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PRESENTATION

THE CONCEPT

The name derives from the ancient Greece where young people were trained in a *gymnasium* by a mentor, who was responsible for their education path. During this period, they were taught all kind of arts, economics, politics, law, to make sure their education was complete and successful.

The WFO Gymnasium programme is a high-level capacity building programme aimed at training young farmers to make them become future leaders in the agricultural sector, implemented in close partnership with Bayer.

In the present economy, education is at the centre of all professional experiences and, like in ancient times, it is the most valuable asset for all. Soft skills acquisition and intellectual capital management are crucial for succeeding in a highly intense competitive environment requiring a diverse knowledge and high-level specialization. This is the spirit of the Gymnasium programme, considering that today's young farmers play a critical role for the achievement of global food security, tackling the climate change, improving the viability level on the farm, and thus contributing to the shift towards more sustainable and resilient food systems.

This role has been recognized by the UN Rome-based agencies and will be strengthened during the implementation period of the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028, UNDF¹

As a member of the UNDF steering committee, WFO is engaged in promoting the empowerment of young farmers as key players in the achievement of food security and sustainable development.

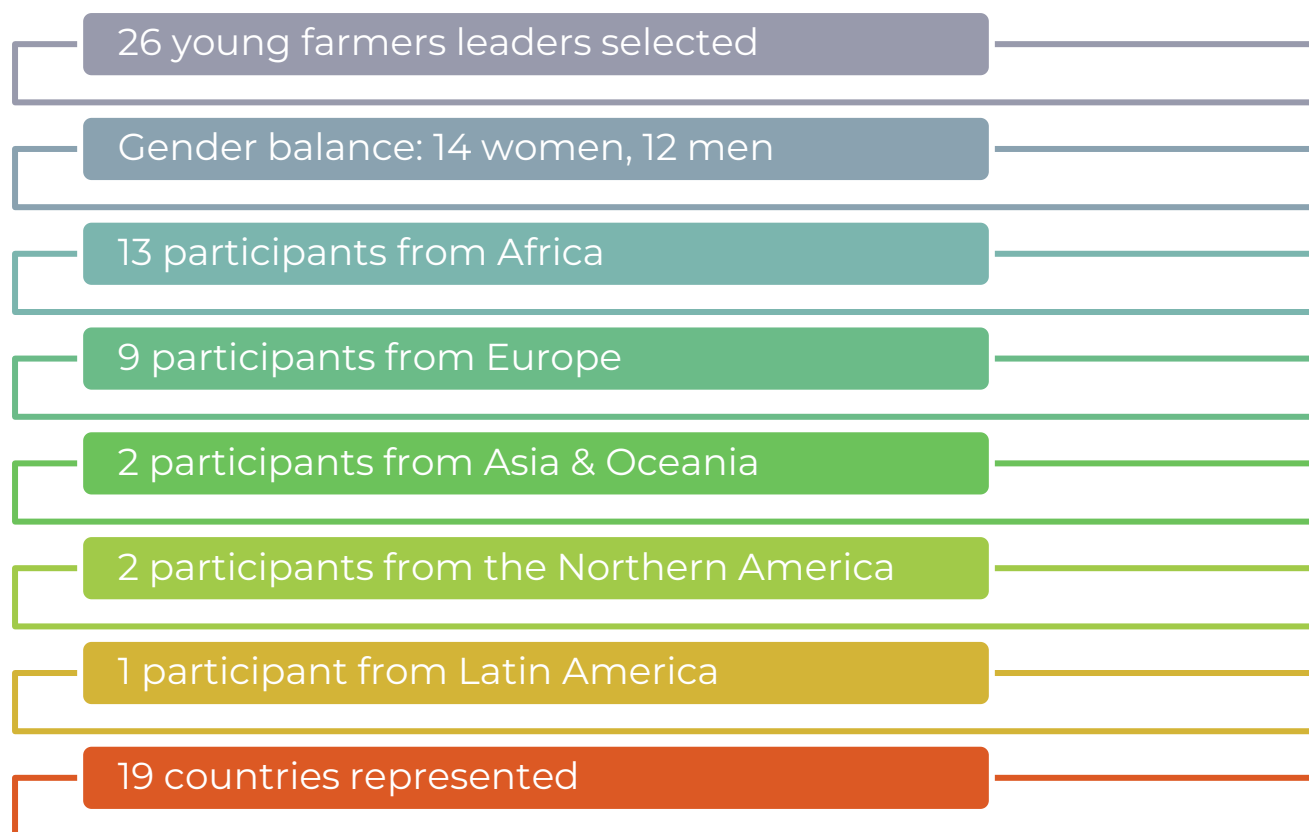
Implemented by WFO with the support of Bayer, this initiative intends to enhance the capacity of today's young farmers by exposing them to training modules on topics related to the global agricultural agenda. Young farmers receive lessons from international leaders, who work in the various policy areas at global level and also have the opportunity to attend and be actively engaged in global events related to agriculture (i.e. plenary sessions of the Committee on World Food Security, CFS, Global Forum on Food and Agriculture, GFFA). Also, starting from 2020 when the second edition begun, a Leadership Programme has been integrated as part of the training to increase young farmers' soft skills as well and provide a comprehensive education.

The Gymnasium group is composed of around 20 young farmers from all over the world. The second edition of the programme started in November 2020 and closed at the WFO 2022 General Assembly which took place in Budapest, from 7 to 10 June. Although as per the MoU signed with Bayer in 2017 each edition of the programme was intended to last for 30 months with the young farmers gathering physically at least twice per year on the occasion of international conferences related to agriculture, so to gain an exposure to the reality of the global negotiations on agriculture, this was not possible unfortunately during to the Covid19 outbreak. Therefore, the second edition happened virtually, with a final in-person meeting at the WFO General Assembly on 7-10 June 2022.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1099026/>

THE SECOND EDITION AT A GLANCE

Here are some numbers which describe the second edition:



SECOND EDITION (2020-2022) - MODULES

1st SESSION - 25-27 NOVEMBER 2020

From November 25 to 27, 2020, the new class of young farmers attending the WFO Gymnasium High- Level Capacity Building Programme convened digitally for the first session of the 2020 – 2022 edition of the training programme.

This first session's overall theme was "Science, Research and Innovation in the agricultural sector: how to close the gap with the farmers". International experts joining the session as teachers included **Peer Ederer**, Programme and Science Director, Global Food and Agribusiness Network and member of WFO Scientific Council; **Tony Siantonas**, Director, Scaling Positive Agriculture, WBCSD; **Serpil Tascioglu**, Director Foods Innovation & Transformation, Unilever; **Giovanni Frajese**, WFO Scientific Advisor and Coordinator of the WFO Scientific Council; **Suzanne van Tilburg**, Global Head Food & Agri Networks, Rabobank; **Natasha Santos**, VP Stakeholders Strategy and Affairs and **Mark Edge**, Director, Seeds & Traits Business Development for LMICs, Bayer AG.

Furthermore, the students worked together and exercised their leadership skills with life coaches, **Annalisa Maffey** and **Giada Boni**. Starting from this first session, the Leadership Programme on soft skills accompanied the overall 2020 – 2022 edition to make young farmers able to develop and present their own positions on matters related to the global agricultural agenda with the self-confidence and leadership skills of international high-level experts on agriculture.

2nd SESSION - 2-4 AUGUST 2021

The second session of the WFO Gymnasium High- Level Capacity Building Programme took place on 2-4 August 2021, back-to-back the Pre-UN Food Systems Summit that took place in a hybrid format at FAO headquarters in Rome, from 26 to 28 July 2021.

On the first day, the young farmers had the opportunity to meet and exchange with the following international experts: **Julia Fendel**, Project Manager, AgrarKontakte International (AKI) who presented the Transitional Agriculture project, a 3-year exchange programme based on a close exchange with African Farmers' Organisations on challenges and solutions about family farming in fast-changing, transitional contexts.

Furthermore, the Gymnasium group had a very interesting session co-led by **Earlene Cruz**, Founder and Director at Kitchen Connection and **Khaled Emam**, representative of the UN Children & Youth Major Group, aimed at showing two examples of the work youth was doing at the global level.

On the second day, the session continued with a lecture by **Yixuan Shao**, Partnerships Officer, UNFSS Secretariat, who talked about how the producers were engaged in the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) process as well as what the expectations were towards the UNFSS to take place in September 2021.

Finally, the last session featured the participation of **Jim Leandro Cano**, Chair, Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger with the support of Bram Van Hecke, President of Groene Kring, member of the Gymnasium and WFO representative in the Youth Alliance. Finally, on the third day, the Gymnasium group had a session with the life coaches, **Annalisa Maffey** and **Giada Bono**, to work on soft skills.

3rd SESSION - 15-17 NOVEMBER 2021

From November 15 to 17, the group of young farmers participated in the WFO third session of the Gymnasium High- Level Capacity Building Programme.

This third session took place at the margins of the UNFCCC COP26 that took place in Glasgow, Scotland, from 31 October to 12 November, and its focus was on climate change.

On the first day, the students worked together and exercised their leadership skills with their life coaches, **Annalisa Maffey** and **Giada Bono**, with a very dynamic session focused on negotiation skills.

On 16 November, the session was organised around the Climakers Alliance, its mandate and work within the regional and global climate change debate. Therefore, after a first overall presentation by **Giovanna Amelio**, WFO Climakers Coordinator, the African experience was shared by **Emmerance Tuyishime**, Programme Officer, PAFO and by **Norbert Tuyishime**, Agribusiness and Trade Officer, EAFF.

On 17 November, the students had the opportunity to hear from the following experts: **Chia-Ling**, Division Chief, Latin American and Caribbean Division and Thomas Peng, Specialist of the project of Improving Productivity of Rice and Common bean from ICDF Taiwan; **Rudolph Dadey**, Youth Engagement Coordinator and **Noëlle Moutout**, Associate Legal Officer at WIPO; **Benjamin Rivoire**, Head of Seed Sector Cooperation and Regional Development, UPOV; **Monica McBride**, Director of Global Partnerships for Environment and Landscapes, Crop Science Division, Bayer.

4th SESSION - BUDAPEST, 7-8 JUNE 2022

The final Gymnasium session took place in the framework of the WFO 2022 General Assembly, in Budapest. This was the first occasion for the students to finally meet in person as well as to meet with other stakeholders. During the General Assembly, the young farmers had the chance to present to the GA their final group work, the Gymnasium young farmers' Manifesto, as well as to network and promote the Gymnasium programme to external partners and stakeholders, thus practicing the skills gained during their Leadership programme.

On 7 June in the morning, the Gymnasium students had the opportunity to do a final session on self-leadership with the coach Annalisa Maffey. The session was the occasion to recap the journey they had been doing so far as well as to interact among each other in person, consolidate the skills gained and define the action plan to continue their growth as Leaders.

Furthermore, in the afternoon, **Caterina Luppa**, ANGA, Italy and **Khoushou Singh Sewraj**, F.A.L.C.O.N Association, Mauritius who were nominated by the group to make the presentation of the group's final work in front of the General Assembly, had the opportunity to train with Annalisa and prepare for the presentation of the day after.



On 8 June Caterina and Khoushou, on behalf of the entire class of young farmers attending the second edition, took the stage to present their final group work, "**WFO Gymnasium Program Manifesto – Linkages Between Food Systems and Climate Change**". The presentation was followed by a graduation ceremony during which Dr De Jager, former WFO President, called the Gymnasium students attending the GA one by one on stage to give them their diploma.

Finally, on 8 June in the afternoon, the students had the opportunity to meet with **Jennifer Crall**, Global Head of Partnerships at Bayer, to exchange with her about their experience as Gymnasium students.



THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME: A TRAINING WITHIN THE TRAINING

The Leadership programme has been designed to accompany the young leaders in a progressive development of abilities and capabilities functional to their roles in their respective organizations and communities.

The journey started with an onboarding that set the context and the rules of the game, young leaders committed to play full out, support each other and be generous. The coaches defined and explained the technology tools and interactions models and they became a model and standard for the young leaders to immediately replicate in their endeavors.

The first module was about Self Leadership to build awareness around their mission, vision, goals and to guide them in defining and taking ownership of their results and growth

The second module was about public speaking and networking to equip the leaders with skills to communicate, influence and inspire. By teaching how to create a Relationship action, the leaders got a tool to make productive and systematic their networking.

The third module was about negotiation skills the leaders learnt about negotiating profiles, tools and techniques to apply to conversations and negotiations.

The Fourth and last module was about innovation and facilitation and provided tools and mindset element to ensure the young leaders become catalyst for change.

During the GA there was also a specific session dedicated to the integration and consolidation of the skills and definition of the action plan to continue the leader's growth.

Between modules, young leaders participated to periodic meetings to celebrate their progress, to get specific and additional content related to the tools and to practice with fellow colleagues.

A final project work with a real application offered the opportunity to the leaders to put into practice their learnings.

Contents with a specific focus on mindset, technology to foster and enhance collaboration and creativity and continuous experimentation with human relationship are the unique elements of the program.

The Programme has provided knowledge, skills and also a constant opportunity to learn facilitation, innovation and meta skills such as consistency, ability to lead and make a team commit, organize and mobilize resources and much more.

The participation to the GA provided the opportunity to speak in front of the delegates as well as at the Gymnasium booth, it gave them the opportunity to network and negotiate deals on the spot.

ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Here below are some examples of the international exposure that the Gymnasium programme has been providing to young farmers in this second edition, as part of their training, thus giving them the opportunity to advocate and network at the international level:

World Soil Day 2020

On 3 December 2020, on the occasion of the World Soil Day, WFO Gymnasium students Hannes Bumann and Chrispen Mununga were interviewed by CropLife International about the actions next-generation farmers are taking to protect soil health and mitigate the impact of climate change. https://www.wfo-oma.org/wfo_news/world-soil-day-wfo-gymnasium-students-make-youngsters-voice-heard/

STEP into a Better World: A call to action, 9-10 December 2020

On December 10, 2020, WFO as a member of the Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism (SEM) of the United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), supported the SEM in organising a one-hour session titled “Strengthen collaboration for local food systems resilience”, as part of the Planetary Emergency Partnership conference “STEP into a Better World: A call to action” (9-10 December). The debate featured the participation of, among others, Khoushou Sewraj, young farmer from F.A.L.C.O.N Association, WFO member organization in Mauritius, and Gymnasium student, who represented the stakeholders’ perspective, particularly from the farming sector. The session focused on how important it is to build resilience and shift towards more sustainable and resilient food systems especially now that COVID-19 exacerbated existing economic and social inequalities, climate change-induced disasters are increasing and so are food insecurity and malnutrition levels.

Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, GFFA (2020, 2021, 2022)

Gymnasium young farmers addressing the ministerial conference at the end of the GFFA week

GFFA 2020: A delegation of young farmers from the WFO, including some of the young farmers enrolled in this second Gymnasium edition (i.e. Julie Bissonnette from Canada) travelled to Berlin and participated in the GFFA 2020, invited by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). The topic was “Food for all! Trade for Secure, Diverse and Sustainable Nutrition” and the young farmers got the opportunity to meet other young leaders from across the globe, as well as other stakeholders. Furthermore, the young farmers worked on a joint declaration on the GFFA’s subject to be presented at the Berlin Agriculture Ministers’ Conference, which represents the world’s largest meeting of agriculture ministers and high-level representatives of international organisations, happening at the end of the GFFA week. https://www.wfo-oma.org/wfo_news/wfo-young-farmers-joining-the-gffa2020/

GFFA 2021: 17 future farmers’ leaders selected from the Gymnasium students were part of the WFO delegation at the GFFA 2021. The event happened virtually around the overall theme “How to feed the world in times of pandemic and climate change?” and the young farmers had the opportunity to work on a joint declaration to be presented to the ministerial conference as per the previous years. Khoushou Singh Sewraj from Mauritius, currently enrolled in the Gymnasium programme, was selected to represent the Young Farmers’ Delegation and deliver the statement which is available at the following link <https://www.gffa-berlin.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GFFA-2021-Young-Farmer-Statement.pdf> https://www.wfo-oma.org/wfo_news/gffa-2021-young-farmers-and-future-leaders-in-agriculture-sent-out-a-strong-message/

GFFA 2022: From January 24 to 28, 2022, the 16 young farmers including a delegation selected from the Gymnasium class, joined the 14th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (2022 GFFA) participating in the International Young Farmers' Forum, upon invitation by the Germany Minister for Food and Agriculture (BMEL). The young farmers had the opportunity to exchange on the topics of the 2022 GFFA "Sustainable Land Use: Food Security Starts with the Soil". Chrispen Mununga from Zimbabwe, Gymnasium student, was selected to deliver the statement at the Agriculture Ministers' Conference in front of over 60 Ministers of Agriculture from all over the world.

Farmers' Dialogue on Public Policy Cycle for Family Farming, May 2021

On May 4, 2021, WFO together with IFAD and FAO as joint Secretariat of the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 (UNDF), organised a farmers' consultation on the Modular Training Programme for Public Policy Cycle on Family Farming (MTP). The session was repeated twice on the same day to allow the participation of as many farmers as possible from different regions of the world. Gymnasium group (Alumni and ongoing second edition) participated in the virtual Farmers' Consultation bringing many concrete suggestions and experiences.

Food Systems Summit Dialogue (FSSD), "Delivering a Global Coalition for Game Changing Solutions at Scale", June 2021

On June 17, 2021, Bayer, the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), and Columbia University's Earth Institute co-organised a multi-stakeholder dialogue ahead of the UN Food Systems Summit to bring together key stakeholders from across our global food system to pinpoint game-changing solutions to build a transformative path to an equitable, sustainable, climate-smart future. A few Gymnasium members (Ruramiso Mashumba, Edith Alula, Lakshuman Aryal and Bram Van Hecke) were invited and participated in the dialogue, bringing the young farmers' perspective.

Food Systems Summit Dialogue (FSSD), "Our Food Systems at risk; Scaling up resilient Agri-Food Production, 22 July 2021

The Gymnasium students participated in the dialogue jointly organised by UNDRR, WFO and FAO that gathered farmers, agri-food actors and DRR decision-makers to share their experiences in managing multiple risks for building resilient and sustainable agri-food systems. The debate focused on the intersections between disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in the agricultural sector as a key solution towards more risk- and climate-resilient and sustainable food systems.

CFS 49, 11-14 October 2021

Gymnasium young farmers at the 49th Session of the Committee on World Food Security

- Julie Bissonnette, a dairy farmer and president of the [Fédération de la Relève Agricole du Québec – FRAQ](#), represented **WFO** at the event "*Transforming food, land and water systems for sustainable healthy diets*", organised by **Stanford University, WorldFish, Environmental Defense Fund, UN Nutrition, CGIAR, ILRI**. Bringing the young farmers' perspective into the debate, she remarked on the crucial role of **young farmers as the foundations of future food systems** and the importance of **inclusive approaches** where we all work together to go in the same direction

- **Khoushbou Singh Sewraj**, Vice-president of [Falcon Association Mauritius](#), spoke on the importance of strengthening generational sustainability of family farming to transform food systems at the event “*Youth Leadership for a Better Food Future: The World Food Forum (WFF) as a Movement by Youth and for Youth to Transform Agri-food Systems*”, hosted by **World Food Forum (WFF)**, **FAO**, **FAO Youth Committee**, **Major Group for Children and Youth**, **Youth Alliance of Zero Hunger**. The session showcased the highlights and outcomes of the first-ever **WFF flagship event** (October 1-6, 2021), which engaged young agri-food systems stakeholders to mobilise action and identify solutions to transform our food systems and achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, in particular, “**zero hunger**”. **Khoushbou Singh Sewraj** brought to the **CFS 49** event the key outcomes from the **World Food Forum Young Farmers’ Roundtable** on strengthening the **generational sustainability of family farming** to build more inclusive and sustainable food systems.

CONCLUSIONS

The process that led to the creation of the Gymnasium was a complex one, made of building trust and find common goals to implement. The Gymnasium programme has been running now for more than six years and negotiations are in place to renew the agreement and organize future editions. It is an innovative and visionary programme, a very good example of multi-stakeholder partnership and a great source of opportunities for the young farmers and the organizations that have supported it, namely WFO and Bayer AG. In fact, the agreement between WFO and Bayer AG generated additional opportunities to increase the participation of young farmers in a number of initiatives that will have a long-lasting impact on the global discussion on agriculture.

First of all, after the first session of the Gymnasium, WFO managed to sign an agreement with LUISS University that allows WFO young farmers to take part in the LUISS master's in Food Law. In 2019, two young farmers, one from Cote d'Ivoire and another one from Cambodia attended the master in Rome, living an incredible learning and personal experience. Also, Crispin Kayitare, young farmer from Rwanda and participant in the first edition of the Gymnasium, as well as Kajol Bajracharya from Nepal and Betty M. Njuki from Kenya, were given the opportunity to attend the LUISS master's as well.

Furthermore, thanks to the programme, the selected young farmers have the incredible opportunity to be exposed to international events related to agriculture where they can actively take part in the negotiations (i.e. UN Food Systems Summit related events and dialogues, Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, GFFA, 2021 and 2022, the High Level Political Forum on the SDGs, HLPF, Committee on World Food Security, CFS, UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028, among others.)

Also, after the end of the first edition, the group of Gymnasium students remained active in the Alumni Group, as advisors and mentors. The intention for the future is to strengthen this group, foster opportunities for in-person and virtual meetings with Gymnasium students and consolidate a network of young farmers leaders from across the world.

Here below are some of the political achievements by some of our Alumni:

- Jannes Maes, young farmer from Belgium, was appointed as Agricultural Advisor in the Cabinet of the Minister for Agriculture
- Veronica Barbati, Italian young farmer, was appointed as President of Coldiretti Young Farmers
- Diana Lenzi, Italian young farmer, was appointed as President of the European Council of Young Farmers, CEJA

ANNEX 1 – YOUNG FARMERS’ BIOS

Adriaan Joubert (AJ) van Wyk, South Africa (withdrew)

AJ grew up on a family farm as the 4th generation of Vetkragga Farming. Vetkragga Farming operates in sheep, cattle and small grains and exists since 1946. They live and farm with the motto: “Faith, Family, Farm”.

Graduated at the Oakdale Agricultural High School in 2015, he continued his education studying for Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at the Stellenbosch University.

He joined the family farm at the end of 2018, and in December 2020 AJ got married to Hanri Janse van Rensburg.

Andile Mcoyi, South Africa

Andile is a biotechnologist by profession, but her love and passion for agriculture led her into farming. She worked as a laboratory quality analyst before resigning to focus on agriculture. After identifying the gap of women in the agricultural environment, she wanted to empower women and encourage women’s engagement in agriculture, thus utilising and opening up more opportunities for women in agriculture.

Angèle Mersch, Luxembourg

Angèle is 24 years old and works at her parents’ horses farm. After her education at the “Lycée Technique Agricole” in Ettelbruck/Luxembourg, she continued her studies in Germany to become a “Pferdewirtschaftsmeisterin”. She completed various internships on farms in Germany, France and Belgium. Since May 2018, she is the president of the Luxembourgian agricultural youth association “Lëtzebuerger Landjugend a Jongbaueren”. Angèle was part of the WFO Young Farmers’ Delegation at the 11th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA 2019).

Angelica Monti, Italy

Angelica is a 22-year-old young Italian farmer. Enrolled in the Faculty of Economics and Marketing of Agroindustrial Sector at the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, she is about to graduate. On Riolo Terme’s hills (Emilia Romagna Region) Angelica’s family runs a farm on a land of 100 hectares with vineyard, sowable crop and pasture. The main activity is the breeding of “Romagnola” beef cattle, a typical breed of the Emilia-Romagna region. Angelica takes care of the cattle with her mother and her sister, investing in genetics and innovation. Angelica is eager to preserve the agricultural biodiversity, considered as an intangible heritage of her territory.

Bram Van Hecke, Belgium

Born at a farm in Belgium, Bram was already passionate about agriculture, farmers and the countryside at a young age. Because of that, he studied agricultural engineering and political sciences. Voluntary involvement with rural youth and young farmers finally led to his current position as president of the Flemish young farmers.

Caterina Luppa, Italy

Caterina is an agronomist specialized in sustainable agriculture and soil quality. She works for the startup that she co-founded to develop a sustainable process to rare insects in Italian farms. Meanwhile, she is developing management skills, and she is the president of the young farmers’ association ANGA Umbria.

Chrispen Mununga, Zimbabwe

Chrispen is an agricultural economist at the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) with 4 years' experience in the agribusiness and agriculture economics. He holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture economics and Development and is currently pursuing a master's Degree in Data Analytics. Well versed with agricultural economics, agriculture labour law, business etiquette, cooperative governance, policy lobby and advocacy, effective communication and negotiations at the National Employment Council. Very much interested in trade and policy formulation such that he is currently the project coordinator for a poultry rapid assessment programme. He has been actively involved with the "Women @ Work" campaign. Currently, he is the Secretary General of the Agricultural Youth Apex Council.

Didier Yves Ishimwe, Rwanda

Didier Yves was born in Muhanga-Rwanda. He had an A-level certificate in Physics-Chemistry-Mathematics, and he is a farmer like his parents for 5 years. His hobby is playing musical instruments.

Edith Akinyi Alula, Kenya

Brought up in the rural countryside of Busia County, Kenya, Edith spent much of her childhood days in farms, shaping her desire for agriculture and her career choices at school and college. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness Management. She actively participates in community agricultural initiatives to bolster farmers' awareness of modern farming systems and promote high-value crops. This passion has carried her to train farmers in agronomy, field management, harvesting and post-harvesting handling and marketing, and encourage the youth to take up agribusiness as a livelihood source. She is enthusiastic about agriculture and specifically production efficiency and sustainability through technical and experimental skills. Her long-term goal and untiring commitment are to engage more with influential decision and policymakers to improve food security in her country and the world and drive dignity and create autonomy for farmers in developing countries.

Elisabeth Hidén, Sweden

Elisabeth is 25 years old, and she grew up on her family farm in central Sweden. She studied agronomy economics at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, and after that, she moved to my fiancé's farm. She was elected president of the Federation of Young Swedish Farmers in March 2020.

Hannes Bumann, Germany

Born in 1995, Hannes grew up on a crop farm in the northern region of Germany. He runs the family farm and is specialised on crop and vegetable production. As a board member of the regional young farmers club in Schleswig-Holstein, he was responsible for representing the German Young Farmers' Organisation. He also participated as a delegate in CEJA's working groups.

Jacqueline dos Santos Persson, Mozambique

Born in 1997, Jacqueline started working at an early age of 11 to help her parents. Thanks to agriculture, tomatoes, cabbages, potatoes, dirty hands, long days under the sun, and much more she now has a degree in Business Management.

Joshua Shedrac Waigolo, Uganda

Born in 1990 in Kiwolera village, Kamuli District, in the Eastern Region of Uganda, Joshua is currently serving as a District Coordinator-Buyende District Farmers Association (BUDFA), a member organisation of Uganda National Farmers' Federation (UNFFE). He is the Co-founder & CEO-Mt Atlas Horticulture Initiative Organization LTD (MAHIO) Uganda, and through MAHIO Uganda he is an active member of African Women Agribusiness Network (AWAN-Afrika), Eastern African Farmers Federation (EAFF) and Family Farming & Agroecology Community of Practice AFRICA platform under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). He has a bachelor's degree in Agriculture, Science and Technology, a Diploma in Agriculture, Science and Technology and a Certificate in General Agriculture Science and Technology (Crop and Animal Husbandry) from Busoga University.

Josiane Irakarama, Rwanda

Josiane is a young farmer from Rwanda. She has a bachelors' degree in Public Administration and Good Governance and is an active member of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Alumni. Josiane's passion for agriculture heads way back from her early childhood. She grew up seeing her mother strive to raise a decent family with high integrity thanks to her profession as a farmer, alongside her evolution from being an ordinary rural African woman to a representative and leader in several farmers organizations. Josiane is one of the founding members of Bright Agriculture Youth Cooperative and is currently working as a communications consultant in coffee farmers' cooperatives. As her mother and other remarkable female leaders before her, Josiane is committed to enhancing youth and women empowerment in the agricultural sector.

Julie Bissonnette, Canada

Julie has been President of the FRAQ (La Fédération de la relève Agricole du Québec) since 2018 and has been involved in the network for almost 10 years now. Born on a dairy farm near Montreal, Julie cares deeply about farming. After graduating from the Institut de Technologie Agroalimentaire (ITA), the Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec campus in 2013, she has worked in various agriculture areas. She now helps her spouse on his dairy farm that started up in 2014, near Drummondville. She also works as an agricultural technician for an agri-environmental club. Whether as an administrator at La Financière Agricole du Québec, as a representative on the Canadian Young Farmers Forum, on the general council of the Union des Producteurs Agricoles or even as chair of the Trust of the Réseau express Métropolitain (REM), Julie's passions are defending the interests of young farmers and improving their daily lives and their future.

Katlego George Lefifi, South Africa

Katlego is a young farmer who affiliates with the African Farmers Association of South Africa (AFASA) as a youth representative and Gauteng AFASA Youth Chair and a Provincial Elective Committee member. He has 12 years of farming experience, and he is also a biodiversity specialist by profession. He specialised in Agricultural Science at the Tshwane University of Technology, Business Management at the University of Pretoria and Agri-Business Management at the University of South Africa.

Katlego served 5 years working as an Environmental Education Officer at the South African National Biodiversity Institute and worked with the Agricultural Research Council as a farm assistant and researcher on South African Medicinal Plants. He also held directorship in 2 Agriculture and Consulting companies.

Khoushou Singh Sewraj, Mauritius

Born to a planter's family, Khoushou started practising agricultural activities when she was 13 years old. She became more interested in livestock rearing and crop plantation during her course at the University of Mauritius. Being personally involved in the farming activities, she is striving towards a rebranding of the narrative of being a farmer. As the Project Coordinator of F.A.L.C.O.N (Farmers in Agriculture, Livestock, Cooperative and Organic Network) Association and Secretary of Falcon Young Farmers, she is working towards the betterment of local farmers-youth, women, elderly coupled with the conservation of the natural environment.

Lakshuman Aryal, Nepal

Lakshuman is a young farmer with a keen interest in transforming subsistence agriculture practices into commercial farming practices to enhance production and productivity. He is an active member of the Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative Ltd. of Illam (Eastern Nepal), a member organization of Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Ltd. (NACCFL). He completed proficiency level education and gained an academic knowledge of 1yrs from Cross Border Agriculture Training Program 2016/17 with the support of the Government of Israel and Small Farmer Development Bank, a partner organization of NACCFL.

Matteo Pagliarini, Italy

Born in 1994, Matteo has been working since 2012 as a young agricultural entrepreneur in the family cooperative specialized in agricultural-social multifunctionality: sheep, cattle and goat breeding, wine production, land management, catering, renewable energy etc. Since 2014 he has been the Coordinator of AGIA – CIA Italian Farmers in the Romagna area. In 2020 he published his first book entitled "I did not want to be a farmer", an autobiography about the rural world's beauty. He is passionate about territorial marketing, the food and beverage world and effective communication.

Peter Waldherr, Austria

Peter is 27 years old and comes from Austria. He grew up on her parents' dairy farm. He is very interested in the agricultural business, and he is currently studying Animal Science at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna.

Phanna Choem, Cambodia (withdrew)

Born in 1989, Phanna graduated in Rural Development at the Svay Rieng University in 2016. He started working for the Cambodian Farmers Federation Association of Agricultural Producers (CFAP-Cambodia) in 2018 as Executive Secretary (ES) and assistant to the managing director, focusing on building the capacity of farmers leaders and their staff on agricultural technical skills and information communication technology (ICT). Moreover, he provides advisory support on agriculture to farmers through "App Chamka" when farmers needed technical assistance.

Phyllis Kadzo Kalama, Kenya

Phyllis is a young small-scale farmer of indigenous chicken in Kilifi, Kenya. She is passionate about youth involvement in agriculture. She is currently involved in volunteering activities with the Kilifi County Government's project "National Rural Agricultural Inclusive Growth" that deals with uplifting the farmer of selected value chains, hence improving their productivity and profitability in the long run.

Rudo Chitapi, Zimbabwe

Rudo is a young, vibrant farmer focusing on honey and horticulture crop production. She holds a master's degree in Business Administration. She also collaborates with ZimApiculture Trust, a local non-governmental organisation that provides technical and material support to beekeepers in Zimbabwe's rural communities. To promote youth participation in agriculture, Rudo offers agriculture and basic entrepreneurship training programs to young potential farmers.

Ruramiso Mashumba, Zimbabwe

Ruramiso is a young woman farmer in Marondera. After getting a bachelor's degree in Agriculture Business Management at the University of West England (UWE), she returned to Zimbabwe and in 2012 she started to run the farm she inherited from her parents. The farm was just a bush with no equipment. Today the farm has tractors, planting equipment, centre pivot and crop protection equipment.

Shalini Seaton, Jamaica

Shalini is a 29-year-old farmer from the rural district of New Market, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica and is also Chairperson of the Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers' (JNRWP) Youth Committee. She holds a bachelor's degree in Medical Technology from the University of Technology, Jamaica and an associate degree in Natural Science from the Hampton School. She launched the YouTube channel "Farmer Chic" where she shares information to aid, inspire and motivate other young people, particularly young women, to launch in a farming profession.

Tracey Miller, United States

Tracey is 29 years old and is from the United States. Tracey and her family have cattle on the family farm in North Dakota, and she has an off-farm job as a government relations specialist. Tracey and her husband RJ are continuing to grow their operation, expanding recently from cattle into cropland. Tracey serves on the Burleigh County Farmers Union Board of Directors, the North Dakota State University Extension Advisory Board, and is an active member of North Dakota Farmers Union's Women In Leadership Development (WILD) program and North Dakota Farmers Union EPIC youth program.