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YPARD Global Coordination Unit

Young Professionals for Agricultural Development e.V.
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Key Partners



Official observer status



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

BKMC - Ban-ki-Moon Centre for Global Citizens

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

FSIP - Food Systems Integrated Program

FTE - Full-time equivalent

GAYO - Green Africa Youth Organization

GCU - Global Coordinating Unit of YPARD

GEF - Global Environment Facility

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

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNFCCC- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNFSS - United Nations Food System Summit

WFF- World Food Forum

WFO - World Farmers' Organisation

WWF - World Wildlife Fund

YIL- Youth in Landscapes Initiative

YPARD - Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

YPP - Young Professionals' Platform

Reflections and Way Forward | YPARD's Journey in 2025

Dear YPARDIans and partners,

With another year coming to an end, we take a moment to stop and reflect.

2025 was marked by unprecedented instability for the development sector. Nonetheless, throughout the development agenda, youth continues to be a cross-cutting theme, and YPARD's focus on young professionals in the agrifood systems continues to be highly relevant. From advocacy at the global level, or empowering communities to promote agroecology on the ground, the year brought with it numerous achievements as well as significant learnings for YPARD.

In spite of sustained funding cuts, wars and humanitarian crises, ecological disasters and alike, young people and communities on the ground keep motivating us with their resilience and determination to prevent and mitigate environmental and man-made disasters.

During the last two years, YPARD was in the process of developing its next Strategic Plan. In November 2025, the first draft of the **YPARD Strategic Plan 2026-2031** was completed, with a public release in April 2026. A collaborative effort between the Global Coordinating Unit (GCU), Regional Teams, Country Chapters, and Steering Committee (SC), this document lays down the opportunities and learnings for the network, with detailed descriptions of our thematic focusses and sustainable growth plans for the next five years. The Strategic Plan will be instrumental in shaping the path forward for our members and the global community for the upcoming years.

Investing in long-term, decent opportunities for youth remains top on our agenda. YPARD's experience with initiatives such as the **WYNA Programme** this year reinforced our conviction that meaningful transformation in food and agricultural systems must be inclusive, participatory, and community-led. Similarly, the development of the **CEA FIRST Gender & Youth Strategy** reminded us that inclusion cannot be assumed; it must be intentionally designed. At the same time, initiatives like the **Menu for Change Challenge** demonstrated the tremendous creativity, innovation, and determination young people bring when we are empowered to shape the future of food systems.

We continued to foster stronger connections between the **Rio Conventions** and other policy fora through our advocacy work this year. This meant working closely with rural youth, young farmers, and Indigenous and community groups to strengthen our role as co-shapers of climate solutions rather than passive stakeholders, facilitating consultations, capacity building, and participatory position papers through the global Policy Working Group, including contributions to the YOUNGO Global Youth Statement and the YPARD COP30 Position Paper. Capacity building was an important part of this work: through initiatives like the Changemakers series, YPARD LAC's Climate Action and Negotiation School for Youth, and the Bridging the Gaps pre-COP event in Santos, Brazil set us up for the much-anticipated COP30.

Throughout the year, YPARD Country Chapter continued to demonstrate how young people are shaping agrifood systems transformation from the ground up through innovative, community-centered action. In **Africa**, youth in countries such as **Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Zambia, and Malawi**, are engaging directly with farmers, schools, and local institutions to strengthen agroecology, expand livelihood opportunities, and promote climate-resilient practices. In **Latin America**, the momentum is equally vibrant. With a goal of creating a peer-led, energizing, impactful space, YPARD LAC organized its first ever **Regional Meeting** in Lima, Peru in November. Over 60 young people from all over the region met to strengthen their network, share knowledge, and build the Regional Agenda of Rural Youth. The need to articulate and enhance youth participation in rural development and sustainable food systems in the Andean region was exemplified by **YPARD Peru's Tri-national Project "YPARD Networks in Action"**. Likewise, initiatives by Chapters in Europe and Asia underscore the importance of youth leadership in landscape restoration, sustainable production, and community engagement.

As we close this pivotal year, we stand encouraged and deeply grounded in the collective strength, creativity, and determination of our global community. With the upcoming Strategic Plan 2026–2031, **we are entering the new year with renewed clarity, purpose, and momentum.**

In YPARD spirit,

Sebastian, Kofi, Xiaoshang, Ednah, Tadeo, Trisha, and Genna.

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Our Key Achievements



YPARD Strategic Plan 2026-2031 | In 2025, YPARD began the process of developing its strategy for the upcoming years. After a series of member consultations and external review, this key document was completed and published in April, 2026.



Youth and Gender Strategies for Food Systems Transformation | YPARD developed a Global Youth Strategy under the *GEF-8 Food Systems IP* to strengthen youth participation and inclusive food systems transformation across 32 country projects. It also co-led the development of the *CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy*, advancing the recognition and importance of women and youth on agricultural research & innovation and policy and governance structures.



Collective Global Advocacy and Policy Engagements | In addition to actively engaging in the UNFCCC COP30 and SB62, YPARD co-organized/led several policy training sessions and high-level events including the pre-COP event '*Bridging the Gaps: Advancing Coherent Policies for Climate Adaptation and Mitigation for Agriculture and Food Systems*', the *Global Changemakers for Agrifood Action* webinar series, and the *Climate Action and Negotiation School* in LAC. As SDG 2 Co-Focal Point for Major Group for Women and Youth (MGCY), YPARD led a Constituencies Collective on Food Systems Advocacy.



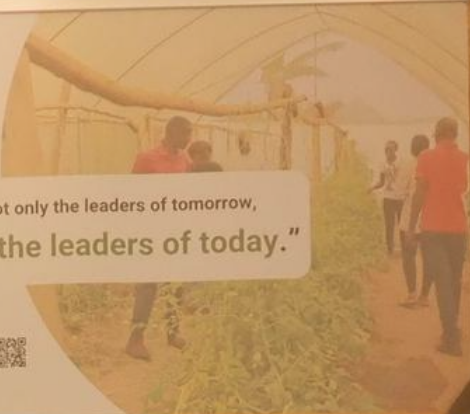
In-depth Opportunities for Capacity Building in Agroecology and Entrepreneurship | Through the *WYNA Programme* and *Menu for Change Challenge*, YPARD developed, coordinated, and delivered tailored modules on agroecology, stipend-based fellowships, and an incubator program for youth-led entrepreneurship.



Scaled Youth- and Community-led Entrepreneurships | YPARD supported the development of over 10 small-scale, youth-led entrepreneurships in Africa and Europe, through seed funding, training, and mentorship.



Expanded Country-level Engagements | National level YPARD Cafes, farm visits, and community-led training sessions were held in over 15 countries across regions as part of different projects.



"Youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow,
but also the leaders of today."

Join our community 

YPARD is an international movement by
Young Professionals for
Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

Our aim is to enable and empower young professionals around the globe to shape and transform our current food systems.



View our
Projects

Our global network is active in over 60 countries

Network





Introduction



YPARD LAC Regional team and Country teams at the first LAC Regional Dialogue held in Lima, Peru | Credit: YPARD LAC

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

Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) is the **largest global, youth-led, network** of young professionals in agrifood systems.

Global, Youth-led, Community- Driven

With over **60 Country Chapters across different geographical regions**, and a growing global membership, YPARD is a key player in fostering youth engagement in sustainable agrifood systems.

Our Mission | YPARD equips young professionals around the world through **networking, advocacy, and capacity building** for an agrifood systems transformation, **challenging exploitative systems with an equitable, rights-based approach** which prioritizes **communities, environment, and just economic sustainability**.

A Roadmap for Impact: Joint Operational Plan 2021-2025 and a new Strategic Plan 2026-2031

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, 2025** in light of these strategic goals.

At the beginning of 2026, the new **YPARD Strategic Plan** is slated to come into effect. The implementation of the new Plan will be further detailed in an internal YPARD Operational Roadmap 2026-2031 that is currently under development.

Context of our Operations

Global Momentum for Youth in Agrifood Systems

Youth has firmly emerged as one of the few unifying priorities in a fragmented global development landscape. This priority has cut across sectors and agendas even amid shrinking donor funding and major institutional shifts, including the abolition of USAID during the reporting period.

This growing consensus is strongly reflected in thematic knowledge products and policy platforms. FAO's *The State of Youth in Agrifood Systems*, a flagship report published in 2025, provides the most comprehensive evidence to date on the opportunities and structural barriers faced by young people, emphasizing **their critical role as innovators and drivers of economic transformation** in agrifood systems. At the same time, the **Africa Food Systems Forum 2025** placed youth at the center of its agenda under the theme "Africa's Youth: Leading Collaboration, Innovation, and Implementation of Agri-Food Systems

Transformation," convening thousands of stakeholders to advance actionable solutions and investments while **positioning young people as key actors in shaping the continent's food systems**. High-level dialogues, youth networking platforms, and dedicated sessions further reinforced the urgency of unlocking youth employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership opportunities in a rapidly expanding young workforce. Looking ahead, the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Governing Council Meeting this year will also focus on youth**, signaling sustained institutional commitment to youth inclusion in global policy and financing frameworks.

In this context, **YPARD's focus on young agricultural professionals remains highly relevant not only to its members but also to partners and the broader global community**, reinforcing its position as the leading global, youth-led network in the agrifood systems.



YPARD Uganda members at the launch of the WYNA Programme in Entebbe | Credit: GCU

Expanding global engagements and strengthening country-level interventions

Community and grassroots engagement has been at the core of YPARD's engagement in 2025, with intentional **emphasis on growing our programs to provide more opportunities for our membership at the country level**. Project implementation through new partnerships and donors like EIT Food and GIZ, as well as initiatives such as RAENS, has enabled greater support for national chapters and **amplified the actions and influence of our volunteer membership on the ground**.

Major Engagements in Policy Fora

- Formed a **Constituencies Collective on Food Systems Advocacy** as SDG 2 Co-Focal Point for Major Group for Women and Youth (MGCY);
- Co-organizer of a pre-COP **'Bridging the Gaps: Advancing Coherent Policies for Climate Adaptation and Mitigation for Agriculture and Food Systems'** event in Brazil;
- Engagement at the **UNFCCC SB62** in Germany;
- Part of the Youth co-host at **UNFCCC COP30** in Brazil;
- First engagement at the **HLPF Forum** in New York;
- Regional delegation at the **Global Land Forum** in Bogotá;
- Contributions to the **Africa Food Systems Forum, World Food Forum, and UNFSS+4**.

Major Capacity-Building Programs

- Developed and delivered **tailored modules on agroecology and organic agriculture** to WYNA Fellows;
- Conducted policy training workshops, including the **Global Changemakers for Agrifood Action** webinar series and the **Climate Action and Negotiation School in LAC**;
- Organized **regional summits** and training programs to build local leadership;
- Organized national level trainings and **YPARD Cafés in over 15 countries**;
- Coordinated and delivered **tailored bootcamp on entrepreneurship** through the Menu for Change Challenge.

Major Administrative Achievements

- Published the **YPARD Strategic Plan 2026-2031**;
- Held **member surveys** and **in-depth consultations** to inform and validate the new strategy;
- Strengthened **regional and country level coordination** with the global team;
- Recruited **new YPARD Country Representatives** across different regions to sustain youth leadership;
- Hired **two embedded consultants based in Uganda** and a new intern in Europe;
- Renewed Steering Committee members;
- Grew partnerships with **GIZ, Seeding the Future Foundation, GEF-8 FSIP, FAO elearning Academy** and other key stakeholders.



5 GENDER EQUALITY

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

YPARD | An International Network **for Young Professionals** by Young Professionals

YPARD operates at local, regional, and national levels- led by youth at every level.

At the heart of YPARD are our **members**, who are encouraged to become active leaders in their communities, engage other young professionals in the area, encourage a stronger voice of youth in their own organizations, and promote the thematic priorities of the network.

Members in a country form **Country Chapters**, which are spearheaded by a **Country Representative or Co-Country Representatives** who are the national ambassadors of the Country Chapter. Country Chapters have core team members, often including a Communications Focal Point and a Partnerships/Fundraising Focal Point; older Chapters have more developed team structures with different departments and positions.



YPARD National Chapters across the globe



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
Partnerships & Communications
Manager



Edoardo Corriere
Program Coordinator



Ajuna Tadeo
Program Coordinator



Ednah Kukundakwe
Communications & Networking
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)

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
Ghana	Paul Atsu
Ivory Coast	Mouhamadou Dosso
Kenya	Jenice Achieng Audi
Lesotho	Malekhooa Suzan Moletsane
Madagascar	Sambatra Kezia Rakotomanga
Malawi	Olive Chilenga
Mali	Drissa Tessougue



Country Representatives (Africa) cont.

Morocco	Hayfa Assia
Morocco	Mustapha El Janiti
Namibia	Victoria Huwanga
Niger	Hassane Abba Oumarou
Nigeria	Chidinma Eze
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	Thapelo Phiri
South Sudan	Festo Bali
Tanzania	Selestine Focus Mushi
Uganda	Daniel Kisekka
Uganda	Ajuna Tadeo
Zambia	Sussana Teriza Phiri
Zimbabwe	Tafadzwa Muzira
Zimbabwe	Patience Shawarira



Country Representatives (the Americas)

Bolivia	María Fernanda Soto Villegas
Brazil	Vitor Diego Pereira da Silva
Canada	Juwonlo Dahunsi
Colombia	Rosmery Baez Lizarazo
Ecuador	Nancy Daniela Núñez López
Mexico	Yenifer Carmona Hernandez
Peru	Liliana Quispe Ccoyllo
USA	Nikita Bhusal

LAC Regional Team

Edwin Prado - Partnerships Coordinator
Claudia Ocampo- Partnerships Coordinator
Hazell Flores- Communication and Advocacy Coordinator
Ivanoe Carrazco- Membership and Institutional Sustainability Coordinator
Pamela Olavarria - Advocacy and Outreach Assistant
Fredy Quispe Condor - Partnership Project Assistant
Camila Cárdenas - Design and Content Creation
Luis Chuquimarca - Local Rural Leadership & Advocacy
Lizet Mejía - Resource Management



Country Representatives (Asia- Pacific)

China	Yue Zhang
Indonesia	Mukhlis Jamal Holle
Iran	Aliakbar Shafighi
Nepal	Upendra Bhusal
Turkey	Armineh Rajabi
Turkey	Bilge Çolak



Country Representatives (Europe)

Albania	Bledar Meta
Belgium	Michael Ruggeri
Georgia	Sopiko Babalashvili
Germany	Arnaz Dholakia
Germany	Pritha Mandal
Sweden	Ingrid Svedham
Sweden	Mariana Forero
Switzerland	Celia Buhler





Activities and achievements: growth in different pillars of work

1. Advocacy and Policy dialogues



YPARD LAC and Country teams at the Global Land Forum in Colombia | Credit: YPARD LAC & YPARD Colombia

In 2025, YPARD strengthened its role as a **global advocate for youth inclusion in agrifood systems** by actively engaging in key international policy processes and platforms. From global summits to national dialogues, the network worked to ensure that young professionals are not only represented, but are actively shaping policies, investments, and solutions for sustainable and inclusive food systems.

Engagement as the MGCY SDG2 Co-Focal Point

YPARD, together with the Youth in Agroecology and Restoration (YARN) Network, continues to serve as **Co-Focal Points for SDG2** within the **Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)**, strengthening coordinated youth engagement in

global food systems policy spaces. In this role, YPARD supported the establishment and facilitation of the **MGCY Food and Agriculture Constituencies Collective on Food Systems Advocacy**, a platform that brings together diverse youth constituencies working across agrifood systems. The Collective has become an important coordination mechanism, enabling alignment on joint policy positions, strengthening collaboration across networks, and enhancing the effectiveness of youth engagement in international fora.

In the lead-up to the **UN Food Systems Summit +4 (UNFSS+4)**, YPARD played a key role in supporting the **SENA Youth Group** and ensuring that youth were represented as a coherent constituency. Through the Collective, YPARD helped convene discussions that **critically examined the limitations of youth**

participation in the Summit processes, particularly the lack of meaningful and inclusive engagement in consultations. These reflections informed coordinated advocacy efforts, with YPARD delivering formal remarks on behalf of the **Collective during a Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism (CSIPM) webinar** of the Committee on World Food Security, titled *“Naming the Elephants in the Room: Addressing Corporate and Geopolitical Power in Food Systems Transformation.”*

Through these efforts, YPARD reinforced its role as a **key facilitator of youth coordination and advocacy**, ensuring that young people’s perspectives are not only represented but also strategically aligned and amplified in global food systems governance.

YPARD Policy Working Group

The YPARD **Global Policy Working Group** continued its work in 2025, with over 80 members and **dedicated co-leads guiding** key thematic areas, including **UNFCCC processes** (**Jane Otieno** and **Michelle Bidima**), **rural youth employment** (**Khalif Ochieng** and **Debora Kasale**), **just transition** (**Juliana Lanyero** and **Bebel Nguépi**), and **agroecology** (**Mukhlis Jamal** and **Pidikiti Pavithra**).

Open to all interested members, the group brings together young professionals to build their **understanding of food and agriculture policy** while contributing to YPARD’s global advocacy. Through structured working methods and a strong emphasis on **collective**

consensus-building, the group develops and refines YPARD’s policy positions across major international processes.

YPARD LAC at the Global Land Forum 2025: Advancing Youth Voices in Land Governance

YPARD Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) played an active role in the **Global Land Forum (GLF)** and the **Global Land Forum for Youth** held in Ocaña and Bogotá (Colombia) in June, contributing to critical discussions on land rights, climate justice, and inclusive rural development. Representatives from YPARD LAC **regional team and country chapters**, including **Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico**, engaged in dialogues, panels, and youth-led exchanges, highlighting the importance of secure land tenure and equitable access to resources for young people.

Their participation reinforced the need to **integrate youth perspectives into policy and practice**, positioning young people as essential contributors to sustainable land management and resilient agrifood systems.



Group picture with participants at the Global Land Forum, Colombia
Credit: YPARD LAC

Advocacy and Policy dialogues (cont.)

YPARD at HLPF 2025: Elevating Youth Voices in Global Sustainable Development



Xiaoshang Deng at the HLPF in New York | Credit: YPARD AP

Engaging for the first time at the **High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2025** in New York, YPARD amplified the voices of young professionals as key agents of change in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. YPARD Asia-Pacific Regional Coordinator, **Xiaoshang Deng**, presented a [position paper](#) emphasizing the need for **integrated agriculture-health policies, Indigenous and rural young women's leadership and land rights, greater youth participation in ocean governance and investment in sustainable aquaculture**, and need for **youth to hold structural, funded roles in partnerships and governance**.

The participation reinforced the visibility of young professionals in global policy spaces and

underscored their essential role in shaping sustainable, inclusive, and resilient agrifood systems.

Engagement at UNFCCC SB62: Advancing Youth Voices on Climate Action

As part of the road to UNFCCC COP30, [participation in the Subsidiary Body \(SB\) 62 meeting in Bonn](#) provided another key opportunity to advance YPARD's climate advocacy work. At SB62, **YPARD policy positions were presented during the official YOUNGO and TAPP Coalition side event**, contributing to discussions on climate adaptation and implementation. Youth groups and civil society highlighted concerns that without clear and adequately resourced adaptation targets, national plans such as NDCs risk remaining underfunded or tokenistic.

A notable outcome from these negotiations emerged under the **Just Transition Work Programme**, where **sustained advocacy from civil society, including YPARD and YOUNGO**, contributed to **the final text explicitly recognizing the roles of youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities** in just transition pathways. In parallel, YPARD also **participated in the FAST Partnership Steering Committee meeting** held on the sidelines of the SB sessions, where, as a Steering Committee member, it contributed to discussions on strategic priorities and coordination efforts in preparation for COP30.

YPARD at the World Food Forum 2025: Youth-Led Agroecology and Global Policy Engagement

During the World Food Forum (WFF) 2025, held at FAO Headquarters in Rome, youth leadership in agrifood systems took centre stage, and **YPARD played an active role across multiple high-level dialogues, side events, and thematic discussions.**

A key highlight of YPARD's engagement was its co-organization of the high-level side event **'Empowering Youth Through Agroecology: Building Climate Resilience & Participatory Systems'**, in partnership with the **Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens** and the **Agroecology Coalition**. Moderated by **Edoardo Corriere**, YPARD GCU, the session opened with remarks from **H.E. Ban Ki-moon** and brought together **youth leaders and technical experts** to discuss how **agroecology can drive climate resilience, equitable livelihoods, and**

participatory governance in food systems.

YPARD also contributed to a **series of thematic sessions** addressing **youth-led governance** in agrifood systems, **Indigenous and rural youth action, urban food systems transformation, SME resilience to climate shocks, and the role of youth in ecosystem restoration** and land rights.

As Co-Chair of the Youth Task Force of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UNDER), **Karen Salazar** (YPARD Policy Working Group member) joined the **'Young Forest Champions: Indigenous and Rural Youth in Action'** panel to discuss the vital role of youth constituencies in ecosystem restoration. Karen assumed the role of the Co-Chair of the Task Force through YPARD's nomination of her in 2024.

Beyond formal sessions, YPARD members showcased **practical examples of youth-led innovation** linking agroecology, biodiversity, and livelihoods.



YPARD members at the World Food Forum 2025 | Credit: FAO & YPARD GCU

Advocacy and Policy dialogues (cont.)

YPARD at COP30: Advancing Youth-Led Climate and Agrifood Systems Advocacy

A key highlight of YPARD's engagement at COP30 in Belem, Brazil was its **role as Youth Co-Host of the Action on Food Hub**, a dedicated space for youth dialogue on sustainable food



YPARD members at the COP30 in Brazil | Credit: YPARD GCU

In 2025, the lead-up to UNFCCC COP30 marked a major focus of YPARD's global policy engagement, with active contributions across youth and multi-stakeholder climate spaces. YPARD continued its engagement in the **YOUNGO Food and Agriculture Working Group**, where members of the YPARD Policy Working Group contributed to the development of the **YOUNGO Youth Statement**, ensuring that perspectives from young professionals in agrifood systems were reflected in global youth advocacy positions. This work was complemented by the YPARD Policy WG through a dedicated **COP30 position paper** which aligns with and reinforces the YOUNGO Youth Statement, the capacity-building webinar series '**Changemakers for Agriyouth Action**', as well as YPARD's co-organization of the high-level convening in Santos, Brazil titled **Bridging the Gaps** led by WWF, the Brazilian Government, CIAT, the BKMC, and others.

systems and climate action. YPARD members co-organized, moderated, and spoke at several side events across different pavilions exploring **climate-induced migration among rural and agrarian youth, lived realities of young farmers and rural communities, and youth-led initiatives in climate-resilient agriculture** and food systems transformation.

The **YPARD delegation** to COP30 included key members from the LAC region including **Sebastian Pedraza** and **Edwin Prado** (YPARD LAC), **Ysabel Calderon**, **Lizeth Mejia**, and **Emerson Espinoza** (YPARD Peru), as well as Policy WG members **Ziadah Nakabiri**, **Michelle Bidima**, and **Edoardo Corriere** from the GCU.

Country-Level Advocacy Engagements

YPARD Tanzania at the National Agriculture Budget Dialogue

From 3–4 April 2025, YPARD Tanzania, represented by Country Representative **Selestine Focus**, participated in a **high-level policy dialogue on the 2025/26 National Agriculture Budget**, jointly convened by ANSAF and Helvetas Tanzania. The dialogue brought together government officials, youth-led organizations, and civil society actors to deliberate on priority investments for Tanzania’s agricultural sector, with particular emphasis on **strengthening youth and women’s participation, promoting innovation, and addressing structural challenges** such as post-harvest losses.

Following the dialogue, **YPARD representatives were also invited to follow-up discussions at the Parliament in Dodoma**, including **direct engagement with the Ministers of Agriculture**, providing an important opportunity to further advocate for youth-responsive agricultural policies and investments.



YPARD Tanzania CR Selestine with participants at the budget dialogue in Tanzania | Credit: YPARD Tanzania

YPARD Nigeria at the NDC 3.0 Consultation

At the National Consultation on **Nigeria’s Third Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0)**, YPARD Nigeria member **Ojuoluwa Oluwatobiloba** actively contributed to national-level discussions on climate mitigation and adaptation in the agriculture sector.



Participants at the NDC 3.0 Consultation in Nigeria | Credit: YPARD Nigeria

He highlighted the critical role of youth in driving climate-smart agriculture, regenerative practices, and community-based innovation. The engagement reflected **broader youth calls for stronger inclusion in NDC design and implementation**, particularly in areas related to climate financing, skills development, and access to data for evidence-based adaptation strategies.

2. Professionalism

Aligned with the strategic plans of YPARD and GFRAS, YPARD creates opportunities for members to strengthen leadership and professional skills, build capacity in areas such as agroecology and entrepreneurship, and foster meaningful networking. These efforts take place not just at global and regional levels, but also increasingly at national levels.

Strengthening YPARD Country Chapters

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 July 2025, with applications closing at the end of the reporting period. Several new Country Chapters, including **Germany, Turkey, Mauritius, China** 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.

In Latin America, the momentum to strengthen the regional network was equally vibrant. With a goal of creating a peer-led, energizing, impactful space, YPARD LAC organized its first ever **Regional Meeting in Lima**, Peru in November. Over 60 young people from all over the region met to strengthen their network, share knowledge, and build the Regional Agenda of

Rural Youth.

The need to articulate and enhance youth participation in rural development and sustainable food systems in the Andean region was exemplified by **YPARD Peru's** Tri-national Project "**YPARD Networks in Action**" funded by the **McKnight Foundation's Global Collaborative Program for Resilient Food Systems**, which facilitated new Chapters in the region and coordinated several regional consultation meetings. These cross-border youth networks show how rural youth are organizing to voice their priorities and participate in agroecological and rural development processes. YPARD Peru has also been nurturing new chapters in LAC; in June **YPARD Ecuador** was launched, and followed by the launch of **YPARD Bolivia** later in the year.



*The newly launched YPARD Bolivia Chapter
Credit: YPARD Bolivia*

Menu for Change Challenge: Turning Youth Innovation into Impact

The Menu for Change Challenge, implemented in partnership with **EIT Food** and the **Seeding the Future Foundation**, exemplified YPARD's commitment to supporting youth innovation by enabling **young changemakers to transform ideas into tangible solutions for agrifood systems**. Completed in December 2025, the programme supported **five youth-led teams across Europe** through **seed funding, mentorship, and intensive training**, helping them develop practical initiatives ranging from agroecology and sustainable food procurement to nutrition and food education.

Participants strengthened their **technical and entrepreneurial skills** through activities such as a business bootcamp and international networking opportunities, culminating in the **presentation of their projects at Next Bite 2025 in Brussels**. Beyond individual projects, the initiative demonstrated the power of youth-

driven collaboration, showing **how early-stage ideas can evolve into scalable, real-world impact** while fostering community engagement, cross-border learning, and long-term leadership development.

The five selected projects reflected a diverse range of innovative approaches to food systems transformation. These included **two university canteen initiatives** focused on promoting sustainable and locally sourced food procurement and improving access to nutritious and affordable diets through community-based interventions, advancing **agroecological practices through a CSA farm**, and strengthening **food literacy and education among young consumers**. The fifth project developed a **dehydrated bean product** to improve nutrition and support smallholder farmers in Kenya. Collectively, these projects highlighted **the creativity and commitment of young people in addressing complex agrifood challenges**, while demonstrating the potential for locally grounded solutions to drive broader systemic change.



Snapshots of the winning teams of the MFC Challenge at the Next Bite 2025 event in Brussels | Credit: EIT Food & YPARD GCU

Professionalism (cont.)



Harriet Amondi, WYNA Fellow, showcasing her peanut butter product at an exhibition in Kenya | Credit: PELUM Kenya

WYNA Programme: Strengthening Youth and Women Leadership in Agroecology

Through the **Building Women & Youth-led Network Alliances for Agroecology and Organic Agriculture (WYNA) Programme**, YPARD embarked on our first project with GIZ. A joint initiative implemented by GIZ in collaboration with **YPARD, PELUM Kenya, and AGSN** under the **Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA)** framework, the program shows firsthand that **women and youth**, when equipped with mentorship, knowledge exchange opportunities, and platforms for visibility, **emerge as confident leaders in promoting agroecology and organic agriculture**. A key component of the programme is the **Community Solutions Fellowships and**

Internships, which support **6 young professionals implementing agroecological initiatives** in Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, and Cameroon. These projects address diverse local priorities, including **mushroom cultivation, organic hibiscus juice production, sustainable groundnut value chains, and agroecology education in schools**. As part of these fellowships, participants went through a **series of 8 in-depth training modules** during 2025, which aimed to **strengthen their knowledge of organic agriculture and agroecology**. Based on this training, fellows have developed updated project plans, and will now focus on implementing these learnings through their initiatives.

WYNA also places strong emphasis on knowledge exchange and youth convening spaces through **national and global Youth Cafés**, which provide platforms for dialogue, peer learning, and capacity building on agroecology, organic agriculture, and youth entrepreneurship. These cafés connect young practitioners, experts, and policymakers, enabling exchange across countries and strengthening a shared youth voice in food systems transformation. In addition, WYNA fellows and partners actively engage in national and regional events such as **organic agriculture weeks, agroecology forums, and regional conferences**, where they showcase innovations, build partnerships, and contribute to policy and market discussions. Through these interconnected activities, WYNA **strengthens the link between grassroots action and broader agrifood systems agendas**.

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

Through the **GP SAEP (Global Programme on Sustainable Agricultural and Environmental Policies) Project**, YPARD has continued to position **young professionals at the centre of agroecological transformation** by linking **field-based learning, policy engagement, and knowledge exchange across Africa and Latin America**. The programme has enabled **YPARD's Agroecology (AE) Fellows** across Africa and LAC to actively contribute to **strengthening rural advisory services, advancing agroecology, and amplifying youth leadership through structured learning spaces, national Communities of Practice (YCoPs), YPARD Cafés, field exchanges**, and participation in regional and global policy forums.

In March, **AE Fellows in Madagascar held a YPARD Café in Morondava**, convening over **80 participants** including young professionals, farmers, NGOs, government, and private sector actors for a dynamic exchange **on strengthening farmer capacities for agroecological transition**. The event combined presentations on **practical techniques such as composting and bio-pesticides** with **stakeholder insights and group advocacy sessions**, fostering dialogue on policy support, capacity building, and collaboration needed to advance sustainable, youth-led food systems.

Parallely, YPARD Uganda AE Fellows, **Mufuruki Frank, Ajuna Tadeo, and Okello John**, participated in the **2nd East African**

Agroecology Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in March, contributing to plenaries, thematic sessions, exhibitions, field visits, the Youth Community of Practice (YCoP), and a dedicated YPARD Café. They facilitated discussions on climate resilience, soil health, market access, and agroecological entrepreneurship, while also visiting the Seed Savers Network in Gilgil to deepen their understanding of seed sovereignty and biodiversity conservation. At the **Africa-Wide Agriculture Extension Week in Lilongwe, Malawi**, AE Fellow **Ajuna Tadeo** contributed to high-level panels, sharing insights on YPARD's work in capacity building, mentorship, digital innovation, and policy advocacy, while reflecting on his fellowship experience and the role of youth-led initiatives in strengthening rural advisory systems.



YPARD AE Fellow, Mariano Esperiant, speaking at the YPARD Café in Morondava | Credit: YPARD Madagascar

In October 2025, Uganda AE Fellows also participated in the **GP-SAEP Scientific Goggle Training and Monitoring Visit in Bugiri**, which

Professionalism (cont.)

Youth in Agroecology: YPARD's Impact on the GP SAEP Project (cont.)

introduced **participatory project design approaches** and showcased youth-led innovations such as biochar, energy-saving stoves, sack mounds, and diversified farming systems. These learning processes were further consolidated at the **GP-SAEP Experience Sharing Workshop in Kampala (November 2025)**, where Fellows from multiple districts **presented results from their YPARD Café engagements in Malawi, Kenya, Uganda**, and beyond, highlighting lessons on integrating scientific and local knowledge, biodiversity, climate resilience, and youth empowerment.

Beyond Africa, GP-SAEP AE Fellows also contributed to global learning exchanges in Latin America. In **Ecuador**, Fellow **Héctor Alfonso** led a series of YPARD Café activities focused on **strengthening organic rice production systems through participatory farmer engagement**. Over three months, he worked with **farmer groups such as the Asociación Agroindustrial El Rosario and the San Lorenzo Association**, in collaboration with **MAGAP and private-sector partners**, to **deliver practical training on integrated organic rice cultivation**. These sessions introduced bio-inputs, integrated weed management techniques, foliar nutrition, and soil restoration strategies using bioles and organic decomposers. Fellows also supported training on **reducing chemical inputs, improving soil microbiology, and addressing**

challenges such as salinity and excess iron in soils. Across all activities, **farmers demonstrated strong engagement and increasing adoption of sustainable practices**, marking a clear shift toward more resilient and environmentally responsible rice production systems.

In **Costa Rica**, AE Fellow **Priscila Angulo Aguilar** facilitated a **YPARD Café at Sun Valley Agroecological Farm**, creating a **participatory learning space for 29 young people and practitioners** from diverse regions. The session combined presentations on the AERAS Project with an in-depth farm immersion at Sun Valley Agroecological Farm in Copey de Dota, a 21-hectare diversified system integrating crops such as figs, blackberries, kale, corn, beans, and small livestock. Participants **explored agroecological practices** including integrated soil management, organic fertilization, crop rotation, cover cropping, biological pest control, and the use of living barriers. The Café provided **space for youth clusters to exchange territorial experiences and reflect on the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of agroecology**, strengthening national-level collaboration and youth engagement.

She further contributed to the **National Knowledge Exchange Meeting of the AERAS Project in San José**, where clusters, trainers, extension workers, and fellows collectively reviewed progress, shared lessons, and co-developed future implementation plans, reinforcing adaptive and locally grounded approaches to agroecological transformation.

Engagement in the RAENS Project: Amplifying Youth Voices through Practice and Learning

Through the **Research for Agroecology Network of Southern Africa (RAENS)**, YPARD has played a key role in **centering youth within agroecology research, practice, and policy dialogue** across the region. By convening youth-led YPARD Cafés in multiple countries, **participatory spaces were created** where **young farmers, students, researchers, and practitioners** engage directly with agroecological concepts through **hands-on learning, peer exchange, and field-based demonstrations**. These Cafés go beyond dialogue, offering **practical exposure to agroecology** while ensuring that youth experiences and innovations are **captured and integrated into broader RAENS knowledge products and policy processes**.

In **Tanzania**, the RAENS Café focused on **capturing youth voices through experiential and participatory learning approaches**. The Café focused on giving young people the tools and confidence to share their agroecology journeys - their successes, challenges, and innovations. During the event, **10 outstanding youth-led agroecology initiatives** were chosen to be documented through multimedia storytelling, amplifying youth perspectives and ensuring their experiences contribute to broader agroecology learning and advocacy. To support this, **participants took part in a story telling workshop**, where they built practical skills on how to document and communicate their work in compelling ways.

Beyond storytelling, the Café in Tanzania created **strong networking opportunities** for youth with **government leaders, universities, farmer field schools**, and organisations such as **ECHO East Africa** and youth food system alliances.



Snapshots from the YPARD RAENS Cafés in Tanzania, and Zambia | Credit: YPARD Tanzania and YPARD Zambia

Professionalism (cont.)

Engagement in the RAENS Project: Amplifying Youth Voices through Practice and Learning (cont.)

Local and indigenous knowledge featured strongly throughout the day. Youth from **Chihondo Village** shared practices such as **cultivating drought-resistant indigenous crops** like sorghum and millet, intercropping systems that improve soil health, natural pest management using neem and garlic, and traditional rainwater harvesting methods. These exchanges **highlighted how agroecology is deeply rooted in local experience** and innovation.

The **RAENS Café in Zambia** incorporated a **World Soil Day Exhibition**, and a **hands-on agroecology training workshop** that brought together young people and other stakeholders to share experiences on soil health, agroforestry, climate resilience, and agroecology-based enterprises. At the Exhibition, **youth showcased practical innovations** like a **board game designed as an agroecology learning tool**, **farm produce from a YPARD member**, and a **mobile soil-testing gadget** developed by a young innovator. With more than **260 people** attending the exhibition and over **70 visiting the YPARD stall**, the event highlighted **tangible contributions from youth in the community**. The training workshop focused on building **practical skills in soil health management, agroforestry, and biofertilizer making**, reaching **42 young people directly**, and revealing new avenues for youth-led services and enterprises.

The **RAENS Café in Zimbabwe** was a collaboration with the **Zimbabwe Small Organic Farmers Forum (ZIMSOF)** and the **Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (MUAST)**, and highlighted the **agroecological transformation of 30 smallholder farmers**.

Farmers demonstrated **practical techniques** to **improve soil fertility** and **moisture retention** by using ashes, livestock manure, mulch, compost, and fallen leaves. Community leaders, agroecology farmers, extension officers, and partners were shown various **rainwater harvesting methods, agroforestry systems, organic poultry production, and intercropping approaches**, that have **helped households improve food security, diversify nutrition** through organic vegetables, and **increase resilience** to climate variability, all without relying on chemical fertilizers or pesticides. These learnings were captured through visual storytelling methods to develop knowledge products, including blogs, short videos, and research outputs that will amplify the innovations in the community.



*Local produce from a smallholder farmer in Zimbabwe
Credit: YPARD Zimbabwe*

Engagement in the RAENS Project: Amplifying Youth Voices through Practice and Learning (cont.)

Across Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, the RAENS Cafés demonstrated how **combining knowledge exchange, practical learning, and community dialogue** empowers young people as active contributors to agroecological transformation.

Policy Engagement and Advocacy Training

Policy engagement remains a **key entry point for YPARD members** to build **professional skills, deepen their understanding of global governance processes, and actively contribute to shaping agrifood and climate policy**. Through the **YPARD Global Policy Working Group (PWG)**, members engage directly with **international policy agendas, gaining hands-on experience in analysing negotiations, co-developing policy positions, & contributing to global advocacy processes**.

The PWG is structured around **thematic focal areas**, with **member-selected focal points** who are mentored by the YPARD GCU throughout the policy engagement cycle, from **facilitating group discussions and consolidating inputs, to drafting and refining policy position papers**, and coordinating submissions to global processes and side events. This approach not

only strengthens the quality and consistency of YPARD's policy contributions, but also **builds the professional skills of young professionals**, equipping them to engage confidently in complex policy fora.

To complement this work, YPARD co-organized the **Changemakers for Agrifood Action webinar series** in collaboration with several partners. Building on previous editions that supported youth engagement in the Rio Conventions, the 2025 series included **introductions to key youth constituencies and stakeholder groups across the Rio Conventions**, exploring their history, mandates, and **pathways for engagement**, as well as **reflections on key negotiation outcomes** such as those from SB62 in Bonn and their implications for COP30. In Latin America, the **YPARD LAC Regional team along with LAC Chapters** organized the **Climate Action and Negotiation School for Youth** on the way to COP30, a **5 month-long online training program held in Spanish that connected young policy enthusiasts from 17 countries across LAC** to build knowledge on global and local climate crisis, and gain practical tips on negotiation and international diplomacy.

Together, these efforts have strengthened YPARD's role as both a **learning platform** and an **advocacy network, equipping youth with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to engage meaningfully in global policy processes**.

Professionalism (cont.)

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions



YPARD members across different countries planting trees to celebrate the 2025 Restoration Day event | Credit: YPARD Uganda, YPARD Cameroon, YPARD Kenya, GCU

At the country level, YPARD chapters play a dynamic role in delivering **locally relevant knowledge exchange and capacity-building activities** tailored to their contexts. Through **trainings, workshops, and community events**, they **translate global priorities into practical action on the ground**. The examples highlighted below represent only a snapshot of this work.

YPARD Restoration Day | YPARD Uganda and beyond

YPARD marked a significant milestone in its climate action efforts by hosting **YPARD Restoration Day 2025 under the theme “2025 Trees for 2025 Years”** on 1 November 2025. The initiative was developed by the **YPARD Uganda** team, and took place primarily in Balitta-Kiwenda, Wakiso District, Uganda. The event mobilized youth, communities, and partners for a **large-scale tree-planting campaign** aimed at **restoring degraded communal land**, supporting biodiversity, revitalizing soil health, and strengthening

landscapes for sustainable agroecology. The **“name-a-tree”** incentive fostered a sense of legacy and personal ownership, encouraging participants who couldn’t be there physically to sponsor a sapling. Each **sapling symbolized hope, renewal, and long-term resilience**, an active demonstration of young people’s commitment to regenerative agriculture and ecological restoration.

The initiative turned into a **global action** with a campaign to **promote restoration across borders**. YPARD Chapters all over the world were encouraged to plant trees from anywhere across the world, sharing their actions online under the hashtag #YPARDRestorationDay2025, which amplified the campaign’s visibility and global reach. Around **15 countries saw young people gathering to plant trees in their communities**, including **Cameroon, Kenya, Germany, and Nigeria**. Building on the momentum of the 2025 campaign, YPARD is committed to expanding restoration initiatives, transforming “trees for years” into an annual continental and eventually global movement.

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions (cont.)

Fungi for Her Freedom | YPARD Benin

YPARD Benin has been selected as one of the recipients of the **Migration Youth and Children Platform (MYCP) Igniting Impact Micro-Grants Program**, an initiative supporting bold, youth-led solutions to pressing global challenges. This program aims to support youth-led initiatives tackling key global challenges, specifically those working in gender justice, health, human trafficking, and climate mobility, with grants ranging between €500–€750. The micro-grant will fund YPARD Benin's innovative project titled "**Fungi for Her Freedom: Economic Empowerment Through Mushroom Farming.**" This youth-led initiative, grounded in gender justice, aims to economically empower **15 young women and displaced youth** in the rural commune of N'dali, northern Benin.

Led by YPARD Benin Country Representative **Wilfrid Adjimoti**, the initiative integrates three components. This includes **a three-day hands-on workshop** which trains participants in sustainable mushroom cultivation techniques, with each woman receiving a complete starter kit to launch her own micro-farm; **a gender justice workshop** to create space for dialogue on women's rights; and **a peer-learning session** enabling participants to share experiences, assess progress, and explore strategies for scaling their efforts. The long-term vision is to use this initiative as a replicable model across Africa.



*Mushroom training workshop being led by Wilfrid of YPARD Benin
Credit: YPARD Benin*

Empowering Farmers through Training Programs | YPARD Tanzania

In a bid to strengthen sustainable agricultural practices in Tanzania, **YPARD Tanzania**, in collaboration with the **Tanzania Agriculture Mentorship Foundation**, conducted a transformative two-day training program on April 18th and 19th, 2025. Held in Dodoma, the training targeted **local farmers from Nkuhungu and Swaswa districts**, with **50 participants** engaging in hands-on guidance in eco-friendly farming, agricultural data analytics, and crop management strategies.

Professionalism (cont.)

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions (cont.)

Affordable Organic Alternative for Chemical Fertilizers | YPARD Tanzania

YPARD Tanzania has also been working on their own local **Community Solution Project**. Spearheaded by passionate youth and sustainability advocates, **Green Harvest Organic Fertilizer** is transforming agriculture by merging innovation with environmental stewardship. The initiative was officially launched in March, in collaboration with **YPARD Tanzania team members** and the **Environmental Conservers Youth Club**. Green Harvest's flagship fertilizer is made from **food scraps, vegetable waste, and other organic materials**. It offers farmers a **sustainable, affordable alternative to chemical fertilizers**, with significant long-term benefits.



Production of Green Harvest Organic Fertilizer | Credit: YPARD Tanzania

Tree Nursery and Community Forestry Training | YPARD Zambia

In September 2025, **YPARD Zambia** members participated in a **four-day training under the FACE-NDC project** in Lusaka, combining virtual sessions and hands-on field visits to build **practical skills in tree nursery establishment and community forestry management**. Participants learned the full tree production cycle, from site selection and nursery setup to planting, watering, and long-term monitoring, while also exploring governance structures, resource mobilization, and private sector engagement in reforestation. **Field visits to local nurseries** provided real-world experience in **seedling management and indigenous species selection**, reinforcing youth capacity to contribute to climate action, sustainable land use, and community-led forest restoration initiatives.

Theory of Change in the Jingmai Mountains | YPARD China

Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2023, **Jingmai Mountain** is home to the world's oldest cultivated tea forests and the Blang ethnic community, whose cultural traditions are deeply rooted in tea cultivation. This rich cultural and ecological landscape provided the backdrop for the hybrid **local Café held by YPARD China**. The session focused on applying the Theory of Change to sustainable development in Jingmai

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions (cont.)

Theory of Change in the Jingmai Mountains | YPARD China (cont.)



A resident of the Jingmai Mountains preparing a meal with local produce
Credit: Good Food Fund

Mountain, engaging **youth and stakeholders in systems thinking around ecological conservation and rural livelihoods**. Youth explored how **heritage and biodiversity preservation** can align with sustainable development. Through interactive discussions and participatory mapping exercises, participants explored how ecological resources, community practices, and economic opportunities can be aligned to create sustainable development pathways. The Café emphasized **long-term planning, stakeholder collaboration**, and the integration of environmental and socio-economic goals, equipping participants with tools to design context-specific, impact-oriented interventions for sustainable agrifood systems.

Recycling and Gardening for Youth Leadership | YPARD Cameroon

In **Cameroon**, the YPARD Chapter partnered with the **Butterfly Foundation** to deliver a **hands-on learning programme for school children** that combined **urban gardening, recycling, and leadership development**. Through interactive sessions, participants explored agribusiness career pathways and learned to transform plastic waste into self-watering garden systems using locally available materials.

The activity emphasized teamwork, responsibility, and environmental stewardship, as students collaborated to design, plant, and manage their gardens while gaining practical skills in sustainable food production. By linking creativity, sustainability, and entrepreneurship, the initiative aimed to **flip the traditional narrative of agriculture by introducing a more dynamic, opportunity-rich vision of the sector**.



School garden club led by YPARD Cameroon CR Bebel
Credit: YPARD Cameroon

Professionalism (cont.)

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions (cont.)

Advancing Youth Careers in Agriculture | YPARD Nigeria

YPARD Nigeria's close collaboration with the **FarmCAS**, an agribusiness consulting firm, highlights the Chapter's focus on **building capacity and advancing youth careers in agriculture**. In 2025, FarmCAS and YPARD Nigeria provided **practical exposure, mentorship, and skills development opportunities** for young professionals, including engagement at the **Ife Crop Day Conference 4.0** and the **FarmCAS Career Fest**.

The FarmCAS Career Fest **links undergraduate agricultural students with practical career paths, internships, and industry mentorship**. YPARD Nigeria is a strategic partner, providing communication support, mentorship facilitation, and outreach engagement. In 2025, the Fest engaged over **500+ students across the Ekiti State University and Obafemi Awolowo University**, with over **200 students onboarded** onto the IT Placement Program and **20+ students placed on farms for 6-month industrial training**. Through structured engagements, participants gained insights into agricultural value chains, career pathways, and entrepreneurship opportunities, while strengthening their technical and professional competencies.



Snapshot from the 2025 FarmCAS Career Fest | Credit: YPARD Nigeria

Contribution to Food Loss Prevention in Europe | YPARD Albania

YPARD Albania Country Representative, **Bledar Meta**, **actively contributed to the FOLOU Twinning Regions Workshop**, engaging with European partners to address food loss and waste challenges. Through participation in knowledge exchange sessions and collaborative discussions, representatives shared insights from local contexts while learning from regional best practices and innovations. The workshop **strengthened cross-country collaboration & positioned youth as important contributors** to sustainable food system solutions in Europe, particularly in reducing post-harvest losses and improving resource efficiency.

Country-Level Capacity Development and Community Solutions (cont.)

Farm Day Out 2025 | YPARD Uganda

YPARD Uganda's second annual **Farm Day Out** brought together over **60 young people for a full-day experiential learning event centered on agroecology and ecopreneurship** at the Kyanja KCCA Farm Resource Centre. Participants engaged in **panel discussions, mentorship sessions**, and a **youth-led mini-expo** showcasing value-added products such as coffee, honey, and peanut butter, while also gaining hands-on exposure through guided farm tours featuring innovations like aquaculture systems, black soldier fly production, composting, and greenhouse farming. The event blended **technical learning with networking, cultural exchange**, and **business development**, strengthening youth capacity to pursue agroecology as both a livelihood and a pathway to resilient food systems.



Snapshots from the YPARD Uganda Farm Day Out
Credit: YPARD Uganda

Farm Day Out 2025 | YPARD Nigeria

To commemorate **World Food Day 2025**, **YPARD Nigeria** engaged students at Ado Grammar School through the Young Farmers Club, promoting awareness of sustainable agriculture and food systems. Activities included **interactive discussions, practical demonstrations**, and **knowledge-sharing sessions** designed to inspire interest in agriculture among young learners. The event emphasized the importance of youth engagement in food systems, encouraging students to view agriculture as a viable and impactful career path.

Students Exchange Tour to Germany | YPARD Uzbekistan

As part of a study tour organized by UNDP Uzbekistan to Berlin, Germany for Bachelor's students from Samarkand State University, YPARD Uzbekistan CR **Nuriddin Samatov** coordinated a meeting of the group with GCU members Genna Tesdall and Trisha Mandal in Berlin. The tour aimed to introduce the students to the global landscape of agricultural research and innovation, and organizations working in this sector. UNDP Uzbekistan representatives and students interacted with YPARD GCU members to learn more about YPARD's work and find synergies for future partnerships.

3. Knowledge Generation and Exchange

Several of YPARD's activities across its strategic fields inherently contribute to **knowledge generation and exchange**. In particular, YPARD fosters peer-to-peer and intergenerational learning through **developing youth engagement strategies, online discussion series, and in-person convenings**. YPARD's digital platforms remain central to this knowledge-sharing ecosystem, with the **website and newsletter** serving as key channels for dissemination during the reporting period. In addition, the development of **thematic infographics** this year further strengthened YPARD's ability to communicate complex information in accessible and engaging formats, enhancing the reach and impact of its knowledge exchange efforts.

Gender and Youth Strategy for the CEA-FIRST

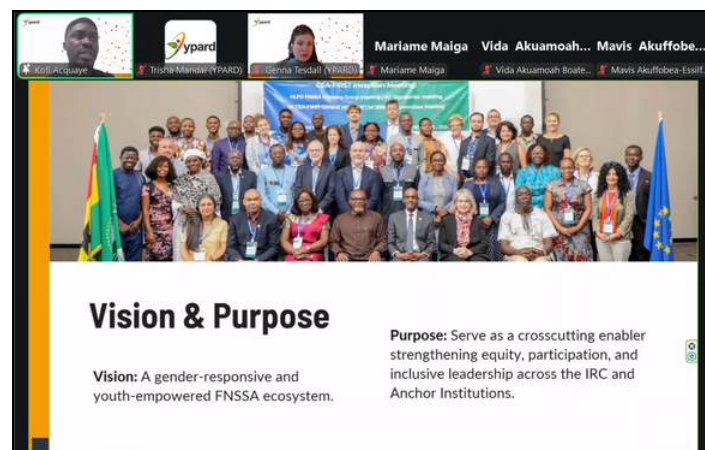
The **CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy and Action Plan** was developed under the **CEA-FIRST (Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation)** initiative, funded by the **Horizon Europe** programme to strengthen collaboration between European and African partners in advancing sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems.

YPARD played a central role in the **drafting and co-development of this strategy**, working alongside consortium partners including FARA (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa), Agrinatura (The European Alliance on

Agricultural Knowledge for Development) and CORAF (The West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development).

As co-lead, YPARD contributed its expertise as a global youth network to **ensure that the strategy meaningfully reflects the realities, priorities, and leadership potential of young people**, particularly **young women**, in agrifood systems. This included shaping the strategic framework, **facilitating consultations**, and advocating for stronger integration of youth perspectives across research, innovation, and agribusiness components.

The resulting strategy represents the **first coordinated effort within the CEA-FIRST initiative to systematically embed gender equality and youth inclusion** into its activities, providing a clear roadmap for partners to enhance participation, address structural barriers, and promote equitable opportunities across the Europe-Africa research and innovation landscape.



Snapshot from the first CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Working Group meeting convened by YPARD | Credit: YPARD GCU

Youth Engagement Strategy for the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Food Systems Integrated Programme (FS IP)

YPARD played a leading role in the development of the youth engagement strategy for the **Global Environment Facility (GEF) 8 Food Systems Integrated Program (FSIP)**, implemented by FAO and IFAD. In this capacity, YPARD worked closely with the Food Systems IP Global Coordination team in shaping a comprehensive **Global Youth Strategy** designed to support 32 country-level projects, with a focus on strengthening youth participation in agroecology, capacity development, and inclusive food systems transformation.

Central to this role was advancing meaningful youth engagement by leveraging YPARD's global networks across Africa, Asia, and Latin America to facilitate dialogue with young farmers and stakeholders. This included designing and implementing a **global survey** to capture youth

perspectives, followed by targeted consultations in selected countries to better understand priorities such as **training needs, access to finance, value chain development, and business opportunities**. YPARD worked closely with the core project design team to ensure that these insights **informed programme design, while also proposing pathways to align youth engagement within FSIP** with broader global processes such as the UN Food Systems Summit and the Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD).

YPARD also presented its approach and proposed contributions at key global convenings, including the **GEF FOLUR Workshops in Istanbul** and the **FSIP Workshop in Nairobi**, reinforcing its role as a key partner in embedding youth voices and leadership within large-scale food systems programming.

As part of its partnership with the FSIP, YPARD is also developing the **Empowering Youth for Agroecological Transformation in Agrifood Systems Programme (EYAAS)** that will be implemented in selected countries in 2026.



Trisha Mandal, Partnerships & Comms Manager at the FOLUR workshop in Istanbul | Credit: GLF Comms



Ajuna Tadeo, Program Coordinator, with participants at the FSIP workshop in Nairobi | Credit: FAO

Knowledge Generation and Exchange (cont.)

Monthly Newsletter and Dissemination of Professional Opportunities

YPARD continues to strengthen its role as a key **information hub** for young professionals in agrifood systems through its **Monthly Newsletter**, which was consistently produced throughout 2025. The newsletter highlights **key updates on YPARD's work**, including specific focus on the different on-ground activities carried out by Country Chapters and Regional teams. Upcoming events, partner activities, and opportunities for engagement are also incorporated into the newsletter. It serves as an **important communication channel to keep members and partners connected** across regions, while also highlighting emerging trends, events, and initiatives relevant to YPARD's work in the agrifoods sector.

A core feature of this dissemination work is the **Monthly Opportunity Roundup**, which remains one of YPARD's most widely accessed and engaged-with outputs across both the newsletter and social media platforms. In line with YPARD's broader mission to facilitate access to resources and capacity-building opportunities, the Roundup curates a **wide range of professional pathways for young people**, including job vacancies, internships, fellowships, scholarships, training programmes, research calls, competitions, and funding opportunities relevant to agrifood systems and rural development. This aligns with YPARD's wider **Opportunities** platform, which serves as a global repository of youth-focused calls. In the

future, YPARD will explore stronger collaboration with partner networks such as YIL and EIT Food Alumni to streamline and enhance the visibility of shared opportunities.

AERAS Newsletter: Strengthening Knowledge Sharing on Agroecology and Rural Advisory Systems



Preview of AERAS Newsletter Editions

As part of its role in the GP-SAEP/AERAS project, YPARD is responsible for the **compilation, coordination, and publication of the AERAS Newsletter**, working jointly with project partners to document progress, share learning, and amplify voices from across the agroecology and rural advisory systems network. In 2025, YPARD led the development and publication of Edition 3 and Edition 4, ensuring continuity in storytelling, visibility of field activities, and dissemination of lessons emerging from project implementation across Africa and Latin America.

Knowledge Generation and Exchange (cont.)

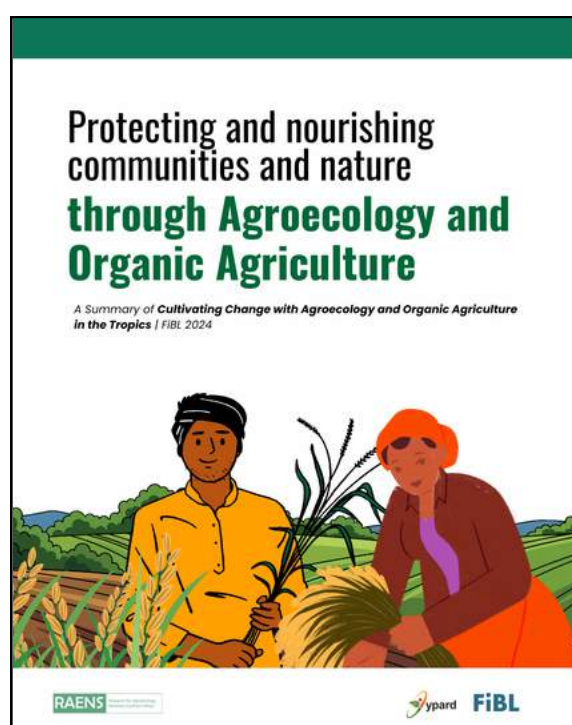
RAENS Knowledge Dissemination: Promoting Agroecology and Organic Agriculture

As part of the work on the RAENS project, YPARD developed several **thematic infographics** to disseminate and promote knowledge products developed by partners in the RAENS consortium. The aim of this activity was to bring more visibility to key policy briefs and training offerings and to widely share these expert-curated knowledge to young professionals.

Five infographics were developed in partnership with the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and CIFOR-ICRAF. Resources for the infographics included statistic reports, trend analysis documents, as well as thematic knowledge products on sustainable management of pests.

The first infographic presented a summary of the different modules under the **Organic Agriculture Training Manual**, an expert-curated knowledge resource that has curated modules on methods and approaches to make farms more organic as well as productive. Targetted at farmers, students, and extension agents, the infographic promotes the main modules of this comprehensive manual.

Key documents including the report titled ***The World of Organic Agriculture: Statistics and Key Trends 2025*** developed by FiBL and IFOAM-Organics International and the policy dossier titled ***Cultivating Change with agroecology and***



Preview of infographic on agroecology and organic agriculture

organic agriculture in the tropics developed by FiBL formed the basis of the second and third infographics respectively.

Additionally, two thematic infographics based on resources from CIFOR-ICRAF were developed to summarize and visually represent the management of fall armyworm, a pest that attacks key crops in different regions across Africa. The first of these is presented low cost pest management approaches for fall armyworm and the second looked at a case study of fall armyworm management in Southern Africa.

YPARD LAC Regional Dialogue

For the first time ever, YPARD LAC held a 3 day **YPARD Latin American Regional Dialogue** in 2025 that brought together more than **60 young people** from across the region in **Lima, Peru**.

The gathering served as a key milestone for YPARD Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), **strengthening regional collaboration and co-creating a shared agenda for advancing fairer, more sustainable agrifood systems**.

Through a combination of workshops, forums, and field visits, participants reaffirmed the central role of youth as active protagonists of change in their territories.

mechanisms to support rural youth initiatives. Participants further engaged in **a field visit to the Vegetable Programme at the National Agrarian University La Molina**, providing hands-on exposure to research and innovation in sustainable agriculture.

The meeting also featured a **strong capacity-building component**, delivered through three thematic workshops designed to strengthen technical and organizational skills within the network. The first, led by **Yenifer Carmona** (YPARD Mexico), focused on **technology transfer for training social enterprises**; the second workshop by **Ricardo Guillén** (YPARD Peru), explored **project management tools including**



Snapshots from the YPARD LAC Regional Meeting | Credit: YPARD LAC

A key feature of the meeting was the development and presentation of the **YPARD LAC Regional Agenda for Rural Youth**, alongside knowledge exchange sessions between country chapters and partners. The programme also included participation from the International Pope Center in a forum titled “From the Gap to the Proposal: Towards a Fund for Rural Youth”, contributing to discussions on financing

theory of change and design thinking; and the final workshop focused on **building alliances and strengthening networking strategies**, led by **Edwin Prado** (YPARD Brazil). Together, these sessions equipped participants with practical tools to enhance their impact and reinforce collaboration across YPARD LAC chapters.

Knowledge Generation and Exchange (cont.)

YPARD Peru Trinational Project and Regional Youth Meetings 2025: Strengthening Youth Networks Across the Andes

In 2025, YPARD Peru advanced a major regional integration effort through the launch of the **YPARD Networks in Action** Trinational Project, designed to strengthen youth-led processes in agrifood systems across **Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia**. The initiative marked a significant step in **consolidating a connected Andean youth network**, enabling structured collaboration between newly established national chapters and **fostering joint action on rural development priorities**. As part of this process, **YPARD Ecuador** and **YPARD Bolivia** were formally strengthened and launched, bringing together young people committed to building inclusive rural futures. The project focused on **enhancing youth leadership, facilitating cross-border learning, and strengthening organizational capacity through coordinated activities and joint planning across the three countries**.

Complementing this regional initiative, YPARD Peru also facilitated a series of **regional youth meetings in Cajamarca and Cusco**, creating **important platforms for rural youth** to articulate their priorities and strengthen local and regional advocacy. The **First Regional Meeting on Rural Youth in Cajamarca** brought together young people from diverse rural territories to share experiences on challenges such as access to land, education, and employment, while also highlighting youth-led solutions in agriculture and community development. Similarly, the **Cusco Regional Youth Meeting** provided a participatory space for youth to discuss territorial development, agroecology, and rural innovation, reinforcing the importance of youth inclusion in decision-making processes. Across both meetings, participants engaged in **dialogue sessions, group reflections, and knowledge exchange activities**, strengthening their capacity to collectively advocate for more equitable and sustainable rural development policies.

These initiatives reflect **YPARD Peru's growing role as a regional connector**, supporting the emergence of a strong Andean youth network.



Snapshots from the Regional Meetings in the Andean region | Credit: YPARD Peru, YPARD Bolivia

YPARD Member Engagements for Knowledge Generation and Exchange

In addition to written showcasing of young professional voices on the YPARD website, newsletter, and other channels, YPARD also nominates members to speaking engagements at seminal regional and international congresses for them to share their perspectives, practice public speaking, and build networks. Below are some examples of these member engagements

AERAS Fellows at the 2nd East Africa Agroecology Conference

From 25 to 28 March 2025, the Argyle Grand Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, hosted the **2nd East African Agroecology Conference (EAAC)**, convening diverse stakeholders passionate about agroecological transformation. The **Uganda AE Fellows** actively engaged in key sessions, sharing insights and advocating for greater youth involvement in agroecology across the region. A major highlight was the **Youth Community of Practice (YCoP)** session held during the PELUM side event. This interactive space enabled young agroecologists to exchange ideas, challenges, and innovative solutions for advancing sustainable agriculture.

YPARD LAC at the Global Land Forum

From June 16 to 21, 2025, in Ocaña and Bogotá (Colombia), the **Global Land Forum for Youth (GLFY)** and the **Global Land Forum (GLF)** were held, key spaces for dialogue on the future of the



YPARD LAC Regional team and Country Chapter members at the Global Land Conference | Credit: YPARD LAC

planet, land rights, and the role of youth in building peace, climate justice, and sustainable development. YPARD LAC actively participated in both events, **representing rural youth in Latin America and the Caribbean**. As a result, participants **drafted a global manifesto** demanding greater recognition, protection, and real participation in land governance processes. The document highlights **the urgency of secure and equitable access to land for rural and indigenous youth**, respect for collective rights, and the need to include their voices in climate and land decisions. The **manifesto was presented to international leaders** and organizations as a call for concrete action and intergenerational commitment to social and environmental justice.

Our delegation was made up of the Regional Coordinator for YPARD LAC, **Sebastián Pedraza**, and representatives from **YPARD Colombia**, Mexico, and Brazil, who were able to attend these events thanks to the support of partner organizations, youth networks, and members of the International Land Coalition (ILC).

YPARD Member Engagements for Knowledge Generation and Exchange

(cont.)

YPARD Indonesia at the Global Landscapes Forum Leadership Camp in Asia



Participants at the GLF Landscape Leadership Camp, Indonesia | Credit: YIL

In a pivotal gathering of emerging environmental leaders, **Mukhlis Jamal Musa Holle**, the Country Representative of YPARD Indonesia, played a prominent role in the **2025 GLF Landscape Leadership Camp** held from April 21–23 at the CIFOR/ICRAF Headquarters in Bogor, West Java. Organized by the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF), this intensive camp brought together 50 young leaders from nine countries across Asia. Jamal was a featured speaker during a key session focused on youth-led environmental movements, where he presented YPARD's global role and YPARD Indonesia's future plans.

YPARD Kenya at GLF Africa 2025 and Youth in Landscapes Workshop

In Nairobi, the YPARD Kenya played an active role in advancing youth leadership and visibility at the Youth in Landscapes Workshop and the **Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Africa 2025**. **Christine Bonareri** of YPARD Kenya highlighted the importance of empowering young people as present and not just future leaders in landscape restoration, agroecology, and sustainable land management. Representatives engaged in dialogue sessions, knowledge exchanges, and networking activities, sharing experiences on youth-led initiatives and advocating for stronger inclusion of youth perspectives in environmental and agrifood decision-making spaces.



Christine Bonareri at the GLF Workshop in Nairobi
Credit: YPARD Kenya

YPARD Member Engagements for Knowledge Generation and Exchange

(cont.)

YPARD Agroecology Fellows represented at the Africa-Wide Agriculture Extension Week

From May 12th to 14th, 2025, the **Africa-Wide Agriculture Extension Week (AAEW)** convened stakeholders in Lilongwe, Malawi. This high-level continental event gathered **agricultural extension professionals, researchers, policymakers, development partners, and youth leaders** from across Africa. Among the participants was **Ajuna Tadeo**, YPARD Uganda Country Representative, YPARD Steering Committee Member, and youth fellow under the GP-SAEP project. Tadeo actively participated in two key panel events: the **“Accelerating Agroecological Transformation through Rural Advisory Services (ÆRAS) and Youth/YPARD Café”** and the RAENS Project panel. These engagements served as platforms to underscore YPARD’s role in promoting youth engagement in agroecological transitions and extension services.

YPARD Kenya at the Together Conference and Kisumu Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems Stakeholder's Workshop

The Together Conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya, from February 18th to 20th, 2025, provided a powerful platform for amplifying the voices of women in agriculture. Organized by Deutsche



YPARD Kenya CR Jenice Achieng Audi at the Together Conference | Credit: YPARD Kenya

Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), in collaboration with Kenya’s Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, AMKA Africa, and CARE, the event aimed to drive gender-transformative approaches in food security and sustainable agriculture. **YPARD Kenya representatives contributed to keynote discussions, panel sessions, and workshops.**

At Kibabii University, in collaboration with Rikolto East Africa, hosted a **stakeholders’ workshop in Kisumu County** focused on enhancing sustainable food systems and promoting urban agriculture. The one-day event brought together diverse actors in the agri-food sector to **explore innovative solutions to food insecurity** and to reflect on the future of food systems in Kisumu and beyond. Among the invited participants was **Jenice Achieng Audi**, the Country Representative of YPARD Kenya. Her participation brought a crucial perspective to the table: the urgent need to center young people in conversations and interventions around agriculture and food systems.

YPARD Member Engagements for Knowledge Generation and Exchange (cont.)



Snapshots from the AWOLA Expo in Nairobi | Credit: PELUM Kenya and YPARD

YPARD and WYNA at AWOLA Expo 2025: Championing Women's Leadership in Agroecology

At the **Africa Women Leaders in Agroecology (AWOLA)** Expo 2025, YPARD, through the WYNA programme, **actively contributed to advancing women's leadership in agroecology** by creating space for youth voices and gender-responsive dialogue.

Ednah Kukundakwe, the Communications and Networking Coordinator at YPARD, gave opening remarks at the event with a compelling message on the **indispensable role of young professionals and women in agroecology, food sovereignty, and community resilience**. Her words framed the Expo as not just a gathering, but a collective call to reposition women and youth at the heart of Africa's agricultural future. WYNA Community Solution Fellows, **Harriet**

Amondi and Irene Gitau, contributed actively to the vibrant exhibition space and learning exchanges. Their involvement illustrated the depth of youth innovation and the promise of the next generation of agroecology champions.

A key moment of the Expo was when WYNA fellow Harriet was awarded the **2025 "Youth Trailblazer in Agroecology"** for her thriving agroecological enterprise on **groundnut value addition**. The recognition particularly celebrates individuals who champion **community resilience, policy advocacy, women's leadership, and environmentally sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship** in the agroecology space. Harriet's work demonstrates how traditional, drought- and disease-resistant groundnut varieties can be conserved and commercialized while empowering rural women through contract farming arrangements. Harriet was commended for her **outstanding leadership and work promoting sustainable groundnut supply chains**, youth-led agroecology and community-rooted food systems.

YPARD Member Engagements for Knowledge Generation and Exchange

(cont.)

Virtual Webinars and Global Cafés for Knowledge Exchange

YPARD continued to strengthen its role as a global convener of dialogue through its well-established **Global Cafés** and **high-level webinar engagements**. The **Global YPARD Cafés** covered a diverse range of timely and strategic topics, including **agroecology, youth advocacy, community organizing, and resource mobilization**. Delivered on a periodic basis, these interactive sessions created inclusive spaces for young professionals to exchange knowledge, build skills, and engage directly with experts and decision-makers. The sessions not only amplified youth perspectives but also provided practical insights and tools, reinforcing YPARD's commitment to capacity development and peer-to-peer learning.

YPARD also collaborated with several Country Chapters to host targeted webinars. In a **Women's Day special webinar**, YPARD highlighted the transformative journeys of young women in the network while addressing systemic barriers to participation and leadership, and a **Youth Day special webinar on food safety** emphasized how youth interventions and local actions on driving food safety. In a hybrid event, YPARD explored advancing climate and sustainability discussions through the session **Circular Economy as a Climate Solution: Youth Voices from Agri-food Systems and Beyond**, which showcased youth-led approaches to

circularity, including regenerative practices and waste-to-value innovations, and linked grassroots action to global climate agendas.

In parallel, YPARD played a key role in global policy dialogue through its position as **Co-Chair of the Rural Youth Employment Thematic Working Group** under the **Global Donor Platform for Rural Development**. In this capacity, YPARD **co-organized the high-level webinar *Investing in Youth: The Role of Development Banks and Development Finance for Youth in a Changing Landscape***. This event brought together development banks, policymakers, and youth representatives to explore how financial systems can better respond to the needs and realities of young people in agrifood systems, particularly in the context of shifting global development priorities.

YPARD also contributed to shaping global discourse at the **GDPRD Annual General Assembly** through the thematic session ***The Future of Youth in Agrifood Systems: Tackling the Double Challenge of Access to Land and Finance***. This session highlighted persistent structural barriers faced by rural youth while advancing practical solutions, including innovative financing mechanisms, policy reforms, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Looking ahead, YPARD will continue its leadership as Co-Chair of the Thematic Working Group alongside the European Commission, further reinforcing its influence in global advocacy for rural youth employment and inclusive agrifood systems.

YPARD Member Engagements for Knowledge Generation and Exchange

(cont.)

Podcasts and Youth Storytelling

Outreach of YPARD members and their initiatives was expanded through **podcasting**, that leveraged storytelling to elevate youth voices and share lived experiences from across the global network. At the international level, YPARD leadership was featured in the **Food.Farms.Future podcast series**, produced by the **Global Donor Platform for Rural Development**. Episodes featuring **Steering Committee Chair Sebastian Pedraza** and Director **Genna Tesdall** explored the evolving role of youth in agrifood systems, highlighting both **challenges and opportunities related to financing, employment, and leadership** in a rapidly changing global landscape.



YPARD SC Chair and LAC Coordinator Sebastian Pedraza featured in the Food.Farms.Future podcast

At the regional level, **YPARD Peru launched Territorio Vivo**, a podcast dedicated to amplifying the **voices of rural youth** actively

shaping sustainable development within their territories. The series centers on **authentic, community-rooted narratives**, combining personal storytelling with broader reflections on sustainability, resilience, and social transformation.



YPARD Peru's Territorio Vivo podcast

Through Territorio Vivo, listeners are introduced to **inspiring examples of youth-led action**, including a **young beekeeper working to protect native biodiversity** while strengthening community resilience, and initiatives such as **Eco Kawsay**, which promotes **recycling, circular economy practices, and environmental education**. The podcast also provides space for young people to reflect on their roles as agents of change, sharing **personal journeys that connect identity, environment, and sustainable livelihoods**.





Conclusion:

**Empowering Youth
to Sustainably
Transform our
Agrifood Systems**

YPARD successfully completed its **external financial audit for 2024** in accordance with ISA 800 standards, conducted by dhpg GmbH (Germany), reinforcing the organization's commitment to transparency and strong financial governance. The 2025 audit process is currently underway.

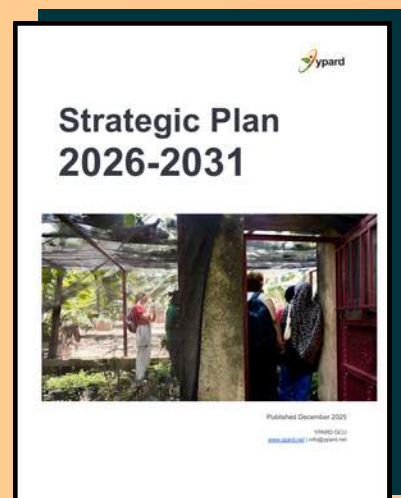
Throughout the reporting period, **YPARD also continued to strengthen its internal governance frameworks**, including the development and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The organization maintains a publicly available, member-reviewed **Gender and Anti-Discrimination Strategy**, alongside a **Sexual Harassment and Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policy**. In line with its values, procurement processes are also being progressively refined to prioritize women- and youth-led initiatives and, where possible, agroecology-based sourcing.

Strategically, 2025 marked an important phase in YPARD's organisational development, as the network advanced **the formulation of its next Strategic Plan**. This process was informed by an extensive global member survey and a series of consultations with members, staff, and external partners. It also drew on key reference documents, including the 2021-2025 Joint Operational Plan developed with GFRAS, and the 2024 external review conducted by the Berner Fachhochschule (BFH-HAFL).

The YPARD Strategic Plan 2026-2031

was publicly released in April, 2026.

The full document can be accessed [here](#).



Building on these foundations,
**YPARD remains committed to
advancing the leadership,
visibility, and professional
development of young people in
agrifood systems globally.**

Through policy engagement, capacity-building initiatives, and multi-level partnerships, the organisation continues to ensure that youth perspectives meaningfully shape the transformation of food systems towards greater sustainability, equity, and resilience.

YPARD Global Coordination Unit

Report published in April, 2026.

