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Youth Recommendations

Empowering Young Women in Agrifood Systems



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Table of Contents

About the World Food Forum Global Youth Action Initiative	3
About the WFF Youth Assembly	3
Contributors	4
Background	4
Summary of engagements	5
YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS - KEY MESSAGES	6
Why integrated approaches matter: linking SDG 4, SDG 5 and SDG 8 for young women in agrifood systems	7
Stocktaking: persistent gaps and challenges	9
1. Restricted access to financial resources and low levels of financial literacy	9
2. Inadequate and underfunded education systems	9
3. Limited opportunities for economic empowerment, leadership, innovation and agripreneurship	10
4. Poor rural infrastructure	10
5. Inequitable legal and policy frameworks, and limited participation in decision-making processes	11
6. Deep-rooted discriminatory social norms	11
7. Insufficient protection from GBV and inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)	11
8. Challenges to achieving adequate nutrition and overall well-being	12
9. Lack of disaggregated, community-level data	12
10. Armed conflict and political instability	12
Recommendations for action	13
1. Inclusive access to resources and finance	13
2. Transformative education and skills development	14
3. Economic empowerment and unpaid care work	14
4. Infrastructure, connectivity and climate resilience	15
5. Leadership, decision-making and political participation	16
6. Social norms and cultural transformation	16
7. SRHR, mental health and GBV prevention	17
8. Nutrition, food sovereignty and wellbeing	17
9. Data, accountability and monitoring	18
10. Peace, security and the weaponization of food	18
Conclusion	19
References	20
Appendix 1: List of Contributing Organizations	20
From policy to action	22

About the World Food Forum Global Youth Action Initiative

The [World Food Forum](#) (WFF) is an open and inclusive global platform established by the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#) (FAO) in 2021 to drive the transformation of agrifood systems through the power of youth, science and innovation, and investment. It brings together stakeholders of all ages and sectors to turn ideas into action, scale solutions, and foster meaningful partnerships that accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

At the core of the WFF is the [Global Youth Action Initiative](#), which harnesses the passion and ingenuity of young people to advance inclusive food governance, drive youth-led innovation and promote sustainable solutions. Through a diverse set of thematic programmes-covering policy engagement, innovation, cultural expression and grassroots action-the initiative empowers youth with the skills, resources and platforms they need to lead transformative change at local, national and global levels.

About the WFF Youth Assembly

The WFF Youth Assembly, led by the [Youth Policy Board](#) (YPB), is a youth-led platform empowering young people to engage in policy discussions on agrifood systems challenges and opportunities. It provides a structured space for youth to systematically contribute to agrifood systems policy and governance processes, ensuring their voices influence local, regional and global decision-making.

Bringing together diverse stakeholders such as young farmers, young parliamentarians, civil society groups, Indigenous youth, academia, youth organizations and partners, and national youth delegations, the Youth Assembly fosters inclusive and diverse participation.

Contributors

This paper was drafted by the 2025-2026 members of the WFF YPB working on the thematic area of Young Women's Empowerment: Carlos Daniel Valdovinos Pérez, Jumo Omodeni, Marilena Bachmeier, Nada Zamel and Sara Kate Smith.

The content of this paper was developed through an extensive consultative process. Approximately 5000 young people contributed, either by participating in live consultations, responding to the online call for inputs, or reviewing the zero draft.

The YPB wishes to thank the organizations and individuals that responded to the call for inputs.

The YPB extends special thanks to the international organizations and other entities that enriched the process through intergenerational exchanges: the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

Special thanks are also extended to the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Felipe Paullier; the United Nations Youth Office; and the Permanent Missions of Indonesia, Ireland, Italy and Nepal for their continued support throughout this process.

Finally, sincere appreciation goes to the FAO Liaison Offices in New York and Geneva for hosting and supporting the consultations.

Background

As part of a year-long process of the WFF Youth Assembly, a global consultation has been conducted to collect youth perspectives at the intersection of the following SDGs **under the umbrella of SDG 2: Zero Hunger**:

- **SDG 4: Quality Education**
- **SDG 5: Gender Equality**
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**

This Youth Recommendations paper is the result of a global, youth-led consultation process starting at the Expert Group Meeting in New York on SDG 5, followed by key engagements through the WFF Geneva Thematic Youth Assembly sessions, the 69th Commission on the Status of Women, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum. These milestone events were complemented by a global survey targeting young people and youth organizations in agrifood systems, as well as an intergenerational dialogue with youth and senior decision-makers. Together, these efforts ensured that the recommendations reflect diverse perspectives, lived experiences and regionally grounded priorities of young women across the world.

With 2026 declared as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, this is a critical moment to co-develop meaningful policy priorities that not only advance youth advocacy and support local initiatives for young women, but also foster intergenerational dialogue and multistakeholder collaboration. Beyond advocacy and programming, there is also a pressing need to expand knowledge, evidence and data systems related to young women in agrifood systems to inform inclusive and evidence-based policymaking.

These recommendations aim to bring in youth perspectives to shape global discussions on gender equality, education, training and economic opportunities within agrifood systems. Designed as a practical tool for youth organizations, this document supports the design and implementation of inclusive and youth-led gender-transformative strategies grounded in the lived experiences of young women and concurrently aims to influence stakeholders that can support youth-led groups and activities, such as governments, international organizations, academia and educators (both formal and non-formal).

Summary of engagements

The consultative process started with the participation of two young leaders from the WFF Youth Initiative at the Expert Group Meeting on SDG 5 in preparation for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. This was then followed by three hybrid (online and in-person) consultations:

Thematic Youth Assembly session in Geneva

This session focused on advancing women's access to decent rural employment and was organized in collaboration with the ILO.

Youth-led side event at the 69th Commission on the Status of Women

This session highlighted the critical role of education and training for young women in agrifood systems and was hosted by the WFF Youth Assembly in collaboration with youth representatives from the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY) and the UNESCO SDG 4 Student and Youth Network. It was co-organized with the permanent mission of Indonesia and Italy to the United Nations.

Side event at the ECOSOC Youth Forum

This session served to elevate youth perspectives on gender equality within agrifood systems and was organized in collaboration with the UN Women, the Permanent Missions of Ireland and Nepal to the United Nations and UN MGCY.

The consultations then extended beyond these engagements, allowing even more young people to contribute through an [Online Call for Inputs](#).

The zero draft of the Youth Recommendations, developed through extensive consultations, was opened for comments and further refined during an Intergenerational Policy Dialogue. The Dialogue convened experts from CFS, FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNESCO and UN Women, fostering alignment between youth priorities and the technical knowledge and policy expertise of these organizations.

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY MESSAGES

- *Intersectional approaches and analytical lenses should guide any effort aimed at including and empowering young women in agrifood systems.*
- *Investing in young women in agrifood systems is crucial for advancing the right to food, eliminating economic poverty, promoting sustainable development, strengthening climate resilience and ensuring the sustainability and resilience of agrifood systems.*
- *To unlock the full potential of young women in agrifood systems, it is essential to recognize and uphold their human rights, including equitable access to and control over land, finances, education, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition and decent work. This requires comprehensive legal reforms that guarantee land tenure, workplace protections, equal pay, access to leadership roles and freedom from discrimination, violence and harassment.*
- *Education systems need to be inclusive, practical, gender-responsive and aligned with real and decent job opportunities and sectoral needs.*
- *Financial products and financial literacy opportunities must be accessible, low-risk and designed to fit young women's realities, including those without formal collateral.*
- *Rural infrastructure – such as safe transport, internet connectivity, energy, water and sanitation – is critical to enabling access to education, decent employment training and markets.*
- *Young women must be engaged as co-designers and decision-makers in shaping policies and programmes, not just as beneficiaries.*
- *Harmful social norms, gendered age discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV) continue to restrict young women's choices and opportunities. These challenges not only undermine the enforcement of protective laws but also prevent transformative progress. Advancing gender equality requires more than access and inclusion; it demands gender-transformative approaches that actively challenge discriminatory norms and shift power relations for lasting, systemic change.*
- *Communication efforts must be localized and inclusive, using Indigenous and local languages to ensure young women in agrifood systems can access information, share their stories and meaningfully engage in shaping solutions within their communities.*



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Why integrated approaches matter: linking SDG 4, SDG 5 and SDG 8 for young women in agrifood systems

Empowering young women in agrifood systems requires an integrated approach that connects **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**, **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)**, and **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**. Education equips young women with technical, financial and leadership skills, while access to decent work ensures these skills lead to dignified employment and economic independence. Gender equality is the critical enabler that ensures these opportunities are inclusive and sustained. The link between quality education and decent work is mutually reinforcing - progress in one accelerates the other.

According to the latest UN Women Gender Snapshot, one in eight women and girls aged 15 to 49 experienced intimate partner violence in the past year. At the current rate, girls will continue to be married as children until 2092 (UN Women, 2024). Globally, around 13 percent of adolescent girls give birth before the age of 18, with regional variations, rates rise to approximately 25 percent in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, significantly higher than in South Asia and Latin America (UNICEF 2024). In 2024, women held only 27 percent of seats in national parliaments and 35.5 percent of seats in local governments; only six countries had achieved gender parity in their legislatures. At current rates, gender parity in parliaments may not arrive until 2063 and eliminating women's extreme poverty may take 137 more years (UN Women, 2024).

Globally, two out of every three youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) are women, and the NEET rate among young women is also more than double that of young men (at 28.1 percent and 13.1 percent, respectively, in 2023), highlighting persistent gender disparities in access to both learning and employment opportunities (ILO, 2024).

Many young women still face employment barriers and work deficits. These disparities are even more acute in agrifood systems, where women account for nearly half of the global agricultural workforce in many regions, yet often lack equal access to land, markets, credit, digital tools and decision-making power. Rural women, in particular, face severe limitations in terms of off-farm employment opportunities due to poor rural employment prospects outside of agriculture.

In Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, for example, women own significantly less land than men and receive fewer benefits from government schemes, despite their vital roles across agrifood systems, from food production to household nutrition and non-farming roles, such as logistics, processing and hospitality (FAO, 2023).

Young women and girls face a dual burden: while contributing significantly to agricultural production, they are also responsible for unpaid domestic tasks such as caregiving, food preparation and collecting firewood and water. Although essential to household survival, these tasks are largely invisible in labour statistics and policy frameworks and are rarely acknowledged as work or assigned economic value (FAO, IFAD and ILO, 2010).

As a result, young women often work longer hours and face reduced access to education, heightening their exposure to psychosocial and physical risks (FAO, 2021). Cultural norms that define agriculture as a male domain, restrict mobility and reinforce unequal care responsibilities, further marginalize rural young women from agrifood education, training and employment opportunities.

Integrating SDGs 4, 5 and 8 is not only a matter of rights, it is a multiplier for sustainable development. Evidence shows that when young women have access to quality education and decent work, they are better equipped to adopt climate-resilient practices, improve agricultural productivity and strengthen household and community resilience (FAO, 2017).

To meaningfully empower young women in agrifood systems, it is essential to recognize their diversity and adopt intersectional approaches that address the multiple, overlapping barriers they face, including those based on gender, age, disability, ethnicity, rural location, sexual orientation, socio-economic background and migration or displacement status.

Such complex, intersecting challenges require targeted, context-specific responses that blend top-down policy reform with bottom-up solutions led by young women and communities.

By advancing SDGs 4, 5 and 8 together, young women can realize their full potential as innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders shaping sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems.



Stocktaking: persistent gaps and challenges

Despite global efforts to align education, employment and gender equality goals, young women – particularly those from rural, Indigenous and marginalized communities – continue to face deep-rooted and structural barriers in agrifood systems. Through the consultation process, ten key gap areas for action concerning young women's empowerment in agrifood systems were identified.



1. Restricted access to financial resources and low levels of financial literacy

Access to finance remains one of the most persistent challenges. Young women are often excluded from credit systems due to discriminatory social norms and a lack of land ownership, formal collateral or financial history. Scholarship and grant opportunities are either too limited or inaccessible due to bureaucratic barriers and insufficient outreach. Even where microfinance exists, many financial products are not designed with young women in mind, often requiring complex documentation, high repayment expectations or lack actual follow-through, putting young women at risk of being indebted and perpetuating poverty cycles. Women face exclusion from agricultural value chains not due to a lack of ideas, but because the systems are not structured to support low-asset entrepreneurs, smallholder or subsistence farmers, or informal workers. Lack of financial literacy prevents rural women from accessing proper finance, including grants and microloans, and they are less likely to own bank accounts, mainly due to lack of awareness regarding financial procedures and legal processes regarding finance.

2. Inadequate and underfunded education systems

Education systems, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas, remain severely underfunded and unequipped to deliver quality learning experiences. Schools often lack infrastructure, safe sanitation and basic resources like learning materials and trained teachers. There is a severe shortage of hands-on, relevant training in modern farming, entrepreneurship and climate-resilient agricultural practices. Curricula remain outdated and theoretical, failing to reflect real agrifood challenges or local contexts. Marginalized groups, including Indigenous and conflict-affected young women, face compounded vulnerabilities in education systems that often overlook Indigenous knowledge, exclude local languages or are disrupted by violence and instability, further deepening their exclusion and limiting access to meaningful, culturally relevant learning opportunities. Many young women lack access to schools and vocational training programmes due to cost, long travel distance or rigid scheduling that does not consider their caregiving responsibilities, as well as a lack of care services in rural areas. This challenge is compounded by the absence of alternative caregiving structures, which leaves young women with few options to balance education and domestic duties.

Without access to quality education, many young women are confined to low-paid, informal roles in agrifood systems, lacking both job security and economic autonomy. Conversely, education without employment opportunities can lead to frustration, brain drain or disengagement.

3. Limited opportunities for economic empowerment, leadership, innovation and agripreneurship

Young women face deeply entrenched barriers to entering and thriving within agripreneurship. The absence of visible female role models and mentors in agribusiness stifles inspiration and guidance, especially in male-dominated rural economies. In many regions, men are migrating out of rural areas at higher rates, leading to the “feminization” of agriculture; yet young women are left with land but little access to markets, finance, productive resources or technology. Even when women complete training programmes, these structural obstacles limit their ability to convert skills into sustainable employment. Gendered assumptions in labour markets often steer them toward informal or care-based roles, sidelining them from agribusiness and innovation opportunities. Often, when young women engage in wage employment in the agrifood sector, they are facing gender pay gaps, working in informal situations and their rights at work are unprotected. Programmes need to consider diverse outreach strategies that are tailored to these realities. It's also important to establish proper monitoring and institutional support to ensure these outreach efforts are effective and inclusive.

Access to economic opportunities and decent work - including fair wages, social protection and safe working conditions - can serve as a powerful enabler of young women's economic empowerment. When young women are meaningfully integrated into agrifood systems as workers, entrepreneurs and decision-makers, they gain greater control over income, enhance their bargaining power within households and communities, and are better positioned to invest in their own education, health and livelihoods. Decent employment not only improves individual well-being but also contributes to broader rural transformation by fostering inclusive growth and intergenerational resilience.

4. Poor rural infrastructure

Limited rural infrastructure - such as transport, energy, water and sanitation, communication and storage facilities - continues to restrict young women's access to education, training centres, decent employment and markets. These challenges are exacerbated by climate change, as rural areas where young women live are often highly exposed to climate shocks such as floods and droughts, which further disrupt mobility, access to schools, markets and digital services. Investing in climate-resilient infrastructure is therefore not only a development priority but also a gender equity imperative. While the rise of digital technologies in agriculture, from mobile banking to online marketplaces and precision farming tools, offers new opportunities, the persistent digital divide remains a major obstacle. Digital harassment and online safety are high barriers in expanding digital access for young women. Many young women, particularly in remote areas, lack access to reliable energy, internet, digital devices, and literacy in information and communication technologies, making it difficult to benefit from online learning, financial services or agrifood systems platforms. Even when they receive training or capital, exclusion from markets often persists. Gender bias, lack of market information and exposure to violence or harassment - especially in public marketplaces, during commuting or in digital spaces - further marginalize them from value chains and cooperative structures. In the context of escalating climate risks, rural young women also face limited access to localized climate data, early warning systems and agricultural extension services, leaving them highly vulnerable to crop failure and food insecurity.

5. Inequitable legal and policy frameworks, and limited participation in decision-making processes

Many legal systems at all levels still do not guarantee land rights, tenure security and rights at work, such as equal pay, workplace protections or social protection for women. Indigenous and rural young women often lack legal documentation needed for education, financial services or land ownership. Gender discrimination in hiring, wage disparities, ageism and the absence of policies promoting women's leadership continue to limit their participation in governance and agrifood systems policymaking. In many settings, young women are absent from decision-making spaces - including youth councils, farmer cooperatives, employers' and workers' organizations, and local governance - resulting in policies that fail to reflect their needs. This is further compounded by the lack of understanding, skills and capacity among many policymakers to meaningfully engage young women in decision-making. At the same time, comprehensive, functioning legislation to criminalize GBV is still missing in many contexts.

6. Deep-rooted discriminatory social norms

Deep-rooted discriminatory social norms continue to shape how young women are perceived and what roles they are expected to fulfil, often relegating them to unpaid care, domestic work and low-status professions. These expectations suppress aspirations, reduce investment in girls' education and reinforce job segregation by steering girls away from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), agritech and leadership pathways. Discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes around femininity, labour and mobility are especially persistent in rural contexts, where early marriage, adolescent pregnancy and lack of support for caregiving responsibilities compound the barriers. These norms not only limit choices but are institutionalized through career counselling, school curricula and community attitudes, locking girls out of opportunity before they even begin. The burden of "resilience" is often placed on young women without adequate resources, leading to burnout, dropout and mental health stressors that remain largely invisible in rural education and agrifood training systems.

7. Insufficient protection from GBV and inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

GBV – including sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, coercion and abuse – remains a pervasive and normalized reality for many young women in agrifood systems. In rural settings, where girls and women often live and work in close-knit communities with limited mobility, reporting violence can carry stigma and retaliation. Partner violence, including psychological and physical abuse, often goes unaddressed due to social silence, economic dependency or the absence of support services. Young women in agricultural training programmes or male-dominated workspaces face risks of harassment, exploitation and assault that are exacerbated by inadequate grievance mechanisms and gender-insensitive leadership. Simultaneously, poor access to sexual and reproductive health services, menstrual hygiene and mental health support continues to undermine girls' autonomy and educational continuity. Long travel distances, stigma around menstruation and lack of private sanitation facilities lead to absenteeism and dropouts. Early and forced marriage, teenage pregnancy and taboos around sexuality further entrench young women's exclusion from leadership and economic participation.

Despite these realities, most agrifood and rural development policies overlook GBV and SRHR entirely. Holistic responses are urgently needed, not only services but systemic shifts that centre care, safety and dignity. This includes engaging boys and men in transforming harmful norms and ensuring that safety, bodily autonomy and reproductive justice are integrated into every level of agrifood systems programming.

8. Challenges to achieving adequate nutrition and overall well-being

Young women in agrifood systems face structural and intersecting barriers that directly impact their nutritional status and overall well-being. Despite their central roles in food production and preparation, their access to nutritious diets remains limited, they are the most likely to experience food insecurity and they are more vulnerable to the effects of weather extremes and climate emergencies. Challenges, such as low income, limited control over food choices, lack of nutrition education and gender-based disparities in intra-household food allocation, limit their ability to obtain diverse and nutrient-rich diets. Malnutrition, particularly iron-deficiency anaemia, remains a critical yet often overlooked barrier for adolescent girls in agrifood systems. Adolescence represents a second critical window of opportunity to improve girls' nutritional status, following the first 1 000 days of life. This period is marked by rapid growth and development, making it crucial for addressing nutritional deficiencies that can have long-term health implications. Evidence highlights that adolescence offers a significant chance to break intergenerational cycles of malnutrition, underscoring the importance of targeted nutritional interventions during this stage (UNICEF, 2020). Without addressing young women's right to adequate nutrition, efforts to empower them socially, educationally and economically within agrifood systems will remain incomplete.

9. Lack of disaggregated, community-level data

A persistent challenge across agrifood systems is the lack of disaggregated, community-level data that captures the diverse realities of young women, especially in rural, Indigenous and marginalised contexts. National and international statistics often overlook critical intersections such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability and geography making it impossible to design real inclusive policies or track comprehensive progress towards the SDGs. This data gap undermines accountability and obscures the contributions and needs of young women in agrifood systems. Moreover, scarcity of gender-sensitive data can lead to unintended and sometimes harmful outcomes of interventions. The complexities of intersectional vulnerabilities are often acknowledged only in broad vision statements rather than being meaningfully integrated into concrete strategies and actions.

10. Armed conflict and political instability

During armed conflict and political instability, agrifood systems are increasingly weaponized (e.g. through blockades, destruction of agricultural land and denial of humanitarian access), which undermines both food sovereignty and rights, and human dignity. The UN Security Council has formally recognized starvation as a method of warfare under Resolution 2417, which condemns the use of food insecurity as a weapon of conflict (UNSC, 2018). For young women, especially in rural regions, this often leads to heightened vulnerability, hunger, displacement, violence and exploitation. Conflict further disrupts access to education, land and livelihoods while deepening pre-existing gender inequalities. Displaced rural youth, particularly young women, face increased risks of GBV and loss of property rights (UN Women & WFP, 2020). Despite these challenges, the intersection of peacebuilding, agrifood systems and gender is rarely addressed in policy design.

These barriers are not isolated, they are overlapping and systemic. Addressing them requires intersectional, inclusive, gender-transformative and rights-based approaches across financing, education, infrastructure, employment and decent work, and legal frameworks. Critically, the lack of disaggregated data on young women in agrifood systems continues to obscure their specific needs and contributions, making targeted interventions difficult. Only by closing these data gaps and tackling structural inequalities can young women fully and equitably participate in transforming agrifood systems.

Recommendations for action

This Youth Recommendations paper builds on and aligns with two key frameworks: the [*CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition*](#) (2023) and the [*CFS Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition*](#) (2022), along with major publications on the status of youth and women in agrifood systems (FAO, 2023; 2025).

The ten key areas identified, ranging from education and financing to GBV and social norms, operationalize core principles from both documents. By translating global policy guidance into youth-led, actionable priorities, this paper offers a coherent roadmap for youth-led organizations to implement gender-transformative and youth-inclusive agrifood systems at all levels.

Recognizing the strong potential of WFF National Youth Chapters as youth-led organizations established to reduce fragmentation and amplify youth action, this paper identifies them as key stakeholders in driving the transition from policy to action. Through its call to action, it also urges governments, private sector, academia and other stakeholders to foster enabling environments that actively support and scale youth-led initiatives. These latter stakeholders are conceptualized in this paper as part of the fundamental facilitating ecosystem that supports youth-led organizations in taking action.

Governments, international organizations, educators, the private sector and other key actors are recognized as enabling and catalytic stakeholders. While referred to by name throughout this document, their shared responsibility to work in close coordination remains essential to accelerating progress.

1. Inclusive access to resources and finance

Youth-led organizations should:

- 1.1 develop community-based savings groups and microfinance schemes tailored to young women without formal collateral;
- 1.2 deliver peer-led financial literacy training, and create toolkits and information sheets in local languages for navigating access to loans and grants;
- 1.3 build partnerships with donors, ethical banks and digital finance platforms to pilot youth-friendly financial products and ensure resources are responsive to real needs on the ground; and
- 1.4 establish a global youth observatory for land rights violations to hold perpetrators and accomplices accountable, including an “early warning” system to publicize threats.

Governments should:

- 1.5 allocate dedicated funding for youth-led financial empowerment initiatives and cooperative models;
- 1.6 reform banking and microfinance regulations to accommodate informal lending and collective savings practices;
- 1.7 recognize and support women-led community banks and local investment networks; and
- 1.8 develop gender-responsive agricultural policies that ensure young women have access to land, productive resources, microfinance and social protection schemes.

International organizations should:

- 1.9 facilitate pooled funding mechanisms and donor platforms supporting youth-led financial inclusion programmes; and
- 1.10 provide technical support and knowledge-sharing on inclusive financial practices.

2. Transformative education and skills development

Youth-led organizations should:

- 2.1 co-create inclusive, context-specific agricultural education modules, incorporating green jobs and climate-smart agriculture, and recognizing the Indigenous and traditional agricultural knowledge, practices and experiences of rural women;
- 2.2 lead community workshops, regional exchanges, mentorship programmes and intergenerational dialogues for girls and young women to enter agrifood careers; and
- 2.3 set up mobile or pop-up vocational training hubs in rural or conflict-affected areas.

Governments should:

- 2.4 fund incubation centres and training spaces co-designed with youth organizations through multistakeholder collaboration;
- 2.5 subsidize education and skill-building initiatives targeted at rural and Indigenous young women; and
- 2.6 ensure safe learning and working environments by providing access to sexual and reproductive health services, including adequate menstrual hygiene infrastructure and proper sanitation systems in schools, as essential enablers of young women's meaningful participation.

International organizations should:

- 2.7 fund and promote youth-led technical and vocational education and training (TVET) models globally, integrating SDG-aligned curricula; and
- 2.8 document and disseminate best practices on inclusive education for agrifood systems transformation.

Educators (school system, academia, non formal educators) can:

- 2.9 develop knowledge materials such as guidelines and toolkits to foster gender-transformative educational approach;
- 2.10 support youth-led groups through their expertise in developing modules from youth to youth for both hard and soft skills needed in agrifood systems, with special focus on off-farm activities; and;
- 2.11 integrate gender-transformative agrifood education into curricula, including in technical and vocational education and training, STEM programmes and gender-responsive nutrition strategies.

3. Economic empowerment and unpaid care work

Youth-led organizations should:

- 3.1 launch advocacy campaigns to promote equal pay for equal work and push for the inclusion of young women in decent work schemes;
- 3.2 organize skill-building and job-readiness training tailored to rural realities, including in digital agriculture, processing, marketing and care work;
- 3.3 establish cooperatives and youth-led agribusinesses that provide safe, fair and inclusive work opportunities;
- 3.4 establish incubators supporting young women innovators;
- 3.5 run storytelling campaigns (radio, theatre, video) that challenge gender roles and promote care redistribution;
- 3.6 create care-mapping tools to document and quantify unpaid labour performed by young women; and
- 3.7 advocate for the recognition of unpaid labour as formal work and for its treatment as a form of economic abuse that requires legal protection.

Governments should:

- 3.8 set targets for young women in employment programmes and public works, ensuring access to formal contracts and protections;
- 3.9 enforce labour rights policies, including anti-discrimination measures, fair wages, care infrastructure and social protections (e.g. maternity leave and health insurance);
- 3.10 promote inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder collaboration (e.g. labour, agriculture and gender) to integrate decent work into national agrifood strategies;
- 3.11 develop and implement clear legal frameworks to recognize, protect and fairly compensate informal labour, particularly for young women in agriculture and care work; and
- 3.12 recognize economic abuse as a form of GBV and address it through social, legal and labour protections.

The private sector should:

- 3.13 offer decent work through inclusive hiring, transparent wage structures, and formal protections (e.g., maternity benefits, contracts);
- 3.14 invest in the rural care economy through partnerships that expand childcare and eldercare services; and
- 3.15 apply an intersectional lens to employment opportunities for young women facing multiple forms of exclusion.

4. Infrastructure, connectivity and climate resilience**Youth-led organizations should:**

- 4.1 map and document infrastructural challenges in their communities (e.g. unsafe transport and lack of internet);
- 4.2 advocate for solar-powered information and communication technologies hubs and safe learning spaces in remote areas; and
- 4.3 collaborate with engineers, architects and local governments to co-design youth-led infrastructure solutions.

Governments should:

- 4.4 prioritize gender-responsive and climate-resilient infrastructure investment in national planning;
- 4.5 ensure universal access to digital tools, connectivity and offline e-learning platforms; and
- 4.6 include young women in infrastructure consultations and implementation processes.

The Private Sector should:

- 4.7 provide technical assistance for climate-resilient infrastructure development; and
- 4.8 mobilize resources for cross-sector rural infrastructure financing.

International organizations should:

- 4.9 invest in connectivity, safe mobility solutions and climate-smart infrastructure in partnership with local actors; and
- 4.10 support access to devices and tools needed for digital agriculture.



5. Leadership, decision-making and political participation

Youth-led organizations should:

- 5.1 establish intergenerational mentorship circles to build political and organizational leadership;
- 5.2 organize shadow youth parliaments or policy simulations to prepare girls and young women for advocacy and decision-making roles;
- 5.3 advocate for youth seats in local and national agrifood systems governance structures; and
- 5.4 facilitate partnerships and create evidence-based feedback loops among youth organizations, international bodies, governments, development actors, civil society and the private sector to ensure policy translates into action.

Governments should:

- 5.5 institutionalize youth advisory mechanisms with real decision-making power in government and key decision-making spaces;
- 5.6 implement quotas and leadership training for young women across local and national institutions;
- 5.7 align national policies and programmes with international commitments, including the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition, and the CFS Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition.

International organizations should:

- 5.8 support and fund youth representation – especially of vulnerable and marginalized groups – in climate and agriculture policy dialogues, through targeted fellowships, speaker opportunities and innovation challenges; and
- 5.9 establish youth-led audits within their programmes to evaluate inclusion, ensure diverse youth representation and track progress using disaggregated data and participatory monitoring tools.

Educators (school system, academia, non formal educators) should:

- 5.10 organize training for young women to develop soft skills related to leadership, public speaking and decision-making; and
- 5.11 offer fellowship opportunities for young women interested in agrifood systems governance.

6. Social norms and cultural transformation

Youth-led organizations should:

- 6.1 launch community dialogues and art-based (e.g. film screenings, exhibitions, performances...) campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes and promote equitable roles for young women in agrifood systems;
- 6.2 host school-based and intergenerational workshops that explore identity, rights and representation;
- 6.3 integrate gender-equity education in youth clubs, farmer groups and vocational training centres; and
- 6.4 design peer programmes and dialogues that actively involve boys and young men in challenging harmful gender norms and promoting gender equality.

Governments should:

- 6.5 mainstream gender-equality content in educational curricula, agricultural training and media; and
- 6.6 support participatory research and local leadership to track and address norm-based barriers.

International organizations should:

- 6.7 fund public education campaigns aimed at dismantling harmful norms and stereotypes; and
- 6.8 promote cross-cultural learning on norm transformation and gender justice.

Educators (school system, academia and non-formal educators) should:

- 6.9 integrate gender-transformative content into curricula from an early age to challenge deep-rooted gender stereotypes and foster equality among boys and girls as a foundation for long-term societal change.

7. SRHR, mental health and GBV prevention

Youth-led organizations should:

- 7.1 create safe, inclusive peer support spaces for survivors of all types of GBV and advocates, as well as to tackle the compounded effects of marginalization;
- 7.2 provide mobile SRHR education and mental health workshops that are accessible in rural areas; and
- 7.3 engage boys and men in educational efforts to dismantle harmful gender norms.

Governments should:

- 7.4 guarantee access to quality SRHR services, trauma support and mental health infrastructure (starting in schools);
- 7.5 criminalize and enforce penalties against gender-based violence in agricultural and educational settings; and
- 7.6 fund grassroots programs focused on healing, justice and care systems for young women.

International organizations should:

- 7.7 support survivor-centered justice initiatives and youth-led mental health responses.
- 7.8 promote SRHR as a core right in all food systems and climate programming.

8. Nutrition, food sovereignty and wellbeing

Youth-led organizations should:

- 8.1 promote youth-led agroecology and local initiatives rooted in Indigenous and local knowledge;
- 8.2 organize youth food cooperatives and nutrition clubs addressing anaemia and food access; and
- 8.3 host dialogues between farmers, scientists and traditional producers to protect food heritage.

Governments should:

- 8.4 fund nutrition programmes tailored to adolescent girls and young mothers to promote culturally appropriate, diverse diets;
- 8.5 ensure young women are integrated into local food policy councils; and
- 8.6 implement gender-responsive nutrition policies that address anaemia and malnutrition among young women, especially in rural and Indigenous populations.

International organizations should:

- 8.7 invest in inclusive nutrition programmes and evidence-based food education; and
- 8.8 recognize youth and Indigenous food sovereignty efforts in international agriculture planning.

The private sector should:

- 8.9 support community markets, biodiversity and local seed banks; and
- 8.10 partner with youth to co-develop sustainable food products and local supply chains.

Educators (school system, academia and non-formal educators) should:

- 8.11 integrate nutrition, agrifood systems and agroecology education into school curricula, linking it with gender equality and cultural heritage from an early age;
- 8.12 promote hands-on learning through school gardens, cooking classes and seed-saving programmes that connect students with local food traditions; and
- 8.13 collaborate with youth, Indigenous leaders and food producers to co-develop learning materials that celebrate food biodiversity and traditional knowledge.

9. Data, accountability and monitoring

Youth-led organizations should:

- 9.1 collect community-based, participatory data (e.g. story mapping and visual documentation) to fill gaps in national stats;
- 9.2 co-create monitoring dashboards and youth scorecards on SDG progress; and
- 9.3 participate in multistakeholder reviews to share findings and lived experiences.

Governments should:

- 9.4 invest in sex-, age-, and ethnicity-disaggregated data systems to track progress on SDG 2, 4, 5 and 8 indicators in agrifood systems; and
- 9.5 include youth organizations in evaluation processes for national and international programmes.

International organizations should:

- 9.6 fund training and tech for youth to contribute to agrifood data systems; and
- 9.7 promote youth-led evidence use in international programming and advocacy.

Educators (school system, academia and non-formal educators) should:

- 9.8 fund intersectional projects of research focusing on young women in agrifood systems;
- 9.9 provide training and tools for youth to collect, analyse and understand agrifood systems data; and
- 9.10 support youth-led organizations accessing data and academic knowledge.

10. Peace, security and the weaponization of food

Youth-led organizations should:

- 10.1 integrate the Women, Peace and Security agenda into agrifood advocacy, highlighting how conflict exacerbates food insecurity for women and girls;
- 10.2 monitor, document and raise awareness about the use of starvation as a weapon of war, such as blockades, the destruction of agricultural land or denial of humanitarian access; and
- 10.3 promote cross-regional solidarity, especially among youth working on peacebuilding and food justice in conflict zones.

Governments should:

- 10.4 design and implement post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian aid programmes that prioritize gender-transformative and youth-inclusive agrifood systems recovery strategies; and
- 10.5 commit to international accountability mechanisms and legal frameworks that criminalize the deliberate destruction of agrifood systems in conflict.

International organizations should:

- 10.6 uphold international laws that criminalize attacks on agrifood systems in armed conflict; and
- 10.7 provide flexible, long-term funding for youth-led organizations working at the intersection of peacebuilding and food security.

Conclusion

Young women are not passive participants, they are active agents of transformation across agrifood systems. This paper's recommendations, grounded in lived realities and created by youth, directly align with the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment and the CFS Policy Recommendations on Youth Engagement and Employment. Together, these frameworks offer a coherent roadmap to dismantle systemic barriers and unlock young women's full potential. Aligning youth action with these CFS instruments ensures that gender equity, youth agency and agrifood systems transformation are not pursued in isolation, but as mutually reinforcing priorities. Empowering young women is not only a moral imperative, but also essential for achieving sustainable development, climate resilience and global food security.

Embedding intersectionality across these SDGs is not only a matter of rights, but also a strategic necessity to ensure the long-term viability, equity and resilience of agrifood systems worldwide. Young women in agrifood systems are not a homogenous group. A truly inclusive and transformative approach to achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) must recognize and respond to the intersecting identities and structural barriers faced by diverse young women, including rural women, Indigenous women, young women with disabilities, migrants and gender-diverse individuals. Policy recommendations must therefore go beyond general calls for inclusion. They must be grounded in disaggregated data, lived experiences and inclusive participatory processes that reflect the differentiated realities of young women globally. Only then can we achieve a just transformation of agrifood systems.

This roadmap, shaped by youth voices and grounded in lived realities, offers a bold and actionable vision for dismantling systemic barriers and building inclusive, gender-just agrifood systems. But young people cannot drive this change alone. Achieving a just and sustainable transformation demands genuine, sustained collaboration across all levels - governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and communities. Together, we must commit to resourcing youth-led solutions, embedding intersectionality and protecting both people and the planet. Only through shared responsibility and strategic alliances can we unlock the full potential of young women in agrifood systems and realize the promise of SDGs 2, 4, 5 and 8 for all.

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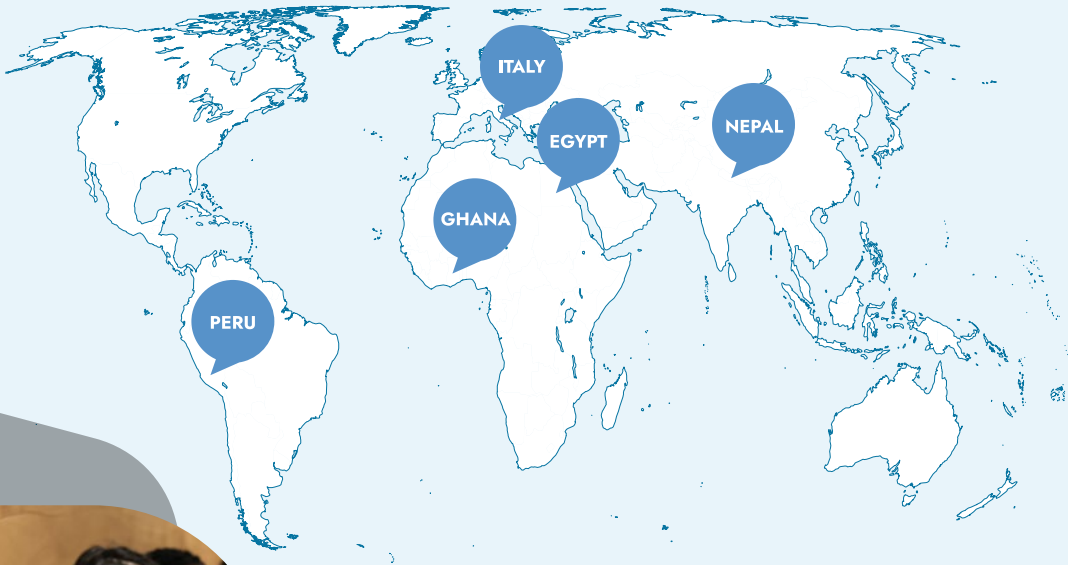
Appendix 1: List of Contributing Organizations:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Actions Communautaires pour le Développement de la Femme | • Bilanga Group |
| • Act4Food | • Le Bureau d'Etudes Interdisciplinaire en Sciences Agronomiques, Environnementales, Logistiques et Techniques |
| • Aflakiosk Limited | • Canadian Coalition of Young Feminists |
| • AfriAFAA | • Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa |
| • Afriponics Marketing Cooperative Society | • Centre for Capacity Building & Empowerment |
| • AGRI GROWTH AFRICA | • Centre for Climate and Sustainability Empowerment |
| • Ame o Santo Amaro Verde | • CharEaty AgriCare Alliance |
| • ARCA Farmers Clinic | • ClimateWise Organization |
| • Art Affair for Development Goals Organization | |
| • Baringo Indigenous Peoples' Organization | |

- Community Action for Food Security
- Creats International
- DeBranch Farmers
- Dreams Redefined Community Based Organization
- EatHealthy Nutrition
- Eco Diversified International
- EcoSisters Project
- Farm Solution BD
- FarmCAS
- Fempower Latam
- The Foundation for Agriculture & Environmental conservation
- Global Leadership Initiatives for Education, Health and Social Development
- Grassroots Nest for Innovation and Change
- Green Farmlands
- Groupe de Recherche et d'Expertise en Développement Durable
- Habitat Action and Peace
- Hope for Street Children and Vulnerable People Foundation
- Humanity in Action Organization
- International Helping for the Young
- JOSSOAL Mozambique
- KOBAT Youth Development Programme
- Kuho Youth Network
- Nala Center
- National Young Farmers Coalition
- Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation Limited
- Northern Aid and Welfare Organisation
- One Health Alliance Jordan
- Plan International Bangladesh
- Power Mikuy
- Red de Jóvenes Indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe
- Rise Up Movement Congo
- Sabatia West Community Driven Development Committee
- Somali Initiative and Environmental Development Organization
- Spokes Africa
- The Foundation for Agriculture & Environmental conservation
- The Green Cycle Network
- The Innovative Women's Association
- The Libyan Organization For Climate and Agriculture
- Tutu & Tulle
- United Nations Youth Delegate Global Call/Model United Nations Young Leaders Parliament
- United Student Association for Education, Inc.
- V&R International
- Village Farmers Initiative
- WFF Bangladesh Youth Chapter
- WFF Egypt Youth Chapter
- WFF Gambia Youth Chapter
- WFF Italy Youth Chapter
- WFF Nepal Youth Chapter
- WFF Sierra Leone Youth Chapter
- WFF Young Scientist Group
- Women Empowerment and Learning Livelihood
- Women for Liberty, Students for Liberty Asia-Pacific; The Relay Fund; Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP
- Yaran e Khair
- YILAA_ Rd Congo

From Policy to Action

In 2026, during the International Year of the Woman Farmer, the following [WFF National Youth Chapters](#) will pilot the implementation of the recommendations:



By pinpointing their priority areas and adopting the recommendations as an operational framework, the National Youth Chapters will tailor global strategies to local contexts and play a crucial role in piloting and expanding their impact. With the coordination and support of the WFF Youth Initiative, they will also develop targeted action plans to engage local youth effectively.

Learn more



**WFF National
Youth Chapters**



WFF Youth Assembly Secretariat
Youth-Assembly@World-Food-Forum.org



**WFF Youth
Initiative**