention on Biological Diversity. The discussion also highlighted the invaluable contributions of Indigenous and rural youth in biodiversity conservation and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices. Specialists from the FAO Regional Office shared their expertise and insights on these topics, providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities

for integrating biodiversity into agrifood systems. The session also featured a diverse group of youth leaders and activists from across Latin America and the Caribbean who are at the forefront of biodiversity advocacy and action.

Speakers included: regional representative for the GYBN Esteban Ramírez, Young Professionals for Agricultural Development and the Coalition of Rural Youth of Latin America and the Caribbean representative Hazel Flores, Viven Chile and the International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences representative María Inés Delgado Rivas, Network of Indigenous Youth of Latin America and the Caribbean representative Manuel Eduardo Peralta and Network of Rural Youth in the Central American Integration System representative Eduardo López Velásquez.

The young leaders shared powerful perspectives on the importance of creating collective spaces for local action and the vital role of youth in driving biodiversity solutions. They discussed innovative initiatives aimed at restoring degraded soils through ancestral knowledge, highlighted the role of Indigenous youth in advancing biodiversity conservation and underscored the urgent need for Indigenous voices to be included in global biodiversity negotiations.

The session successfully united dynamic youth voices to explore the interconnected themes of youth empowerment, agrifood systems and biodiversity conservation. It reinforced the idea that a sustainable future for rural territories requires a collaborative, inclusive approach that values the knowledge and leadership of young people, especially those from Indigenous and rural communities. Through their collective efforts, these young leaders are paving the way for transformative change and sustainable solutions in the fight to protect biodiversity and ensure the resilience of agrifood systems.

Near East and North Africa Regional Forum event

- “Agrination Startup Cup: Supporting Youth Innovation for Sustainable Agrifood systems in NENA [Near East and North Africa] Region” – hosted by the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa – 17 October

This online event was hosted in collaboration with Berytech, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in the region. It served as an occasion to showcase the five winning startups of the 2023 round of the Agrination Startup Cup, a regional competition which seeks to support youth-led innovative business ideas that have the potential to make agrifood systems more sustainable, equitable and resilient. Featuring speakers from across the tech sectors, the discussion revolved around climate smart agriculture, sustainable energy solutions and water-saving measures in agricultural value chains, as well as the crucial role of accelerators and incubators in connecting agricultural needs with technological solutions.

- Economist at the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa Dalia Abulfotuh highlighted Agrination’s goal of supporting youth in agriculture through funding and the creation of a supportive environment for youth-led startups.
- Berytech representative Ramy Boujawdeh outlined the importance of connecting entrepreneurs with markets, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and validating new technologies. He also provided tips for young entrepreneurs, emphasizing the prominent role of regenerative agriculture, alternative protein sources and urban farming.
- Discussions also addressed the need for increased collaboration among stakeholders and the speakers stressed the importance of innovation in underexplored areas to enhance food security, urging the younger generation to persist and connect swiftly with market demands.
- Young leaders of the five winning startups (PCS AGRI, Green Biotech Solutions, ADM Agri Digital Marketing, AGRIM MAYAR, and Ultra Fresh Food) presented their pitches, showcasing how innovative ideas and technologies can be impactful in agrifood systems transformation.

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WFF Global Youth Action 2024 impact



WFF Global Youth Action 2024 impact*

FOSTERING YOUTH - LED SOLUTIONS

50 +

youth led projects supported (including funding, mentorship and networking)

1 000 +

entrants for the TRC

11

teams in the YFL

468

entries from 53 countries in the SIA powered by XTC

90

entrants for the AgX Fair

229

entrants for the Policy Deliberation Challenge

326

films from 60+ countries submitted to the WFF Film Festival

FACILITATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

21

active National Chapters

46

Youth Assembly sessions held throughout the year

1 500

youth representatives and observers

1 812

total participants across 17 learning sessions

OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

184 000 +

website visitors from 216 countries and territories

90 000 +

social media followers

30 465

newsletter subscribers

43.4%

average follower engagement rate on social media

2 170

press clippings throughout the year

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

Freerice campaign

88 875 310

rice grains raised

14 392

participants

WFF Goes to University

6

universities

2 000

student participants

*Through November 2024

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Looking forward: Scaling up youth-led action



Looking forward: Scaling up youth-led action

The WFF Global Youth Action initiative envisions a future where empowered young people are central to global efforts in achieving food security and environmental sustainability. Its mission is not only about creating impact today but also about building a legacy of youth leadership for generations to come.

In 2025, the initiative will intensify its efforts, and deepen its impact by fostering collaboration across ages, sectors and cultures. Achieving a world free from hunger and malnutrition requires leveraging our immense collective potential to shape policies, drive sustainable practices, accelerate technological innovation and inform investment priorities. Upcoming areas of focus include:

Expansion of WFF National Chapters and Local Impact initiatives

With an expanding network of National Chapters, the WFF Local Youth Action programme will strengthen its grassroots initiatives, allowing young leaders worldwide to tackle local challenges and drive impactful, community-focused agrifood transformations.

Implementation of the Global Youth Action Plan

The WFF Global Youth Action initiative will work with its YPB, National Chapters and partners on the implementation of the Global Youth Action Plan, supporting community engagement and innovation for agrifood systems transformation at the local level. This will ensure that challenges and gaps in regional agrifood systems are adequately addressed through policy and action. This Plan lays the groundwork for a resilient and inclusive agrifood system led by young change-makers.

Establishment of regional YFLs

The Global Youth Action initiative will continue the localization of the YFL to countries and regions around the world. The expansion of regional YFLs will empower young innovators to develop and implement sustainable agrifood solutions tailored to their unique local contexts. These Labs will foster the skills, mentorship and resources needed to create scalable, impactful projects within agrifood systems.

UNFSS+4 Stocktake

The Global Youth Action initiative will contribute to the 2025 UNFSS+4 Stocktake by providing insights and youth-centred perspectives, ensuring that young voices are represented in global agrifood systems deliberations. In addition, the initiative will continue working in supporting the implementation of National Pathways through its growing number of National Chapters.

Agrifood Leadership Education Programme

The WFF Global Youth Action initiative's Agrifood Leadership Education Programme is the latest major initiative of the WFF Education programme and RFS, designed to equip young leaders with the tools and expertise to transform local agrifood systems. In 2025, the Programme will nurture the next generation of agrifood leaders by providing training, mentorship and opportunities for young people to shape policies and practices that support sustainable agrifood systems.

Collaboration with the United Nations Youth Office

The WFF Global Youth Action initiative is set to deepen its partnership with the United Nations Youth Office, working collaboratively on initiatives that amplify youth impact across United Nations frameworks and support the integration of young voices in decision-making processes affecting agrifood systems.



WORLD
FOOD
FORUM

GLOBAL
YOUTH
ACTION

GOOD FOOD FOR ALL, TODAY AND TOMORROW



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