

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



YPARD Global Coordination Unit

Young Professionals for Agricultural Development e.V
Berlin, Germany

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Glossary of abbreviations (in alphabetical order)

AGRIDEA - Swiss Association for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas

ALA- African Leadership Academy

APYDF - Asia-Pacific Youth Development Forum

BMZ- German Federal Ministry for International Development Cooperation

CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity

CZU - Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

EIT Food- European Institute of Technology Food

EFARD- European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FARA - Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa

FANRPAN- The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network

FiBL- Research Institute of Organic Agriculture

FTE - Full-time equivalent

GAYO - Green Africa Youth Organization

GCU - Global Coordination Unit of YPARD

GFRAS - Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services

GFFA - Global Forum for Food and Agriculture

GIZ - German Agency for International Cooperation

GLF - Global Landscapes Forum

GP- SAEP - Global Programme for Small-scale Agroecology Producers and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation

IAAS- International Association of Agricultural and Related Sciences Students

IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development

IFSA - International Forestry Student Association

RAS - Rural Advisory Services

SDC - Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation

UNCCD - United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

UNFCCC- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNFSS - United Nations Food System Summit

WFF- World Food Forum

WFO - World Farmers' Organisation

YIL- Youth in Landscapes Initiative YPARD - Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

YPARD - Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

YPP - Young Professionals' Platform

From Milestones to New Horizons: A Reflective Look at YPARD's Journey

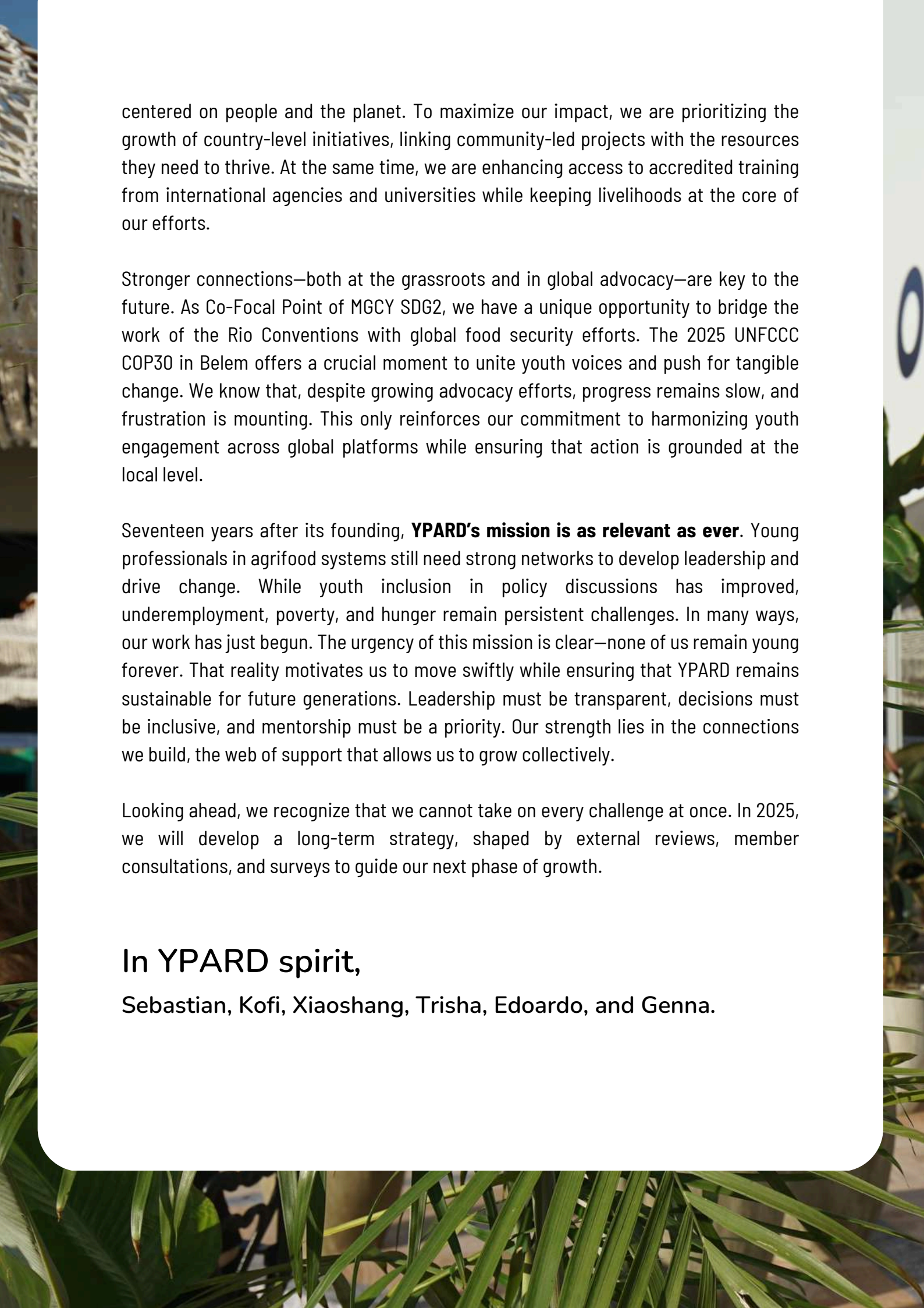
Dear YPARDians and partners,

As 2024 comes to a close, we take this moment to reflect on YPARD's journey—our transition to independence, our growth, and the path ahead. Over the past four years, we have built a stronger, more resilient organization, expanding our reach and impact while navigating a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Leaving FAO's hosting 5 years ago was a defining moment, requiring us to establish financial and administrative independence while staying true to our mission. Today, **YPARD is a registered nonprofit in Germany (YPARD e.V.)**, allowing us to sign contracts, secure funding, and directly support members. This step has been instrumental in diversifying our resources and expanding our projects, enabling us to serve members in Uganda, Madagascar, Ecuador, and Costa Rica, with new initiatives launching in Southern Africa. We have also strengthened our role in international collaborations, partnering on the regional project CEA-FIRST and working with EIT Food on youth-led change.

Despite global challenges—including major cuts to development budgets and key government changes—**YPARD continues to gain momentum**. We are now part of more grant consortia, advocating across all three Rio Conventions, and representing youth in key global forums. YPARD has been selected as Co-Chair of the Global Donor Platform on Rural Development's Rural Youth Employment Working Group, is actively engaged with FANRPAN, the Decent Work in Food Systems Coalition, and serves as Co-Focal Point for MGCY SDG2. In addition, we remain actively involved in GFAiR, TAP, GFRAS, and EFARD. This year, we also hosted our first in-person YPARD Steering Committee and Staff Meeting in Berlin, marking another milestone in our journey.

As youth inclusion in food systems becomes an increasingly crowded space, YPARD remains distinct. We are the only youth-led global network for young agricultural professionals that operates independently, implements projects, and provides leadership opportunities through strong partnerships. Our thematic focus remains clear: agroecology, sustainable diets, green jobs, and access to resources—all



centered on people and the planet. To maximize our impact, we are prioritizing the growth of country-level initiatives, linking community-led projects with the resources they need to thrive. At the same time, we are enhancing access to accredited training from international agencies and universities while keeping livelihoods at the core of our efforts.

Stronger connections—both at the grassroots and in global advocacy—are key to the future. As Co-Focal Point of MGCY SDG2, we have a unique opportunity to bridge the work of the Rio Conventions with global food security efforts. The 2025 UNFCCC COP30 in Belem offers a crucial moment to unite youth voices and push for tangible change. We know that, despite growing advocacy efforts, progress remains slow, and frustration is mounting. This only reinforces our commitment to harmonizing youth engagement across global platforms while ensuring that action is grounded at the local level.

Seventeen years after its founding, **YPARD's mission is as relevant as ever**. Young professionals in agrifood systems still need strong networks to develop leadership and drive change. While youth inclusion in policy discussions has improved, underemployment, poverty, and hunger remain persistent challenges. In many ways, our work has just begun. The urgency of this mission is clear—none of us remain young forever. That reality motivates us to move swiftly while ensuring that YPARD remains sustainable for future generations. Leadership must be transparent, decisions must be inclusive, and mentorship must be a priority. Our strength lies in the connections we build, the web of support that allows us to grow collectively.

Looking ahead, we recognize that we cannot take on every challenge at once. In 2025, we will develop a long-term strategy, shaped by external reviews, member consultations, and surveys to guide our next phase of growth.

In YPARD spirit,

Sebastian, Kofi, Xiaoshang, Trisha, Edoardo, and Genna.



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Our Key Achievements



Achieved Financial and Administrative Independence – Successfully transitioned into an independent nonprofit organization (YPARD e.V.) in Germany, allowing direct contract signing, funding acquisition, and member support.



Strengthened Global Advocacy Presence – Secured official observer status for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); actively participated in UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP29, UNCCD COP16, and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP16, where YPARD presented the *Rural Youth Manifesto*.



Expanded Capacity-Building Initiatives – Launched *YPARD LAC Incuba*, an incubator for agribusiness startups in Latin America; organized policy training workshops like the *Changemakers for Agrifood Action* webinar series.



Increased Engagement in High-Level Policy Discussions – Co-chaired the *Global Donor Platform on Rural Development's Rural Youth Employment Working Group*; appointed as Co-Focal Point for the *UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) SDG2*.



Revamped Digital Infrastructure – Launched a new YPARD website with enhanced resources and opportunities, reaching 56,000 views in its first two months; reintroduced a monthly newsletter with a high engagement rate.



Supported Youth-Led Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems – Led the Agroecology Fellows Program under the *GP-SAEP project*, training young professionals in Uganda, Madagascar, Ecuador, and Costa Rica; engaged in key food systems dialogues such as the *Good Food Summit in China*.



Secured New Funding and Partnerships – Gained financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Food Systems Program and EIT Food, strengthening YPARD's ability to support youth leadership in agriculture globally.

Introduction



Participants at the Rural Youth Summit in Colombia, co-organized by YPARD LAC

Empowering the Future: YPARD's Commitment to Young Agricultural Leaders

A Global Network for Youth in Agriculture

The Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) is a dynamic network driven by and for young professionals in agriculture. **Our mission is to empower young leaders worldwide to transform agri-food systems through policy advocacy, knowledge sharing, and professionalization.**

With over **60 national chapters** and a growing global membership, YPARD remains a key player in fostering youth engagement in sustainable agriculture.

This report details YPARD's activities and impact throughout 2024, aligning with our strategic priorities and highlighting key accomplishments across our four main focus areas.



A Roadmap for Impact: Joint Operational Plan 2021-2025

Since 2020, YPARD has been in a strategic partnership with the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS). Together, they operate through a virtual Joint Global Secretariat, hosted by the Swiss Association for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas (AGRIDEA) in Lausanne, Switzerland. This collaboration is strengthened by multi-annual institutional support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), facilitating organizational growth and the execution of our Joint Operational Plan 2021-2025, which is divided into four pillars:

Advocacy: Promoting a supportive policy environment and investment in rural advisory

services (RAS) and young professionals' contributions to sustainable food systems.

Professionalisation: Enhancing the professionalisation of RAS and expanding access to capacity development opportunities for young professionals.

Knowledge Management: Facilitating effective and continuous knowledge generation and exchange.

Network Strengthening: Building functional and financially sustainable networks.

This document reports on the achievements and management of YPARD from **January 1 to December 31, 2024** in light of these strategic goals.

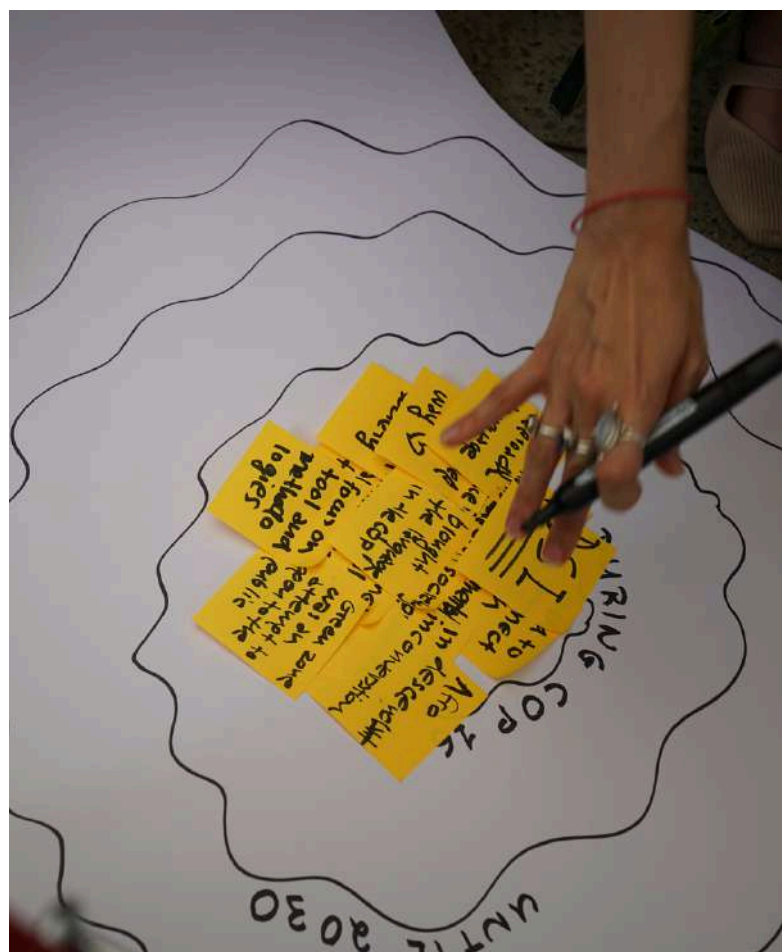
Context of our Operations

YPARD in a Changing Global Landscape: Strengthening Youth Engagement in Agrifood Systems

Addressing Youth Challenges in Agriculture

Youth remains an essential topic in global development cooperation. Youth aged 15-24 are estimated to make up **16% of the global population**, and people under 30 are estimated to make up **70% of the sub-Saharan African population**. Nonetheless, we observe that youth tend to be unemployed, in informal working conditions, and underemployed, despite the primary sector for youth livelihoods lying in agrifood systems. Youth are also uniquely mobile, as 70% migrant flows are under 30 years of age. Thus, YPARD's focus on young agricultural professionals is highly relevant to low- and middle-income countries and traditional donor governments, which express growing concern over increasing hunger, inequality, conflict and migration.

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine, as well as the conflict in Gaza and government changes in Europe and the United States of America, have diverted the attention of governments and donors, as well as development aid. Being a youth organisation that faces additional barriers to accessing funding, YPARD was motivated to seek legal registration and a change in strategy to ensure the organization's sustainability. YPARD aims to support its members in realizing their full potential in food and agriculture, and YPARD is keeping momentum strong from global advocacy through to project work.



Workshop on the role of youth in climate change and biodiversity conservation

Expanding global engagements

In 2024, YPARD grew our engagements in advocacy platforms, strengthened our capacity building offerings, and further developed our administration & strategic communications.

Major Representations in International Forums

- Secured official observer status for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
- Led youth representation at UNFCCC COP29 and CBD COP16, presenting the Rural Youth Manifesto for Biodiversity.
- Strengthened engagement at ECOSOC Youth Forum and other key global platforms.
- Expanded speaking engagements at global forums, amplifying youth-led solutions.
- Expanded participation in high-level policy discussions, securing strategic collaborations with FAO and EIT Food.

Major Capacity-Building Sessions

- Launched YPARD LAC Incuba, supporting small-scale agribusinesses in Latin America.
- Conducted policy training workshops, including the Changemakers for Agrifood Action webinar series.
- Organized regional summits and training programs to build local leadership.
- Established the Monthly Opportunity Roundup to provide young professionals with job openings and career-building resources.

Major Administrative Achievements

- Successfully launched a new YPARD website, enhancing access to resources and opportunities.
- Reintroduced the YPARD monthly newsletter
- Recruited new YPARD Country Representatives to sustain youth leadership.
- Grew partnerships with FAO, EIT Food, GIZ, and other key stakeholders.
- Secured new funding streams, including grants from the European Commission and GEF Food Systems Program.



YPARD Peru member Ysabel Calderon speaking at a session in CBD COP16



Championing **Youth in Agriculture.**

By actively participating in global events, YPARD reaffirms our dedication to empowering young agricultural professionals and promoting sustainable development in agrifood systems.

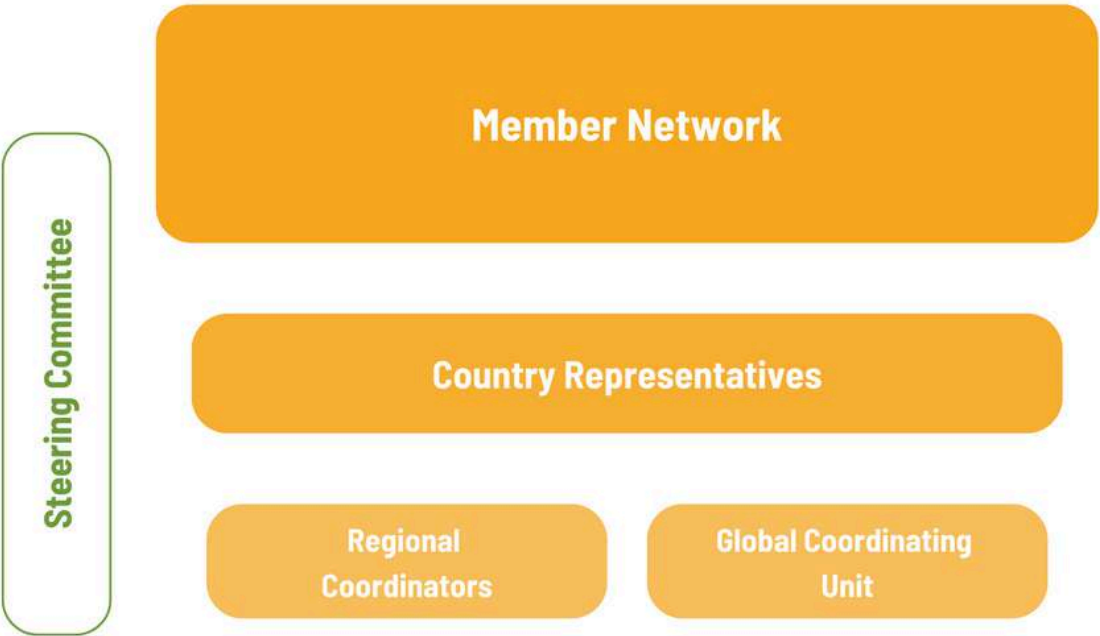
At the heart of YPARD are our **members**, who are encouraged to become active in their area, spread the news about YPARD to other young professionals, encourage a stronger voice of youth in their own organizations and share our views and ideas with other young professionals in the network.

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For Africa, LAC, and Asia-Pacific, **Regional Coordinators** coordinate regional activities and liaise between the country and global levels.

The **Global Coordinating Unit (GCU)** implements the vision of the Steering Committee, coordinating, supporting, and promoting the work of our members.

YPARD's **Steering Committee** guides the organization in strategic development along with the GCU and Regional Coordinators.



YPARD Organigram

Global Coordinating Unit



Genna Tesdall
Director



Trisha Mandal
Communications & Membership
Coordinator



Edoardo Corriere
Program Coordinator

Regional Coordinators



Kofi K. Acquaye
Africa Regional Coordinator



Sebastian Pedraza
LAC Regional Coordinator



Xiaoshang Deng
Asia Pacific Regional Coordinator

Steering Committee



Sebastian Pedraza
Chair
(Columbia)



Jorrit Kiewik
(Netherlands)



Oluwaseun Adekugbe
(Nigeria)



Jelena Grosse-Bley
(Germany)



Ajuna Tadeo
(Uganda)



Michelle Seck
(Malaysia)

YPARD: An International Network for young professionals by young professionals

(cont.)

Country Representatives (Africa)

Algeria	Nassim Mamri
Benin	Wilfrid Adjimoti
Benin	Rodrigue Kaki
Botswana	Mosa Balesamang
Botswana	Diphoso Gadaffi Maitiyo
Burkina Faso	Christy BOUSSARI
Burkina Faso	Faïshal OUEDRAOGO
Burundi	Celestin Havyarimana
Burundi	Liboire Ndayashimiye
Cameroon	Bebel Nguepi
Djibouti	Idriss Miganeh
Egypt	Dalia Metwalli
Eswatini	Gcina Dlamini
Ethiopia	Bisrat Fikadu
Gabon	Borice E. EFOUA ABA'A
Gambia	Ebrima Jarra
Gambia	Haddy M. Ceesay
Ghana	Theodore Adovor
Ghana	Paul Atsu
Ivory Coast	Mouhamadou Dosso
Ivory Coast	Kone GniniNagnon



Country Representatives (Africa) cont.

Kenya	Jenice Achieng Audi
Lesotho	Malekhooa Suzan Moletsane
Madagascar	Sambatra Kezia Rakotomanga
Malawi	Olive Chilenga
Mali	Drissa Tessougue
Morocco	Hayfa Assia
Morocco	Mustapha El Janiti
Namibia	Victoria Huwanga
Niger	Abdoul-Kader ISSOUFOU
Nigeria	Akinbowale Showemimo
DRC	Eden Mvuenga
Republic of Guinea	Maurice Sangare
Rwanda	Etienne Niyigaba
Rwanda	Helene Uzayisenga
Senegal	Thierno Ngamb
Sierra Leone	Augustine Macarthy
Somalia	Mohamed Abdulkadir
Somaliland	Mustafa Mohamed
South Africa	Thato Mugonda
South Africa	Tshiamo Dichabe



Country Representatives (Africa) cont.

South Sudan	Festo Bali
Tanzania	Selestine Focus Mushi
Togo	DIYANI Sinandja
Togo	Selom Anani Combe
Uganda	Daniel Kisekka
Uganda	Ajuna Tadeo
Zambia	Sussana Teriza Phiri
Zimbabwe	Tafadzwa Muzira



Country Representatives (the Americas)

Trinidad and Tobago	Enricka Julien
Mexico	Yenifer Carmona Hernandez
Colombia	Rosmery Baez Lizarazo
Peru	Ivanoei Carasco
Haiti	Berthony Saint Fleur
Jamaica	Jhannel Tomlinson
Grenada	Bevon Charles
Brazil	Allan
Venezuela	Saul Elias Lopez
USA	Nikita Bhusal
Canada	Juwonlo Dahunsi



Country Representatives (Asia- Pacific)

Indonesia	Mukhlis Jamal Holle
Lebanon	Ali Ibrahim
Iran	Aliakbar Shafighi
India	Ashish Khandelwal
South Korea	Sk Abidur Rahman
Nepal	Upendra Bhusal
Kyrgyzstan	Nursultan Karabaev



Country Representatives (Europe)

Albania	Bledar Meta
Georgia	Sopiko Babalashvili
Sweden	Vaida Dzemedzionaite
Belgium	Michael Ruggeri
Germany	Jackson Wolf
Switzerland	Celia Buhler



#ActionOnFood Hub



Activities and achievements: growth in different pillars of work

1. Advocacy and Policy dialogues

2024 was a landmark year for advocacy in the global landscape, especially with the prominence of the three Rio Conventions. YPARD strengthened its role in shaping global policy discussions, securing official observer status to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) while continuing its active participation in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). These efforts solidified YPARD's role in advocating for youth engagement in sustainable food systems.

UNFCCC COP29: Empowering Youth in Climate Action

At the UNFCCC COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, **YPARD played a pivotal role as a Youth Co-Host of the Action on Food Hub**, collaborating with organizations such as IAAS, IFSA, GAYO, and

EIT Food.

Despite challenges related to badge allocations and funding, YPARD ensured representation through YPARD Nepal Country Representative Upendra Bhusal, who presented YPARD's 2024 Policy Position for UNFCCC. This participation highlighted the organization's dedication to amplifying youth voices in climate action.

During COP29, YPARD engaged in various side events and discussions, emphasizing the importance of integrating youth-led initiatives into climate policies. The organization's involvement in the Action on Food Hub facilitated dialogues on sustainable food systems, showcasing successful youth-led projects and advocating for increased support and recognition of young professionals in agriculture and climate resilience efforts.



YPARD Nepal CR Upendra Bhusal with youth representatives at COP29

CBD COP16: Exploring Connections Between Agriculture and Biodiversity



Side event at CBD COP16

YPARD was involved in the CBD for the first time at COP16 in Cali, Colombia. It played a pivotal role in the conference by presenting the **Rural Youth Manifesto for Biodiversity**, developed by over 170 young people from Latin America and endorsed by the COP16 President.

YPARD representatives, including Colombia Country Representative Rosmery Baez Lizarazo, Peru member Ysabel Calderón, Steering Committee Chair and LAC Regional Coordinator Sebastian Pedraza, and Global Coordination Unit members Genna Tesdall and Trisha Mandal, .

actively engaged in discussions exploring the interconnectedness of agriculture and biodiversity conservation.

YPARD's participation included moderating and speaking at side events, where representatives shared insights on agroecology, regenerative agriculture, and the role of youth in transforming food systems. Notably, YPARD member Ysabel Calderón was awarded the prestigious MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity for her transformative work with her enterprise, Sumak Kawsay, which uses sustainable honey production from native stingless bees to fund reforestation and ecosystem restoration.

Advocacy and Policy dialogues (cont.)

UNCCD COP16: Advocacy and Learning in Riyadh

In December 2024, YPARD actively participated in the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the UNCCD in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Supported by the UNCCD Youth Caucus, YPARD members, including Uganda Country Representative Ajuna Tadeo and YPARD Benin Country Representative Wilfrid K Adjimoti, engaged in a series of advocacy and learning activities. Ajuna moderated pivotal events focusing on **collective action for land restoration among marginalized communities**, and contributed to the YPARD UNCCD Position Paper and the UNCCD Youth Caucus's youth statement, presented at the conference's closing event.

Beyond moderating sessions, YPARD representatives participated as panelists in multiple discussions, sharing insights on regenerative agriculture and the integration of land restoration into National Adaptation Plans.

They also attended numerous side events, gaining insights into global land restoration initiatives and networking with key figures, including the UNCCD Secretary-General, government ministers, and private sector leaders. This engagement underscored YPARD's commitment to advocating for youth involvement in combating desertification and promoting sustainable land management practices.



Group picture with speakers at a side event in COP16

YPARD Global Policy Working Group: A Renewed Approach

In 2024, YPARD's Global Policy Working Group adopted a new leadership structure, selecting dedicated Leads or **Co-Leads for each of the Rio Conventions** rather than a single general co-lead. This change aims to enhance leadership opportunities and distribute responsibilities more effectively. Three position papers, one each for the three Rio Conventions, were developed and published by the Policy Working Group under the three Co-Leads.

The working group remains open to all YPARD members interested in food and agriculture policy, emphasizing consensus-building to shape YPARD's global policy positions.

Engagement at the ECOSOC Youth Forum

For the first time, YPARD partnered with FAO and MGCY to **organize a plenary session at the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2024**. Titled "Feeding the Future: Youth and Sustainable Food Systems for All," the session focused on youth-led practices related to SDG2 and their role in decision-making. YPARD USA Country Representative Nikita Bhusal represented YPARD in this high-level discussion.

Participation in UNFCCC Subsidiary Body (SB60)

Leading up to COP29, YPARD remained engaged at UNFCCC's SB60. YPARD contributed to side events, including the panel discussion "The Road to Belém & Beyond: Financing & Leveraging Agroecology for Impactful NDCs, NBSAPs, and NAPs," co-organized by Biovision Foundation, WWF, IPES-Food, and SAFE. YPARD's intervention focused on how initiatives like the FAST Partnership can fund agroecology and empower youth to transform food systems. YPARD also participated in a **FAST Partnership Steering Committee meeting** at SB60 to set priorities for COP29. Additionally, YPARD joined a press conference where the Action on Food Hub for COP29 was officially announced.

Selection as MGCY SDG2 Focal Point

YPARD, alongside the Youth in Agroecology and Restoration (YARN) Network, was competitively selected as the **SDG2 Focal Point for the UN Major Group for Children and Youth** (MGCY). This selection presents a major opportunity to revitalize the SDG2 youth constituency, which has been inactive for over two years. As Focal Point, YPARD will work to enhance youth engagement in agrifood policy discussions at ECOSOC and beyond, strengthening youth advocacy within the UN system.

2. Professionalism

YPARD is committed to advancing professionalisation and expanding access to capacity development opportunities for young professionals in agriculture and food systems.

In alignment with the strategic plans of YPARD and GFRAS, the network actively promotes existing opportunities while also creating new ones to address gaps in training, advocacy, and leadership development.

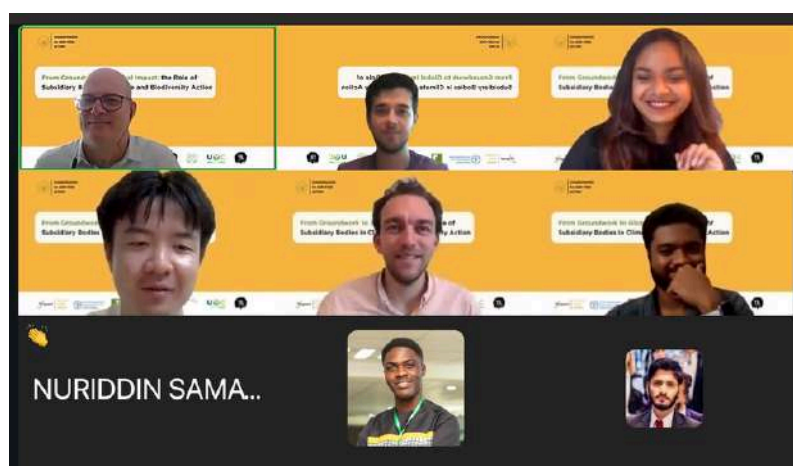
Recruitment of New YPARD Country Representatives

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the network, YPARD regularly renews its leadership. Recognizing that youth leadership is inherently dynamic, YPARD launched **an open call for new Country Representatives** in June, with applications closing at the end of the reporting period. Furthermore, several new Country Chapters were established owing to interest in youth to establish a YPARD chapter in their countries.

The appointment of new Country Representatives aims to sustain fresh perspectives within the network while empowering the next generation of leaders in agriculture and rural advisory services.

Changemakers for Agrifood Action Webinar Series

Engaging in policy spaces is a critical aspect of professionalisation for young professionals in agriculture. Through the YPARD Policy Working Group, members gain hands-on experience in international policy dialogues and advocacy. To enhance learning opportunities, **YPARD co-organized the Changemakers for Agrifood Action webinar series** in collaboration with Biovision Foundation, IAAS, FAST, YIL, FAO OCB, GYBN, UNCCD Youth Caucus, and MGCY. Unlike previous years, this series expanded its focus beyond UNFCCC to include all three Rio Conventions, enabling young professionals to develop a more holistic understanding of food systems advocacy and environmental governance.



The Changemakers webinar series participants

YPARD LAC Summit for Rural Youth: In Peace with Nature

YPARD Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) collaborated with the European Commission, Italian Development Cooperation, and other partners to host the **Rural Youth in Peace with Nature Summit** leading up to CBD COP16 in Cali, Colombia. Held from August 29–31 in Nuquí, Chocó, this event gathered over 100 young professionals from across Colombia and beyond.

The summit served as a platform to strengthen youth participation in biodiversity policy discussions, culminating in the development of a political charter to influence global biodiversity governance at COP16.

Set against the backdrop of the **Whale and Turtle Migration Festival of the Colombian Pacific**, organized by Mano Cambiada, this event aimed to create **a platform for cultural exchange, environmental discussions, and educational initiatives**. Through interactive sessions, participants engaged in conversations that highlight the region's rich cultural and natural heritage while reinforcing commitments to sustainability and rural development.

The collaboration between international partners and the Colombian government underscored a collective effort to amplify the voices of rural youth in advocating for sustainable practices across Latin America.



Participants at the Rural Youth Summit in Nuquí, Colombia

Professionalism (cont.)

YPARD LAC Incuba: Supporting Agribusiness Startups

Building on its experience with hackathons in Africa and the Asia-Pacific, in 2024 YPARD LAC launched the **YPARD Incuba, an incubator program designed to support small-scale agribusinesses.**

Held between April and June, this incubation program focused on fostering entrepreneurship and innovation skills among young participants from **Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, and Brazil.** The initiative was led by YPARD's LAC coordination, providing a platform for emerging agri-food entrepreneurs to develop and refine their business ideas.

The program concluded with YPARD Incuba's Demo Day, where the various startups showcased their innovations in an open event. This was a competitive pitch event, where an international jury selected the top three startups based on their scalability and regional impact.

The winners received cash prizes of \$2,500 and scholarships, with **Foreslab (Peru)** securing first place, **AiGrou (Colombia)** taking second, and **Agroevolve (Argentina)** placing third. YPARD Incuba was made possible through financial support from the U.S. Department of State via the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Alumni Impact Award, specialized technical assistance from the Wadhvani Foundation of India, and strategic partnerships with IICA, NGP Integral Service, the International Land Coalition (ILC), YPARD Peru, and FAO.



YPARD Incuba Demo Day event

Shaping Future Food Systems at the 8th Good Food Summit: YPARD Asia-Pacific

YPARD played a key role in co-organizing the **8th Good Food Summit** held in Hangzhou from November 1 to 3, 2024, bringing a youth-focused perspective to the event. As one of the three key supporting organizations, alongside partners like Slow Food and Compassion in World Farming, **YPARD emphasized the importance of empowering young professionals in driving the shift toward sustainable, healthy, and climate-friendly diets.** Their collaboration with the Good Food Fund and other partners highlighted the need for intergenerational cooperation and innovative solutions to shape future food systems and cities.

The summit, themed "Future Food Leads Future Cities," brought together over 70 participants, including government officials, industry leaders, and academics, to discuss how sustainable diets can foster low-carbon, eco-friendly urban environments. With insights from international experts, government representatives, and academic leaders, the event highlighted the crucial role of sustainable food systems in global public health and climate change solutions. YPARD's engagement aligned with its mission to empower youth in shaping sustainable food systems, and the summit also provided a platform for collaboration through various social and cultural activities.

Empowering Youth for Resilient Food Systems at APYDF 2024

YPARD Asia Pacific was invited to take part in the **Asia-Pacific Youth Development Forum (APYDF) 2024**, held from October 15 to 16 in Bangkok, focused on "Building Sustainable Cities and Resilient Food Systems."

Represented by **Nuriddin Samatov, the Country Representative of YPARD Uzbekistan**, the YPARD AP unit participated in a panel discussion titled "Creating an Enabling Environment for Youth-Led Organizations to Lead Solutions Accelerating the Green Transition." Nuriddin emphasized the importance of integrating youth voices into climate policy, sharing successful strategies from Uzbekistan where youth engagement in climate-smart agriculture and policy advocacy is a priority.



Group picture at the APYDF 2024

Professionalism (cont.)

Youth in Agroecology: YPARD's Impact on the GP SAEP Project

The GP SAEP Project (Global Programme on Sustainable Agricultural and Environmental Policies) aims to advance agroecology and sustainable food systems by fostering knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and youth engagement. As part of this initiative, the AERAS Project was launched **to equip young professionals with the necessary skills to drive the agroecological transition**. Through training, mentorship, and community engagement, the project seeks to strengthen sustainable agricultural practices while promoting bottom-up approaches led by youth networks.

YPARD plays a crucial role in this project by leading the Agroecology Fellows Program, through which it **trained 20 fellows from Latin America (Ecuador and Costa Rica) and Africa (Uganda and Madagascar)**. The program included five online training modules, covering communication, knowledge management, agroecology principles, and systemic change strategies. The fellows actively engage in promoting agroecology through Youth Communities of Practice (YCoPs), facilitating discussions in YPARD Cafés held by them, and producing various communication materials. Additionally, YPARD has partnered with the Tropical Agriculture Association International (TAAI) to provide mentorship, connecting the fellows with experienced professionals in environmental science, agroecology, and sustainable development.

With these initiatives, YPARD has successfully empowered young agroecology practitioners to take leadership roles in their communities. The mentorship program has further strengthened their capacity by providing expert guidance, fostering professional growth, and expanding networks. Moving forward, YPARD remains committed to supporting these young professionals, ensuring that they continue to make a meaningful impact in agroecology and sustainable food systems at both local and global levels.



YPARD Agroecology Fellows in Costa Rica

Building Sustainable Food Systems in Europe: YPARD's Work with YPP and EIT Food

YPARD is a founding member of the **Young Professionals Platform (YPP)**, an initiative launched by EIT Food to empower early-career professionals in shaping the future of food systems. The YPP provides a collaborative space for young experts from diverse fields to exchange knowledge, develop solutions, and drive positive change in the agri-food sector. Other founding members include IAAS, WFF, and AppatEIT. The YPP first met at an in-person co-creation workshop at the EIT Food Offices in Belgium in June.

As one of its first initiatives within the YPP, **YPARD is leading the implementation of the Menu for Change Challenge**, an innovation competition co-organized by EIT Food, Seeding the Future Foundation, the FutureFoodMakers, and the YPP. The Challenge aims to transform Europe's food systems by encouraging sustainable dietary choices and innovative food solutions. It called on young professionals to develop idea projects that promote healthier, climate-friendly, and culturally diverse food options in Europe, while addressing key environmental and social challenges.

The Menu for Change Challenge was officially launched and the open call for applications announced at EIT Food's annual event Next Bite 2024 in October. The open call lasts till January

2025, following which 5 winning teams will be selected- each team will receive a cash prize, mentorship and training to develop their project ideas, and the opportunity to pitch their projects to potential funders and stakeholders at key food systems innovation events.

YPARD facilitates this process by mobilizing its network, providing mentorship, and offering resources that help participants scale their ideas. Through interactive workshops, networking events, and expert guidance, YPARD ensures that young innovators have the tools to create impactful and lasting change in Europe's food landscape.

As YPARD continues to integrate its expertise into the YPP, it strengthens opportunities for young leaders to influence food policies, shape industry practices, and contribute to a more sustainable and resilient European food system.



YPARD at the YPP co-creation workshop in Belgium

Professionalism (cont.)

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions

At the country level, **YPARD chapters are extremely active in facilitating locally-adapted knowledge exchange and training** through various events. The events below offer only a sampling of their activities, which are reported to the GCU through their mid-term regional reports, but also individual coordination with the GCU to prepare articles featuring their work.

Exploring the local food heritage in Jingmai Mountain: YPARD Asia Pacific

YPARD Asia-Pacific partnered with the Good Food Fund to explore the **rich food heritage of Jingmai Mountain, a newly recognized UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The research focused on plant-based ingredients, traditional dietary habits, and sustainable food practices, offering insights into the role of indigenous knowledge in modern food systems. Engaging with the Blang ethnic group, the team learned about efforts to restore the ancient rainforest tea ecosystem and preserve local agriculture. **YPARD facilitated discussions with local youth**, emphasizing the importance of intergenerational knowledge transfer in maintaining sustainable and culturally significant food systems.

Celebrating World Environment Day 2024: YPARD India

On June 5, 2024, YPARD India co-organized the World Environment Day event in collaboration with the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem and Milestone NGO. The event, themed "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience," **engaged 180 students in activities like painting, quizzes, and speeches**. YPARD India's Country Representative, Dr. Ashish Khandelwal, joined experts in delivering lectures on topics such as sustainable food security, climate change adaptation, and youth involvement in natural resource management. The program also included the planting of saplings to promote environmental stewardship.



Participants of the World Environment Day event held by YPARD India

Leading the way in Agroecological Transformation: YPARD Uganda



YPARD Uganda's Farm Day Out

In 2024, YPARD Uganda actively engaged youth in agriculture through a series of impactful events. On March 23rd, they hosted the **Farm Day Out at the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) farm**, themed "Farming as a Business for Youth." This event brought together over 30 YPARD members, along with three children and two experienced individuals, to explore various agricultural enterprises,

including piggery, poultry, livestock, aquaculture, aquaponics, vermiculture, dairy farming, and urban farming. The day emphasized practical learning and team-building activities, fostering collaboration among participants.

Building on this momentum, YPARD Uganda organized an **Agroecology Training for Trainers (TOT) workshop** on April 20th at the Ministers Village Hotel. Supported by the Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda and The Roddenberry Foundation, the workshop aimed to empower approximately 30 participants—including farmers, agronomists, environmentalists, and representatives from NGOs and academic institutions—with sustainable agricultural practices that promote biodiversity and food sovereignty. The training featured experienced agroecologists Ms. Naume Kalinaki and Mr. Ademu Andrew, who provided valuable insights and practical demonstrations.

In celebration of World Food Day on October 19th, YPARD Uganda organized an event in Kayunga District under the theme "**Honoring the Hands that Feed Us**". The day commenced with a march through Kayunga Town, led by a brass band and Agricultural Police, drawing over 400 participants, including government officials, farmers, teachers, students, and pupils from multiple schools. It also featured a symposium with a keynote by Hon. Victoria Sekitoleko, former Minister of Agriculture and Chairperson of Uganda Agribusiness Alliance, and an agricultural exhibition.

Professionalism (cont.)

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions

(cont.)

Empowering Youth for a Sustainable Agricultural Future: YPARD Uzbekistan

In 2024, the newly established YPARD Uzbekistan, led by Nuriddin Samatov, actively engaged in initiatives to promote sustainable agricultural practices and youth empowerment in the country.

On April 17th and 18th, **YPARD Uzbekistan participated in the Life Sciences Festival at Tashkent International Agricultural University**, themed "Life Sciences: Safeguarding Environment and Nature." This event attracted a diverse audience, including government officials, diplomats, international organizations, academia, and students. The festival featured discussions on climate change, sustainable development, and agricultural practices, along with interactive sessions showcasing technological applications in agriculture and environmental sciences.

Notably, **Nuriddin presented YPARD's mission to empower young professionals in agriculture**, forestry, and rural development, aligning with the festival's focus on environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Furthering their commitment to sustainable agriculture, YPARD Uzbekistan representatives visited "Suvchilar Maktabi" on April 5th, 2024. Established under the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, in collaboration with Agrobank ATB, the Ministry of Water Economy, and the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers, "Suvchilar Maktabi" aims to promote high crop yields, efficient water and energy usage, and improve irrigated lands. The institution offers short courses on modern irrigation methods and has successfully trained over 70,000 farmers across 70 centers in Uzbekistan. During the visit, both organizations discussed potential collaborations to promote sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation, reflecting a shared commitment to advancing these fields in Uzbekistan.



Nuriddin Samatov, YPARD Uzbekistan CR, presenting at the Life Sciences Festival, Tashkent

Practical Training and Knowledge Exchange: YPARD Kenya

In 2024, YPARD Kenya, one of the most active YPARD Chapters, implemented several initiatives to empower youth and enhance sustainable agricultural practices. Through the **Samburu Youth Climate Action Project**, they mentored young agripreneurs in Samburu County, focusing on sustainable agriculture, food security, and agribusiness opportunities. The program included sessions on agricultural transformation principles and challenges faced by youth in agriculture, equipping participants to contribute effectively to their communities.

Additionally, YPARD Kenya collaborated with the Young Farmers Club at Nyando Mixed Secondary School to establish an agroforestry garden. This project involved 21 students who transformed an underutilized area into a productive space growing indigenous vegetables like spider plant, managu, and cowpeas. The garden not only provided fresh produce for the school but also generated income, funding school fees for eight local students over the academic year. Plans for expansion include increasing student involvement and introducing innovative practices such as cone gardens and black soldier fly farming.

Empowering Women on Ground: YPARD Nigeria

YPARD Nigeria partnered with Roddenberry Foundation to empower rural women farmers in Nigeria in climate resilient agricultural production techniques. Following the theme of the International Womens day 2024 - #Inspire Inclusion; YPARD Nigeria held the event titled 'Economic Empowerment as a Panacea for Financial Inclusion for Women in Africa'.

The event was held in Asher Farms, Ibadan Nigeria where over 100 rural women farmers were trained. Training was held on climate resilient farming techniques in vegetable production. **Akin Showemimo, YPARD Nigeria Country Representative, presented innovative aquaculture techniques**. Participants were also empowered with seeds, fertilizers, and other farm inputs.



Jenice Achieng, YPARD Kenya CR, interacting with school children

Professionalism (cont.)

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions

(cont.)

Discussing the significance of urban agriculture with youth: YPARD China

To promote urban agriculture among youth, YPARD China organized a training workshop with the Good Food Fund, La Fresque de l'Alimentation, and Paris2050workshop, with funding support from the China Youth Climate Action Network. The workshop aimed to equip young people with practical skills and knowledge on urban farming and its importance in mitigating climate change.

Through this initiative, YPARD China provided participants with **insights into sustainable urban agriculture, climate change, and ecosystems, alongside hands-on experience in agricultural activities within city limits.** Additionally, YPARD China **provided some participants with seeds to help them start their own urban farming ventures.** One participant shared a significant improvement in their understanding of both urban agriculture and climate change, highlighting the impact of YPARD China's efforts in fostering environmental awareness and action.

Supporting youth entrepreneurship: YPARD DRC

YPARD DRC and Collibri Foundation (Belgium) sign a collaboration contract for the implementation of the **Project to support youth agro-entrepreneurship and the preservation of forest ecosystems in Pelende (PAAJEPEF-Pelende)** in the Kwango province of the DRC. The PAAJEPEF-Pelende Project is an initiative that aims to empower 150 young people in rural North Pelende (Kenge Territory, Kwango Province) through agricultural and beekeeping entrepreneurship while facilitating a synergy between economic development and ecosystem conservation, placing young people at the heart of positive and sustainable change.



YPARD DRC members engaged in a discussion about forest ecosystems

Agroecology Initiatives in Amazonas: YPARD Peru

In November, ANPE PERU, in partnership with YPARD Peru, hosted **a dynamic workshop in Amazonas, bringing together young leaders, educators, and agroecology enthusiasts to advance youth-led agroecological development in Peru.** The event, organized in collaboration with Yachay Wasi Agroecology school and other allied organizations, focused on leadership, capacity building, and collaboration to empower young people to champion agroecology and sustainability within their communities. Participants engaged in discussions and activities that highlighted the importance of agroecology, showcased youth-driven success stories like the innovative fruit liquor project, and presented results from initiatives such as "Agroecología Yachay Wasi,"

which aims to deepen agroecological practices among youth.

The workshop culminated in the creation of **Agroecological Learning Nuclei (NAA)**, collaborative spaces where young individuals can exchange knowledge and co-create solutions to local agricultural challenges. These nuclei serve as dynamic learning hubs that empower youth to develop sustainable agroecological initiatives with the support of experienced farmers, organizations, and institutions. A key element of the workshop was identifying critical areas for future training and capacity building, ensuring the initiatives align with the needs of the participants. This collective effort reinforces the vision of a resilient and equitable food system, with youth leadership playing a central role in shaping sustainable agroecology in rural communities.



A moment from the agroecology workshop in Amazonas

3. Knowledge Generation and Exchange

Many of YPARD's activities in our other strategic fields crosscut with knowledge generation and exchange. In particular, YPARD contributes to knowledge exchange through **peer-to-peer and intergenerational exchange** through written pieces, online discussion series, and in-person events. YPARD's digital infrastructure is key to this information exchange, and during the reporting period, YPARD can report a huge leap forward: a new website and relaunch of the newsletter.

Launch of the New Website: A New Digital Era for YPARD

YPARD launched a **brand-new website** in May, 2024. This marked a significant improvement over the previous website, which faced multiple technical challenges and adversely affected everything from member and partner engagement to maintaining the backend.

Thanks to the collaborative effort of the **GCU team, NoCodely**, and **Tech to the Rescue**, the new site was developed for only €1,000 with Tech to the Rescue's low-bono service for impactful NGOs. The resources needed for the development of the new website thus stood at 1/20th the amount spent on the previous website.

The new site has already made a significant impact, receiving 56,000 views in May and June

and generating over 1000 new membership requests from May till the end of the year. Members and partners have reported an enhanced understanding of YPARD's activities and network, highlighting the effectiveness of the new platform in engaging the community.

Relaunch of the Newsletter: Connecting Members with Valuable Updates

After resolving technical issues with the previous newsletter service, **YPARD successfully relaunched its newsletter** with a new provider, benefiting from a reduced cost through Stifter Helfen.

This has allowed for a more reliable and efficient distribution system, benefiting YPARD's growing subscriber base of approximately 300 members. The newsletter boasts impressive engagement rates, with a 54% open rate and a 22% click rate, both well above industry averages for the agriculture and nonprofit sectors. These statistics reflect the relevance and value of the content, and the newsletter continues to serve as a vital communication tool for sharing updates and opportunities within the YPARD community.

Disseminating Professional Opportunities: A Hub for Youth Empowerment

YPARD's Monthly Opportunity Roundup has become a highly valued resource, offering a one-stop shop for career and professional development opportunities. This initiative, shared via the website, newsletter, and social media channels, has garnered significant attention, with LinkedIn impressions 2-3 times higher than average posts. The Opportunities page on the YPARD website is now the third most visited, reflecting the demand for such resources among youth professionals. This initiative further strengthens YPARD's role as a key platform for empowering young individuals in the agrifood sector.

Webinars for Knowledge Exchange

YPARD Global Cafes, which have been offered regularly throughout YPARD history, were also packaged and branded for increased member and partner recognition of this offering.

Monthly Global YPARD Cafes were offered on a diverse range of topics, including advocacy, agroecology, and community organizing.

YPARD also contributed guest speakers to the FAST Partnership webinar and the GDPRD Webinar with OECD Combatting hunger and poverty through rural youth employment.

Various Country Chapters held different webinars



Kofi Acquaye (left), YPARD Africa Regional Coordinator, speaking at a FAST Partnership webinar

Knowledge Generation and Exchange (cont.)

YPARD Member Speaking Engagements: Showcasing Youth Leadership

In addition to written showcasing of young professional voices on the YPARD website and social media, YPARD also works to **bring YPARD members to speaking engagements at seminal regional and international congresses** for them to share their perspectives, practice public speaking, and build their networks.

At the GFFA Berlin in January, **YPARD Director Genna Tesdall was invited as a moderator for the expert panel Prospects for Achieving Food Systems Transformation through Agroecology**. The panel highlighted different countries' perspectives on agroecology and presented different tools for measuring agroecology. The organisers and speakers are members of the

Agroecology Coalition that emerged from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

Mid-year, YPARD was invited to give closing remarks on the occasion of the **WFO launch of WFO Young in Rome**, emphasizing the importance of collaborating with such organizations.

YPARD was also present at the three-day African Youth Conference (AYC) on Natural Resources and Environmental Governance (NREG) 2024 organized by the Strategic Youth Network Development (SYND) opened at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel in Accra on May 2, 2024. This event was held to advance discussions on Natural Resources and Environmental Governance on a regional level while empowering young leaders to shape the future of Africa.

Wilfrid Adjimoti, the Country Representative for YPARD Benin, gave a presentation on the Fungal Conservation in Sub-Saharan Africa: Sustainability and Livelihood Implications (The FC-SSA Project). The main activities under the FC-SSA include forest restoration, reforestation of sacred forests, and the establishment of community and village gardens alongside local trees and edible mushrooms. The project, which targets 20 villages in Benin, looks forward to editing at least 70,000 new records on fungi and associated organisms.



Wilfrid Adjimoti (right), YPARD Benin CR, presenting at the AYC

YPARD members were competitively selected for the fully-funded participation of four YPARDians in a 10-day workshop on rural sustainable livelihood programs. As the first of the Next Generation Institute and hosted by Iowa State University Uganda Program (ISU UP), the program encompassed both discussions sessions and field visits, providing a holistic understanding of initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable livelihoods in rural communities in Kamuli district. The workshop focused on the participants' knowledge and skills towards establishing a successful sustainable livelihood project.



Participants at a session during the rural sustainable livelihood program workshop



Conclusion: Empowering Youth to Sustainably Transform the Agrifood systems

YPARD remains dedicated to advancing the careers and involvement of young professionals in agriculture on a global scale. Through targeted programs, policy advocacy, and dynamic events, the organization ensures that youth perspectives play a vital role in shaping the future of agrifood systems. By providing access to education, networking opportunities, and vocational training, YPARD empowers emerging leaders to drive sustainable agricultural solutions and make a lasting impact in our communities.

YPARD Global Coordination Unit

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