



**AN INDEPENDENT DIALOGUES  
SPECIAL SYNTHESIS REPORT**  
**Youth Perspectives on Food Systems**

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## Blue Marble Evaluation Preface

This report was prepared by members of the [Blue Marble Evaluation Network](#).

Blue Marble Evaluation (BME) is an approach to evaluating global initiatives aimed at transforming systems towards a more sustainable world. Blue Marble Evaluators constitute a global network of evaluators who work in the space of global systems transformation. For this assignment, our BME team brings together evaluators from around the globe who offer an interdisciplinary approach to research and evaluation. As a team, we bring various standpoints yet at the same time we have a shared view seeing the world as a global system of ecological and human interdependence.

Blue Marble Evaluation (BME) teams have been working to synthesize themes across hundreds of Independent Dialogues, which resulted in two interim reports.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, the BME synthesis team and the Food Systems Summit Secretariat identified a need for a deeper dive into the perspectives of several key stakeholder groups: smallholder farmers and other small-scale producers, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and women. The data presented in this synthesis are from Independent Dialogues that focused on youth. Conveners of those dialogues were invited to participate in a special focus group to discuss cross-cutting themes, common issues, and divergent perspectives.

The authors of this report were selected for this deep dive synthesis because of their knowledge of the issues faced by youth and their support for including the voices of youth in research and evaluation. The interpretations expressed in this report, based on their analysis of dialogues and the subsequent focus groups, are solely those of the report authors and offered to support Summit deliberations. Author bios can be found at the conclusion of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Interim Report 1: [https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/April-Interim-Synthesis-Report\\_FSS-Independent-Dialogues\\_.pdf](https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/April-Interim-Synthesis-Report_FSS-Independent-Dialogues_.pdf) and Interim Report 2: [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/unfss\\_independent\\_dialogue\\_synthesis\\_report\\_2\\_0.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/unfss_independent_dialogue_synthesis_report_2_0.pdf)

## Executive Summary

Youth perspectives are critical to the future of food systems. This report provides a deep dive into the perspectives of youth on food systems and their importance to the Food Systems Summit. It is organized into three sections: (1) why a focus on youth perspectives is important, (2) youth perspectives on food systems, and (3) how youth want to engage in the Summit and beyond. Each section of the report offers key themes that emerged from a qualitative analysis of 17 Independent Dialogues and a focus group with five Dialogue convenors. The key themes in each section are summarized below. In the report that follows, quotes from Dialogue reports and convenors provide depth and context to these themes.

### Key Themes by Section

#### 1. Why a Focus on Youth Perspectives is Important

- **Youth Inclusion.** Youth inclusion is critical for mobilizing other young people, empowering communities and ensuring future sustainability.
- **Change Agents.** Youth are critical food systems actors and innovators.
- **Knowledge Exchange.** The two-way sharing of knowledge between older generations and younger generations is key to the sustainability of good practices.

#### 2. Youth Perspectives on Food Systems

- **Increase Youth- specific Financing.** There is a need to create access to financing targeted at youth.
- **Increase Opportunities for Capacity-building.** There was a call for training to be current, context specific and practice oriented.
- **Increase Access to Technology.** Technology is one of the key tools to both save time and decrease effort.

#### 3. How Youth Want to Engage in the Summit & Beyond

- **Support Entrepreneurship and Employment.** Income generation opportunities need to be created and shared with youth.
- **Promote Inclusive Policies.** Policies for youth should be created by youth.
- **Engage Youth in Networks and Discussions.** Meaningful youth engagement can enable new collaborations.
- **Facilitate Individual Farming.** Home and school gardens are the first step in developing passion for agriculture.

Our findings clearly illustrate that youth are an untapped asset for food system transformation. The inclusion of youth as equals in key decision-making processes, as opposed to including them as beneficiaries or affected populations, is essential; youth will carry the burden of today's actions. Section 1 identifies why youth perspectives are important; Section 2 illustrates various youth perspectives; and Section 3 provides seven ways to actively include youth in the Summit. We encourage the organizers and those who attend to the World Food Systems Summit to draw on these findings.

# Introduction

To better understand the critical perspectives of young people, our team identified 42 Independent Dialogues that specifically focused on youth. Of those Dialogues, our team synthesized 17 reports, which represented 1,698 participants, with approximately 47.5% of whom were aged 0-30.

The topics covered in these Dialogues include climate smart agriculture, financing, technology and malnutrition, to name a few. A qualitative analysis of the Dialogue reports resulted in identifying key themes. Our BME team then explored those themes by engaging with the Dialogue convenors in an online focus group discussion. Five convenors attended the focus group, in which we asked three primary questions:

- Why do we need to focus on youth perspectives on food systems?
- What are the youth perspectives on food systems?
- How should youth be engaged in the Food Systems Summit?

The voices we present in this synthesis could never represent the diverse and sometimes divergent youth voices across food systems. Youth voices need to be heard through inclusive and meaningful dialogues at the Food Systems Summit. This report aims to support and, to the extent possible, inform those dialogues.

## Section 1:

# Why a Focus on Youth Perspectives is Important

Across the seventeen Independent Dialogues, youth perspectives revealed (1) youth inclusion is critical given the growing population within this demographic; (2) youth are critical agents of change; and (3) youth have important insights to share and learn to secure the future of food systems.

**Youth Inclusion. Youth inclusion is critical for mobilizing other young people, empowering communities and ensuring future sustainability.**

Youth are the future and the leaders of tomorrow; their perspectives are central in developing trajectories and achieving sustainability within food systems. There is a rapidly growing population of young people, especially in Africa, all of whom can make meaningful contributions across both food value chains, and to food and agri-related services. One Dialogue provides a succinct summary of this point and is provided below.

*Despite Africa's endowment with abundant arable land and vast water resources, its agricultural sector is unable to supply enough food to the continent. With a rapidly growing youth population expected to double to over 830 million by 2050, youths remain Africa's greatest asset for its Food System Transformation. Nigeria, the most population African country with over 43% of its population as youths ranks 98th of 107 countries on the 2020 Global Hunger Index. With less youths involved in the food and agricultural sector, the need for youth inclusion in transforming the broken food system is imperative.<sup>2</sup>*

Youth are often not invited to participate in formal knowledge generating gatherings or asked to take part in political decision-making processes. Or when youth are included in these events, their voices are often drowned out by older, 'more experienced' people or people in powerful positions. Youth voices need to be heard and **not** be included in Dialogues and other processes merely as a tick box exercise. Youth voices bring perspectives different to those of other key stakeholder groups, which are often dismissed due their comparatively limited experience. However, dismissing youth's voices ignores an important source of insight, information and perspectives that would benefit the food system dialogue discussions. Two quotes from Dialogues are provided below that provide some insight to this finding.

*General findings of the dialogue shows that there is a big need for just inclusion of young people in the conversation on sustainable food. There is a fear of "youth-washing", that young are being invited in general, but not listened to. Tokenism was also mentioned, and that there is a real need to actually act on what youth bring to the table.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Addressing the Food System Dynamics: Nigerian Youths as Frontline Actors, 17 June 2021, 26055, page 5.

<sup>3</sup> The role of youth in food systems, 1 June 2021, 18613, page 6.

*Youth are a strong part of society and their empowerment and full participation in productive processes and sectors of the economy are critical.*<sup>4</sup>

### **Change Agents. Youth are critical food systems actors and innovators.**

Youth bring passion and energy to the food system transformation discussion, and provide the necessary workforce to transform food systems. For this reason, youth need to be included at every step of the food value chain. Notably, their familiarity with technology uniquely positions them to bring fresh ideas to resolve problems, especially those created by technology itself.

*... session recognized youth as critical agents for change. Countries seeking to attain the SDGs with the commitment of leaving no one behind ought to engage youth from diverse backgrounds at various levels of planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions. This is particularly because youth are critical thinkers, change makers, innovators, communicators, and leaders of today and tomorrow.*<sup>5</sup>

There is strong evidence that suggests the positive impact of youth and their unique capabilities can accelerate food systems transition and align to the path of achieving Sustainable Development goal two for Zero Hunger.<sup>6</sup>

*Young people can become drivers of future changes in food patterns to “call for” food issues.*<sup>7</sup>

Despite recognizing the importance of youth as food systems actors and innovators, the system appears to actively discourage them through structural challenges such as poor wages and at times, unpaid work. If youth who will inherit the future food systems are not actively engaged, the sustainability of food systems will be brought into question.

*Youth are key players in creating change in food systems, thus it is important to create incentives to encourage youth to get involved and pursue careers in the food system sector.*<sup>8</sup>

### **Knowledge Exchange. The two-way sharing of knowledge between older generations and younger generations is key to the sustainability of good practices.**

In most countries the population working in agriculture is ageing, and succession appears to be a problem for food system sustainability.<sup>9</sup> Older generations have key know-how of good practices, while younger generations bring new methods, a willingness to engage with technology and understanding on issues relating to environmental conservation. If youth are not engaged, a generation of producers could be lost, lowering the productivity of the sector. Furthermore, ignoring their insights on conservation can be counterproductive to the fight against climate change. The youth of today will tomorrow be responsible for knowledge transfer to those after them; and should be seen as critical intermediaries as well.

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<sup>4</sup> Youth as food systems actors and transformers: Global voices for inclusion, 1 June 2021, 16711, page 7.

<sup>5</sup> Youth as food systems actors and transformers: Global voices for inclusion, 1 June 2021, 16711, page 5.

<sup>6</sup> Piselli, D., Loni, S. S., Colyard, K., & Nordquist, S. 2019. The Role of Youth in Achieving the SDGs: Supporting Youth-Led Solutions for Sustainable Food Systems. In *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Through Sustainable Food Systems* (pp. 229-245). Springer.

<sup>7</sup> Youth For Future of Indonesia Food System, 28 May 2021, 8091, page 10.

<sup>8</sup> Empowering Youth Food System Leaders, 13 July 2021, 29386, Page 14.

<sup>9</sup> White, B. 2015. Generational dynamics in agriculture: reflections on rural youth and farming futures. *Cahiers Agricultures*, 24(6), 330-334.

During the focus group discussion, the [‘Strengthening the Resilience of the Darim Community in Facing the Impact of Climate Change to Achieve a Prosperous Life’](#) initiative in Indonesia was brought to the attention of the evaluators. This initiative is a good example of inter-generational knowledge sharing that brings an element of establishing information systems and climate change adaptive technology.

*There is an urgent call to action to empower the indigenous women and youth from the disadvantaged and underserved coastal communities to mobilize and become the core of generational knowledge transfer facilitating development that spreads from not just farmer to farmer but also to the children in their households and also the men in their lives.<sup>10</sup>*

This generational gap provides an opportunity for the youth and the established farmers and others who work in the agricultural sector to learn from each other.<sup>11</sup> Several Dialogues spoke about this unique opportunity.

*Exchange between youth and elders and intergenerational cooperation is key and crucial for the future of our way of life<sup>12</sup>*

*Main activity of the KCA group is to share information - intergenerational sharing of information - the youth have access to modern education compared to the elders - so we wanted to merge the modern and the traditional ways.<sup>13</sup>*

*Responding to the climate crisis provides an opportunity for young people to share what they are learning about environmental conservation.<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> The role of smallholder farmers and indigenous people's knowledge, skills and experiences in boosting nature positive production to ensure safe, nutritious food and conservation of our biodiversity for a sustainable food system, 19 April 2021, 12151, page 7.

<sup>11</sup> Food & Business Knowledge Platform. 2018. Changing food systems and the power of youth.

<sup>12</sup> Global Indigenous Youth Forum 2021, 16 June 2021, 32240, page, page 8.

<sup>13</sup> Global Indigenous Youth Forum 2021, 16 June 2021, 32240, page, page 13.

<sup>14</sup> Dialogue between refugee youths and the Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, Agnes Kalibata, 27 May 2021, 19154, page 6.

## Section 2:

# Youth Perspectives on Food Systems

Across the 17 Independent Dialogues, we found that the common youth perspective on food systems was to increase: (1) youth specific financing; (2) opportunities for capacity building; and (3) access to technology.

### **Increase Youth-specific Financing.** There is a need to create access to financing targeted at youth.

Inadequate access to financial services is a principal challenge youth face in agriculture<sup>15</sup>. Youth can be very passionate about their ideas, however securing finance for those ideas is extremely challenging. One key requirement for access to financing is often land ownership, which is itself another constraint.<sup>16</sup> Other challenges to securing financing that were highlighted included transaction costs, interest rates and the fact that most young people do not usually have the required collateral. Furthermore, they have limited knowledge pertaining to how financing can be made accessible. These kinds of challenges then contribute to youth not pursuing their agricultural ambitions. Several quotes below provide depth to this finding.

*Furthermore, participants commented that intergenerational wealth is almost a necessity to afford land and start-up costs in Canadian agriculture. In addition, working on farms requires long hours of hard work which is not always compensated with fair wages. It is imperative that youth are compensated fairly for their hard work so that they are able to take part in the food system.<sup>17</sup>*

*Financial incentives such as grants and scholarships should be made to support youth performing internships or other forms of education needed for careers in the food system. In addition, more opportunities and student placements should be created so that students can get experience and have the opportunity to try out this career field. Many farming jobs require 2-3 seasons of prior experience, which can make it very difficult for someone who does not have family connections or the necessary resources to get into the industry.<sup>18</sup>*

*.. underlined the importance of bridging the financing gap for these small and medium-scale entrepreneurs and the fact that this requires working both on the "demand side" of finance - particularly through effective platforms and initiatives to support access to information and skills development (including financial skills development) for young (aspiring) entrepreneurs, and on the "supply side", through better use of de-risking capital, shared metrics to assess investibility of new or existing enterprises, and better coordination among lenders and investors.<sup>19</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> FAO, CTA, IFAD. 2014. Youth and agriculture: Key challenges and concrete solutions.

<sup>16</sup> Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN). 2012. Engaging Youth in Agricultural Policy Processes.

<sup>17</sup> Empowering Youth Food System Leaders, 13 July 2021, 29386, Page 8.

<sup>18</sup> Empowering Youth Food System Leaders, 13 July 2021, 29386, Page 14.

<sup>19</sup> Catalyzing finance for young food entrepreneurs, 23 February 2021, 3390, page 6.

### **Increase Opportunities for Capacity-building.** Training that is current, context specific and practice oriented.

Our research suggests that another main challenge for youth to participate in the agricultural sector is insufficient access to knowledge, information, and education, which then hinders productivity, skills acquisition, and entrepreneurial spirit.<sup>20</sup> Opportunities for accessible and cheaper capacity building activities are fundamental to address the challenges they face in food systems transformation.

*Africa must not outsource its food security (export jobs) but build capacity to bolster its global food production and export markets.<sup>21</sup>*

Educational institutions should investigate innovative approaches to sharing modern practices within their regions, with a primary focus on hands on practical training methods.

*The most effective information systems are those that are close to users – whether closeness means accessibility of information services via digital tools (e.g., phones) or via radio or small-group training organized directly with young (prospective) entrepreneurs in the field.<sup>22</sup>*

*Increase focus on practice-oriented training through establishment of hands-on practical units and stations within training institutions; and development of enterprises that partner with universities in vocational training of graduates.<sup>23</sup>*

Additionally, extension services are critical to the transformation agenda; agricultural extension services are essential to ensuring new methods and key business skills are taught to farmers. Furthermore, there is a need to focus on training youth for production and to specifically cater training for those who are coming from human biology background in order to ensure that they are trained to contribute to the agricultural sector.

*Assist youth in engaging in organic agricultural production. Organize trainings among youth on transferring knowledge and skills to operate production facilities.<sup>24</sup>*

### **Increase Access to Technology.** Technology is one of the key tools to both save time and decrease effort.

Technology is a tool to transform food systems, but it also might be seen as a threat to traditional forms of work. However, youth have the experience, familiarity, and thinking needed to benefit from technological innovation and automation. Further, youth are often more familiar with new technologies and open to explore and take advantage of them in different environments.<sup>25</sup>

*Need to ensure that technology works for the people and keep people in the sector and so that we do not replace the people within agriculture to create another crisis.<sup>26</sup>*

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<sup>20</sup> FAO, CTA, IFAD. 2014. Youth and agriculture: Key challenges and concrete solutions.

<sup>21</sup> Vice Chancellors Forum: Towards a Common Voice from African Universities to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, 20 May 2021, 16187, page 8.

<sup>22</sup> Catalyzing finance for young food entrepreneurs, 23 February 2021, 3390, page 8.

<sup>23</sup> Vice Chancellors Forum: Towards a Common Voice from African Universities to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, 20 May 2021, 16187, page 7.

<sup>24</sup> Youth and Sustainable Food Systems in Mongolia, 16 June 2021, 28784, page 8.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations. World Youth Report. Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Global voices for inclusion, 1 June 2021, 16711, page 6.

The slow advancement of technology in the agricultural sector was seen as a deterrent for youth, who expressed their desire for low-cost technologic solutions to be available.

*Increased access to affordable tech solutions. Current cost for access to the internet and to technological based solutions in the developing world is prohibitive. Youth and women cannot leverage technology to overcome many of the challenges they face because these are expensive.<sup>27</sup>*

Poor internet connectivity in rural areas was mentioned as a disincentive for youth. It was suggested that the government should invest in good housing in rural areas with good internet connectivity. Good internet connectivity is one aspect that if improved, may contribute to youth pursuing or remaining engaged in agriculture.

*Work collaboratively to develop, market and make available low-cost technologies or the mechanization of agriculture and other processes within the food system. This will make engaging in food systems attractive for youth and less tedious for all including women (involved in the primary production stage).<sup>28</sup>*

Technology has been seen as a double-edged sword. When it's readily available and accessible, it is an excellent tool for sharing information, especially through social media. During the focus group discussion, the example of the creative use of Twitter by the Impact Nutrition Africa Initiative to explain 'what food systems are?' was shared. However, as noted in the paragraph above, the limited access to technology and the internet can be exclusionary to those who cannot access it, such as rural farmers. The focus group discussion pointed out that limited access is a discussion that goes beyond internet access, it applies to innovative and other technologies as well.

*Participants recognized the utility of technology and social media to market and communicate advocacy projects and connect youth to one another.<sup>29</sup>*

*'Human centred digitalization' in agri-food systems can help ensuring existing divides are not deepened and new divides are not created. Initiatives by young people are at risk of operating in silos and serving as 'small islands of brilliance'.<sup>30</sup>*

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<sup>27</sup> Empowering women and youth to better contribute to transforming food systems in Malawi, 26 February 2021, 5560, page 6.

<sup>28</sup> Empowering women and youth to better contribute to transforming food systems in Malawi, 26 February 2021, 5560, page 8.

<sup>29</sup> The Double-Burden of Malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: Engaging Youth in Access to Nutritious Food, 14 June 2021, 10133, page 8.

<sup>30</sup> African youth as drivers for decent job creation in sustainable food systems, 30 June 2021, 8081, page 10.

## Section 3:

# How Youth Want to Engage in the Summit & Beyond

Across the 17 Independent Dialogues, we found that youth want to be engaged in: (1) entrepreneurship and employment; (2) promoting inclusive policies; (3) networks and discussions; and (4) individual farming. Below, these needs have been phrased as active approaches to support youth in agriculture.

### Support Entrepreneurship and Employment. Income generation opportunities need to be created and shared with youth.

A study finds that although African youth are mostly employed in the agricultural sector, and have a large share in the workforce, the employment opportunities are not ideal as they face constraints in access to land, credit, training, and new technology.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, a lot of young farmers have challenges finding jobs in the sector and given their need for money they change careers and resort to seeking jobs that provide a stable income. There must be a conscious effort to create and make youth aware of agricultural opportunities.

*It is important to ensure to transform Africa's rural economies to provide more and better jobs for rural youth and particularly young women. Investing in young people is key for rejuvenating and improving the performance of the agrifood sector.<sup>32</sup>*

There needs to be a spotlight on the entrepreneurship opportunities such as the potential for creating a tech start-ups which provide agricultural solutions. Youth are more likely respond to potential business opportunities than an emotional appeal to join agricultural sector (e.g., 'join agriculture so you have something to eat.).

*Supporting start-up investments of young people who run agricultural, food production and business and expanding work on the dissemination of production, technological and innovative knowledge;<sup>33</sup>*

*Young people need to see the large opportunities in the value chains and see these opportunities as their launch pads for entrepreneurship. However, they ought to appreciate that this must be profitable. Further, because Africa has more mouths to feed and the ability to feed these populations, this enables to unlock the entrepreneurship, opportunities of jobs, activate other sectors.<sup>34</sup>*

### Promote Inclusive Policies. Policies for youth should be created by youth.

The youth perspective is often overlooked in developing youth policies and programs resulting in policies and programs that do not adequately reflect the needs of youth in the agricultural sector.<sup>35</sup> An example of how

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<sup>31</sup> Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN). 2012. Engaging Youth in Agricultural Policy Processes.

<sup>32</sup> African youth as drivers for decent job creation in sustainable food systems, 30 June 2021, 8081, page 6.

<sup>33</sup> Youth and Sustainable Food Systems in Mongolia, 16 June 2021, 28784, page 7.

<sup>34</sup> Global voices for inclusion, 1 June 2021, 16711, page 5.

<sup>35</sup> Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN). 2012. Engaging Youth in Agricultural Policy Processes.

policies could be supportive of youth can be seen in an example of land acquisition in Nigeria, which is a basic asset for youth involvement in agriculture.

*...the youth suggested the need for governments to openly share information with the young farmers, to sensitize young farmers on available policies, the need to gather feedback from youth on effectiveness of provided policies and for the governments to prioritise youth inclusion in policy making and implementation.<sup>36</sup>*

Having youth involved in creating policies and programs that address them will likely result in more suitable, fitting and appropriate policies and programs. Young people know the challenges that they are facing and are more likely to know what proposed solutions are more likely to be successful.

*The government should assist young people in setting up policies that are friendly for them in agriculture involvement.<sup>37</sup>*

*Review existing relevant policies and ensure that youth and women roles / challenges in food systems are mainstreamed, which should the strengthening of youth and women groups and the deliberate provision of income earning opportunities for them.<sup>38</sup>*

### **Engage Youth in Networks and Discussions.** Meaningful youth engagement can enable new collaborations.

It is important to stop seeing youth as beneficiaries or affected people but instead as equals. Youth are seeking a platform on which they can share their ideas and opinions.

*Youth organizations and networks are critical but rarely engage in governance making processes, usually due to limited capacity and representation. Young people working in the sector can become lighthouses to inspire others.<sup>39</sup>*

*Include youth voice in platforms where decisions that affect engagement in food systems initiatives are made. Ensure those voices are translated into action (beyond tokenism).<sup>40</sup>*

Networks facilitate connections that can enable youth-led initiatives to be taken forward. There are numerous digital platforms that enable global and local knowledge sharing; actively engaging youth can lead to learning amongst young people, which can be shared with in local communities and with those not using digital platforms. Examples of which include ‘Job-Agri’ for knowledge generation on labour issues in agriculture; the ‘Agripreneurship Alliance’ and ‘Youth Business International’ are targeted to young entrepreneurs; and ‘Decent Jobs for Youth’ for building ownership with government.

*Young Professional for Agricultural Development (YPARD Nigeria) currently has reach in 16 states across Nigeria and are actively engaged working with the local representatives.<sup>41</sup>*

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<sup>36</sup> EAFF Youth Dialogue on United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021, 1 July 2021, 29868, page 7.

<sup>37</sup> The state of youth in the future of food in Tanzania and other sub-Saharan Africa, 25 May 2021, 21766, page 8.

<sup>38</sup> Empowering women and youth to better contribute to transforming food systems in Malawi, 26 February 2021, 5560, page 8.

<sup>39</sup> African youth as drivers for decent job creation in sustainable food systems, 30 June 2021, 8081, page 10.

<sup>40</sup> Dialogue between refugee youths and the Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, Agnes Kalibata, 27 May 2021, 19154, page 8.

<sup>41</sup> Nigeria UN Food Systems Summit Youth Dialogue 2021\_27 April 2021, 5793, page 10.

### Facilitate Individual Farming. Home and school gardens are the first step in developing passion for agriculture.

Numerous Dialogue reports discussed and advocated for community, home or school gardens, mentioning how people become passionate about agriculture in these contexts.

The Start Them Early Program (STEP), which was discussed during the focus group, is an example of a project that focuses on changing mindsets of students towards agriculture. The project demonstrates how participating in growing vegetables at home or at school, led to better nutrition. For example, the intake of green leafy vegetables increased as youth were more likely to eat what they planted. Home gardens were viewed as a way of securing individual food security, offer potential income generation, and can assist the community. Furthermore, young people started to consider agriculture as a potential career, as opposed to traditional jobs such as a medical doctor or lawyer.

*Promote the engagement of women and youth in seemingly simplistic innovations such as backyard vegetable farming and home Irrigation farming, which for the poorest members of society can be very empowering.<sup>42</sup>*

*Community gardens are a great solution to food insecurity and education around food. This gave the community a voice in what they wanted on their plates during the week and it gave them more choices for meals as they didn't have to pay for the food. - When food banks had to close due to under funding the community ensured that the gardens stayed open. This also allowed for inter generational learning, the longer the garden stayed open. - Indigenous participants talked about the community not having access to shops as they are just too far away so they have no choice but to eat food that lasts the longest which are the unhealthy foods. - A lot of young people only get their food meals from school so not having access to school has hindered their food security. - Some students still maintain their school garden as it give them an income as locals can buy from them.<sup>43</sup>*

*Schools can implement seed education programs or teach science and numeracy through food. It is important for students to get the opportunity to spend time out on the land, such as through school gardens, where they can build an appreciation for nature. Furthermore, youth should learn about critical issues in the food system and should be encouraged to take action. One participant shared an example of youths at their university who had organized a climate strike where youth gathered and led a large group of their peers to walk out of class in support of climate justice. Youth need to see examples of successful change so that they are not discouraged about standing up for issues they believe in. Urban farms and urban gardens can be a gateway for youth to learn more about food systems issues and to connect with farmers. These spaces can expose youth to different career prospects and build an appreciation for nature.<sup>44</sup>*

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<sup>42</sup> Empowering women and youth to better contribute to transforming food systems in Malawi, 26 February 2021, 5560, page 7.

<sup>43</sup> Food Systems, Climate Change & Youth Power, 27 February 2021, 6540, page 6.

<sup>44</sup> Empowering Youth Food System Leaders, 13 July 2021, 29386, Page 11.

## Conclusion

Youth are the future and therefore should have a critical voice in how that future is shaped. Youth are uniquely positioned to provide insight, unique perspectives, and advice on issues relating to agriculture, and particularly on conservation, which is essential for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The inclusion of youth as equals in discussions around transforming the food system, and in key decision making forums, is essential; youth will bear the consequences of today's actions.

## Authors

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Taruna Gupta is a Kenyan national and an independent evaluator with an interest in people and the planet. She is an advocate for including the youth voice in decision making that influences their lives. She holds an MSc in Global Health and Development from University College London; and is currently studying her Bachelor of Laws.

Taruna worked as a global health consultant in London, where she supported the creation of a health unit; through the successful contracting, management and implementation of large multi donor programmes. She transitioned to conducting evaluations as a result of her passion for doing development differently and maximising results and learning in the aid sector.

While her background lies in mixed method research, more recently her work has relied on qualitative social data collected through literature reviews, focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

Taruna is the former Secretariat for the EvalYouth Global Network and sits on the advisory council for Blue Marble Evaluation.

### **Gabriela Rentería Flores.** Researcher, Key Stakeholder Deep Dive Special Reports, Blue Marble Evaluation Team, UN Food Systems Summit Independent Dialogues

Monitoring and evaluation specialist. Currently working as an independent consultant. She holds a MA in Development Economics from the University of Göttingen in Germany and a BA in Economics from the University of Guanajuato in Mexico.

Gabriela has evaluative experience in development cooperation projects in India, national and subnational social programs in Mexico, and on projects related to monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda.

Active member of EvalYouth LAC, and the National Academy of Evaluators of Mexico (ACEVAL). Gabriela is the current Chair of EvalYouth Global Network, where she advocates for the inclusion of youth in all stages of evaluation processes and for influential evaluation. She is based in Mexico City.'

## Annex A: Independent Dialogues Included in Youth-Focused Thematic Synthesis

Title	Convener(s)	Date	ID#	Total participants	Youth participants age range (0-30)
<a href="#">Youth Support Program in the Food Industry and the Promotion of Climate-Smart Agriculture</a>	ONG Femme et Enfant	7 January 2021	2025	16	2
<a href="#">Le Role De La Jeunesse Dans Le Developpement Des Chaines De Valeur Alimentaires - Region De l'est Cameroun.*</a>	Carletto TIAM , OCEANE Group	23 January 2021	2989	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">The Role of Women and Youth as Enables to Transforming Food Systems and Enhancing the Decade of Action Implementation by 2030*</a>	Ntiokam Divine- CSAYN Global	10 February 2021	4417	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Opportunities for Youth and Women in Transforming Africa's Food Systems*</a>	Mary Nyasimi, Executive Director - Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation for a Sustainable Africa (ICCASA)	19 February 2021	3467	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Catalyzing finance for young food entrepreneurs</a>	SAFIN, the Agripreneurship Alliance, AGRA, the Global Agribusiness Alliance, the International Agri-food Network, IFAD, Nourishing Africa and One Young World.	23 February 2021	3390	130	33
<a href="#">Empowering women and youth to better contribute to transforming food systems in Malawi</a>	Youth Enterprise Services Malawi	26 February 2021	5560	20	7
<a href="#">Food Systems, Climate Change &amp; Youth Power</a>	Peace Jam and Sophie Healy-Thow	27 February 2021	6540	9	7
<a href="#">The World Food Prize Wageningen Youth Institute*</a>	Mirjam Troost, Coordinator Wageningen Youth Institute, Wageningen University Research	3 March 2021	6917	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">The World Food Prize Foundation Med City Youth Institute*</a>	Dr. Josh Marrell, University of Minnesota Rochester and Morgan Day, World Food Prize Foundation	4 March 2021	6922	n/a	n/a

## Youth Perspectives on Food Systems

<a href="#">Pathways to Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems - 2</a>	Christopher Chinapoo Co Convenors Dr Wayne Soverall UWI, Donovan Mc  Laren KCDI Jamaica, Anna Kay Mc Intosh National Youth Council Jamaica,, Tamisha  Lee JNRWP, Clyde Phillip IBBC, Lincoln Beal Growgreen Aquaponics Ltd, Riyadh  Mohammed TACS	20 March 2021	2970	57	18
<a href="#">The World Food Prize New York Youth Institute*</a>	Cornell University and World Food Prize Foundation	26 March 2021	9290	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Contributions from Indigenous peoples' food systems to Action Track 2 and the shift to healthy and sustainable consumption patterns</a>	The Global Hub on Indigenous People's food systems to action The Global Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems (GHIPFS) and Action Track 2  of the UNFSS	7 April 2021	10770	32	1
<a href="#">Sessions on Cooperatives &amp; Livelihoods*</a>	Matheus Marques, Giulia Marras, G20+6 MUN	10 April 2021	3368	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">The World Food Prize Wisconsin Youth Institute*</a>	The University of Wisconsin and the World Food Prize Foundation	13 April 2021	11904	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Youth-Led Solutions to Enhancing The Resilience of Africa's Food Systems*</a>	Generation Africa, Yara International, AGRA, USAID, AGRF, Syngenta Foundation, Corteva AgriScience, Heifer International, Econet	15 April 2021	8219	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">The role of smallholder farmers and indigenous people's knowledge, skills and experiences in boosting nature positive production to ensure safe, nutritious food and conservation of our biodiversity for a sustainable food system</a>	Name: Asikaralu Okafor Organization: Maklummy Technology Services Limited Title:  CEO	19 April 2021	12151	17	6
<a href="#">The World Food Prize Ohio Youth Institute*</a>	The Ohio State University and the World Food Prize Foundation	19 April 2021	12762	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">The World Food Prize North Carolina Youth Institute*</a>	North Carolina State University and the World Food Prize Foundation	23 April 2021	13577	n/a	n/a

## Youth Perspectives on Food Systems

<a href="#">How to Eat Responsibly? A Dialogue between College Students in China and the U.S.</a>	Hua Dong, Senior Academic Specialist, Northeastern University, USA; Huiyu Ouyang, UNFSS-AT2 China Action Hub	27 April 2021	9592	40	0
<a href="#">Nigeria UN Food Systems Summit Youth Dialogue 2021</a>	YASIF and UYSG Nigeria	27 April 2021	5793	233	124
<a href="#">Kestävä ruokavalion murros</a>	WWF- Finland Youth	28 April 2021	12989	22	16
<a href="#">Youth Voices for Global Action in Transforming Food Systems*</a>	MGCY, YOUNGO, GACSA, and Kitchen Connection	28 April 2021	13568	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Youth Inclusiveness In Agricultural Transformation For Sustainable Food Systems In Nigeria*</a>	UnyimeAbasi Ben (SDGs Clubs Initiative) & Gabriel Aniabi (GoBeyond)	6 May 2021	10249	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Youth Leaders for Food Systems Transformations*</a>	Arrell Food Institute, McGill University and University of British Columbia	6 May 2021	14933	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">CO-CREATE Regional Dialogue Forum: Youth-Led Policy Dialogue*</a>	Iain Shepherd, Director of Global Engagement, EAT, and Samantha Nesrallah, Officer, EAT	7 May 2021	15394	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">The World Food Prize Minnesota Youth Institute*</a>	The University of Minnesota and World Food Prize Foundation	17 May 2021	18321	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Global launch of the youth Act4food Act4change campaign in support of Goodfood4all*</a>	Youth Champions of the Act4Food Act4Change campaign	18 May 2021	15505	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Addressing challenges in Arab food systems from youth perspective</a>	Regional Youth Focal Point for the MENA - Rayan Kassem - UNMGCY	19 May 2021	13718	10	7
<a href="#">Vice Chancellors Forum: Towards a Common Voice from African Universities to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021</a>	Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, Executive Secretary Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)	20 May 2021	16187	237	72
<a href="#">The state of youth in the future of food in Tanzania and other sub-Saharan Africa.</a>	Jackson Buzingo, Country Representative - One More Salary Tanzania	25 May 2021	21766	28	17
<a href="#">Dialogue between refugee youths and the Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, Agnes Kalibata</a>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	27 May 2021	19154	17	12
<a href="#">Youth For Future of Indonesia Food System</a>	Mr. Said Abdullah (Koalisi Rakyat untuk Kedaulatan Pangan)	28 May 2021	8091	53	35
<a href="#">The role of youth in food systems</a>	WF Sweden Youth and Reformaten	1 June 2021	18613	30	19

## Youth Perspectives on Food Systems

<a href="#">Youth as food systems actors and transformers: Global voices for inclusion</a>	Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, Executive Secretary, Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)	1 June 2021	16711	236	140
<a href="#">The Role of Youth in Participating in and Transforming South Africa's Food System*</a>	Dr Sifiso Ntombela	14 June 2021	25919	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">The Double-Burden of Malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa: Engaging Youth in Access to Nutritious Food</a>	NCD Child	14 June 2021	10133	56	24
<a href="#">Youth and Sustainable Food Systems in Mongolia</a>	European Union Delegation to Mongolia	16 June 2021	27874	55	40
<a href="#">Global Indigenous Youth Forum 2021</a>	Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations & Indigenous United Nations Food Systems Summit Champions	16 June 2021	32240	160	75
<a href="#">Addressing the Food System Dynamics: Nigerian Youths as Frontline Actors</a>	Impact Nutrition Africa Initiative (INAI)	17 June 2021	26055	49	40
<a href="#">Youth-led Dialogue on inclusive and accessible technological and innovative support in the transformation to regenerative and sustainable food systems.</a>	Lisanne van Oosterhoud (World Food Forum Youth Champion), Setyaki Kusumadireja (YOUNGO)	18 June 2021	24310	33	12
<a href="#">Youth-led Dialogue on inclusive and accessible technological and innovative support in the transformation to regenerative and sustainable food systems.</a>	Lisanne van Oosterhoud (World Food Forum Youth Champion), Setyaki Kusumadireja (YOUNGO)	18 June 2021	24396	33	13
<a href="#">Roundtable with youth on innovations in agriculture in the Kyrgyz Republic*</a>	FAO, RCO	25 June 2021	26428	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Covid 19 and Climate Change Resilience: Challenges and Opportunities for Youth towards Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security*</a>	Dr Sarada Prasad Mohapatra & Ntiokam Divine, GCSAYN	25 June 2021	26809	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">African youth as drivers for decent job creation in sustainable food systems</a>	The Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD)	30 June 2021	8081	48	11

## Youth Perspectives on Food Systems

<a href="#">EAFF Youth Dialogue on United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021</a>	Eastern Africa Farmers Federation	1 July 2021	29868	55	55
<a href="#">"Strengthening local food systems towards food secure and healthy communities."-Youth's perspective.*</a>	Joseph Gaithuma. Clinical Nutritionist and President emeritus. Food Technology and Nutrition Students society of Kenya.	2 July 2021	19974	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Lebanese Youth Food Systems Dialogue: Water for Food Systems</a>	Lebanon Youth Parliament for Water (LYPW) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA)	6 July 2021	30743	unavailable	unavailable
<a href="#">Florida Youth Institute*</a>	University of Florida	13 July 2021	35294	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">Empowering Youth Food System Leaders</a>	York Region Youth Food Committee	13 July 2021	29386	22	21
<a href="#">Youth's vision on consumer trends and food system of future*</a>	Серова Евгения Викторовна, Директор по аграрной политики НИУ «ВЫСШАЯ ШКОЛА ЭКОНОМИКИ»	15 July 2021	22257	n/a	n/a
<a href="#">The role of youths in building a regenerative food system*</a>	Green Welfare Indonesia	13 August 2021	30625	n/a	n/a

*\* Indicates no Dialogue report was available at the time of writing. Participant data not available for Dialogues without reports.*

## Annex B: References

FAO, CTA, IFAD. 2014. Youth and agriculture: Key challenges and concrete solutions.

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Piselli, D., Loni, S. S., Colyard, K., & Nordquist, S. 2019. The Role of Youth in Achieving the SDGs: Supporting Youth-Led Solutions for Sustainable Food Systems. In *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Through Sustainable Food Systems* (pp. 229-245). Springer.

United Nations. World Youth Report. Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2018.

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## Annex C: Youth Perspectives Spotlighted at the Pre-Summit



**26 July, 2021 FAO Rome**

### Transforming Food Systems Together-Youth Actions for our Present and Future

For more than a year now, young people have played a central role in global deliberations and actions towards equitable and just food systems in preparation for the United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS). In an inspiring and powerful session, global youth will propose commitments and actions towards a better future for our food system.

**Moderator – Mr. Victor Mugo**, Co-chair Youth Liaisons Group, UN Food Systems Summit 2021

#### Opening Remarks – Why Youth in Food Systems Matter

- **Ms. Yugratna Srivastava**, Youth Constituency Focal Point, UNEP and UNFSS Champion

#### Video Montage on Youth-led Dialogues

#### Section 1 – Youth Priorities and Commitments for a Better Food Future (12 min)

Declaration of youth priorities and commitments towards a better food future for everyone, everywhere

- **Ms Lana Weidgenant**, Action Track Vice Chair, UN Food Systems Summit 2021
- **Mr. Lavetanalagi Seru**, Action Track Vice Chair, UN Food Systems Summit 2021
- **Ms. Kim Anastasiou**, Youth Liaisons Group, UN Food Systems Summit 2021
- **Ms. Marie-Claire Graf**, UN Food Systems Summit 2021 Champion
- **Mr. Mike Khunga**, Action Track Vice Chair, UN Food Systems Summit 2021

#### Section 2 – Youth Pledge

- **Ms. Sophie Healy-Thow**, Co-Chair Youth Liaisons Group, UN Food Systems Summit 2021

#### Section 3 – Supporting Youth Priorities – Panel Discussion

- **H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn**, Former Prime Minister, Ethiopia  
<https://vimeo.com/user112716545/download/579484465/06e65e06f1>
- **Ms. Henrietta Fore**, Executive Director, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)  
<https://vimeo.com/user112716545/download/579493331/47d719304e>
- **H.E. Peter Gatirauu Munya**, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Fisheries and Cooperative, Kenya
- **Ms. Julie Gichuru**, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Mastercard Foundation
- **Mr. Jim Barnhart**, Assistant to the Administrator, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security,
- USAID

#### Closing Remarks by the moderator



**28 July, 2021** **FAO Rome**

**Closing plenary comments on youth engagement**

**Opening remarks**

<https://vimeo.com/user145891411/download/580227137/5680b78a59>

**Q&A**

<https://vimeo.com/user145891411/download/580248339/74cc98291c>

and

<https://vimeo.com/user145891411/download/580248406/467b7d1897>