



WORLD  
FOOD  
FORUM

GLOBAL  
YOUTH  
ACTION



# YOUTH ASSEMBLY REPORT 2023

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# About this document

The WFF Youth Assembly offers a dedicated, apolitical platform for youth engagement in agrifood systems advocacy and action. Founded on principles of inclusivity, diversity and respect, it provides an institutional space for meaningful contributions from young individuals.

In 2023, the WFF YPB selected policy priorities for each global region based on the [regional Youth Action policy compendia](#) developed by the Youth Assembly in 2022. Through collaborative efforts, the YPB expanded upon these priorities, identifying key action areas per region. The objective is to enhance regional policy priorities by fostering partnerships and capacity-building initiatives. This collective endeavor will culminate in the development of a Global Youth Action Plan in 2024, aimed at laying the groundwork for local actions and policy positions. This plan will guide actions across different regions in collaboration with various stakeholders, including national governments, agencies of the United Nations (UN), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), WFF partners and others.

The policy recommendations can be used as advocacy tools and guides that indicate action points in each region, and which can be presented to national governments, regional offices of UN and its agencies, including FAO, WFF partners and more.

The actionable priority items drafted by the YPB reflect the perspectives of global youth in agrifood systems transformation. However, it is important to note that the content does not necessarily reflect the views and positions of FAO.

## a. Methodology

To date, the WFF Youth Assembly track has:

1. Launched the **2021 Global Youth Action Compendium** – an analysis of global youth manifestos, statements and positions, identifying 17 top policy asks by youth.
2. Produced a synthesis in 2022 of existing regional and national youth policy statements, manifestos and outcomes of youth consultations. The summary captures the takeaways of previous youth discussions and informs the identification of broad key policy themes per region and recommended actions. Read the summary [here](#).
3. Rolled out survey consultations in English, Spanish and French in 2022 to collect further regional youth perspectives on agrifood systems transformation, building on the policies identified in the 2021 WFF Global Youth Action Policy Compendium. Read survey results [here](#). Held six regional consultations online to present the outcomes of the identified policy asks. Held six in-person regional assemblies to further discuss the findings, and identify solutions and actions.
4. Launched the **Regional Compendium** in 2023. The YPB also selected a policy priority to focus on throughout 2023. Online consultations were conducted for each region and hybrid regional assemblies were held during the WFF Flagship event in October 2023, aiding in gathering inputs from youth on the priority action items required in their respective regions. The Youth Assembly 2023 report serves as a summary of all work undertaken in 2023.





# 1.

## Africa

### a. Introduction

Agriculture serves as a crucial pillar supporting livelihoods and economies across Africa. Despite contributing minimally to climate change, the continent faces disproportionate vulnerability to its impacts, which particularly affect vulnerable groups like women and young people who rely heavily on natural resources and rain-fed agriculture. Nevertheless, the agriculture sector presents significant employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for Africa's youth, who are projected to represent 42 percent of global youth by 2030, driving sustainable development in the agrifood sector.

Persistent challenges hinder meaningful involvement of African youth in decision-making and scaling up innovative agrifood systems. To unlock their potential, it is essential to understand and address these barriers. Initiatives such as the YPB in Africa aim to overcome obstacles, amplify

youth-led actions, and engage stakeholders ranging from young farmers to policymakers and organizations. The 2023 WFF Regional Assembly underscored the pivotal role of youth in reshaping agrifood systems through advocacy for climate-smart practices, showcasing success stories and empowering youth for active participation.

Key discussions at the assembly centered on financial challenges, policy support and targeted interventions to build resilient agrifood systems. Outcomes included identifying barriers, proposing actionable steps and fostering collaborations among stakeholders. The assembly provided a platform for marginalized young changemakers to advocate for policy changes and highlighted the growing number of young researchers committed to finding innovative solutions for African agrifood challenges.

**b.**

### **Policy Priority**

**Invest in resilient and nature-positive agrifood systems in Africa.**

## **c. Overview and summary of findings**

Recognizing the imperative of harnessing the potential of young people to address climate change, the WFF Africa Regional YPB conducted a survey and hosted a virtual youth consultation webinar ahead of the WFF Regional Youth Assembly. The survey garnered 193 responses from youth across six subregions in Africa, while the subsequent virtual consultation engaged 25 youth participants continent-wide. These tailored activities effectively gathered insights, opinions and perspectives from young individuals actively engaged in agrifood systems, enhancing youth engagement within agrifood systems, especially during emergencies and periods exacerbated by climate change.

The Africa Regional Youth Assembly focused on the critical interplay of youth involvement in transforming agrifood systems, with the primary goal of prioritizing investments in resilient, nature-positive agrifood systems. This commitment unfolds through advocating for the implementation of climate-smart agriculture practices, establishing storytelling platforms to showcase the successes of climate-smart farmers and empowering young individuals to actively participate in sustainable agriculture. Key

themes from the assembly included addressing barriers to youth engagement, financial challenges and the importance of support in policy spaces. The resulting outcomes involved not only identifying barriers and proposing need-based actions, but also drafting a comprehensive position document. These discussions contributed to strengthened networks, collaborations and partnerships among stakeholders in the agrifood sector, providing a platform for marginalized young agrifood changemakers to voice their concerns and mobilize for change in policy and practice.

The Africa Regional Youth Assembly in October 2023 yielded significant insights into key themes. These encompassed the need for resilient and nature-positive agrifood systems, emphasizing adaptability to local conditions, biodiversity preservation, the dissociation of global political stability from agrifood systems and the promotion of sustainable practices to combat climate challenges. Identified barriers and challenges included the lack of local infrastructure and knowledge, generational issues such as aging farmers, water scarcity, conflicts, market barriers, overproduction and technological limitations hindering progress. Proposed solutions and investments centered on tailored education and awareness, pilot projects, research for local understanding, global solutions contextualized to local realities, incentives for youth involvement and sustainable practices to mitigate emissions. Additionally, discussions highlighted the importance of youth engagement through grants and opportunities, changing perceptions of farming as a career, advocating for agriculture's significance in human rights and showcasing innovation in agriculture. A call to action was made for policymakers to experience the realities of farmers, directing funding towards impactful initiatives and establishing a streamlined civil society engagement mechanism.

### **The primary recommendations include the following:**

- 1. Policy co-creation:**
  - a. Facilitate the development of better-designed policies with youth involvement.
  - b. Implement education programs on sustainable techniques.
- 2. Financial support:**
  - a. Offer transition packages and subsidies to young individuals
  - b. Promote media awareness to enhance market access.



- 3. Land tenure and rights:**
  - a. Tackle land tenure issues to empower young people and women.
  
- 4. Inclusive engagement:**
  - a. Ensure diverse representation in youth engagement initiatives
  - b. Bridge the gap for heterogeneous youth groups.
  
- 5. Global Youth Action plans:**
  - a. Develop global plans for youth engagement.
  - b. Shift the mindset of youth regarding agriculture as a career.





# 2.

## Asia and the Pacific

### a. Introduction

The Asia and the Pacific region confronts a pressing public health challenge driven by non-communicable diseases (NCDs). According to insights from the FAO report *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023*, NCDs such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease significantly contribute to deaths in the region, primarily due to unhealthy dietary habits characterized by the high intake of fats, carbohydrates and salt. Urgent action is imperative to reduce harmful dietary components, emphasizing the crucial role of nutritious diets in preventing NCDs and enhancing overall health. Responding to these challenges, the Asia-Pacific region is overhauling its agrifood systems to prioritize safer, healthier and more sustainable food production and consumption. Led by the WFF YPB, consultations in this region aim to implement policies that prioritize investment in safe, nutritious food systems, with youth involvement at the forefront due to their disproportionate vulnerability to dietary and health issues. The engagement of young individuals is pivotal in that they



can drive lasting changes in food systems and health practices, bringing innovation and fresh perspectives. Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN, this underscores the crucial role of youth in steering the region toward a healthier and more sustainable future, emphasizing health, sustainable agriculture and responsible consumption.

**b.**

### **Policy Priority**

**Invest in and promote agrifood systems transformation through the production, accessibility and consumption of safe, healthy and sustainable food.**

## **c. Overview and summary of findings**

The “Voice Up Youth Voice” consultation conducted in the Asia and the Pacific region from September to October 2023 is a pivotal initiative addressing the challenges young people face in accessing healthy food. This comprehensive Youth Assembly report details the approach taken through a survey and an online consultation to gather insights from youth and propose solutions to enhance food accessibility and nutrition education. The survey received 146 responses from a diverse pool of respondents across various countries in the region that were predominantly between 18 and 35 years of age. The online consultation saw over 200 participants, including individuals from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Main findings include the difficulty in finding healthy foods, particularly in educational settings, due to high costs, lack of awareness and limited availability. The consultation recognized the critical role of youth in addressing food security and nutrition, leading to recommendations such as implementing standards for healthy foods in educational institutions, enhancing food retail access in underserved areas, promoting urban agriculture, integrating nutrition education into school curriculums and regulating food advertising targeting children.

Discussions during the Asia and the Pacific regional assembly focused on education and capacity development to explore methods of educating and enhancing the capabilities of stakeholders involved in agrifood systems. Proposed solutions encompass developing capacity-building programs, encouraging youth-led initiatives, advocating for policy changes and facilitating platforms for knowledge exchange among

young farmers. Emphasizing access to healthy and nutritious food options, discussions highlighted the need to enhance access in public spaces, particularly schools and civic areas. Key proposals included promoting front-of-packaging labeling systems, implementing comprehensive programs and youth initiatives, advocating for financial support and grants, implementing educational campaigns, and supporting local farmers and sustainable agriculture practices. The Asia and the Pacific Regional Youth Assembly showcased the significant role of over 80 young participants in addressing food security and nutrition. Key proposals included establishing community kitchens, integrating nutritious food into educational settings, advocating for governmental policies to enhance youth access to healthy food, emphasizing the importance of traditional foods, and educating stakeholders about healthy eating. The assembly highlighted the active role of young leaders as agents of change in developing equitable and sustainable food systems.

**The primary recommendations include the following:**

- 1. Implementing standards for healthy food:**
  - a. Develop and enforce standards for healthy food in educational institutions.
  - b. Enhance food retail access in underserved areas to promote availability of nutritious options.
- 2. Promoting youth engagement and initiatives:**
  - a. Encourage youth-led initiatives that support the production and availability of healthy, sustainable food.
  - b. Advocate for financial support, grants and incentives for projects that improve access to healthy and nutritious food, especially in underserved communities.
- 3. Integrating nutrition education:**
  - a. Implement comprehensive programs and youth initiatives that emphasize the importance of prioritizing healthy food options
  - b. Advocate for the integration of nutrition education into school curriculums to foster informed choices and healthier eating habits.
- 4. Regulatory measures and policy advocacy:**
  - a. Regulate food advertising and marketing targeting children to promote healthier consumption habits.
  - b. Advocate for policy changes that promote sustainable agricultural practices and healthy eating habits, emphasizing the need for governmental support and intervention.



# 3.

## Europe and Central Asia

### a. Introduction

Addressing Food Loss and Waste (FLW) stands as a crucial endeavor in the Europe and Central Asia region, given its profound implications for food security, environmental sustainability and socio-economic development. These challenges are compounded by the varying levels of development and infrastructure across different countries, impacting the efficiency of food supply chains and waste management systems. The WFF aims to harness the energy, creativity and capabilities of youth, providing a vital platform for the Youth Policy Board to articulate their insights and spearhead initiatives. By integrating the younger generation's unique perspectives and innovative ideas, the WFF endeavors to foster a collaborative approach towards reducing FLW, ensuring food security, and promoting sustainable practices across Europe and Central Asia. In this context, the role of the YPB becomes critically significant.



As a vibrant collective of informed and engaged young individuals, the YPB serves as a dynamic platform to voice youth perspectives, innovate solutions and drive meaningful change. YPB's commitment to addressing FLW aligns with the broader objectives of the WFF, an initiative that seeks to transform food systems to achieve the SDGs, particularly Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Climate Action (SDG 13). This background underscores the urgency and significance of addressing FLW in the region, highlighting the instrumental role of the YPB and the WFF in galvanizing action, shaping policies, and driving a collective movement towards a more sustainable and resilient food future.

b.

**Policy Priority:**

**Take action and scale up initiatives to reduce FLW.**

c. **Overview and summary of findings**

A structured literature review was conducted, involving systematic searches of academic databases and grey literature for relevant publications on FLW. The selection of literature was based on strict criteria, ensuring the inclusion of recent, authoritative sources. The data was synthesized and used to inform evidence-based policy and practice recommendations, ensuring they are reflective of current research and best practices in FLW reduction.

The Europe and Central Asia YPB organized and hosted a webinar with 50 youth participants, featuring presentations on the regional FLW landscape and FAO's mitigation efforts. Breakout sessions facilitated the exchange of views and solutions regarding FLW among participants.

Building on this, the findings were presented at the Europe and Central Asia Youth Assembly during the WFF Event in Rome 2023, attracting a wider, international youth audience of over 60 participants. The assembly successfully compiled a diverse array of youth-proposed strategies and ideas targeting FLW, meticulously documented to serve as the foundation for actionable insights detailed in the report. The contributions of youth are evident in their innovative ideas and active participation, mobilizing and inspiring collective action. Their insights have enriched our understanding of FLW and outlined actionable path-

ways for stakeholders at various levels. Sustaining and amplifying the momentum generated by this report and the initiatives of the YPB and the WFF are imperative. Continued engagement, resource allocation and implementation of recommended strategies are essential to translating these insights into tangible outcomes. In conclusion, the insights gleaned from this report should be leveraged both as a reflection of the current landscape and as a guide for future action. The active participation and empowerment of youth, supported by evidence-based strategies and robust policy frameworks, are paramount in driving meaningful progress in FLW reduction and realizing a sustainable and equitable future for all.

**The primary recommendations include the following:**

**1. Policy and legal advocacy:**

- a. Prioritize preventive measures to reduce FLW at the source
- b. Advocate for legal policies facilitating food recovery and redistribution.
- c. Promote collaboration between sectors for FLW reduction and incentivize sustainable practices.

**2. Implementation strategies:**

- a. Encourage local community initiatives and partnerships for FLW reduction.
- b. Support technological adoption for better inventory management and food preservation.
- c. Invest in efficient transportation and storage solutions for extended food shelf life.

**3. Education and engagement:**

- a. Integrate FLW education into school curricula from an early age.
- b. Establish community programs and engage youth organizations in FLW initiatives.
- c. Utilize social media for broader awareness of and engagement with FLW reduction.

**4. Enhancements for future engagements:**

- a. Maintain regular youth assemblies to sustain momentum on FLW initiatives.
- b. Provide increased support and recognition for youth-led FLW projects.
- c. Include youth in decision-making processes for FLW policies and initiatives.



# 4.

## Latin America and the Caribbean

### a. Introduction

Established in April 2022 for a duration of two years, the YPB aims to localize discussions and actions to address specific regional issues. To this end, the YPB of the WFF with its members from Latin America and the Caribbean, supported by the WFF Secretariat and the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO RLC), initiated the inaugural Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Assembly (LAC RA) as part of the 2022 WFF Global Youth Forum. Leading up to the 2022 LAC RA, the YPB leveraged the policies outlined in the 2021 WFF Global Youth Action Policy Compendium, conducting a survey consultation and an interactive online workshop. These activities culminated in the

identification of five policy priorities, deliberated upon during the 2022 LAC RA. This event provided a platform for discourse and interventions from diverse stakeholders, including young individuals, representatives of youth-led organizations, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, Youth Representatives of FAO Member States and Permanent Representatives to FAO. The ensuing discussions refined the policy texts, resulting in the formulation of five policy priorities for the LAC region, detailed in the WFF Youth Action Regional Compendium 2022.

Aligned with the WFF's 2023 theme, "Agrifood action accelerates climate action," the YPB selected one of the policy priorities for focused attention leading up to the 2022 WFF flagship event.

**b.**

**Policy Priority:**

**Invest in agrifood systems by applying innovative approaches through an agroecological framework.**

**c. Overview and summary of findings**

The chosen policy priority underscores the growing prominence of "agroecology" in global and regional discourse. Notably, its inclusion in frameworks like the Global Biodiversity Framework and regional initiatives such as the Second World Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition highlights its relevance. Within Latin America and the Caribbean, several countries are already advancing specific laws and public policies for agroecology adoption.

In line with the 2023 policy priority, regional YPB members from Latin America and the Caribbean orchestrated various key activities leading up to the 2023 LAC RA. These activities included:

- A comprehensive youth consultation aimed at prioritizing activities promoting agroecology.
- Active participation in a FAO RLC seminar on agroecology to enhance understanding of regional agroecological initiatives.
- Facilitation of a virtual regional pre-assembly to disseminate YPB's work and foster cohesion with diverse youth networks and constituencies.

The youth consultation garnered significant engagement, gathering responses from young leaders, representatives and members of over 40 organizations, including:

Major Group for Children and Youth for Latin America and the Caribbean (MGCY LAC), Global Youth Biodiversity Network of Latin America and the Caribbean (GYBN LAC), International Forestry Students' Association, Young Professionals for Agricultural Development, Network of Indigenous Youth of Latin America and the Caribbean, Association of Women Artisans of Ipeti Embera, Peasant Development Committee, Food Bank of Bolivia, National University of San Marcos and University of the Frontier.

The consultation yielded the following prioritized activities under the policy priority:

- Promotion of educational models linked to the territory with a gender focus, emphasizing ancestral knowledge (prioritized by 44 percent of participants).
- Promotion of crop diversity, organic gardens, and agroecology as sustainable alternatives, ensuring access for marginalized groups (prioritized by 36 percent of participants).
- Provision of technical assistance and capacity building for sustainable production systems committed to environmental stewardship (prioritized by 20 percent of participants).

The virtual regional pre-assembly provided a platform for youth-led organizations, Indigenous groups, civil society, and youth constituencies to engage in discussions. This session facilitated a deeper understanding of YPB's work within the WFF framework and the collaborative efforts across various levels of engagement.

The 2023 LAC RA served as a forum to present the outcomes of the youth consultation, showcasing the contributions of different youth-led organizations to agroecological transformations in the region. The assembly convened diverse youth leaders and representatives, alongside delegates from prominent organizations, such as MGCY LAC, GYBN LAC, and the Brazilian National Confederation of Agricultural Workers.

Noteworthy interventions were made by young representatives appointed by the governments of Peru and Argentina; Ms. Camila Jara, Parlia-



mentarian of Brazil; and Mr. Mario Lubetkin, Assistant Director General and FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, further enriching the discourse on agroecology and youth engagement in the region.

**The primary recommendations include the following:**

- 1. Promotion of agroecology:**
  - a. Advocate for educational models emphasizing territorial training with a gender focus, incorporating ancestral knowledge through social networks, workshops and environmental fairs.
- 2. Youth coordination group:**
  - a. Establish a Youth Coordination Group for the transformation of agrifood systems in Latin America and the Caribbean to enhance collaboration with regional youth constituencies and organizations.
- 3. Youth call for action:**
  - a. Coordinate efforts to launch a youth call for action fostering the implementation of agroecology in Latin America and the Caribbean to unify regional youth visions on agroecology.
- 4. Accessibility and inclusivity:**
  - a. Ensure accessibility by providing spaces and documents in Spanish, English and Portuguese, the most widely used languages in the region, to increase the participation of diverse youth in WFF activities.





# 5.

## Near East and North Africa

### a. Introduction

The Near East and North Africa region faces challenges in meeting the SDG target of Zero Hunger by 2030, with projections indicating a rise in hunger cases surpassing 75 million by the target year. Notably, three conflict-affected countries in the region rank among the top ten nations grappling with severe crises. Scarce water and productive land pose significant hurdles, with only 17 percent of highly productive land and 0.3 hectares of agricultural land per capita. Moreover, the region suffers from extreme water scarcity, with only 10 percent of the global average water availability. Approximately 43 percent of the population resides in rural areas, with 70 percent among the poorest, heavily reliant on

agriculture. Rainfed agriculture, accounting for 70 percent of food production, faces vulnerability due to climate change.

The WFF signifies a strategic partnership between the Near East and North Africa and countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, aimed at sharing knowledge, expertise and governance standards to support ongoing reforms. Other initiatives, such as climate-smart agriculture) led by FAO, focus on assisting farmers in adopting practices resilient to climate change. The Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport serves as another notable initiative, offering programs in sustainable agriculture.

b.

**Policy Priority:**

**Advance environmentally and socially friendly practices in agriculture by promoting accessible education and multi-stakeholder collaboration.**

c. **Overview and summary of findings**

Virtual consultations and surveys in the Near East and North Africa region, involving respondents from 13 countries with a nearly balanced gender split, underscored the necessity for enhanced collaboration between educational institutions and the agrifood sector. Key findings include:

- **Gaps in education:** Students lack practical field experience, and educational programs are costly and inaccessible. There exists a disconnect between education and the needs of local farming communities.
- **Limited exposure to real-world challenges:** The educational system inadequately exposes students to practical challenges faced by farmers, particularly related to sustainable land management.

During the Near East and North Africa Regional Assembly at the 2023 WFF flagship event, over 60 change agents participated in discussions revolving around four themes:

- **Accessible Green Education:** Emphasizes the importance of educating students about climate justice and environmental issues, needing government involvement and a mindset shift. It advocates

for courses raising awareness about the green economy and sustainable practices. Participants discussed the need for curriculum adjustments to incorporate practical experience and align educational content with the needs of local farming communities.

- **Smart and Sustainable Campuses:** Highlights the significance of addressing school meals, food waste and raising awareness within educational institutions. It calls for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and government support to promote sustainability initiatives on campuses. Participants emphasized the role of educational institutions in leading by example through sustainable practices and creating environments conducive to learning about and practicing sustainability.
- **Access to Opportunities and Funding:** Identifies obstacles in accessing funding and opportunities, proposing enhanced social media presence and targeted funding to alleviate challenges. Discussions focused on bridging the gap between rural and urban communities, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for all stakeholders. Participants stressed the importance of government support and private sector involvement in providing funding and creating conducive environments for innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture.
- **Role of Policy in Advancing Environmentally and Socially Friendly Practices in Agriculture:** Underscores the crucial role of policy in agricultural development, advocating for transparency, accountability and local production. It emphasizes the need for reforms to support farmer-led initiatives and incentivize local crop production. Participants discussed the importance of policy coherence and coordination across sectors to address environmental and social challenges in agriculture effectively. They highlighted the need for policies that promote sustainable practices, support smallholder farmers and ensure food security for all.

The Near East and North Africa Regional Assembly provided a platform for dynamic exchanges among participants from diverse backgrounds. The discussions were not only insightful but also strategic, focusing on key areas of concern and potential solutions. The assembly emphasized the urgency of addressing challenges related to education, sustainability, funding and policy to ensure progress towards food security and sustainable agriculture in the region. Through collaborative efforts and a shared commitment to change, the assembly laid the groundwork for impactful initiatives and policies that can drive positive transformation in the Near East and North Africa.



## The primary recommendations include the following:

- 1. Political will and proactive measures:**
  - a. Prioritize political will for sustainable agricultural policies and encourage proactive creation of opportunities.
- 2. Youth involvement and accountability:**
  - a. Engage youth in agricultural initiatives and hold institutions accountable for policy implementation.
- 3. Synergy and inclusivity:**
  - a. Foster collaboration among stakeholders and ensure policies encompass all relevant actors.
- 4. Updating and monitoring policies:**
  - a. Address gaps in policy implementation and monitor policies to reflect evolving needs.
- 5. Generational shift and attention:**
  - a. Overcome generational divides and highlight the importance of sustainable initiatives.
- 6. Advocacy and peaceful means:**
  - a. Recognize varied advocacy approaches and engage a broad base of stakeholders.







# 6.

## North America

### a. Introduction

Perceptions of healthy food among student populations are influenced by media portrayals and the dominance of large food industries. Addressing this requires comprehensive interventions; research shows that while students possess knowledge about healthy eating, they struggle to implement it. Initiatives should begin early, ideally through parental modeling and family exposure to healthy eating practices. Schools are key environments for behavioural change, given the significant time students spend there. Thus, creating supportive school environments is essential for fostering sustained dietary changes among students.

b.

**Policy Priority:**

Ensure inclusive, healthy, and sustainable feeding programs at schools, nurseries, and colleges that are procured from local producers and provide food education.

c. **Overview and summary of findings**

The North America online consultation and survey received over 35 responses from a demographically diverse pool. It highlighted gaps and opportunities in the North American dietary landscape, focusing on school nutrition transformation and youth involvement in policy decision-making.

Qualitative data from online consultations involved 20 participants sharing experiences and perspectives on school nutrition programs and community-centric reform. Key findings included:

- **Awareness:** Fifty-seven percent of participants emphasized the importance of raising awareness about food education and production in communities. They stressed the need for educational initiatives to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in daily dietary choices.
- **Defining a Healthy Diet:** Respondents prioritized nutritive value (66 percent), ecological impact (46 percent), and cultural relevance/diversity of food options (31 percent) in defining a healthy diet. They highlighted the need for a holistic understanding of nutrition that considers environmental sustainability and cultural context.
- **Identified Gaps:** Participants identified gaps in nutrition education initiatives within academic curricula, citing sporadic programs and a lack of thoroughness. They emphasized the importance of integrating comprehensive, year-long nutrition education into school curricula to promote lifelong healthy habits.

At the 2023 WFF flagship event, over 60 change agents discussed the causal factors behind current dietary behaviours among students in North America. They explored multi-sectoral approaches to analyze problems and engage stakeholders effectively.

Key themes from the assembly included:

- **Youth Involvement:** Acknowledging youth as essential sources of generational knowledge transfer and advocating for their inclusion in decision-making processes. This was emphasized through the incorporation of Indigenous youth voices throughout the policymaking process.
- **Access to Nutrition:** Highlighting barriers to adequate school nutrition, including access to knowledge, opportunities and affordable, nutritious resources. Participants emphasized the need for hands-on engagement in various stages of the food system and affordable options for nutritious food.
- **Language in Policy:** Recognizing the role of language in policymaking and intervention design, with an emphasis on community-centric approaches and stakeholder accountability. Participants discussed the importance of language in framing interventions and ensuring inclusivity in decision-making processes. They stressed the need for policies that reflect the diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of students in North America.

**The primary recommendations include the following:**

**1. Raising awareness:**

- a. Launch comprehensive awareness campaigns in communities about food education and production.
- b. Highlight the importance of nutrition, ecological impact and the cultural relevance of food choices.
- c. Engage with local schools, community centers and social media platforms for effective dissemination.

**2. Integration of nutrition education:**

- a. Ensure integration of comprehensive, year-long nutrition education into academic curricula at schools nationwide.
- b. Focus on holistic aspects of food systems, including nutritive value, ecological impact and cultural relevance.
- c. Provide training and resources for educators to deliver engaging and informative nutrition lessons.

**3. Promotion of healthy meal preparation:**

- a. Offer workshops and cooking classes for students and families to promote healthy meal preparation.
- b. Collaborate with local chefs, nutritionists and community organizations for hands-on learning experiences.

- c. Encourage the use of local and seasonal ingredients to support sustainable food practices.

**4. Advocacy for policy change:**

- a. Advocate for policy changes at the federal level to prioritize school nutrition programs.
- b. Ensure inclusive representation in decision-making processes.
- c. Lobby for increased funding and support for initiatives aimed at improving access to healthy and nutritious food in schools.
- d. Incorporate food and nutrition education as a core component of national education policies.

**5. Enhancing access:**

- a. Improve knowledge, opportunities and the affordability of nutritious food options.
- b. Develop resources and tools to help students and families make informed choices about food.
- c. Promote community engagement initiatives such as farmers' markets and community gardens to increase access to fresh and locally sourced produce.

**6. Language and communication:**

- a. Use inclusive and community-centric language in policymaking and intervention design.
- b. Ensure involvement of stakeholders from diverse backgrounds in decision-making processes.
- c. Provide resources and support for bilingual communication strategies to reach non-English speaking communities effectively.





# What is next?

To continue the ongoing progress, the WFF Secretariat and the YPB will continue facilitating youth assembly discussions on various topics related to agrifood systems throughout the year. This initiative will prioritize two key objectives: (i) identifying actionable points and implementing associated activities, and (ii) enhancing capacity in policy advocacy and communication.